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Exploring the mobilization of mindfulness with children: the diversity of practice and what this means for education

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of Warwick

Centre for Education Studies
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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the mobilization and diversity of mindfulness with children. This study recognizes that although the growth of mindfulness is a global trend, mindfulness is a relatively new and emerging trend in education.

The diversity of how and why mindfulness can be mobilized and delivered with children is limited in previous studies and existing literature. There is also limited research from primary school settings, in particular children aged four and five who have experienced mindfulness, a gap this thesis addresses. In doing so, this study asks how is mindfulness mobilized, and how is it specifically mobilized to support the emotional wellbeing of children? How do the contexts in which mindfulness is mobilized shape its deployment? What motivates teachers of mindfulness to mobilize mindfulness pedagogies in their teaching practices? And how do teachers of mindfulness assess the value of mindfulness? This study addresses these questions to better enable a broad range of educators, internationally, to further understand how mindfulness can be mobilized with primary school aged children, understand the impact of mindfulness on children’s emotional wellbeing and learning and development, and inform educational practice on further developing and mobilizing mindfulness.

Using a qualitative design, this study adopts a grounded theory approach. Semi-structured interviews were employed with psychologists, pediatric doctors, and a psychiatrist, and Skype interviews were employed with primary school teacher participants, and focus groups were employed with children aged four and five. Data collection was conducted in the United States of America: San Diego, New York, San Francisco, Boston, and Texas. Selecting participants from a range of locations encouraged cross-cultural data collection, and
gathering data from participants who were based in clinical and educational contexts captured the diversity of how and why mindfulness can be mobilized with children.

This study shows that mindfulness is diverse and complex in how it is identified, used, and mobilized with children. The findings indicate that there is no singular form, teaching approach, resource, or environment that is required to mobilize and deploy mindfulness with children. Mindfulness can be adapted and customized to fit into existing curriculums. There is therefore a hybrid and malleable nature to the mobilization and deployment of mindfulness with children. The findings also indicate that participants associate mindfulness with contributing to children’s emotional regulation, empathy, executive functioning and overall emotional wellbeing. This study also shows that adult participants are concerned for children’s psychological health, emotional wellbeing, educational skills, and children’s life trajectories. The adult participants in this study are therefore motivated to mobilize mindfulness as they take responsibility to contribute to children’s emotional wellbeing, and thus feel that mindfulness is one feasible way to address these concerns.

This thesis makes a valuable contribution towards the knowledge and research base concerning the diversity among the emerging trend of mindfulness in education. This knowledge adds value to understanding the complexity and diversity in how and why mindfulness is mobilized with children, specifically how mindfulness teachers attempt to enhance the emotional wellbeing of children, and the underlying motivations and values for mobilizing mindfulness with children.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter will set the scene for the thesis by introducing the research study. This chapter, therefore, consists of five sections: (1) Mindfulness matters (2) The rationale for the study; (3) the aims of the study; (4) the methodological details of the study; and (5) a guide to the thesis.

1.1 MINDFULNESS MATTERS

Over the past forty years mindfulness has become increasingly prominent throughout pockets of society. In the Western world, mindfulness has reached hospitals, military, law enforcement, popular culture, prisons, schools, and financial sectors among others (see figure 1 for non-exhaustive timeline) (Ryan, 2012; Wilson, 2014; Kucinskas, 2019). Mindfulness has transformed from being a religious practice to a widely publicized solution for an infinite amount of diverse problems (Wilson, 2014). For instance, in an educational context, mindfulness can be mobilized within a teaching practice or subtly blended into a curriculum for students to regulate their emotions, develop altruistic behaviors, and enhance their executive functioning skills (Maloney et al., 2016; Rechtschaffen, 2015; Schonert-Reichl and Lawlor, 2010). However, in hospitals and rehabilitation contexts, mindfulness can be mobilized to help patients contend with illness and pain management (Kabat-Zinn, 2003; Hardison and Roll, 2016). In corporate organizations, mindfulness can be mobilized to enhance employee’s efficacy, performance, and leadership skills (Good et al., 2015; Rupprecht, 2016; Weick and Putnam, 2006). On the other hand, mindfulness can be found in popular culture in the form of health or self-help trends in the form of online platforms,
meditation apps, teas, books, films, memoirs, diets, and holiday retreats (Wilson, 2014; Kucinskas, 2019).

There is existing literature that suggests mindfulness originates from Buddhism. Some commentators therefore, argue that mindfulness has been subjected to a transformative process as a means to fit into the desired contexts to essentially deliver the desired benefits (McMahan, 2008; Wilson, 2014; Kucinskas, 2019). There is also existing literature that questions the authenticity or effectiveness of mindfulness (Finn and Petrilli 1998; Salzberg 2016). Mindfulness critics thus argue that the surge of excitement surrounding mindfulness attracts a serious money-making industry, which can lead to a commodification of mindfulness (Spector and Johnson, 2006; McMahan, 2008; Wilson, 2014; Hyland, 2015). In relation to the mobilization of mindfulness with children, there is also existing literature that raises concerns as to children’s agency and the ethics of teaching mindfulness to children (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009; Gagen, 2013). Additionally, there are commentators who express concerns as to the underlying objectives and motivations for the mobilization of mindfulness. Some commentators, therefore, argue that psychologized, medicalized and neoliberal priorities are at play in mobilizing mindfulness in education (Sanchez-Allred and Choudhury, 2016; Reveley, 2016; Mills, 2018). It is apparent mindfulness can be mobilized in different forms for diverse purposes, and for diverse outcomes. However, with the spread of mindfulness in society, and in particular the focus of this study mindfulness in education, a host of questions arise.
In the Western world, there are reports of growing concerns for children’s mental health and emotional wellbeing. A report conducted in 2004 by the National Health Service (NHS) in the United Kingdom found that one in 10 children (10.1%) had a clinically diagnosed mental health disorder. The survey that was conducted involved children aged five to 15. The 2017 NHS survey an increase to 11.2% children were found to have mental health disorders. In particular this survey shows that there has been an increase in children’s emotional disorders such as anxiety, depression, and bipolar affective disorders, which rose from 3.9% in 2004 to 5.8% in 2017 (NHS digital, 2018). Existing literature suggests that this stark rise in figures reveal the scale of children’s mental health crisis in the United Kingdom, “children are struggling to understand how they fit into the world. They have to contend with things like intense pressure at school, bullying, problems at home, all while navigating a complex 24/7 world with constant stimulation from social media” (Hussain, 2018 as cited in Parr, 2018). A similar picture of statistics can also be found in the United States. One in five children, aged 2–8 years, (17.4%), are reported to have a diagnosed mental health disorder (CDC, 2019). In particular, anxiety, depression, and behavioral problems were reported as the most commonly diagnosed disorder for children (Ghandour, 2018; CDC, 2019).

It is apparent that adults in both the United Kingdom and the United States share concerns for children’s mental health and emotional wellbeing, and therefore consider it an important public health issue. Mental health is interconnected to overall health, and mental disorders can constitute chronic health conditions that impacts children’s life trajectories (Ghandour, 2018; Parr, 2018; CDC, 2019). Some argue that without early interventions and preventative measures, children’s mental health and emotional wellbeing will negatively impact their
development, and consequently continue to implicate their development into adulthood (NHS digital, 2018; CDC, 2019).

The mobilization of mindfulness with children, particularly in education, can be presented as a response to these concerns. Langer (1997) argues that changes can be made to school curriculums, standards of testing, increases in budgets, and advances and access to technologies in schools, however none of these measures alone will make significant differences unless children are given the opportunity to learn more mindfully. Mindfulness education programs have mainstreamed into all levels of education and have been mobilized with millions of children transnationally including the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Hong Kong, Australia and New Zealand (Wilson, 2014; Choudhury and Moses, 2016; Kucinskas, 2019). In light of the phenomenon of mindfulness in education, this study explores why mindfulness is mobilized with children? How did forms of mindfulness come to be associated with education and learning? Why have primary school teachers decided to mobilize mindfulness with children? How do they mobilize mindfulness with children? And does mindfulness appear to make a difference in children’s emotional wellbeing development and or learning? These questions are important to consider as this research area is relatively under examined, yet this research area may be significant in informing children’s learning and development, and useful to contribute to education more broadly (Wilson, 2014; Greenberg and Harris, 2012; Meiklejohn et al., 2012; Weare, 2012).
Figure 1: Timeline of prominent developments of mindfulness

1979
- **Healthcare**- Jon Kabat-Zinn's Stress Reduction Clinic founded at the University of Massachusetts' Medical School

1982
- Kabat-Zinn's first article on Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction published

1992
- The Mind and Life Institute first begins research on meditators in the United States

2000
- **Education**- Susan Kaiser Greenland founds Inner Kids in the United States

2002
- **Education**- Goldie Hawn starts MindUp in the United States

2004
- **Mental health**- Mindfulness based cognitive therapy approved by the United Kingdom’s National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence

2007
- **Education**- Initial implementation of Mindful Schools in-class program in the United States

2007
- **Organizational**- Google Search Inside Yourself program starts in the United States

2007
- **Military**- Mindfulness-based Mind Fitness Training program starts developing in the United States

2009
- **Education**- Mindfulness in Schools Project first established in the United Kingdom

2010
- **Education**- Publication of first meta-analyses of mindfulness in education

2010
- **Business**- Headspace meditation app founded

2013
- **Education**- Mindfulness in Schools Project introduced in the United Kingdom

2015
- **Education**- Global dissemination of mindfulness education programs, resources, training and empirical research

2019
- **Government**- 250 members of the Parliament of the United Kingdom have received training in mindfulness
1.2 **Rationale for the Study**

The mobilization of mindfulness with children, specifically in educational contexts, is an emerging field (Wilson, 2014; Greenberg and Harris, 2012; Meiklejohn et al., 2012; Weare, 2012). To date, current research predominantly originates from clinical and psychological perspectives, which represent research trends with adults (Burke, 2010; Greenberg and Harris, 2012). There is thus a need for rigorous social science research on the mobilization of mindfulness in education in order to strengthen the efficacy, feasibility, and sustainability of mindfulness in education.

This study is concerned with exploring the mobilization of mindfulness with children. It seeks to explore the diversity of how mindfulness can be used to support the emotional wellbeing of children. Mindfulness is international in scope (Wilson, 2014); however, mindfulness-based programs are a relatively new and emerging trend in education (Choudhury and Moses, 2016; Hyland 2015; Schonert-Reichl, et al, 2015). Mindfulness consists of a set of dynamic and complex relationships between education, and social and emotional development, and mindfulness organizations, concepts and practices. This study, therefore, charts these diverse relationships in order to uncover how mindfulness is mobilized with children, what is involved in mindfulness pedagogies in educational contexts, why is mindfulness mobilized with children, and what are the uses, functions, outcomes and value in mobilizing mindfulness with children.

As presented in this study, there are a range of commentators who express concerns for children’s emotional wellbeing. Some commentators argue that education should support the
development of children’s emotional wellbeing (Flor Rotne and Flor Rotne, 2013; Geake, 2009; Mendelson, et al. 2010; Rempel, 2012). In existing literature and previous studies, there are however differences of view in the construction, use and outcomes of mindfulness in education (Jennings and Greenberg, 2009; Rechtschaffen, 2014; Ecclestone, 2004; Hayes, 2008; Gagen, 2013; Choudhury and Moses, 2016; Reveley, 2016; Mills, 2018). There are proponents who consider mindfulness to be a skill, tool, and literacy, and thus essentially a resource for teachers to use in order to facilitate emotional well-being development indirectly academic development (Kaiser-Greenland, 2010; Jennings and Greenberg, 2009; Rechtschaffen, 2014). This existing literature highlights multiple areas of development that children can experience as a result of participating in mindfulness. For instance, mindfulness is argued to enhance children’s focus and attention abilities, emotional regulation, executive functioning, and memory, in addition to encourage altruistic behaviors (Kaiser-Greenland, 2010; Weare, 2012; Rechtschaffen, 2014; Schonert-Reichl, et al, 2015). There are however, also detractors who question the mobilization of mindfulness in education, and thus raise caution as to its uses and outcomes. When mobilized in educational contexts, some argue that mindfulness is a therapy, remedy, and an unwarranted orthodoxy that deviates from and replaces the fundamental foundations and values in education (Ecclestone, 2004; Hayes, 2008; Thompson, 2007). Some commentators argue that mindfulness in education represents a medicalized pedagogy, which emphasizes psychiatrization and psychologization (Reveley, 2016; Mills, 2018). Some commentators also present a critique of mindfulness as a vehicle for neo-liberal influence and control of education and children (Gagen, 2013; Mills, 2016; Reveley, 2016), through standardized testing, performativity, managerialism, audit regimes, and the reshaping of social order (Hall, 2007; Gagen, 2013; Rustin, 2016). Consequently, these concerns for the growing implementation of mindfulness in education
also raise concerns as to the ethical boundaries of mindfulness in education. Some commentators question the underlying rationale of mindfulness being used to control and manipulate children’s brains in order to shape a specific ‘type’ of human (Gagen, 2013; Sanchez-Allred and Choudhury, 2016). Critics of mindfulness thus typically critique neuroscience research as a means to further solidify and raise their ethical concerns of mindfulness in education. The influence and reliance on neuroscience research in terms of why and how mindfulness is increasingly being implemented in education raises both ethical and practical concerns for several commentators (Geake and Cooper, 2003; Goswami, 2006; Farb, 2007; Geake and Cooper, 2003; Gagen, 2013; Davidson, 2016; Eklöf, 2017).

Additionally, existing literature also critiques the commercially driven nature of mindfulness in terms of its growing international currency, growing accessibility, mainstreaming in education, and standardization (Wilson, 2014; Reb and Atkins, 2015; Kucinskas, 2019). Due to religious, and specifically Buddhist connections to mindfulness, there are concerns as to the authenticity of the functions and uses of mindfulness. In relation to Buddhism and science, Lopez (2008) argues that science and Buddhism are not compatible. In the Westernized world mindfulness is typically likened to neuroscientific developments and neuroscientific ‘evidence’, however Lopez (2008) argues that science equates to neurobiology, and Buddhism equates to meditation. Therefore the framing and merging of science and Buddhism in Lopez’s (2008) view threatens, bleaches and domesticates Buddhism.
In sum, there is a range of scholars who argue that contemporary mindfulness is susceptible to being adapted and customized to the extent that a form of deinstitutionalized and detraditionalized mindfulness is what remains (Lopez 2008; Hunter, 2016; Salzberg, 2016).

Existing literature is not informative about how a diversity of mindfulness is framed with children, particularly in primary school settings (Wilson, 2014, Weare, 2012, Mills, 2018; Kucinskas, 2019). What is lacking in existing literature is an understanding of whether and how mindfulness is pieced together and mobilized for children as a program, pedagogy, or resource in order to enhance their emotional wellbeing, psychosocial development and/or academic skills and abilities (Greenberg and Harris, 2012; Weare, 2012; Mills, 2018). It is for these reasons this thesis sheds light on that variation and seeks thus to introduce matters of children’s and teachers social and institutional contexts into debates about the merits or otherwise of mindfulness for addressing educational concerns. This study is therefore designed to explore whether the value and quality of mindfulness is identical for all or whether it varies in different contexts or circumstances. This study also seeks to gain an understanding of the reasons as to why participants, who have some degree of discretion as to whether they engage with it, are seeking out mindfulness resources and ideas in order to implement mindfulness into their settings with children. This thesis is, therefore, concerned with informing educational practice of the implication and significance of children’s social and emotional development, psychological development and emotional wellbeing in education and to offer new knowledge on the implications of mindfulness in education.

1.3 AIMS OF THE STUDY
This study has three core aims. Firstly, this study aims to explore the diversity in which mindfulness is mobilized with children. Of particular interest is how mindfulness is specifically mobilized to develop children’s emotional wellbeing. The second core aim is to explore the views and experiences of clinical and primary school teacher participants who mobilize mindfulness with children. It is anticipated that by gathering such data, the findings will establish what are the uses and functions of mobilizing mindfulness with children, how mindfulness can be mobilized with children in education, what can influence and inhibit mindfulness, why is mindfulness ultimately mobilized in education, how participants value the mobilization of mindfulness with children, and what are considered the goals and outcomes of mindfulness for children. The third core aim of this study is to explore children’s understandings and experiences of mindfulness pedagogies. As children are the ‘receivers’, or arguably the ‘active agents’, in the process of mindfulness in education, it is of particular interest to consider how children relate to mindfulness pedagogies, explore what the mobilization of mindfulness does for children, and if children feel mindfulness benefits them in any way. Existing literature that speaks to the concept of children as active agents suggests that children actively construct their social worlds, and are therefore active agents in their own learning and development (Qvortup, 1994; James et al, 1998). In the context of mindfulness used with children, there is a tension of children’s agency at play. This tension raises questions surrounding children’s choice of participating in mindfulness, alternative options to mindfulness, and autonomy. By gathering data from children who participate in mindfulness pedagogies, it is hoped that this data will enrich the findings in terms of illuminating the diversity in the similarities, tensions, and differences in how and why mindfulness is mobilized with children.
Thesis argument and original contribution to knowledge

This thesis is an education studies contribution to mindfulness studies involving a small-scale exploratory study of mindfulness in primary school in the United States.

On the basis of this study, this thesis argues that mindfulness in the settings studied:

Is conceptualised and practised in diverse, multiple hybrid ways.

Not applied through a standard curriculum; taught outside of curriculum subjects (before, after, and in breaks between curriculum subjects).

Thereby shows how teachers can be innovative and creative in supplementing their curriculum subjects with mindfulness.

Mindfulness varies in how it is presented depending on its contexts and settings of application across clinical and primary school settings.

There is diversity in the purpose, outcome, and rationale for mindfulness.

Finally, mindfulness is not limited to the purpose of enhancing emotional wellbeing alone.

This study moves the study of mindfulness in schools beyond the current research and scholarship of proponents and critics of mindfulness.

1.4 The methodological details

This study employs a qualitative exploratory design. In order to explore and uncover participants’ understandings and experiences of mindfulness, and identify the diversity of
approaches in the settings under study, this study adopts a grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006).

**The research questions in this study are:**

Overarching research question: How is mindfulness mobilized, and how is it specifically mobilized to support the emotional wellbeing of children?

Sub question 1: How do the contexts in which mindfulness is mobilized shape its deployment?

Sub question 2: What motivates teachers of mindfulness to mobilize mindfulness pedagogies in their teaching practice?

Sub question 3: How do teachers of mindfulness assess the value of mindfulness?

Three qualitative research methods were employed: semi-structured interviews, Skype interviews, and child focus groups. Data were analysed using inductive thematic analysis. A six-phase analytic process guided by Braun and Clarke (2006) was employed in order to identify similarities, distinctions, and tensions in experiences and understandings across participants and contexts in relation to the diversity of mobilization with children.

The participants in this study include: six participants from a clinical centre for mindfulness in San Diego, a total of eight primary school teachers from New York, San Francisco, Boston, and Texas, and twenty-four children in primary schools in New York, San Francisco, Boston, and Texas. It was anticipated that selecting participants from a range of locations would encourage cross-cultural data to be collected, and thus shed light on the diversity and multiplicities of how and why mindfulness in mobilized with children (Davidov, et al., 2018. Furthermore, gathering data from participants who are based in both
clinical and educational contexts, it was also anticipated this would contribute to accessing a diversity of data for exploring how mindfulness can be mobilized with children.

1.5 A GUIDE TO THE THESIS

This thesis comprises 6 chapters. This chapter, chapter 1, has introduced the research study as a whole and sets out the rationale and the aims of the study, in addition to the methodological details.

Chapter 2 will provide a review of the existing social science literature and research on mindfulness. This will be organized into four sections: Mindfulness Defined, Contemplative Neuroscience-based Programs in Education, Neuroscience and Neuroplasticity, and Educational Policy. The literature review chapter will shed light on the research in this relatively new field, identify outstanding questions and research directions, and inform the selection of the research questions in this study.

Chapter 3 focuses on the methods and methodology of this study. This chapter provides the rationale for the methodology, describes the research design for this study. The methods, data analysis process, methodology, and ethical aspects will be presented and discussed.

Chapter 4 will present the findings from the study. The overarching themes and subthemes will be presented with thematic maps and excerpts from the interview transcripts in order to further illustrate the findings.

Chapter 5 discusses the findings while also drawing on the relevant literature and existing social science research on mindfulness.
Chapter 6 concludes the thesis. A summary of the findings will be provided, in addition to highlighting the strengths and contributions of the study, the limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research.

It is important to note that in the thesis mindfulness is often discussed as if it were one self-identical phenomenon. This thesis discusses mindfulness in a way that recognizes that even though it is often spoken about, theorised and assessed as if it were one construct or phenomenon, it may, in practice consist of a set of different things. Rather than asking if whether the ‘real, single mindfulness’ is present in the settings, this study asks how participants build with the word, and with the concepts and practices that are associated with it. Thus, when the word ‘mindfulness’ is used this does not imply the view that mindfulness is a single self-consistent or self-identical phenomenon. The approach used in this thesis suspends that assumption to reveal variation in detail.

**CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

**A note on the selection of literature for this review**

When carrying out the literature review, an initial ‘snowballing’ method was applied. Primary sources of literature were obtained from electronic databases including ERIC, PsychNET, Wiley online library, and EBSCO host. Literature searches revealed that mindfulness and emotional wellbeing were dominated by the disciplines of psychology, medicine, and neuroscience. This proved to be somewhat problematic as I was unfamiliar with some of the research designs, terminology, and the empirically based literature was often dominated by positivist approaches, I therefore experienced some difficulty in obtaining data that aligned
with my research focus. In order to overcome this difficulty, I networked with mindfulness practitioners in the United States, United Kingdom, and Canada, through making contact through professional social media platforms.

Throughout the literature search, the importance of other disciplines including education, psychology, neuroscience, philosophy, and sociology did however remain paramount, as they were key to informing this study. Although this thesis is an education studies contribution, this study is interdisciplinary as it transcended disciplines other than education. For grounded theorists, writing a thorough but focused literature review often means going across fields and disciplines (Casper, 1998; Wiener, 2000).

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide a review of literature and synthesis of existing social science literature and research on mindfulness. This will be organized into four sections. The four sections are: (1) Mindfulness Defined, (2) Contemplative Neuroscience-based Programs in Education, (3) Neuroscience and Neuroplasticity, and (4) Educational Policy. Each section, in its own right, illustrates the diversity and complexity of mindfulness, provides contexts and details in order to better understand the mobilization of mindfulness, and emphasizes the emerging and dynamic relationships of mindfulness and education. This chapter will, therefore, develop a picture of research in this relatively new field, identify key outstanding questions and research directions, and inform the selection of the thesis’ research questions.

2.2 Mindfulness Defined
Mindfulness is a large, diverse, and complex phenomenon (Wilson, 2014). This study explores some of this diversity, with a particular focus on the mobilization of mindfulness with children. This study thus seeks to chart some of the emerging and dynamic relationships between concepts and practices concerned with mobilizing mindfulness with children, education, and emotional wellbeing development. Due to the proliferation and multifaceted nature of mindfulness, this first sub-section will provide definitions of mindfulness (Kucinskas, 2019; Wilson, 2014). The intention of this sub-section is to illustrate and emphasize the diversity of expression concerning mindfulness and to chart the understandings of the mobilization of mindfulness, and the diverse contexts that can shape mindfulness. In doing so, four lenses that engage with mindfulness for different uses will be delineated. The five lenses are: Buddhist mindfulness, mindfulness in health contexts, psychological and neurophysiological aspects of mindfulness, organizational mindfulness, and educational mindfulness.

**Buddhist mindfulness**

Buddhist mindfulness and the implications of contemporary mindfulness will now be illustrated. This will emphasize the extensive history of mindfulness and the consequent concerns surrounding the mobilization of contemporary mindfulness programs.

Although contemporary mindfulness has been heralded as an innovative health technique or a tool to enhance brain functioning, arguments in support of mindfulness-like practices have extensive historical seeds (Kucinskas, 2019). There are proponents of mindfulness that argue mindfulness occupies a significant role in Buddhist practices and philosophies (Kang and Whittingham, 2010).
There are some Buddhist scholars and proponents of mindfulness that identify mindfulness as residing within the fundamental philosophies of Buddhism (Gunaratana, 1992, 1999; Nanamoli and Bodhi, 1995). They suggest that mindfulness can contribute to the attainment of optimal cognitive capacities and emotional states. Buddhist scholars and proponents of mindfulness understand mindfulness as a vehicle for attaining the ultimate religious goal; complete freedom from suffering and the perfection of all positive qualities of the mind in a state of altruistic omnipresence (Kang and Whittingham, 2010).

Furthermore, within the Buddhist traditions, mindfulness is not applied in isolation but rather supported by and supports the development of wisdom and ethics. Mindfulness is thus understood as a function of the mind that can be cultivated (Kang and Whittingham, 2010; Hunter, 2016; Salzberg, 2016). Buddhist traditions identify mindfulness as having liberating and enlightenment related functions: the wholesome functioning of personality, and thus the wholesome functioning of cognition and emotion (Kang and Whittingham, 2010). Additionally, according the Buddhist traditions, there are believed to be multiple functional benefits of mindfulness: the avoidance of cognitive problems such as greater clarity of reality and self-reflexive thinking, the prevention of emotional distress (Kang and Whittingham, 2010).

There are however some proponents of mindfulness that raise caution when identifying Buddhist links to mindfulness. Kabat-Zinn (1994, P.3) believes that mindfulness involves “living in harmony with the world, examining who we are, questioning our view of the world, our place in the world, and cultivating appreciation for each moment we are alive”. Williams and Kabat-Zinn (2013) thus present mindfulness as a ‘universal dharma’, which is sacred as well as secular.
McMahan (2008), for example, argues that Buddhism has been adapted in America, and mindfulness has thus been molded and manipulated in order to appear accessible and to suit the modern American culture. He argues that in a complex interplay with converging forces of modernization, scientization and Westernization, American Buddhist modernizers and converts who do not have ethnic ties to Buddhism have dramatically adapted Buddhism over the past 175 years. He believes the growth of secular modern adaptations of mindfulness practices have transformed the Buddhist monastic disciplines into techniques of happiness and self-development (McMahan, 2008). This American adaption of Buddhism has become “understood today not as an otherworldly nirvana or heavenly realm, but as a way to appreciate and embrace life” (McMahan, 2008, P.221). 

McMahan (2008) thus questions the uses, authenticity and philosophies of contemporary mindfulness programs. He argues that Buddhism and mindfulness has become increasingly privatized throughout society by way of organizations marketing, delivering, and profiting from mindfulness as a product. He essentially argues that this privatization removes the original Buddhist monastic characteristics and structures from mindfulness, and leaves a “deinstitutionalized and detraditionalized form of mindfulness” (McMahan, 2008, P. 24).

As highlighted, there are many views concerning contemporary mindfulness and the associations to Buddhist mindfulness. Contemporary mindfulness can represent and encompass Buddhist practices and philosophies (Gunaratana, 1992, 1999; Nanamoli and Bodhi, 1995). While, others view mindfulness as a product of modernized Buddhism, with removed religious affiliation to fit into the westernized needs of American culture.

**Mindfulness in health contexts**
It is important to note that when not taught within Buddhist or religious contexts, mindfulness has been predominantly mobilized in health contexts. Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) are classified as healthcare interventions, which are evidenced by science and applied in medicine and clinical psychology (Kabat-Zinn, 2017). In part through the work of Kabat-Zinn (2017), mindfulness and specifically MBSR has entered the mainstream of western society. Kabat-Zinn (2003, P. 145) thus defines mindfulness as “the awareness that arises from paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally”. There is an extensive evidence base for the efficacy of MBSR and MBCT (Williams and Kabat-Zinn, 2013). From its inception, MBSR was initially conceived as a public health intervention rather than a therapy; nonetheless, the influence of both MBSR and MBCT has greatly informed implementations of mindfulness in medicine and psychology (Kabat-Zinn, 2017).

**Psychological and neurophysiological aspects of mindfulness**

When attempting to define mindfulness, some commentators emphasize the psychological and neurophysiological aspects of mindfulness to illustrate the uses, processes, and outcomes of mindfulness.

Langer, described as the “mother of mindfulness”, has conducted some of the earliest research into mindfulness in the West (The Langer Mindfulness Institute, 2016). The Langerian mindfulness theory is an approach focused on cognition and claims to trigger a shift in cognitive processes. According to Langer (2009) mindfulness involves an active state of awareness that facilitates the creation of new knowledge and ultimately allows multiple perspectives of awareness and reality to develop. This approach is identified by Ellis (2000)
as “a shift from epistemology to ontology”, which effectively suggests a cognitive shift. This
cognitive shift is believed to be from a ‘mindless’ state of anticipating future events or
ruminating about past events, to a ‘mindful’ state of being fully present and aware of the
current moment and situation (Langer and Pirson, 2015). Langer (1997, P.4) thus explains
‘mindlessness’ to be characterized by “an entrapment on old categories; by automatic
behavior that precludes attending to new signals; and by action that operates from a single
perspective”.

Velmans and Schneider (2006) associate mindfulness with a range of innate biological
abilities, such as awareness, attention, emotional control and resilience. The frontal lobe of
the brain encompasses a region known as the mirror neuron region, which enables humans
to express conscious actions such as paying attention and absorbing information (Siegel,
2010). These actions indicate a level of consciousness, which effectively indicates a level of
attention and awareness. Consciousness, attention and awareness can be identified as
interchangeable abilities, which are essentially innate biological abilities (Velmans and
Schneider, 2006).

The prefrontal cortex, which lies within the frontal lobe of the brain, is associated with the
control of cognitive function. Neurophysiology evidence has indicated, “neuronal activity in
sub regions of the prefrontal cortex are correlated with the attentional state” (Rossi, et al.
2008). Kabat-Zinn (2006) argues mindfulness as a fundamental attentional state or stance is
frequently and intermittently adopted, whether this is intentionally performed or not. In
order to carry out any task, a level of consciousness is required, and within that level of
consciousness constitutes qualities of attention and awareness (Rossi, et al. 2008).

Rechtschaffen (2014, P.5) writes, “mindfulness is not some new-fangled invention. There is
no need to construct this awareness, we are born with it”. Arguably, seeing as consciousness, attention and awareness can be identified as innate abilities, mindfulness, the practice of cultivating attention and awareness, is aligned with innate human capacities

The intellectual history and existing research on mindfulness is diverse and therefore can transcend multiple disciplines. In the work of Ellis (2000), Langer (2009) and Langer and Pirson (2015) mindfulness is understood as facilitating cognitive shifts concerned with benefits associated with conceptual distinctions. Whereas in the work of Kabat-Zinn (2006), Velmans and Schneider (2006), Rossi et al., 2008, and (Siegel, 2010), mindfulness can be used to develop key regions of the brain concerned with awareness, attention, resilience and emotional regulation.

It is important to note that although both Langer (2009) and Kabat-Zinn (2006) speak of the activities, including attention and awareness, occurring in the brain when practicing mindfulness, these perspectives are explicitly different.

**Organizational mindfulness**

Mindfulness has been adopted in a range of organizational settings including the Parliament of the United Kingdom, Google headquarters, British Airways, and the United States Marines. This section outlines these in order to emphasize the diverse and omnipresent nature of mindfulness (Wilson, 2014). Additionally, the mobilization of mindfulness within organizational, corporate, and governmental arenas supports the argument of mindfulness apparently existing entirely outside of Buddhism (Wilson, 2014). Although schools can also
be identified as institutions, there will be a separate overview of ‘educational mindfulness’, thus, governmental and corporate examples will be highlighted in this overview (Berg and Wallin, 1982).

Lemm and Vatter (2014) argue that the mobilization of mindfulness in organizations is a result of changes and growing demands within financial markets and political alliances. Specifically, Weick and Putnam (2006) argue that successful organizations, particularly in high-risk industries, continually reinvent themselves, and typically have infrastructures grounded in processes of collective mindfulness. It is apparent that Weick and Putnam (2006) believe that mindfulness is present in successful organizations and that ‘mindful organizing’ contributes to the success of those organizations. Weick and Putnam (2006) explain ‘mindful organizing’ as stable cognitive processes that ensure the effective management of unexpected events. Distinctly different to Kabat-Zinn (2006) and Langer (1997; 2009) perspectives on mindfulness, Weick and Sutcliffe (2001) identify five characteristics of mindfulness that contribute to effective practice in organizations: the preoccupation with failure, reluctance to simplify interpretations, sensitivity to operations, commitment to resilience, and deference to expertise. For organizations with infrastructures grounded in processes of collective mindfulness, there is less of an emphasis on decision-making, and more concentration on inquiry and interpretation grounded in the capabilities for action (Weick and Sutcliffe, 2001).

Putnam (2001), however, points out that attempts to increase mindfulness in organizational contexts are complicated. If as Weick and Putnam (2006) argue, organizations are established, held together, and made effective, largely by the means of concepts, there is a risk that conceptual decision-making may mislead organizations. Conceptual decision-
making is typically socially and collaboratively orientated and, therefore, involves the consideration of broad alternatives to solve problems, encourages negotiation of possible solutions, and generating multiple creative solutions (Chiva et al., 2018). Conceptual decision-making can fall short of providing structured and defined outcomes, and also fail to offer immediate results where there is limited room for error (Weick and Putnam, 2006; Chiva et al., 2018). In such cases, the processes of collective mindfulness can guide effective management and decision-making through prioritizing and employing inquiry and interpretation approaches, in addition to action plans (Putnam, 2001; Weick and Putnam, 2006).

There is also evidence to suggest that mindfulness has a presence within governmental contexts and gaining attention in policy. Reportedly, as of April 2019, there are at least two hundred and fifty members of the Parliament of the United Kingdom who have received training in mindfulness (MAPPG, 2019). There is also evidence that suggests members of parliament have engaged in testimonial dialogue with the mindfulness All-Party Parliamentary Group in the UK, which has focused on the evidence, benefits, and implementation of mindfulness in the health, education, workplace, and the criminal justice system sectors (Safer, 2015). Mindfulness is an aspect of a discourse of ‘mental capital’, which identifies cognitive and emotional capacities as a resource to be harnessed or conserved (MAPPG, 2015). The key argument of this testimonial dialogue argued that developing the mental capital of the nation is “crucial to the future prosperity and wellbeing” (MAPPG, 2015). In the United Kingdom, efforts have also been made with ‘The Mindful Nation Initiative’, whereby funding investments have been made to further mindfulness pilot studies, increase public access to qualified mindfulness teachers, and the implementation of
mindfulness in areas such as health, education, and the workplace among others (MAPPG, 2015; MAPPG, 2019).

Mindfulness also has a presence in corporate contexts. In October 2016, Virgin trains launched ‘Be Mindful’; a mindfulness video available on Virgin trains developed in collaboration with the Mental Health Foundation. The video provides visuals of the train’s routes through the endlessly emerging scenic landscapes. The launching of this video reflects recognition of a greater societal focus on health and wellbeing. Virgin Trains (2016) claim that we “lead busy lives with lots of things competing for our attention. Practicing mindfulness can help us feel more connected to the world around us”. The objective in launching ‘Be Mindful’ resonates with the objective of many other contemporary mindfulness practices, that is, to deliberately and intentionally focus “on the right now, before stepping back into the bustle of our lives” (Virgin Trains, 2016). Mental health and wellness within the societal dynamics of the twenty-first century is further acknowledged by Virgin Trains (2016), “The potential value of taking time out during a journey to pause and be aware of our internal ‘weather’ before carrying on with work cannot be underestimated in today’s world”. Similarly, in April 2015, British Airways introduced ‘mindfulness’ for travel series’. The in-flight mindfulness is an initiative to encourage travelers to “develop the clarity, calm and focus necessary to get the most out of their travel experiences” (Coleman, 2015).

Furthermore, the Google headquarters in California is noted for holding regular mindfulness classes for employees. Good et al., (2015) explains the mindfulness practice at the Google headquarters draws on neuroscience, and facilitates skills development in order to increase performance and leadership. Moreover, Goldman Sachs, British Telecom, Ford, and the
world’s largest hedge fund, Bridgewater Associates, has also been noted to introduce and promote mindfulness amongst their employees (Goguen-Hughes, 2010; Rupprecht, 2016).

Mindfulness programs have also become a component for the preparation for overseas deployment within the United States Marines. Preparations for deployment consist of weapon qualifications, physical testing and exercise, counterinsurgency drills, and more recently, the practice of mindfulness (Jha et al., 2015). Service members carry out intensive physical training, however, recently, a greater recognition and training associated with the mind, cognition, and emotions has developed (Stanley and Jha, 2009).

‘M-Fit’, a military initiative that teaches service members the secular practice of mindfulness has been implemented within the United States Marines since 2011 (Hruby, 2012). The implementation of mindfulness within the Marine Corps is concerned with reinforcing the Marine’s emotional health, in addition to improving their mental performance under the demands of combat (Hruby, 2012). Stanley (as cited in Hruby, 2012), suggests, if a Marine is equipped with the ability to focus their attention and awareness on their present environment, emotions, and actions, they may have the opportunity to make decisions with higher levels of coherency.

Although the presence of mindfulness in organizational contexts is relatively new, existing research claims there are beneficial outcomes for mindfulness-based programs on work-related stress (Jha et al., 2015; Good et al., 2015). The outcomes are understood to include reductions in perceived stress, increased sleep quality, increased job satisfaction, increased levels of self-compassion, increased optimization of blood pressure and autonomic balance in employees (Rupprecht, 2016; Wolever et al., 2012). Organizations are becoming increasingly aware of the significance of human capital; that is, the skills and motivations of
individuals in workplace contexts (Rupprecht, 2016). There are commentators that claim recognizing and contributing to the mental health and wellbeing of employees can effectively enhance human capital (Jha, et al. 2015; Good et al., 2015; Wolever et al., 2012). The existing research that claims to validate beneficial outcomes of mindfulness on work-related stress appears to encourage organizations to engage with mindfulness programmes in order to address employee mental health and wellbeing, and subsequently enhance human capital (Rupprecht, 2016).

Although this current study seeks to explore why and how mindfulness is mobilized in education, and how it may support the emotional wellbeing of children, it is important to offer insights into other areas where mindfulness is present. There is no singular mindfulness, thus this study explores the diversity of contexts, uses, and functions by which mindfulness can be mobilized.

**Educational mindfulness**

This section will review the multifaceted nature of mindfulness in education, and the different uses for mobilizing mindfulness in education.

‘Educational mindfulness’ aligns to the research area of this study and the overarching research question of this study: how is mindfulness mobilized, and how is it specifically mobilized to support the emotional wellbeing of children? This study, thus aims to contribute to the existing research gap of qualitative studies on mindfulness in education (Wilson, 2014). This overarching question will be illustrated throughout the findings and discussion of this thesis.
Rechtschaffen (2014) defines educational mindfulness as “a learning culture that facilitates social and personal development”. This can be constructed through five key literacies: somatic literacy, cognitive literacy, emotional literacy, social literacy, and ecological literacy (Rechtschaffen, 2014).

Langer (1997) however uses the term ‘mindful learning’ in order to describe mindfulness in education. There are three characteristics outlined in Langer’s (1997, P.4) approach to mindful learning: “the continuous creation of new categories; openness to new information; and an implicit awareness of more than one perspective”.

Although Rechtschaffen (2014) and Langer (1997) both describe mindfulness in education, it is apparent that their perspectives are different. These contrasts in definitions of mindfulness in education speak to the diversity in how mindfulness can be conceptualised and consequently mobilized. Although providing definitions are useful, this current study will explore and consider what the data reveals later on in terms of how participants refer to mobilizing mindfulness with children, and what they consider are the uses, functions, outcomes and value in mobilizing mindfulness with children.

A diversity of mindfulness programs has a presence within areas of mainstream education and higher education in Canada, the United States and United Kingdom (Choudhury and Moses, 2016; Hyland 2015; Schonert-Reichl, et al, 2015). An extensive range of mindfulness and socioemotional development programs and initiatives has filtered into schools (Hyland, 2015; Rempel, 2012). Programs such as the MindUp, Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning, Personal Social Health and Economic Education, Every Child Matters, Healthy Schools, and the mindfulness in Schools project have become mobilized within educational systems (Rechtschaffen, 2014). These programs seek to address and encourage emotional
wellbeing development; however, the approaches and applications used, and the extent to which a form of mindfulness is used varies tremendously.

The MindUp program, mobilized in both the United Kingdom and the United States, aims to provide students with tools to manage their emotions, reduce stress levels, increase awareness and focus, and increase their levels of optimism and empathy (Schonert-Reichl and Lawlor, 2010). The MindUp program claims to be scientifically based, derived from cognitive neuroscience, and aligned with positive psychology and social and emotional learning (Maloney et al., 2016).

In the United Kingdom, SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) has focused on recognizing social and emotional qualities of learning including self-awareness, managing feelings, motivation, empathy and social skills (DfE, 2005). More recently PSHE (Personal Social Health and Economic Education) has been introduced in the United Kingdom educational system. This program is, however, optional for teachers to implement into their classrooms as the Department for education deems PSHE as not an essential component of the curriculum. The objective of this program is to contribute to the personal development of children with a focus on developing confidence, self-esteem, self-understanding, empathy, and creating productive healthy relationships. These are notably similar qualities of mindfulness described by Rechtschaffen (2014) and Kabat-Zinn (2006), however not described by Langer (1997) or Weick and Putnam (2006).

There is also a growing presence of mindfulness and emotional development related programs tailored for school staff (Flook et al., 2013; Jennings et al., 2013, 2015; Weare, 2012). For example, ‘Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE) is a mindfulness-based professional development program for teachers. The program focuses
on teachers’ emotional health through the development of emotional non-reactivity and regulation, improving relationships with students, classroom management, managing stress, social and emotional learning, and wellbeing and resilience among staff (Schussler et al., 2015). Jennings (2016) points out that the CARE program seeks to enhance teacher quality and classroom learning environments; Jennings (2016) considers these are key priorities for the United States policy agenda for improving student academic achievement. In a similar vein, the Mindfulness in Schools Project in the United Kingdom offers a professional development course for school staff. The course seeks to train teachers on developing mindfulness principles personally, developing a mindful learning culture and how to teach the mindfulness pedagogy to students (MiSP, 2015).

In the United States, undergraduate and postgraduate mindfulness related degrees in Contemplative Studies, Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy and Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction are becoming increasingly available at Universities (Kabat-Zinn, 2017; Shapiro, Brown and Astin, 2011). These include the University of Massachusetts, the University of California Berkley, and Lesley University in the United States; the University of Ottawa, University of Toronto, and Simon Fraser University in Canada; and the University of Oxford, King’s College London and the University of Aberdeen in the United Kingdom. Within these higher education institutions, the mindfulness related degrees are offered within social science departments: law, psychology, sociology, humanities and philosophy. Degrees are also offered within teacher training and medical school departments.

Mindfulness has a presence in areas of mainstream education and higher education in Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom. It is apparent that the manner in which
mindfulness is mobilized in education is diverse. Programs can vary in how mindfulness is accessed, engaged with, and shaped according to the context of the programs.

**Section Summary**

Overall, this first section of the literature review has shed light on different lenses through which mindfulness can be identified, and thus mobilized. The five lenses that were described: Buddhist mindfulness, mindfulness in health contexts, psychological and neurophysiological aspects of mindfulness, organizational mindfulness, and educational mindfulness illuminate the diversity of mindfulness. Although prominent contributors to the field of mindfulness studies use the same word- mindfulness- this does not necessary mean this word is being used in the same ways. Mindfulness is not a singular concept or practice, and thus defined and understood in different ways. The five lenses in this section depict the diversity in the understanding, practice, and implementation of mindfulness. Deriving from clinical and healthcare contexts, Kabat-Zinn (2003, P. 145) perceives mindfulness as sacred as well as secular, and an “awareness that arises from paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally”. In contrast, Langer (2009), deriving from a social psychology and education context, perceives mindfulness is an active state of awareness that encourages the development of new knowledge and multiple perspectives of awareness and reality. However, within the context of organizational mindfulness, Weick and Putnam (2006) offer a very different understanding of mindfulness. ‘Mindful organizing’ is defined as stable cognitive processes that ensure the effective management of unexpected events (Weick and Putnam, 2006). Mindfulness can therefore be mobilized in different contexts, for different purposes, and for different outcomes. Mindfulness is not singular, and therefore
has a multifaceted nature and expands across several areas of society (Kucinskas, 2019; Wilson, 2014).

Although this study does not explicitly explore all the five lenses described, the interdisciplinary literature is drawn on to critically explore and examine mindfulness in education. This study concentrates on the mobilization of mindfulness in education, with children, and emotional wellbeing development. This study is, therefore, concerned with how participants mobilize mindfulness with children and in education, and what they consider to be the uses, functions and outcomes associated with mobilizing mindfulness with children. Adult participants are asked questions such as: Why practice mindfulness with children/in schools? What is the purpose? Do you consider the mindfulness practice a priority in your classroom/school? Can you outline and describe the Mindfulness practice that you teach; what is the process? While, child participants are asked questions including: What is Mindfulness? What does Mindfulness do? How does it make you feel?

2.3 Contemplative Neuroscience-based programs in Education

This section of the literature review will provide a greater understanding of contemplative neuroscience-based programs in education. This section will also shed light on the views of some proponents as well as detractors with regards to the mobilization of mindfulness in education, and the influence of mindfulness on children’s learning and development. There will also be a sub-section that will provide a summary of some of the prominent mindfulness in education programs, which are mobilized by organizations in The United States and the United Kingdom. This study seeks to explore how mindfulness is mobilized. Therefore,
proving a summary of the current state of play of mindfulness in education programs will emphasize some of the uses, functions, and contexts of these programs. It is, however, important to note that this study does not explicitly seek to explore the operation and implementation of these curriculums and organisations. The participants involved in this study do not teach any standard or manualised mindfulness ‘curriculum’. The established mindfulness curriculums or their founders however might nevertheless have influenced the participants’ use of mindfulness. Hence, the following section provides an insight into some of the prominent mindfulness in education programs. Specifically section 2.3.1 will review the mindfulness programs.

In this following section, contemplative education and contemplative neuroscience-based programs will be used interchangeably. Many commentators use these terms as umbrella terms for programs such as mindfulness use these terms. It is important to note that multiple frames of contemplative education are available. Contemplative neuroscience is considered an emerging multidisciplinary field where mindfulness intersects with neural mechanism functioning (Barinaga, 2003; Wallace, 2007). To elaborate, this is the neurological, physiological, behavioral, and cognitive activity that is claimed to occur simultaneously when altruistic behaviors are enacted (Barinaga, 2003; Wallace, 2007).

When mindfulness is mobilized in education, it can be framed as contemplative education Steel (2014). Contemplative education is identified as “a set of pedagogical practices designed to cultivate mindful awareness whereby personal growth, moral living, and caring for others is also developed (Roeser and Peck, 2009).
Rosch (2008) considers contemplative education to cover three functions (Rosch, 2008). Firstly, mindfulness practices, which include the development of intentional and non-judgmental awareness. Secondly, cultivating social and emotional abilities. This includes empathy, understanding, and acceptance. Thirdly, the development of abilities associated with communicating the complexities of life (Rosch, 2008).

Repetti (2010), however, views contemplative education slightly differently, and thus separates contemplative education more distinctively. Repetti (2010, P.10) suggests contemplative education comprises of “contemplative practice, contemplative pedagogies, and contemplative studies”. Metacognitive exercises, which encourage awareness and attention of conscious experiences, can be understood as contemplative practice (Repetti, 2010). This form of education can be found in clinical settings for remedial and therapy-based purposes. Contemplative pedagogies, however, is the category that is closely aligned to mindfulness, and the focus of this study. This form of contemplative education can, therefore, be found in education systems and specifically, classrooms. In Repetti’s view contemplative pedagogies are “philosophies of education that promote the use of contemplative practices”, such as mindfulness, “as valid modes not only of teaching and learning but of knowledge construction and inquiry” (Repetti, 2010, P.10). Contemplative studies, however, involve the pursuit of scholarly research in respect to the traditions, epistemology, mechanics, and scientific effectiveness of contemplative practices (Repetti, 2010).

The mobilization, uses and outcomes of contemplative education discourses can be diverse. Some parallels can, however, be drawn. The contemplative education frames described by
Rosch (2008) and Repetti (2010) acknowledge metacognition and the development of awareness as key principles of mindfulness. Both frames also acknowledge the development of social and emotional abilities, including the development of interpersonal and intra-personal relationships.

Since the overarching focus of this study is to explore the mobilization and diversity of mindfulness in education, and specifically explore how it is mobilized in attempts to enhance the emotional wellbeing of children, it is, therefore, the contemplative pedagogies that resonate with this study.

Within the educational arena, there is a developing trend of contemplative neuroscience-based programs (Sanchez-Allred and Choudhury, 2016). Typically, in school contexts, these programs or pedagogies, can be referred to as mindfulness. There has been a surge of excitement and investment surrounding mindfulness programs in education. It is believed that millions of children “in over a hundred countries on five continents” have been exposed to mindfulness education programs (Kucinskas, 2019, P.86).

The discussion will now turn to proponents of contemplative neuroscience-based programs in education, specifically mindfulness. The following discussion will emphasize how proponents value the mobilization of mindfulness programs, and how these commentators consider the programs to influence the emotional wellbeing of children.

Proponents of mindfulness believe that there is an urgent need in education to mobilize mindfulness-based pedagogies (Rechtschaffen, 2014; Rempel, 2012; Schonert-Reichl et al.,
Proponents claim that children need to build essential skills such as empathy, resilience, and emotional regulation in order to combat the stress and pressure of living in today’s highly charged world (Rempel, 2012). Similarly, Ryan (2012, P. 172) argues that children need to be taught about the importance of “kindness and being connected to their fellow human beings and the environment that sustains them”. These commentators, therefore, believe that mindfulness can meet those needs. It is apparent that proponents of mindfulness feel that there is urgency and a place for mindfulness in education, and that mindfulness should be prioritized in educational agendas. There is, however, a tension in what these commentators consider the objectives and assumed outcomes of mindfulness to be. Some commentators see mindfulness as a means to develop children’s resiliency for a world assumed to be harsh (Rempel, 2012; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015). On the other hand, some commentators see mindfulness as enabling children to shape their present and future lives (Ryan, 2012; Rechtschaffen, 2014).

The interest of mindfulness in education is understood by some commentators as a result of unprecedented levels of stress experienced by children (Mendelson et al., 2010). Seeing as research suggests that increased levels of stress among children can negatively hinder children’s learning and development, educational institutions, to an extent, are now accepting the position of contributing to children’s emotional wellbeing. This is a shift, which Rempel (2012) claims educators have not seen in previous generations.

Mindfulness pedagogies claim to facilitate and optimize children’s learning through enhancing children’s social, psychological and physiological development (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015). A study conducted by Durlak et al. (2011) found that the greatest amount of
growth in primary school students after mobilizing mindfulness was an increase in their social-emotional skills. Further, Schonert-Reichl et al., (2015) claim that mindfulness can offer a higher level of awareness that is associated to a higher intake of knowledge, greater focus, enhanced memory, and a decrease in cortisol levels. Additionally, Rechtschaffen (2014) claims that mindfulness pedagogies can encourage attention, self-regulatory and compassion qualities in children. Rather having education systems and teachers imposing rigidity, tightly structured rules, and controlling disciplinary measures to develop attention, self-regulatory and compassion qualities in children, “mindfulness actively fosters these qualities” (Rechtschaffen, 2014, P.18). Hyland (2009, P.130) believes, “mindfulness prepares the way for genuinely rich and deep learning and the journey from self-obsession to a fuller engagement with life and with others. There can be few worthier educational ideals”. Mindfulness is, therefore, “promoted to render educational systems more effective in achieving both traditional and more contemporary goals” (Sanchez-Allred and Choudhury, 2016, P.116).

The interest and promotion surrounding mindfulness in education signals a tension between ‘traditional schooling’ and more child centered pedagogies. Traditional schooling pedagogies typically consist of routine-based lessons that are teacher-directed, and focused on standardized stages and goals (Daniels and Shumow, 2003; Stipek and Byler, 2004). Langer (1997) argues that learning in a rote manner encourages mediocrity and deprives learners of maximizing their own potential. Child centred pedagogies, on the other hand, emphasize the importance of encouraging learning environments, direct experience, positive relationships, and socio-emotional and cognitive skills development (Langer, 1997; DfE, 2017). Child
centred approaches thus acknowledge children as active constructors of knowledge who develop and learn in different ways, and at different rates (NAEYC, 2009; DfE, 2017). Some commentators believe that a shift has occurred in children’s stress levels, which have negatively impacted children’s emotional wellbeing and abilities to learn in school (Mendelson et al., 2010; Rempel, 2012). As a response to this shift, there are commentators who argue that ‘traditional schooling’ is no longer equipped to serve the needs of children (Hyland, 2009; Rechtschaffen, 2014). Mindfulness pedagogies are, therefore, argued to provide child centered pedagogies that can support children’s emotional wellbeing development, and thus better serve children’s learning progression in school (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015).

Current cultural changes and challenges are believed to be increasingly placing demands on education (Flor Rotne et al., 2013). Increased fast paced lifestyles, advances in technology and technological devices, and information over flow can impede children’s learning and development (Pea et al., 2012; Duff and Roberts, 2016). Duff and Roberts (2016, P. 1) argue, “children are now growing up within a reality that is heavily induced and reliant on technological advances”. Furthermore, Geake (2009) argues that children subsequently progress into graduates and adults, are expected to demonstrate self-reliance and emotional resilience in the face of a socially fragmented, unstable and unpredictable world. Staples (2008, P.179) echoes this view by stating “we no longer live in a modern world whereby nation states can build and empower themselves on their own terms, using education to build nationhood. Increasingly, we inhabit a globalized world in which fewer and fewer places are culturally homogeneous”. Flor Rotne, et al. (2013), therefore, argue for education to recognize the current and future social and political demands on children, and thus take
action in employing opportunities for children to develop resilience and their emotional wellbeing in education. Flor Rotne, et al. (2013) suggest implementing mindfulness pedagogies in education can encourage profound positive cultural changes within schools, such as, changes from a culture of bias and judgment to a culture of acceptance and equality, and changes from a culture of emotional and behavioral restriction to a culture of intrapersonal and interpersonal communication.

Geake (2009) claims there is neuroscientific evidence that indicates strong neural connections between the emotional and cognitive systems of the human brain and nervous system. This evidence suggests that there is a bi-directional dependency, that is, aspects of emotion rely on cognition and aspects of cognition rely on emotion. This interconnection and interdependence of the emotional and cognitive systems suggest that emotions are fundamentally involved in learning at a neural level (Geake, 2009). As argued by Geake (2009), there are distinct connections amongst emotional and cognitive systems of the brain, and therefore a strong emotional dimension to learning. School-based mindfulness research has provided evidence that students have shown “enhanced ability to pay attention, improved concentration, and decreased anxiety” from practicing mindfulness (Beauchemin, Hutchins, and Patterson, 2008). While, Wiser, Jones, and Gwin (2010) claim that mindfulness pedagogies can lead to improved emotional and behavioral self-regulation, frustration tolerance, and self-control.

Although there can be a multitude of scientific evidence and marketing claims connected to the mobilization of mindfulness in education, Rechtschaffen (2014, P.5) warns, “mindfulness may be perceived as a wonder drug, magic pill, or an anaesthetic”. Rechtschaffen (2014) points out that mindfulness has to be diligently carried out in order to experience the
benefits. With increasing attention and hype that can often surround any developing phenomenon, unauthentic reproductions and the ‘McDonaldization of mindfulness’ are often unavoidable (Reb and Atkins, 2015). Finn and Petrilli (1998) explain that within the educational arena, ‘trends’ and ‘fads’ emerge. Education often attempts to address concerns by implementing programs that can supposedly rectify and reform concerns (Spector and Johnson, 2006; Ciarrochi, Forgas, and Mayer, 2006). These programs are typically quick fixes, trends, and fads that lack “regard to soundness or effectiveness” (Finn and Petrilli 1998, P.56). In relation the emerging trends, curriculums, and programs of mindfulness, this may lead to a reductionism and commodification of mindfulness (Hyland, 2015). Typically with educational innovations, Hyland (2015, P. 219) argues that the “foundational values of mindfulness strategies have been distorted and subverted in a number of instances in which ‘McMindfulness’ programmes have been implemented with a view to the exclusive pursuit of corporate objectives and commercial profit”. Furthermore, Purser (2019) argues that the mobilization of mindfulness in schools is part of a broader structure, which shapes ‘neoliberal subjects’ as entrepreneurial individuals who can self-regulate and thus internalize norms of authority.

If the educational benefits of mindfulness are to be fully realized, Hyland (2016, P.1) argues that mindfulness needs to be “organically connected to its spiritual roots”. Similarly, Hunter (2016) identifies mindfulness as a robust and irreplaceable phenomenon; however, it can also be represented and used as a commodity. Salzberg (2016) identifies mindfulness as ‘the methodologies of awareness’, and therefore suggests that the foundations in mobilizing and disseminating mindfulness are upheld within the ethics of mindfulness. In Salzberg’s (2016) view practitioners have a responsibility to authentically disseminate mindfulness. However, it is apparent that within the mindfulness community, there are concerns that some
mobilizations of mindfulness take away from the fundamental originality of mindfulness. For
the commentators who share these concerns, they believe that there are limits to
mindfulness’s malleability if it is to stay authentic and or effective.

By way of future developments for contemplative neuroscience-based programs in
education, Geake (2009) predicts that cognitive neuroscience will become more influenced
by educational concerns as a sub-discipline of educational neuroscience. Geake (2009)
foresees educational practice to become influenced by educational neuroscience, and
subsequently, educational neuroscience will become a recognizable research inter-discipline
in its own right. Due to growing complexities within education, Geake (2009) argues
cognitive neuroscience will be drawn on to improve educational concerns and positively
influence education. Fletcher (as cited in Geake, 2009, P.1) further conjectures “one day
there might be enough known about brain activity to show the process of learning, and
whether it was taking place efficiently”.

There are common themes present from the commentators who champion contemplative
neuroscience-based programs, specifically mindfulness, in education. Firstly, there is a
commonality of mindfulness as actively acting as a catalyst to provide a more conducive
learning experience for student. There are commentators who claim that pedagogical
interventions, such as mindfulness can prioritize and enhance children’s social, psychological
and physiological development (Rempel, 2012; Schonert-Reichl et al, 2015; Geake, 2009; and
Rechtschaffen, 2014). This study thus explores participants’ views and experiences of what
they consider as outcomes and positive changes in children as a result of mobilizing
mindfulness in their classrooms. Additionally, this study will ask participants whether and
how they measure or assess the progress and success of mindfulness. Secondly, the proponents argue that due to changes in society, they feel the children are growing up in a socially fragmented and unpredictable world. These commentators, therefore, argue that there is a need to cultivate positive classroom environments and enhance children’s wellbeing, for which they claim mindfulness is the tool to do so (Mendelson et al., 2010; Flor Rotne and Flor Rotne, 2013; and Rechtschaffen, 2014). This study will therefore explore participants underlying motivations as to why they mobilize mindfulness with children; thus, asking whether there have been any influences in their decisions to mobilize mindfulness with children, what they consider to be the benefits associated with mindfulness, how important is it to expose children to mindfulness, and why in education has mindfulness emerged? The commentators above are highlighting a connection between emotional wellbeing and learning, and thus believe that mindfulness can be a tool to develop the emotional wellbeing of children. There is growing evidence of neuroscientific research also recognizing emotional dimensions of learning that can greatly influence children’s learning processes. These claims and recommendations from the neuroscientific field can be seen to hold optimism and progression by way of advancing educational neuroscience.

Turning the focus now to commentators who challenge the emergence and mobilization of mindfulness in education. The following discussion will emphasize how detractors of contemplative neuroscience-based programs raise caution about the reliance of neuroscience research on mindfulness. Disparities within the neuroscience-education dialogue will also be highlighted, in addition into what detractors view the mobilization of mindfulness in education represents.
There are several commentators who raise caution about the authenticity of neuroscience research on mindfulness. It seems the excitement and growing popularity surrounding mindfulness in education can attract companies that exploit early neuroscience research, which can thus result in neuroscience research being overstated and invalid. Goswami (2006, P. 406) explains “there is a hunger in schools for information about the brain. Teachers are keen to reap the benefits of the 'century of neuroscience' for their students”. Willis (2015) further explains that valid neuroscience research can be a useful resource for guiding interventions in education, however not all ‘neurocontent’ is created equal. Willis (2015) thus, warns of companies that capitalize on educational programs, which are falsely based on neuroscience. This can be referred to as ‘edu-cash-in’ (Willis, 2015). The ‘neuro-hype’ is argued to derive from the seductive allure of neuroscientific explanations in order to solidify the credibility of research on the brain and thus inform neuroscience-based programs (McCabe and Castle, 2008). Willis (2015) warns of ‘neuromyths’, that is, content purportedly based on neuroscience that, while sounding plausible, can be invalid. Geake (2009) explains “many popular educational programs claim to be ‘brain-based’, despite pleas from the neuroscience community that these ‘neuromyths’ do not have a basis in scientific evidence”. Similarly, Sanchez-Allred and Choudhury (2016) explain that there is substantial ‘neuro-hype’, which can encourage, however, also distort mindfulness in education programs. Sanchez-Allred and Choudhury (2016, P.117) point out that there is a body of mindfulness research that proposes noteworthy and positive changes in the brain, however “the science is not yet in a position to adequately inform interventions”. It is evident there are multiple commentators who raise caution and warn that although there is a demand from the public for neuroscientific evidence on the applications of mindfulness programs, knowledge translation can have deleterious consequences (Bruer, 1997; Knudsen, 2004).
Goswami (2006, P.406) suggests that there is “a gulf between current science and direct classroom applications” and neuroscientists would likely argue that bridging this gulf is premature. In Goswami’s (2006) view, the disparities between such dialogues can be ambiguous and disjointed. Goswami (2006) therefore, recommends the use of dual role communicators whereby the interpretation, mediation of the bridging of neuroscience and education can be facilitated. Goswami (2006) proposes, “A network of such communicators would serve us all, and our children, and would prevent society from pouring precious educational resources into scientifically spurious applications”. Similarly, Eklöf (2017) argues science communication is a continuum and the boundary between science and popularized science is the outcome of human negotiations. Eklöf (2017) therefore, analyses a form of ‘personalized science communication’ that seeks to build bridges between scientific findings and their assumed application, in the context of what she calls “neurodharma self-help” (Eklöf, 2017).

The SEAL curriculum, for example, is explicitly driven by literature from popular neuroscience. Gagen (2013) argues that the SEAL curriculum reflects the ‘somaticisation’ of education, and thus signifies a change from previous educational interventions. Gagen (2013, P. 146) explains that the potential for neuroscience to feed into education policy is expected as “neuroscience enlivens the capabilities of education to equip the nation’s young people with the skills to manage their emotional lives and become responsible citizens. In Gagen’s view, education has become dominated by the ‘explicit prioritization of emotions’ via neurology. Gagen (2013) explains the neurological techniques are being marshaled in the pursuit of emotional control in education. Indeed, part of the SEAL curriculum offers a
lesson on neurological control. This lesson involves developing an awareness of 
neurochemical states in order to manage moods and essentially take responsibility for 
neurochemical states. Furthermore, the SEAL curriculum purports some emotions in a 
negative light. For instance, anger is portrayed as a dangerous and explosive emotion. The 
SEAL curriculum, therefore, offers techniques to manage anger, and thus eradicate anger a 
soon as the signs of emotions of anger arise. Barker et al., (2008) explain that mindfulness is 
useful for transmitting anger into ‘positive’ emotions. Solomon (2007), however, argues that 
there are no inherently positive or negative emotions. Hence, anger does not always fall into 
the negative classification. Solomon (2007) points out that the emotions, anger, guilt, and 
despair, experienced by all humans, regardless of age or stage of development are just part of 
life.

There are detractors who have different views as to what the mobilization of mindfulness 
can represent. For example, Gagen (2013) argues that mindfulness in education represents a 
new emotional paradigm. She explains that education has shifted to valuing the management 
of health in neurochemical terms; a new emotional paradigm has shifted the way modern 
subjectivity is psychologized (Gagen, 2013). She further argues that this shift in education 
represents a ‘neural turn’ and therefore, results in the ‘emotionalization of education’ as 
emotional skills have become the new criteria by which young people are deemed to be 
succeeding or failing as citizens. She explains that students are now judged on their aptitudes 
for managing their emotions and neurological impulses so they can respond in more 
measured and productive ways, and thus navigate an emotionally charged world with insight, 
neurological composure and self-regulation (Gagen, 2013).
There are also detractors who argue that the trend of mobilizing mindfulness in education represents distinct changes and shifts within education systems. There are commentators who claim that mindfulness and mindfulness-related pedagogies represent a ‘therapeutic turn’ in education (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009; Thompson, 2007; Furedi, 2004). Ecclestone (2004) argues, a therapeutic ethos in education promotes marginalization and vulnerability, and thus demoralizes the human agency of students. Hayes (2008) advances a similar view to the rise of therapeutic education. Hayes (2008, as cited in Hyland, 2009) proposes that the therapy ethos emerging within educational policy, and therefore society, reflects the perception of governments. In Hayes’ view, he claims the mobilization of a program such as mindfulness into education represents a result of governments’ limited expectations of students’ resiliency, autonomy. Furthermore, Thompson (2007) warns that a therapeutic ethos steers away from core values upheld in education. Moreover, Thompson (2007) provides a socioeconomic view; she suggests a therapeutic ethos alludes to the remedying of personal and social concerns and subsequently detours from the fundamental causes of inequality. In Thompson’s (2007) view, a therapeutic ethos in education seeks to remedy personal and social development, and therefore has a deficit in recognizing or remedying greater socioeconomic concerns of inequality.

Furedi (2004) offers a view associated with a societal shift. Furedi (2004) argues society is manifesting a ‘victim culture’. As a result of economic shifts, instability, and risk, Furedi (2004) claims society has drawn on the application of emotional wellbeing trends such as mindfulness to serve as an anesthetic to populations. Additionally, a further detractor of mindfulness in education argues that mindfulness represents a medicalized pedagogy (Reveley, 2016). He suggests that mindfulness is a correctional exercise that is mobilized in
order to prevent the onset of psychopathology (Reveley, 2016). Reveley (2016), therefore, advances the idea that the mobilization of mindfulness emphasizes a medicalizing force that exposes young people to medical-therapeutic subjection, and he therefore, considers this exposure to be inappropriate. The assertion that young people must learn to self-manage their emotions, in Reveley’s (2016) view, is to assume that they are vulnerable and at risk if they do not. There are commentators who have similar views, explaining “schools act as key sites in the production of psychopathology, acting as sites of medicalization” (Hardwood and Allan, 2014, P. 159; Barker and Mills, 2018, P. 639). Baker and Mills (2018) raise caution as to what they argue is a ‘cultural shift’ in education. Baker and Mills (2018, P.639) claim that the mounting dissemination of “psychiatrization, medicalization, and psychologization of children and childhood signifies a cultural shift that has profound effects on teachers and student subjectivity, and on institutional and professional practices”.

Similarly, Sanchez-Allred and Choudhury (2016) also argue that mindfulness represents a psychological and emotional intervention. They, however, raise concerns as the implicit assumptions, and goals of mindfulness. Sanchez-Allred and Choudhury (2016) claim that mindfulness is being implemented and promoted in schools across North America and the United Kingdom with educational goals, however, there are underlying goals that are not necessarily overt. Mindfulness is used to shape a certain ‘type’ of human, a higher quality human that is equipped with high levels of emotional intelligence, resiliency, and is well regulated (Sanchez-Allred and Choudhury, 2016). Sanchez-Allred and Choudhury (2016) therefore, argue that the implicit assumption of shaping and molding a particular higher quality human does not align to the promotion of mindfulness as an objective and scientific program.
Furthermore, Sanchez-Allred and Choudhury (2016, P.127) claim that pedagogical interventions that prioritize the emotional wellbeing of children, including mindfulness, are being mobilized on “the idea of the brain as an ethical substance”. Neuroscience research and developments suggest the brain is plastic and malleable, and can, therefore, re-wire itself (Schultz, 1998, P.30). Sanchez-Allred and Choudhury (2016, P.127) argue that this idea makes “the brain a fruitful site for intervention and manipulation”, and essentially drives educators and children in feeling responsible for giving shape and form to the brain through practices such as mindfulness. Gagen (2013) raises caution about the encroachment of neuroscientific research and developments entering the spaces of childhood, she warns that a consideration for ethical implications is needed.

**SECTION SUMMARY**

This second section of the literature review chapter has discussed the emergence and implementation of contemplative neuroscience-based programs in education, specifically mindfulness. From this discussion, it is clear that contemplative neuroscience is an emerging multidisciplinary field; contemplative neuroscience-based programs in education can be considered an interchangeable umbrella term for programs such as mindfulness, and therefore multiple frames of contemplative education can be found. It is evident that there are disparate reasons for the mobilization of contemplative neuroscience-based programs in education. As expressed above, commentators who champion a greater concentration of emotional wellbeing programs and pedagogies in education offer justifiable arguments with concerns for supporting the social, psychological and physiological development of children. It is apparent that there are commentators who specifically support mindfulness programs
and pedagogies as they believe that mindfulness can enhance children’s learning processes, and education as a whole. Additionally, the proponents of mindfulness in education claim that the neuroscientific empirical research strengthens the case for mindfulness programs and pedagogies in education. On the other hand, there are some commentators that present mindfulness as a vehicle for inappropriate medicalized (Reveley, 2016; Barker and Mills, 2018) or therapy-related programs (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009; Thompson, 2007) oriented toward social and emotional control. As they draw connections between mindfulness and what they consider to be problematic or illegitimate wider programmes of social influence, these commentators, however, tend to overlook the question of what might attract teachers and learners and others to mindfulness in the first place and what might keep them engaged over time.

There is also existing literature that suggests mindfulness in practice is available in a debased form in some programmes. These commentators thus seek to mark out and accord value to a core of authentic mindfulness practices and commitments (Rechtschaffen, 2014; Hyland, 2015; Hunter, 2016; Salzberg, 2016). The metaphor of McDonaldisation (Reb and Atkins, 2015) and ‘McMindfulness’ (Purser, 2019) has been used to critique mindfulness in the context of the growing international currency of mindfulness as a concept and the growing accessibility of practices. McDonaldisation is term coined by the sociologist Ritzer (1993) to describe a tendency in contemporary society to standardise skilled practice, so as to render outcomes more predictable in the pursuit of efficiency gains. The argument has been made that mindfulness practices can be and are subject to McDonaldisation with a resulting debasement of the practices on offer as the use of mindfulness practices becomes more widespread and more commercially driven. Further, Purser (2019, P.15) argues, “the
contemporary mindfulness fad is the entrepreneurial equal of McDonald’s”. Purser (2019) further argues that mindfulness has been branded as secular, which has resulted in the overselling, commodification, and privatization of the ‘mindfulness product’ that ultimately aligns to neoliberal priorities. For those studying mindfulness as an educational phenomenon, this strategy of drawing distinctions between authentic and inauthentic versions of mindfulness practice carries the risk that once we have categorised mindfulness practices and programmes into those that we deem authentic and those we deem McDonaldized we will, perhaps falsely, believe that we have exhaustively described and characterised all the salient diversity of use and meaning that growing cultures of mindfulness have. It may be that teachers who mobilize mindfulness and the learners involved do not share this concern to protect mindfulness’ authenticity from debasement whilst still maintaining their contextually appropriate preferences and values.

While this study recognises that mindfulness in education is a relatively new phenomenon, and multiple frames of contemplative education can be found, this study however, differentiates itself methodologically and strategically from the positions expressed in this section. It may be that mindfulness is ultimately best understood as a program of potentially inappropriate social influence. However, unless mindfulness offers something of value to the teachers and learners who have some degree of discretion as to whether they engage with it, it is difficult to determine how it could deliver. Existing literature does not establish what this value is. Specifically, existing literature does not establish whether this value is identical for all or whether it varies in different circumstances. Concerning the difference that some wish to mark between authentic and debased mindfulness, this study asks whether that is the only, or the most insightful way of framing the diversity of practice that shares the term 'mindfulness'. Wilson (2014), Weare (2012), Mills (2018) and Kucinskas (2019) have
examined the issue of diversity in practices of mindfulness but existing literature is not informative about how a diversity in how mindfulness is framed in primary educational settings.

It is for these reasons and in order to address these gaps in current literature that this study is designed to investigate diversity in mindfulness concepts and practices amongst teachers and children in clinical and educational settings. Most noteworthy, the primary school educational settings of the participants, in addition to the age bracket of the child participants contribute to the gaps in existing research (Wilson, 2014; Greenberg and Harris, 2012; Weare, 2012). Mills (2018, P. 651) suggests that further analysis of different mobilizations of psychotherapeutic-based interventions in schools “globally is important because it signifies a cultural and educational shift that has profound effects on teachers and students, and on that we understand as being the purpose of education”. Furthermore, the participants in this study are located in different locations across the United States (San Diego, New York, San Francisco, Boston, and Texas). There is existing research in the geographical sciences that indicates that there are distinct regions within the United States that can be defined in terms of their political, economic, social, and health characteristics (Elazar, 1994; Heppen, 2003; Hero, 1998; Florida, 2002; Putnam; 2000; Rentfrow et al., 2013). Typically, the major cities on the East coast (New York, Boston, and Texas is often included) are renowned for having fast paced, uninhibited, and competitive cultures, whereas the West coast (San Diego and San Francisco) is typically renowned for having a relaxed, innovative, health conscious and open-minded culture (Rentfrow et al., 2013). These characterizations of regions are likely to be the underlying influences for the individual-level behaviors that eventually get expressed in terms of macro level social and economic indicators, which are thus reflected within the educational cultures (Rentfrow et al., 2013). It
is, therefore, anticipated that cross-cultural data from this study will enrich and further inform the questions posed in this study (Davidov, et al., 2018). This thesis, thus aims to uncover how and why mindfulness is mobilized, while considering its position within education. In doing so the aim of this study is to explore diversity rather than to determine the 'good' and the 'bad' mindfulness in education. This study, therefore, seeks to gain an understanding of whether and how teachers and learners mark differences of quality in their own everyday contexts.

2.3.1 Mindfulness in education programs

Although this study seeks to explore how mindfulness is mobilized, and how it is specifically mobilized to support the emotional wellbeing of children, this study, however, does not explicitly focus on one mindfulness approach, curriculum or organization that mobilizes mindfulness in education. This study does not explicitly explore the operation and implementation of these curriculums and organisations, which are reviewed below. This study focuses more broadly on understanding why mindfulness is mobilized in education, what is involved in the mobilization of mindfulness, what approaches, resources and environments are used in the mobilization of mindfulness, what influences and motivates the individuals who mobilize mindfulness with children, and what are the outcomes and value in the mobilization of mindfulness with children. In order to better understand what mindfulness programs are, the programs and organizations highlighted below, will offer context as to what mindfulness pedagogies can entail, and what objectives and outcomes the mindfulness organizations can include. Mindfulness has increasingly entered mainstream education, to the extent that some commentators claim mindfulness-based education has become an institution, which generates curricula, courses, guides, and workshops in the
United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom (Sanchez-Alred and Choudhury, 2016).

The participants involved in this study do not teach any standard or manualised mindfulness ‘curriculum’. It is however important to review some of the established and prominent mindfulness curriculums as the participants in this study have most likely in part been influenced by these curriculums or founders. This sub-section will therefore provide a snapshot of some of the more prominent mindfulness programs and organizations in the United Kingdom and the United States.

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<th>NAME</th>
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<td>The Mindfulness in Schools Project (MiSP)</td>
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<td>MindUp</td>
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<td>Mindful Education’</td>
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<td>Learning to BREATHE</td>
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<td>Mindful Schools’</td>
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The Mindfulness in Schools Project (MiSP) is a registered charity that was developed by teachers in the United Kingdom. It offers mindfulness curriculums that are claimed to compliment the National Curriculum subjects. For example, the Paws B curriculum is tailored for primary school students. The overarching goals of MiSP curriculums are to positively contribute to students’ mental health and wellbeing (mindfulnessinschools.org).

‘MindUp’ was initially mobilized within the United States, however it has now reached the United Kingdom, amongst several other locations. MindUp is promoted as a solution to
develop and restore the psychosocial, psychological, and emotional wellbeing health of children (MindUp, 2016). This mindfulness-based program drives skill sets in education with the intent to shift children’s perspectives (MindUp, 2016). There are four components that structure the program: neuroscience, mindful awareness, positive psychology, and social-emotional learning. They are promoted to activate empathy, compassion, optimism and gratitude in children. Grounded in the science of neuroplasticity, and the foundations of mindfulness, this program is disseminated as a catalyst for children to flourish and navigate the world with resilience (MindUp, 2016).

‘Mindful Education’ is an educational resource in the United States. This resource offers mindfulness-based curriculums, programs and training for school communities. The facilitation and assimilation of Mindful Education concentrates initially on the development of introspection and compassion for teachers. Through the integration of mindfulness, Mindful Education proposes a holistic revolution for education is underway.

Learning to BREATHE is another mindfulness-based curriculum from the United States that leverages the development of social and emotional skills. Through the fundamental principles of mindfulness, predominantly attention and awareness, paramount to this curriculum is the strengthening of emotional regulation. The skills encompassed within emotional regulation are considered to correlate with academic attainment.

‘Mindful Schools’, also based in the United States, is a non-profit training organization mobilized nationally and internationally to counteract toxic stress present within school communities. Based on neuroscience research, mindfulness and heartfulness are the key
methods employed with the objectives to manage stress, regulate emotions and facilitate interpersonal skills, and enable positive changes within the brain.

Having summarized some of the more prominent mindfulness programs and organizations in the United Kingdom and the United States, there are some distinct similarities across these programs. In particular, how these programs are promoted, in addition to their objectives suggest multiple commonalities. Four themes are apparent among all or some of the mindfulness programs highlighted in this section: (1) The programs are centered around the promotion of wellbeing; (2) ‘Education shifts’ or changes appear to be part of or a result of the mindfulness programs; (3) There is an emphasis for promoting neuroscience and/ or neuroscience research as part of the programs; and (4) the adaptable nature of the mindfulness in education programs.

There is a common theme of the promotion of wellbeing among all the mindfulness programs highlighted in this section. There is a sense of these programs offering curriculums and resources that claim to remediate wellbeing and thus offer preventative and restorative measures for children’s, and occasionally, teacher’s emotional wellbeing and emotional development.

The MiSP aims to enhance the wellbeing and resiliency of both children and staff (Mindfulness in schools, 2016). The objective of this organization is to “advance the wellbeing and resilience of young people and those who work with them by promoting the practice of mindfulness primarily, but not exclusively, in educational settings (MiSP, 2018). This structured curriculum aims to facilitate somatic and psychosocial development in students through contemplative practices of introspection. It seems encouraging the
development of student’s wellbeing is at the centre of this program. The MiSP (2016) states that their mindfulness programs can help students to be resilient and resourceful when life is challenging. In a recent impact report, MiSP expresses concerns surrounding the mental health of children. In the report MiSP highlights that “this year we have seen stories continue to emerge about the crisis in mental health services and the need to promote well-being and resilience in our children. Pressures on our schools and their staff have never been greater” (MiSP, 2018). The curriculum offered by MiSP, is therefore promoted as a resource to empower children with key qualities, skills, and abilities, and therefore empower the next generation to manage difficulty and flourish (MiSP, 2016)

Similarly, MindUP is promoted as a solution to develop and restore the psychosocial, psychological and emotional wellbeing health of children. This program claims to be based on neuroscience, mindful awareness, positive psychology, and social-emotional learning. MindUP provides a teaching framework that is structured by skill sets in order to encourage the development of children’s empathy, compassion, optimism, and gratitude. At the core of the MindUP is the objective to equip children with resiliency in order to flourish and navigate within the world (MindUp, 2016).

Mindful Education also delivers a program that promotes wellbeing and emotional resiliency, however, Mindful Education claims to contribute to a ‘new paradigm’ in education (Mindful Education, 2016). Mindful Education, therefore, offers a curriculum that targets the development of altruistic related skills and abilities including gratitude, impulse control, compassion, and communication skills (Mindful Education, 2016). This program is promoted to augment altruistic behaviors, so that educational environments can be
cultivated to “nourish the inner lives of students and teachers” (Mindful Education, 2016). The key objectives of this curriculum are to thus “build healthy, happy and responsible lives” and effectively “build a more compassionate integrated society” (Rechtschaffen, 2014, P.xxxi).

Learning to BREATHE is mobilized with an objective to facilitate “universal prevention to cultivate wholesome emotions including gratitude and compassion, and expand the repertoire of stress management skills” (learning2breathe, 2016). Through the mindfulness-based curriculum, emotional regulation seems to be at the forefront of the mobilization of this curriculum. Learning to BREATHE claims that emotional regulation is considered “critical to mental health, academic achievement, and relationships” (learning2breathe, 2016). Similarly, Broderick (2013) argues that when feelings are not managed, cognitive processing and functioning can be impaired. Learning to BREATHE thus understands emotional dysregulation as central to emotional concerns and maladjustment; therefore, Learning to BREATHE mobilizes an educational curriculum for students to develop skills in order to address emotional concerns and develop emotional regulation (learning2breathe, 2016).

Mindful Schools, however, promotes wellbeing and emotional resiliency with an emphasis and concern surrounding toxic stress as a way of promoting their program. Mindful Schools argue that mindfulness and ‘heartfulness’ encourage positive developments in cognition, social and emotional skills and wellbeing, however, a key objective in mobilizing their programs are to counteract toxic stress within school communities. Mindful Schools claims that within the current education system, “healthy stress is frequently displaced by toxic stress” (mindfulschools.org, 2016). This program argues that the roots of toxic stress
originate from the nervous system; therefore, mindfulness programs can target the nervous system and “transform habitual responses” (mindfulschools.org, 2016). Mindful Schools explicitly identify mindfulness as ‘a solution’ (mindfulschools.org, 2016).

It is evident that mindfulness programs offer curriculums and resources that aim to promote the development of children’s (and teacher’s) wellbeing. The programs claim to do so through enacting the development of several skills and abilities including compassion, gratitude, empathy, emotional regulation, and communication skills. While this study recognizes that participants may be influenced by the mindfulness programs and resources they access, in addition to the wider mindfulness communities and social influences they may be exposed to, this study seeks to uncover participants’ views on whether and how mindfulness can support children. This study differentiates itself from the five mindfulness programs highlighted in this sub-section, and the positions and objectives of these programs. It may be that these programs offer practical and appealing programs for teachers and learners. It may also be that these programs are offered by private organizations that are taking advantage of the opportunity to profit from the surge of interest in mindfulness.

However, unless teachers and learners are able to see some form of value or positive differences and outcomes as a result of mindfulness, or at least some aspects, it is not clear how mindfulness can attract and continue to engage users who have some discretion over their involvement in it. In response, this study aims to explore how participants consider mindfulness can support the emotional wellbeing of children, in addition to how they gauge the positive outcomes in children.

The second prominent theme among the mindfulness programs is the mention of ‘educational shifts’. There are three mindfulness in education programs in particular that
speak of some form of educational shift or change as part of their program, or their program contributes to an educational shift or change.

The MindUP curriculum claims that through the development of empathy, compassion, optimism, and gratitude, the curriculum aims to shift children’s perspectives (MindUp.org). Additionally, Mindful Education claims to change schools from the inside out through the application of ‘a new educational paradigm’ (Rechtschaffen, 2016). Mindful Education is promoted as a contributor within “the mindful education movement” and this movement proposes to “support the next generation to create a more peaceful and conscious world” (Rechtschaffen, 2016). Mindful Schools also promote their programs as contributing to a transformative shift. Through mindfulness and ‘heartfulness’ methods, Mindful Schools claim to “transform schools from the inside out” (mindful schools, 2016). Mindful Schools, thus describes the mobilization of their programs and curriculum as ‘a journey’, which is collectively reinforced within school communities (mindfulschools.org, 2016).

The third common theme across some of the mindfulness programs was the emphasis of promoting neuroscience as part of the programs. It seems Mindfulness in Schools, MindUp, and Mindful Schools rely on neuroscience to promote their programs and subsequently inform their curriculums.

For example, MiSP includes scientific groundings and direct neuroscience teachings of brain functioning and processing in the curriculum. MiSP seems to emphasize the scientific knowledge base surrounding mindfulness, including the science of neuroplasticity, metacognition and the neural process and factors that are believed to be part of mindfulness.
MindUP also references neuroscience, however, MindUP makes explicit reference to drawing on neuroscience, specifically neuroplasticity to facilitate the mobilization of the curriculum. It seems MindUP relies on neuroscience to inform the curriculum as the MindUP curriculum is promoted to educate children in the functioning and processing of their brains, in addition to how their brain influences emotions, behavior, and cognition (MindUp, 2016). This curriculum claims to be “science-centric and evidence-based” and can “empower children and fundamentally change their lives” (MindUp, 2016).

The programs and curriculums offered by Mindful Schools claim to be based on neuroscience research. Mindful Schools (2016) claim “mindfulness changes the brain”. Mindful Schools (2016) explain that through mindfulness, the amygdala, hippocampus and prefrontal cortex can address psychological challenges, and thus accelerate the capacity of human flourishing. Furthermore, Mindful Schools has reported to engage significantly in empirical investigations concerning mindfulness in education. Mindful Schools claims to have conducted “one of the largest randomized-controlled studies to date on mindfulness and children, which investigated the effects of the Mindful Schools curriculum” (mindfulschools, 2016).

Broderick (2013) believes that neuroscience evidence can further inform the “holistic message about cognitive, social, and emotional development”. Broderick (2013) claims that the advances in neuroscience have provided evidence that demonstrates the prefrontal cortex, identified as the region of higher-level cognition in the brain, can contribute to emotional processing and functioning. Research conducted by the National Scientific
Council on the Developing Child (2004) provides evidence that demonstrates the
development of emotion and cognition is interrelated; that is, the regulation of emotion is
contingent and highly interactive with executive functioning. They claim that “emotions
support executive functions when they are well regulated” however, when dysregulated,
emotions can also inhibit executive functions. Similarly, Geake (2009, P.114) explains there is
neuroscientific evidence that indicates there are “strong neural connections between the
emotional and cognitive systems”. Such evidence suggests that there is a bi-directional
dependency; aspects of emotion are reported to rely on cognition and aspects of cognition
rely on emotion. Geake (2009, P.115) thus claims that the interconnection and
interdependence of the emotional and cognitive systems emotions are “crucially involved in
learning”. Similarly, Broderick (2013) argues that the “operation of the brain is more like an
orchestra than a number of soloists”. These developments in neuroscientific evidence are
claimed to be “paradigm-shifting evidence” that effectively reconsiders the interplay between
cognition and emotion (Broderick, 2013; Siegel, 2010). It can, therefore, be argued that
academic learning is contingent on social and emotional skills, however, this evidence also
suggests that cognition and emotion function inextricably connected (Siegel, 2010).

This study recognizes that mindfulness programs may be promoted in order to appear
enticing for teachers and learners, and ultimately offering a promising and innovative
educational intervention (Choudhury and Moses, 2016), which some argue has links to
cutting edge neuroscience research (Geake, 2009; Fletcher, 2009; MindUp, 2016). Rather
than determining if the form of mindfulness that is mobilized by participants is accredited or
approved by neuroscience research, this study is designed to explore what has triggered
participant’s interest and motivations for accessing and integrating mindfulness into their
practices, in addition to what advances and benefits they claim to receive from mobilizing mindfulness. This study will also gain an understanding of the mindfulness approaches and pedagogies that are mobilized, and thus explore how the contexts in which mindfulness is mobilized can shape and influence its delivery. These insights will also shed light on how existing practices and curriculums, which may be long-standing and conventional, are reconciled with mindfulness.

The fourth similarity among all the mindfulness programs was the emphasis placed on the adaptability of the programs. There were claims made among all the programs as to how easily the mindfulness curriculums could assimilate into teaching and thus target all development stages of students.

For instance, MiSP claims that the curriculum is mobilized in such a manner that is tailored to all the development stages of students; the curriculum can, therefore, assimilate within national curriculum subjects (mindfulnessinschools.org). Due to the nature of ‘mindfulness’, MiSP claims that mindfulness can be taught at any age (mindfulnessinschools.org). Rechtschaffen (2014) however points out that in order for students to fully engage and benefit from mindfulness lessons, the lessons should be within the range of students age levels, students’ current emotional states, in addition to the classroom environmental dynamics. Mindful Education also claims to mobilize curriculums that can be adjusted to all ages and levels states. While, Learning to BREATHE references providing universal, and developmentally appropriate mindfulness instruction that fosters mental health and wellness (learning2breathe, 2016). Learning to BREATHE is promoted as a resource that can be
integrated into a multitude of educational contexts and levels; however, the intended outcomes to support the development of wellbeing are the key priority. Bierman and Motamedi (2015) argue that social and emotional learning begins in early childhood, however, higher education settings also have the potential to integrate social and emotional learning.

The majority of the programs highlighted in this section also claim to be mobilized internationally. MiSP reports to have implemented programs internationally and translated into ten languages (mindfulnessinschools.org). MindUP also claimed to be mobilized internationally. It is reported that MindUP has been mobilized in the “United States, Canada, UK, Serbia, Mexico, Hong Kong, Australia and New Zealand” (MindUp, 2016). Similarly, Mindful Schools claims to have trained educators from all fifty states in the United States, in addition to and “over one hundred countries, impacting more than 750,000 children and adolescents worldwide” (Mindful schools, 2016).

It is evident the mindfulness programs are promoted as accessible for all stages and ages, and thus compliment previous existing curriculums. It is also apparent that these programs have reached educational settings internationally. In response to the malleability, assimilation, and hybridity of mindfulness with children described above, this study asks adult participants:

When you first implemented the practice in your classroom, has the practice changed at all? How do you determine the age appropriateness of the mindfulness practice you implement in your classroom? What is the appropriate age to start practicing Mindfulness? In your opinion, does the context in which mindfulness is offered alter the quality or impact? While, child participants are asked questions including: What is your favourite kind of Mindfulness exercise? Do you think other people should try Mindfulness? The aim of these questions is
to address the overarching research question (see overarching research question and sub question 1) in order to gain an understanding of the diversity in which mindfulness can be mobilized, and how those different contexts can shape or influence how mindfulness is delivered. For instance, how the settings, teaching approaches, resources, and children’s reactions can impact or alter the delivery of mindfulness. Whilst exploring factors that may influence or impede the mobilization and delivery of mindfulness with children, this study will also gain an understanding of what mindfulness pedagogies can entail, how these pedagogies are constructed, how the goals and objectives of the pedagogies are realized and achieved, and how mindfulness pedagogies are reconciled within the existing settings, practices and curriculums. Previous studies have examined the effects of mindfulness programs in education and offered some promising and appealing findings in terms of positive changes in children’s behavior and wellbeing (Rempel 2012; Weare, 2012; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015; and Rechtschaffen, 2014). Existing literature (Kaiser-Greenland, 2010; Rechtschaffen, 2014) also focuses on how mindfulness can be mobilized in education and recognizes a multitude of benefits. These studies and existing literature do not, however, offer a lens that explores the diversity in how ‘mindfulness’ can be delivered with children. Rather than focusing on structures and boundaries of mindfulness pedagogies that are appropriate or inappropriate, or promoting or ruling out different versions of mindfulness in education, this study explores how mindfulness can be mobilized in education. In doing so, this study aims to gain an understanding of the factors that are at play in order to mobilize mindfulness with children. For instance, participants’ approaches, influences, priorities, values, goals, and aspirations they associate with mindfulness.
2.4 Neuroscience and Neuroplasticity

Neuroscience and the concept of neuroplasticity are somewhat unavoidable when reviewing and synthesizing the existing social science research on mindfulness. As discussed in the previous section, ‘Contemplative neuroscience-based programs in education’, and highlighted in the sub section ‘Mindfulness in education programs’, neuroscience is typically part of the mindfulness package when it is mobilized in education. Whether or not neuroscience, or neuroscience research is made explicit in the mobilization of mindfulness, more often than not neuroscientific claims and narratives are attached to mindfulness programs. However, the relationship between mindfulness and neuroscience is, arguably, conflicting. Some commentators claim that neuroscientific research strengthens the case for mindfulness programs and pedagogies in education (Rechtschaffen, 2014; Geake, 2009; Fletcher, 2009). While, other commentators raise concerns as to the authenticity of neuroscience research on mindfulness (Willis, 2015; Sanchez-Allred and Choudhury, 2016). Although this study does not claim to conduct any neuroscientific research or claim to explore mindfulness through a neuroscientific lens, neuroscience arises as a prevalent concept when reviewing the existing social science research on mindfulness. It is, therefore, important to chart some of neuroscience contexts and developments that are associated with mindfulness in education. This section will therefore shed light on key neuroscientific studies that have investigated the implications of mindfulness on the brain, education, and learning. A consideration of neuroscience, neuroplasticity, and associations to mindfulness in education will also be explored. This section will also consider the interconnectedness of neuroscience and neuroplasticity on mindfulness in education. In doing so, the tensions arising out of the associated neuroscientific domains of mindfulness will be brought to light.
A study led by Farb (2007), offers a neuroscientific perspective on how individuals interact with experiences. Farb (2007) defines two network circuits within the brain that are activated when interacting with experiences; the ‘default narrative network’ and ‘direct experience network’. During routine events or experiences, the default narrative network is activated and narrative circuitry occurs. Planning, strategizing, ruminating about past and future events, and personal interpretive accounts are activated during this state; a state that holds similarities to what Langer and Pirson (2015) consider being ‘mindless’. The second network offered from the Farb (2007) study, the direct experience network, involves a thought process, which curbs the rumination of past and future events. During this state, the senses are stimulated and captivate experiences in real time. Seeing as new information is directly absorbed, further areas of the brain are activated: the insula and anterior cingulate cortex. As a result of this activation, a higher state of awareness is therefore reached, a state, which researchers and scholars define as mindfulness (Langer and Pirson, 2015).

Empirical neuroscience research and specifically cognitive neuroscience research is novel, however studies similar to the Farb (2007) are shedding light into territories where educational implications arise. This can result in shifts for current discourses of educational perspectives, methods, and paradigms. Geake and Cooper (2003) perceive the cognitive neuroscience insights as an additional factor in understanding educational discourse. Geake and Cooper (2003, P.8) claim that cognitive neuroscientific insights have the ability to move “towards the creation of a holistic bio-psycho-social framework, and not a regression to an earlier bio-deterministic position”. Arguably, cognitive psychology has limited models of brain functioning, which can now be considered obsolete, specifically within education, due to the top-down approach and ‘black box’ models (Davidson, 2016; Geake and Cooper,
2003). Educational perspectives, methods, and paradigms are and have been modelled on cognitive psychology consistently. It is clear there is a strong call from some commentators for a shift in a greater focus on holistic bio-psycho-social framework in education.

Neuroscience research is argued as clear driving force behind programs, akin to mindfulness (Gagen, 2013) New developments in neuroscience are showing that emotions is fundamentally linked with how the brain processes information, and bringing about a new recognition of the central role emotion plays in the process of learning (DfES, 2007). Developments in neuroscience have increasingly received recognition in societies as it is believed “willful efforts to improve the brain will naturally lead to superior intelligence, improved [life performance], and greater emotional stability” and subsequently, desired self-optimization (Thornton, 2011, P.4).

As discussed in the previous section, contemplative neuroscience-based programs in education, specifically mindfulness, claim to enrich learning through supporting children’s social, psychological, physiological, and emotional wellbeing (Rempel, 2012; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015; Geake, 2009; and Rechtschaffen, 2014). Through a neuroscientific lens, such programs claim to solve learning dysfunctions, behavioral dysfunctions, and to be conducive in stimulating neuroplasticity; that is, “the brains’ natural ability to form new connections” (Schultz, 1998, P.30). Developments in neuroplasticity claim to offer evidence of the brains’ ability to ‘change’ and ‘re-wire’ itself. Neuroplasticity, also known as adaptive plasticity, can be further defined as “the capacity of the brain to change at a neurophysiological level in response to changes in the cognitive environment” (Geake and Cooper, 2003, P.14). It can
be argued that the concept of neuroplasticity has correlations, implications, and aligns with educational concerns associated with children’s learning processes.

The ‘state of mind’ of a child is also considered to implicate the learning process and facilitation of neuroplasticity. Siegel (as cited in Olson, 2014, P.133) identifies the state of mind as “an overall way in which mental processes, such as emotions, thought patterns, memories, and behavioral planning, are brought together into a functional and cohesive whole”. The state of mind thus creates a pattern of circuitry pathways, which can signal the brain in consistently activating such patterns and pathways. In relation to a child’s learning process; if positive thought processes, affirmative emotional coherence, somatic interconnectedness, and conducive classroom culture are consistently present, the state of mind of a child, or what some may identify as the process of neuroplasticity, can enable an enriched learning experience and journey.

It is apparent there are commentators who view neuroplasticity as an essential contributor to learning and educational advancement. Stein (1997, P. 122) believes neuroplasticity is “one of the most extraordinary discoveries of the twentieth century”. While Geake (2009, P.6) expresses confidence in neuroscientific discoveries as he urges “the education profession needs to extend dialogue with neuroscientists to enable educational applications to be realized”. Within this vein, Bruer (1997, P.14) proposes “the mission for a school of the future; should be one that carries the implicit recognition that every child’s brain is unique”. The majority of brains follow similar developmental trajectory pathways; however, every brain is idiosyncratic when it comes to learning processes.
Echoing the idiosyncratic intricacies of the brain, and thus the classroom, Olson (2014) argues, classrooms do not solely consist of teachers, students, and the purpose for students to intake and regurgitate knowledge. Within the classroom, a powerful web of active neurological and human connections, with forces operating with their own rules, are continuously present (Olson, 2014). Olson (2014), therefore, claims that neurological connections impact learning, and are rarely associated with the content of knowledge that are expected to be learnt. In Olson’s (2014) view, these biological, emotional and social forces of neurobiology are powerful and can stimulate and facilitate learning processes and learning experiences.

Geake and Cooper (2003) offer a recommendation for the relationship between neuroscience and education. Geake and Cooper (2003) suggest that two diametrically opposed camps are found: that neuroscience should remain separate to educational affairs, or, that an even stronger case should be made for a future reliance of education on neuroscience. Geake (2009, P.x) claims, “there is much about education of which neuroscience is silent; either the relevant research has yet to be carried out, or the educational phenomena cannot yet be captured within a neuroscientific paradigm”.

It is apparent the relationship between neuroscience and education is emerging. Having drawn on proponents of this relationship, it is evident proponents claim neuroscience and neuroplasticity can have the ability to inform and advance educational practices.

The focus will now shift to detractors of the relationship between neuroscience and education. Bennett and Hacker (2007) discuss concerns associated with cognitive
neuroscience research and the tensions in cognitive neuroscience research. Bennett and Hacker (2007) make clear, although extraordinary advances have occurred in cognitive neuroscience, the current assumptions of the mind-brain connection offered by way of psychological concepts in contemporary neuroscience is misapplied, misconstrued, and embellished. Bennett and Hacker (2007, P.4) claim, “conceptual questions are not amenable to scientific investigation, experimentation or theorizing; logically different kinds of intellectual inquiry can be problematic in developing the neuroscience and education relationship”.

Bruer (1997) argues, “education cannot be directly informed by neuroscience”. Bruer (1997) therefore contests the notion of neuroscience creating insights into educational discourses. He argues that neuroscience is limited in simplifying the complexity of neural functioning to the cognitive behaviors and learning processes present within classrooms (Bruer, 1997). Bruer (1994) does, however, offer a recommendation for disparities among the neuroscientific and educational paradigms and discourses. He suggests, “a reasonable position would be to admit the traditional cognitive science should be supplemented by cognitive neuroscience from below and by socio-cultural psychology from above” (Bruer, 1997, P.289). In Bruer’s argument, biological discourses, socio-cultural discourses, and practical applications advance at levels, which are highly inconsistent, and thus linking such discourses is complex. Bruer (1994) thus offers to access neuroscience through a ‘bottom-up’ approach of neural mechanisms associated with learning in order to establish links to integrate into education and effectively supplement traditional cognitive psychology; meanwhile accessing a ‘top-down’ approach of structured socio-cultural frameworks to
education to recognize and address the broad cultural, environmental, and behavioral implications present within education.

SECTION SUMMARY

In summary, it is apparent that neuroscience has a diverse and complex relationship with mindfulness and education. As stated previously, this study does not claim to conduct any neuroscience-based research. Neuroscience does, however, surface as a prominent concept when reviewing the existing social science research and literature on mindfulness. This section has, therefore, focussed on the neuroscientific domains that are taken by some to be an underpinning of mindfulness. It is evident there are proponents who claim the neuroscientific empirical advances and evidence have the ability to inform and advance educational practices. Despite this optimistic outlook and empirical advances, detractors express concerns with the psychological and educational discourse boundaries cognitive neuroscience crosses. Detractors view the neuroscience relationship in education as categorically contradictory, thus effectively problematic in evidencing, theorizing, and applying to educational discourses.

2.5 EDUCATIONAL POLICY

Although policy, and political and economic shifts and powers may seem quite far removed from the realities of children and mindfulness, political economy does indeed saturate and shape children’s lives in multiple ways (Mills, 2017). It is, therefore important to chart some of the economic and political contexts and highlight some of the shifts that may speak to the
emerging trend of mindfulness in education. This section aims to address the themes and shifts in economies and educational policy, in addition to highlight links between neuroscience-based discourses, mindfulness, social-emotional learning, and emotional wellbeing in education. In doing so, a critical review of educational policy will be presented. The concepts of bio-power, neoliberal economies, and hegemony will also be drawn upon to facilitate this discussion.

There are commentators who argue economic shifts occur in order for societies to better position themselves among other competing economies (Lemm and Vatter, 2014; Palmer, 2006; Pickering and Rockey, 2011; Winter, 2010). The wave of economic shifts and dominant views of education that shape educational policy are argued to reflect dominant government ideologies (Lemm and Vatter, 2014; Palmer 2006; Pickering and Rockey, 2011). Commentators therefore claim that to advance economies, governments exert control over standards of achievement in education in order to secure future human potential entering the economic arena (Lemm and Vatter, 2014).

Lee (2013, P. 28) claims, “Children have long been and continue to be a principal focus on biopolitical strategy”. This focus may reflect the “rooted determinants” within governmental ideologies, and thus biopolitical strategy (Pickering and Rockey, 2011, P. 909). The individual can thus be identified as human capital, and used for both its own good, and for the good of society (Lemm and Vatter, 2014).

Aligning education policy in order to successfully place future human beings within an economy can be perceived as a sound strategic governmental move. The art of governments is to manipulate, “maintain, distribute, and re-establish relations of force within a space of
competition that entails competitive growths”, thus governments have exclusively acted on human capital as a means to secure economic growth and stability (Lemm and Vatter, 2014, P.102). Palmer (2006, P. 308), building a wider argument about the rapidly changing economies, claims that the elements, which solidify competing economies, can also create a cycle of ill-adapted citizens. Steel (2014) further argues that as a result of advancing economies and standards of achievement the entirety of students’ happiness is dependent on the level of academic accomplishments.

Palmer (2006) claims the speed and progressiveness of economies is not in synchronization with the speed of human competencies. In response to this lack of synchronization, some children in competing economies have increasingly become ‘hot housed’; that is, children attending specialized educational settings in order to enhance their academic development (Winter, 2010). Within competing economies, some children under the age of three are increasingly being exposed to cognitive sensory stimulation in the hopes of securing a higher level of intellect in order to survive the perceived tumultuous waves of education and future economies (Winter, 2010). Low rates of happiness and increases in neuropsychiatric disorders in children are argued to be correlated with current economic shifts (Palmer, 2006). It is further argued that children exposed to educational acceleration pressure will likely encounter emotional and behavioral obstacles including burnout, and thus display social nonconformity (Palmer, 2006).

The demands for student academic attainment are also believed to have repercussions for teachers. Hayes (2004) explains that teachers often find themselves taking on responsibilities aligned to that of psychologists and social workers. Similarly, Mills (2018) and Atkinson and Hornby (2002) argue that educators, predominantly in the global North are on the ‘front-
lines’ in identifying children’s mental health concerns and thus employing hybridized, semi-official roles to support children’s social, emotional, and behavioral concerns. Hayes (2004) thus claims this is due to a climate of globalization and globalized communities, and increases in students’ learning dysfunctions. Educators, schools, and school systems have therefore been under growing pressure (Palmer, 2006). It is argued that this has lead educators, schools, and school systems to promote and mobilize neuroscience-based programs, such as mindfulness, with the hopes that students will attain the cognitive and emotional resilience required to successfully enter and navigate the economic arena (Thornton, 2011; Winter, 2010). Gagen (2013) argues that within the neoliberal workplace “emotions are becoming a currency in and of themselves”. Gagen (2013), therefore, claims that this reflects the desire to produce citizens that have ‘mindful’ qualities, are emotionally intelligent, and equipped with resilience.

Wynyard (2004) argues that successive governments engage with educational systems in order to further drive government ideology. In Wynyard’s (2004) view, government initiatives are mobilized with the objective to drive ideologies; this is identified as ‘weak interference’ and ‘strong interference’. Direct government involvement, by which the ideology is accepted from a population, is deemed as ‘weak interference’; however, ‘strong interference’ can reflect a population that is cautious towards the direct governmental involvement (Wynyard, 2004, P. 64). By way of developments in neuroscience, and the recognition of mindfulness in education, this recognition can be posited as a ‘weak interference’. This can thus be seen both as consistent with a dominant ideological view of how children should grow and as a way of ameliorating the damage associated with the practical expression of this ideology. Some commentators, therefore, view the increased
implementation of mindfulness in education as a “therapeutic form of governance” (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009). Similarly, Gagen (2013, P.142) argues that with the recent implementation of neuroscience-based curriculum, akin to mindfulness, children in school are no longer autonomous and free; they are now seen as neurological subjects to be governed and governable according to their emotional intelligence (Gagen, 2013, P.142). The influx of these curriculums introduces a new element to the requirement of governability as emotions are seen as a new technology of governance: the ‘emotionalisation’ of conduct (Gagen, 2013, P.142). Furthermore, there are commentators who argue that mindfulness is a result of governmental austerity and privatization, which they believe points to neoliberalism. Connelly (2013) claims mindfulness in education reflects ‘the subjective grip of neoliberalism’. While, Mills (2016) explains “power interests tend to be institutional forms of government, but increasingly can also be seen to be companies”. In neoliberal free markets, Mills (2016) thus argued there is a psychologized culture, which can give rise to exploitative and manipulative power relations. Additionally, Reveley (2016, P.499) argues that mindfulness in education “transmits the neoliberal self-responsibilizing impulse down to young people”. In Reveley’s (2016) view, mindfulness charges children with a responsibility to augment their own emotional wellbeing, mindfulness is “the non-obvious medicalizing vector that reconstructs the educational subject in line with neoliberal imperatives” (Reveley, 2016, P.499).

As shown so far, a number of commentators offer the view that there is a lack of synchronization among the progressiveness of economies and human competencies (Palmer, 2006; Winter, 2010; Hayes, 2004). There are commentators that further argue there is a misalignment of economic-biological harmonization (Palmer, 2006; Thornton, 2011; Winter,
Some commentators present mindfulness in education as a means to address this misalignment (Palmer, 2006; Thornton, 2011). It is apparent that there are authors who argue that there has been a fierce concentration on achievement in education, and neuroscientific-based practices, such as mindfulness, have been presented as a means of mitigating the negative effects of this academic pressure. There are however, also reasons to see mindfulness where it is relied on in order to promote resilience and self-optimization in students as a means for students to contend with the pressures and standards surrounding academic achievement.

The focus will now turn to the relationship between educational policy in the United States, emotional wellbeing, and mindfulness. The concepts of bio-power, neoliberal economies, and hegemony will be drawn upon to facilitate this discussion.

As previously discussed, in the United States, there has been a range of stakeholders who have been advocating for ‘mindfulness’ particularly in education, healthcare, and the workplace (Jha, et al., 2015; Rupprecht, 2016; Jennings, 2016). Policymakers in the United States are yet to explicitly endorse mindfulness in education. However, policymakers are increasingly recognizing that wellbeing, mental health, and social and emotional development plays a vital role in students’ ability to learn; similar features that are found in existing arguments for mobilizing ‘mindfulness’ in education (Schonert-Reichl, et al, 2015; Rechtschaffen, 2014 Kaiser-Greenland, 2010; Jennings and Greenberg, 2009). Policymakers in the United States are thus endorsing policies to implement Social and Emotional Learning into school curriculums (NASBE, 2019).

A key policy commitment aligned to wellbeing, mental health, and social and emotional development is the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). This education law passed in 2015
emphasizes the importance of key learning environments and opportunities for schools to support student achievement by improving student health and wellbeing (ESSA, 2015). Additionally, since 2015, the Healthy Schools Campaign has delivered specific support, tools, and resources to states and school health stakeholders to ensure that the mobilization and delivery of ESSA is effective in contributing to student health and wellbeing.

On a state level, current state policies provide a foundation for including Social Emotional Learning, in addition to mental and emotional health curriculums, however the extent to which these curriculums are integrated or required varies by state. For instance, thirty-one states have statutes and regulations that encourage or require Social Emotional Learning, however fifteen of these states mandate the inclusion of such programs in schools (NASBE, 2019). Furthermore, beyond policies that call for an explicit focus on Social Emotional Learning, thirty-seven states include components of Social Emotional Learning, such as interpersonal and intrapersonal skills development, or self-esteem as part of regulations governing education standards. Thirty-eight states also include mental and emotional health in health education standards, which typically include teaching students how to monitor, understand, and regulate their emotions; a key component of Social Emotional Learning and ‘mindfulness’ (NASBE, 2019; Schonert-Reichl, et al, 2015; Rechtschaffen, 2014; Kaiser-Greenland, 2010). Only five states (Hawaii, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and Ohio) do not have any statutes and regulations concerning Social Emotional Learning.

In relation to this study, the locations of the schools and the participants differ by state as to the extent Social Emotional Learning and mental and emotional health curriculums are implemented. In New York, state law or regulation requires districts to integrate Social
Emotional Learning, and mental and emotional health curriculums are required for all grade levels. In Texas, state law or regulation encourages districts to integrate Social Emotional Learning into the school curriculum; however, mental and emotional health curriculums are required for only some grade levels. In California, Social Emotional Learning is not addressed in state law or regulation, although mental and emotional health curriculums are required for all grade levels. Finally, in Massachusetts Social Emotional Learning is encouraged and mental and emotional health curriculums are required for all grade levels.

In sum, the key policy commitments in the United States highlighted above promote mental health, wellbeing development, emotional and behavioral regulation, and interpersonal and intrapersonal skills development. These existing key policy commitments, in part, align to the existing goals and arguments for mobilizing ‘mindfulness’ in education, and thus potentially provide space and opportunities for ‘mindfulness’ in schools (Maloney et al., 2016; Rechtschaffen, 2015; Schonert-Reichl and Lawlor, 2010).

The concepts of bio-power, neoliberal economics, and hegemony will now be discussed. Neoliberalism and bio-power are argued as dominating influences within education systems in Western nations. Neoliberalism essentially consists of economic liberalism and free market capitalism (Haymes, et al., 2015; Bloom, 2017). The policies that can, therefore, result from neoliberalism include privatization, deregulation, free trade, and austerity (Springer et al., 2016). Encompassed within neoliberal ideologies, bio-power is argued to exist. Bio-power, a term coined by Foucault, is understood as a political approach, informed by clearly stated or hidden ‘ideologies’, which exercise power over populations. Although not exclusively associated with neoliberalism, Searle (2010, P. 153) considers bio-power as
governments’ regulative strategies that exert “control over the bodies of human beings by subjecting them to normalizing practices of society”.

Hall (2007) and McChesney (1999) argue that the current testing system is argued by some commentators as driving the division and organization of students into the specific requirements of the school. Hall (2007) thus offers the view that the requirements of schools are confined by the externally imposed neoliberal bio-power, which is regulated through a regime of assessments and surveillance. In relation to the mobilization of mindfulness-based programs in education, Reveley (2016, P. 499) claims “mindfulness functions as a neoliberal self-technology”. Reveley (2016, P. 499), therefore, argues that the mobilization of mindfulness is a form of emotional hypervigilance as it brands students as needful subjects who must learn self-surveillance in order to monitor and manage unruly emotions.

It is argued that the fluidity of bio-power, through the division and organization of students, contributes to the alignment of students into the neoliberal economy, and into the perceived ideology of the neoliberal economy (Gagen, 2013; Reveley, 2016). The exercise of bio-power can affect young people. Bio-power involves the use of surveillance and assessment in order to attribute worth to young people in ways that they may experience as uncomfortable and that may, as with any selective system of valuing people, be open to critique. In relation to the emerging trend of mindfulness-based programs in education, there are some commentators who argue, “emotional skills have become the new criteria by which young people are deemed to be succeeding or failing as citizens” (RCVP, 2012; Gagen, 2013, P.150). If changes to curricular continue, this may result in regular, reoccurring, emotional audits to assess students’ emotional skills and abilities development according to a
standardized set of criteria (RCVP, 2012; Gagen, 2013). The ‘worth’ factor of a student within the neoliberal, bio-power driven strategy is argued to create unwarranted categorization and exclusions during the process of organizing students into the perceived neoliberal ideology (Hall, 2007; McChesney, 1999).

Taking this discussion a step further, there are commentators that hold the view that neoliberalism confines students to a testing system, which is effectively sustained through bio-power (Hall, 2007; McChesney, 1999; Proctor, 2014).

It is posited that neoliberal driven economies implement strategies to maintain hegemony (Proctor, 2014). The discourse employed in the educational system positions itself as a dominant ideology and thus exerts a dominant influence that arguably is enforced as a means to ensure the accountability of hegemony (Proctor, 2014). Although economic growth necessitates hegemony to an extent, the discourses of economic growth are argued to exacerbate societal constituents such as education (Hall, 2007; Proctor, 2014). Echoing this notion, Lankshear (1997, P. 82) claims that the “dominant political discourses become those that dominate education”.

Critics of neoliberal influenced education policy and practice argue that the dominance of the results driven testing system drives pushing and coaching teaching practices, which results in teachers encountering unrealistic demands, constrained by standards (Cohen, 2008; Hall 2007; Lankshear, 1997). The pressures encountered by teachers raise questions as to the impact on students in terms of classroom dynamics and environments, quality and value of learning experiences, and quality of teacher-student relationships.

Having presented a discussion of the relationship between educational policy, emotional wellbeing, and mindfulness, in addition to the concepts of bio-power, neoliberal economies,
and hegemony, it is clear there are implications for education. The implications are argued to impact future generations who are expected to contribute to economies; some commentators argue such an impact requires recognition and action (Cohen, 2008; Hall 2007; Lankshear, 1997). Emotional wellbeing programs that recognize and develop students’ emotions, such as the mobilization of mindfulness, are claimed to have the potential to act as a tool to equip, prepare and position students to navigate the standards prescribed through the discourse of assessment (Poynter, 2004; Wrigley, 2006).

**SECTION SUMMARY**

This section has reviewed the mindfulness and educational policy relationship. In doing so, the themes and shifts in economies and educational policy have been discussed. It is important to point out that most recently in the United States, a new wellbeing program for the House of Representatives has been launched and is expected to serve thousands of employees who work on Capitol Hill (Ryan, 2019). However, currently in terms of mindfulness-related policy, the United Kingdom is at the forefront with the efforts made with ‘The Mindful Nation Initiative’, and the implementation of mindfulness across health, education, and the workplace (Safer, 2015; MAPPG, 2019; Ryan, 2019). In fact, there are mindfulness stakeholders in the United States, who praise and commend the United Kingdom’s recent funding investments for mindfulness and the efforts made with the Mindful Nation Initiative. These mindfulness stakeholders, in the United States therefore, aim to take similar actions as to the United Kingdom (Meiklejohn et al., 2012; Ryan, 2019). While the United Kingdom appears to be making headway and pioneering the pathway for mindfulness related policy, the United States is in the background in terms of policy,
however, the United States is claimed to be “both the largest creator and the most eager consumer of new trends of mindfulness” (Wilson, 2014, P.8). It is for these reasons that the empirical work for this study was carried out in the United States.

This section has emphasized that commentators locate and value mindfulness differently. There are commentators who locate mindfulness and argue it has value for safeguarding against the current government ideology and biopolitical strategy that is dominated by a result driven testing system. There are also commentators who argue that mindfulness is mobilized into educational settings for students to develop emotional wellbeing skills that facilitate coping strategies, limit psychological damage, and boost resilience. On the other hand, there are commentators who locate mindfulness as inappropriate for educational contexts and thus understand its value as limited and to the extent obstructing to academic standards. However, there are also commentators who argue that governments locate mindfulness and thus argue it has value for expediting the government ideology and biopolitical strategy of a result driven testing system. The developments in neuroscience and the recognition of mindfulness in education are claimed by some commentators as a measure to strengthen educational settings by way of developing students’ emotional resilience and emotional intelligence. Furthermore, some commentators claim that mindfulness helps to expedite the government ideology and biopolitical strategy by reinforcing students as the focus for biopolitical strategy and as human capital.

It is clear mindfulness is mobilized, understood, and valued differently for diverse purposes and diverse outcomes. As stated at the beginning of this chapter, political and economic shifts and powers may seem relatively detached from the realities of children and mindfulness; however, political economy does indeed affect children’s lives (Mills, 2017).
Although this existing literature relates the mobilization of mindfulness in education to economic shifts, government ideologies, biopolitical strategy, and neoliberalism, this literature does not seem to consider other factors that may encourage the mobilization of mindfulness. For instance, advances in diagnosing child mental health concerns or learning disabilities, greater flexibility in teaching attitudes, approaches and curriculums, or alternative modes of classroom management and discipline in education. This study is therefore designed to explore mindfulness as an aspect of participant’s own teaching and learning practices, settings and teaching communities. In doing so, this study also seeks to gain an understanding of the reasons as to why participants, who have some degree of discretion as to whether they engage with it, are seeking out mindfulness resources and ideas in order to implement mindfulness into their settings with children.

2.6 The Literature Review Conclusion

This chapter has provided a review of literature and synthesis of existing social science literature and research on mindfulness. The four sections covered in the literature review were: (1) Mindfulness Defined, (2) Contemplative Neuroscience-based Programs in Education, (3) Neuroscience and Neuroplasticity, and (4) Educational Policy. These sections have presented and discussed multiple contexts and concepts within the existing social science literature and research on mindfulness.

There are key constructs in the literature review that inform and guide this study. Firstly, there is diversity in understandings of mindfulness. The uses to which the term ‘mindfulness’ is put are varied, and practices and concepts are contested amongst communities of practice and research into mindfulness. Although contributors to the field of mindfulness studies use
the same word- mindfulness- this does not necessary mean this word is being used in the same ways. Secondly, mindfulness pedagogies can be mobilized with children in diverse manners. There are extensive resources available to facilitate the mobilization of mindfulness in schools. However, there is an assumption that mindfulness can be educated, and thus can be taught to children. This assumption raises questions as to mindfulness being a ‘professional’ skill the teacher needs to be trained to teach, and how mindfulness is reconciled within existing school curriculums. Furthermore, this also raises the question over to what extent the varying educational contexts of the deployment of mindfulness shape the conceptual and practical work that is done in reference to the term- is mindfulness as it is deployed in education a single phenomenon with varied expression or is it an homogeneous mix of practices and concepts that happen to share the same name? Thirdly, the transferable and assimilative nature of mindfulness is a key feature within the literature. Mindfulness can be used in diverse ways across very different settings and contexts. However, in education the uses are primarily for emotional, behavioral, cognitive and academic enhancement purposes. This picture of variation raises a question whether ‘mindfulness’ in education is best understood as drawing on a single set of definitions and whether teachers share a single set of motivations. Finally, mindfulness is a relatively new and emerging concept in education. There are therefore a host of concerns, assumptions and questions that surround the mobilization of mindfulness with children: religiosity, ‘therapised’ educational contexts, children’s agency, and the shaping and controlling of children’s emotions and behavior. The deployment of mindfulness to increase wellbeing and to adjust emotions, cognitions and behaviors has been presented as a form of power that merits critical scrutiny. This raises a question of judgement- how are examples of mindfulness practice in education to be assessed?
As we have seen, mindfulness in education has grown rapidly over the past 2 decades and even though still marginal, mindfulness continues to be explored as a potential response to problems of education experienced by individual students and teachers, by classrooms and by schools as a whole. Given this, the issues of variation and judgement this thesis addresses are of growing significance. The research questions the thesis will address are therefore:

Overarching research question: How is mindfulness mobilized, and how is it specifically mobilized to support the emotional wellbeing of children?

1: How do the contexts in which mindfulness is mobilized shape its deployment?

2: What motivates teachers of mindfulness to mobilize mindfulness pedagogies in their teaching practice?

3: How do teachers of mindfulness assess the value of mindfulness?
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Two provided a review and synthesis of existing social science research on mindfulness. From this it was evident that mindfulness in education is an important area to study because the ways that mindfulness is mobilized with children, and specifically how it is mobilized to support the emotional well-being of children, is relatively underexamined (Wilson, 2014; Greenberg and Harris, 2012; Weare, 2012). Further, it was clear that such an investigation would need to use qualitative methods. Qualitative methods afforded an exploration and illumination of the commonalities, differences, and tensions in the understandings and experiences across participants and contexts of the shared phenomenon of the mobilization of mindfulness with children.

Of particular interest were the views and understandings of those directly involved with the mobilization of mindfulness with children, in both clinical and educational settings. An exploration of how and why participants in these different contexts mobilize mindfulness with children may provide new insights into mindfulness in education. Seeing as there are tensions within existing literature, in particular between the authenticity and ‘McDonaldization of mindfulness’, and between mindfulness helping children by subjecting them to neoliberal governance, this study will contribute to a further understanding of these theoretical positions and tensions. Of further interest were children’s experiences and understandings of mindfulness. There are gaps in existing research for illuminating the insights of primary school children who have engaged with mindfulness pedagogies (Wilson, 2014; Greenberg and Harris, 2012; Weare, 2012). In response to this gap, this study will
offer illustrations as to the subjective experiences and purported outcomes of mindfulness. It is anticipated that contributing to this relatively under examined area, the findings from this study will help to further inform children’s learning and development, and also inform education more broadly (Wilson, 2014; Greenberg and Harris, 2012; Meiklejohn et al., 2012; Weare, 2012).

This chapter provides the rationale for the methodology and describes the research design for this study. The research aims and research questions will be outlined in section 3.1. The research paradigm is presented in section 3.2. The ontological and epistemological issues in the study are considered in section 3.3. Section 3.4 describes the participants; the recruitment process, participant samples, and eligibility criteria. In section 3.5 the methods employed within this study will be described, in addition to a discussion of the strengths and limitations of each method. Following this, section 3.6 presents the rationale for the data analysis method, in addition to a description of the data analysis process employed. Finally, the ethical aspects of this study are examined in section 3.7.

3.2 RESEARCH AIMS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The core aims of this study are:

To explore the mobilization and diversity of mindfulness with children, and how it is mobilized in attempts to enhance their emotional wellbeing; to explore the views and experiences of clinical and primary school teacher participants who mobilize mindfulness pedagogies with children; and to explore children’s understandings and experiences of mindfulness pedagogies.

The three research questions that will be answered in this study are:
Overarching research question: How is mindfulness mobilized, and how is it specifically mobilized to support the emotional wellbeing of children?

1: How do the contexts in which mindfulness is mobilized shape its deployment?

2: What motivates teachers of mindfulness to mobilize mindfulness pedagogies in their teaching practice?

3: How do teachers of mindfulness assess the value of mindfulness?

### 3.3 Research Paradigm and Assumptions

A research paradigm is defined as a “basic set of beliefs that guide action” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, P.157). Selecting a research paradigm is a central component of the research process. For this study, a constructivist paradigm was adopted. A constructivist paradigm recognizes the multiple realities that exist and emphasizes an individual’s experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This study is also influenced by grounded theory. A grounded theory approach aims to identify emerging themes and patterns in the data through a process of constant comparison (Thomas, 2017). In essence, grounded theory is a ‘bottom up’ approach to developing theory. The current study does not claim to develop a grand theory of mindfulness in education. Instead, its grounded approach becomes the means by which to explore and identify themes or features that characterize the mobilization of mindfulness in early years education and the diversity of approaches in the settings under study. In this study the grounded approach supports the thesis’ engagement with existing theoretical positions within the literature.
It is important to acknowledge that qualitative approaches are diverse and subtly nuanced (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Consideration was, therefore, given to phenomenology. A phenomenological approach seeks to describe participants’ meanings of the lived experiences of a phenomenon (Starks and Brown Trinidad, 2007). The emphasis of a phenomenological approach is on the direct descriptions of participants’ experiences (Starks and Brown Trinidad, 2007). This study is exploratory by nature, and seeks to explore a new phenomenon: how mindfulness is pieced together, and specifically, how mindfulness is mobilized to support the emotional wellbeing of children. The descriptive and narrative nature of a phenomenological approach, however, did not compliment the methodological aims of exploring a new phenomenon. It was evident grounded theory was more appropriate for inspiring the methodology in this study, because of its commitments to identifying emerging themes and patterns in data through a process of constant comparison (Thomas, 2017), while thematic analysis was a better fit to the analysis of data.

In order to explore and uncover participants’ views and experiences of mindfulness, this project adopted three qualitative research methods; Semi-structured interviews, Skype interviews, and child focus groups (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The paradigm and methods in this study, thus, allowed the researcher to adopt an inductive approach in order to uncover the subjective views and experiences of participants. Generalisation of data was less of a priority; enabling the researcher to capture ‘an insider view’ of how clinical and primary school teacher participants mobilize mindfulness to support the emotional wellbeing of children, and in turn, how children understood and experienced mindfulness (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).
The research area of mindfulness with children, particularly amongst qualitative research, is a relatively new (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015; Goswami, 2006). Adopting an inductive stance was, therefore, found to compliment the research paradigm, as the examination of particular cases and subjective views and experiences is the focus of the study. Exploring these interpretations provided a greater understanding of how mindfulness is mobilized with children, and how it may be specifically mobilized to support the emotional wellbeing of children. These insights drawing on these data will offer new knowledge within the field of the social study of mindfulness and may contribute to wider debates about children, mindfulness and education.

3.4 Ontological and Epistemological Issues

Research methodologies encompass a set of epistemological and ontological principles (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The researchers’ own epistemology and ontology should, therefore, compliment those principles within their chosen research methodology (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In order to justify the approach in this study, the ontological and epistemological issues pertaining to this study will be addressed by answering questions posed by Willig (2001).

What assumptions does the methodology make about the world?

Ontological assumptions raise questions in terms of the nature of being and the form of reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The constructivist methodology considers reality to be socially constructed (Creswell, 2006). The ontological assumption in this study is relativist. This assumption involves the researcher acknowledging the multi-layered and complex nature of reality concerning the phenomenon (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Commonalities
among instances of these realities will most likely occur among participants, however, different participants will construct experiences and interpretations differently.

The social construction of knowledge is emphasized in constructivist methodology. Caution must be taken by the researcher to ensure that their position is open to examination in parity with the methodological choices that have been made. This is reconciled by adopting an inductive approach to the analysis of data. Inductive analysis encourages the researcher to develop subjective knowledge that derives from experiences and feelings from the participants’ viewpoint.

**What knowledge does the methodology aim to produce?**

Epistemology is the philosophical enquiry into the nature of knowledge, what distinguishes a belief from an opinion, and what researchers claim as truth (Denscombe, 2010). Within a constructivist paradigm, the epistemological assumption of knowledge is transactional, subjectivist, and socially constructed (Creswell, 2006). A constructivist paradigm allows the researcher and the participant to interact and produce findings based on the understandings and the experiences of the participant.

Pertaining to this study, a constructivist paradigm allows the researcher to capture and uncover the multi-layered subjective constructions of the mobilization of mindfulness for children (Denscombe, 2010). The process of interpretation upholds this (Creswell, 2006). Interpretation involves the participants’ ability to reflect and articulate their perceptions of the phenomenon, in addition to the researchers’ ability to conceptualize and produce findings built on the understandings and the experiences of the participant (Creswell, 2006).

**How does the methodology conceptualise the researcher’s role in the research process?**
Constructivist methodology assumes that knowledge and reality are interrelated through the social constructions of interpreting the data and the organisation of knowledge (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This assumption emphasizes the active role of the researcher, specifically during the interpretation of data. It is, therefore, important for the researcher to acknowledge their assumptions that may contribute to the formation of knowledge (Denscombe, 2010).

To this end, the position of the researcher within the paradigm and methodology of this study is summarized in the following three statements:

1) There is limited qualitative research theory concerning the mobilization of mindfulness with children, and how mindfulness is mobilized to support the emotional wellbeing of children. This study is therefore exploratory in nature. A constructivist paradigm was adopted in order offer insights into the subjective realities of the clinical and primary school teacher participants and children involved in the mobilization of mindfulness.

2) The understandings and experiences of how clinical and primary school teacher participants and children were captured. Participants’ perspectives are subjective, all of which are considered worthy of exploring. Multi-layered subjective constructions and multiple complex realities were captured (Denscombe, 2010).

3) The participants and researcher both contribute to the transformation of the research process, from the articulation of experiences and understandings through to the transcription and analysis stage. The epistemological stance of the researcher is thus subjectivist and transactional. In essence, the researcher takes the position of understanding reality as a social construction, not an objective truth, and thus understands that ‘multiple
realities’ can exist that are associated with different groups and perspectives (Lincoln and Guba, 2000).

3.5 PARTICIPANTS

This study aimed to explore how mindfulness is pieced together and mobilized in clinical and education settings for children, and specifically, how mindfulness is mobilized to support the emotional wellbeing of children. It was therefore essential to obtain the views and experiences of participants in both clinical and educational settings, in addition to children who experienced mindfulness pedagogies. The recruitment process, participant samples, and eligibility criteria will be covered in this sub-section. Below is a table that presents an overview of the different participant groups.

**TABLE 1: OVERVIEW OF PARTICIPANT GROUPS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant group</th>
<th>Sample size</th>
<th>Rationale for participant selection</th>
<th>Method employed</th>
<th>Locations of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clinical participants</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-Mobilized established mindfulness programs with children aged 4-5</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews</td>
<td>Affiliated with a clinical centre for mindfulness in San Diego</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary school teacher participants</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-Mobilized mindfulness pedagogies with children aged 4-5</td>
<td>Skype interviews</td>
<td>Primary schools in New York, San Francisco, Boston, and Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child participants</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>-Participated in mindfulness pedagogies for at least six months</td>
<td>Focus groups</td>
<td>Primary schools in New York, San Francisco, Boston, and Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Age 4-5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5.1 Recruitment

The growing phenomenon of mindfulness is considered international in scope (Wilson, 2014). However, for the preceding few decades, the United States appears to be the largest developer and mobilizer of mindfulness (Wilson, 2014). For this study, the United States was therefore chosen as the location to recruit participants from. There were three key reasons for this decision. Firstly, the surge of popularity and diversity surrounding the mobilization of mindfulness in the United States, it was hoped, would shed light on the multiplicities of the applications, uses, outcomes, and tensions surrounding the mobilization of mindfulness with children. Secondly, gathering data from different locations within one English speaking territory offered the advantage of potential cultural differences. There is existing research in the geographical sciences that shows there are distinct regions within the United States that can be classified in terms of their political, economic, social, and health characteristics (Elazar, 1994; Heppen, 2003; Hero, 1998; Florida, 2002; Putnam; 2000; Rentfrow et al., 2013). Thirdly, for practical reasons concerning research accessibility and data collection logistics, the United States proved to offer greater efficiency in securing participants for the study.

In western societies, the mobilization of mindfulness to purportedly help children is considered a relatively new phenomenon (Jennings and Greenberg, 2009; Rechtschaffen, 2014; Kaiser-Greenland, 2010). Mindfulness is mobilized for children in clinical and educational (school) settings (Jennings and Greenberg, 2009; Kabat-Zinn, 2017). Some clinical settings see themselves as educating children in mindfulness; mindfulness is often delivered in clinical settings as a skill or activity that can be taught and learned (Kabat-Zinn, 2014; Wilson, 2014; Sanchez-Allred and Choudhury, 2016). This study, therefore, recruited
participants from both clinical and primary school settings, in addition to children who experienced mindfulness in primary schools. It is important to note that for the purpose of this study, the ‘clinical participants’ in the clinical settings refer to clinicians including psychologists, pediatric doctors, and a psychiatrist, who, indeed, mobilize and deliver mindfulness with children, as part of their clinical practices (see Table 1 for further details on participants). Typically the clinical mindfulness practices involve individual or small group sessions that focus on a range of children’s needs such as emotional regulation, behavioral management, physical and chronic pain management, and overall wellbeing. While, the ‘primary school teacher participants’ are based at primary schools and thus refer to the primary school teachers, councilor, and music therapist, who mobilize and deliver a diversity of mindfulness practices with children (see Table 2 for further details on participants).

This study is exploratory in nature, and seeks to shed light on a relatively new phenomenon. Eligibility parameters were, therefore, set in order to ensure the data from the participants addressed the research aims. At this initial stage of recruiting participants, purposive sampling was the means by which participants were selected (Creswell, 2006). This involved searching online for mindfulness interventions in schools, across the United States. Due to the growing popularity surrounding mindfulness with children, there were multiple sources to locate clinical centres and schools in the United States that mobilized mindfulness (Ryan, 2012). The online sources included the advertisement of mindfulness classes and workshops for children in clinical centres, news reports of specific schools implementing mindfulness, in addition to websites of mindfulness programs, such as ‘Mindful Schools’, which offered directories and contact information for schools and teachers that mobilized mindfulness pedagogies.
The selection criteria of participants consisted of clinical participants and primary school teacher participants who mobilize mindfulness with children, in addition to children who experience mindfulness pedagogies in primary schools. Recruiting participants that were involved in the mobilization of mindfulness with children, under different conditions, speaks to the methodological underpinning in terms of sampling in grounded theory (Starks and Brown Trinidad, 2007).

It was essential the primary school teacher participants solely worked with children aged four and five. This age range is particularly suited to the aims of the study and to answering the research questions, as there are gaps in existing literature on the mobilization of mindfulness in early years education (Wilson, 2014; Greenberg and Harris, 2012; Weare, 2012). There are tensions in existing literature that raises concerns and questions surrounding the authenticity and ethics of mobilizing mindfulness with children, children’s agency, and neoliberal influence and governance among others (Gagen, 2013; Sanchez-Allred and Choudhury, 2016; Mills, 2018; Reveley, 2016). This research, therefore, seeks to inform these current debates within the literature. Furthermore, existing literature and studies have examined the diversity in mindfulness practices, however they are not informative about how a diversity of mindfulness is framed in primary educational settings (Wilson, 2014; Weare, 2012; Mills, 2018; Kucinskas, 2019). This study, thus aims to fill existing research gaps in the qualitative research on mindfulness in education, specifically concerning children, aged four to five (Wilson, 2014; Greenberg and Harris, 2012; Weare, 2012). It was also decided at the early stages of the study that child participants would only be recruited from primary schools and not clinical settings. The rationale behind this decision concerned the methodology,
specifically the participant sample. Children who were given mindfulness-based treatment within the clinical settings had a range of diagnoses. Including children with specific diagnoses would add a level of complexity to the analysis, although this would also have allowed differences in the delivery of mindfulness to be studied. Selection criteria also required that primary school teacher participants had mobilized mindfulness with children, and children had participated in mindfulness pedagogies for at least six months. This rationale for this requirement was to ensure all participants were relatively knowledgeable and comfortable sharing their views. Furthermore, in upholding economic and demographic diversity it was essential that the primary schools were a combination of public and private schools. It is, however, important to note that it was not a requirement or prerequisite for teachers to be formally trained or certified to teach mindfulness in schools. Participants were not directly asked in the interviews as to whether they had received formal training, and participants did not disclose this specific information.

Two clinical settings in the United States, one in Miami and one in San Diego, were initially selected and contacted via email to request their consent. These settings were chosen due their established mindfulness programs, whereby clinical participants mobilized and delivered mindfulness with children. Both settings provided consent, however due to budgeting and travel logistical restrictions, the clinical setting in Miami was omitted.

Four primary schools, each in a different location (New York, San Francisco, Boston, and Texas), and two primary school teacher participants from each school, were initially selected and contacted via email to request their consent. San Francisco and New York were public schools, whereas Boston and Texas were Private schools. The New York and Boston
schools were located in urban areas, whereas the schools in San Francisco and Texas were located in suburban areas. It is important to highlight that in this study the terms ‘West coast’ and East coast’ are used to refer to the areas in which the schools and participants are located. Existing research speaks to differences between regions of the United States that are associated with important geographical factors (Rentfrow et al., 2013). These differences are defined in terms of their political, economic, social, and health characteristics (Elazar, 1994; Heppen, 2003; Hero, 1998; Florida, 2002; Putnam, 2000). Rentfrow et al., (2013) provide empirical evidence for categorizing the ‘West coast’ and East coast’ of the United States. For the ‘West coast’ Rentfrow et al., (2013) define this as the ‘Relaxed & Creative region’, which comprises of people from a diverse range of cultures and backgrounds, who are wealthy, educated, economically innovative, politically liberal, and health conscious. Overall, the qualities of this region represent a place where open-mindedness, tolerance, individualism, and happiness are valued (Rentfrow et al., 2013). For the ‘East coast’, Rentfrow et al., (2013) define this as the ‘Temperamental and Uninhibited’ region, which has disproportionate numbers of older adults, and consists of individuals who are typically affluent, college-educated, impulsive, passionate, and competitive (Rentfrow et al., 2013). The terms ‘West coast’ and East coast’, and the differences between regions of the United States that are associated with geographical factors, are therefore used in this thesis as a means to further explore the differences in the data and thus illustrate the findings. In sum, selecting participants, from a diversity of locations within the United States, encouraged cross-cultural data to be collected, and therefore contributed to illumining the multi-layered and complex nature of mindfulness (Davidov, et al., 2018).
During the recruitment process, the two primary school teacher participants in Boston proved to be the only participants that acknowledged the email and provided consent. In order to avoid any further delays in securing primary school settings and participants for the study, the researcher decided to attempt to conduct convenience sampling and referral sampling (Evans and Rooney, 2018). This was employed when the researcher attended ‘Mindfulness in Education’ conferences in San Francisco, San Diego, and Big Sur. During these conferences, there were ample opportunities to network with potential participants involved in mobilizing mindfulness with children. It was, therefore, through the means of convenience sampling during the conferences and referral sampling following networking opportunities at the conferences, whereby securing participants from the initially selected primary schools occurred (Evans and Rooney, 2018). A total of four primary schools (New York, San Francisco, Boston, and Texas), with two primary school teacher participants from each school, thus provided consent to participate in Skype interviews. Following the Skype interviews, a rapport was developed with the primary school teacher participants. I considered this as an opportunity to access data from the children in their classes who participate in mindfulness pedagogies. This approach to sampling reflects convenience sampling (Evans and Rooney, 2018). Following the Skype interviews, I, therefore, enquired with the primary school teacher participants if they would be willing to conduct focus groups. Fortunately, I was successful in recruiting one primary school teacher participant from each location, which resulted in four child focus groups. The primary school teacher participants then recruited children who participate in mindfulness pedagogies within their classroom. Recruitment and a child-friendly consent procedure was conducted by the teachers drawing children’s names out of a container, and asking the child if they were happy to participate in the mindfulness focus group. The teachers explained to each child that it
was their choice to participate or not. Each child did however agree to participate in the focus groups. Following this child-friendly consent procedure, informed consent and assent was obtained (see appendix J).

3.5.2 Sample size

In qualitative research, sample size is typically derived from the epistemological position of the study, and the goals and purpose of the study (Denscombe, 2010). In order to explore the mobilization and diversity of mindfulness with children, and thus capture and uncover the views and experiences of both teachers of mindfulness and children, individual experience is emphasized. This approach can be considered as subjectivist, which does not require large sample sizes (Denscombe, 2010). Grounded theory studies typically report sample sizes ranging from 10 to 60 participants (Dey, 1999). Creswell (2006) argues large sample sizes are not necessarily needed to generate rich data sets. There is, indeed, a fine balance for sample sizes. The research sample ought to ensure the majority of the data can address the key aims of the study, however, if the sample is too large, there is risk of the data becoming repetitive and redundant (Mason, 2010).

In summary, six teachers of mindfulness in a clinical center for mindfulness, in San Diego, participated in semi-structured interviews (See table 2); a total of eight teachers of mindfulness, in primary schools in New York, San Francisco, Boston, and Texas participated in Skype interviews (See table 3); and twenty-four children (four focus groups) in primary schools in New York, San Francisco, Boston, and Texas participated in focus groups (See table 4). The interviews ranged from thirty-five minutes to one hour in length, and the focus groups ranged from thirty-five to fifty minutes in length. Bloor et al., (2001) consider the optimum size for a focus group to be six to eight participants; small focus groups can risk
limited discussion occurring, alternatively, large focus groups can be chaotic and unmanageable. For this study, the focus groups were carried out on a smaller scale; six participants for each focus group.

**Table 2: Clinical participants who participated in the semi-structured interviews**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Code and location</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Years of mindfulness experience</th>
<th>Current occupation</th>
<th>Date of interview</th>
<th>Length of interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MP1-3 San Diego</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Family Psychologist</td>
<td>20/07/2015</td>
<td>48 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP1-4 San Diego</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Research director and psychologist</td>
<td>14/07/2015</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP1-5 San Diego</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Pediatric doctor</td>
<td>14/07/2015</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP1-6 San Diego</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Child Psychologist</td>
<td>29/07/2015</td>
<td>42 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP1-7 San Diego</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Pediatric doctor</td>
<td>07/07/2015</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP1-8 San Diego</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Child and youth Psychiatrist</td>
<td>21/07/2015</td>
<td>35 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 3: PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER PARTICIPANTS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE SKYPE INTERVIEWS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant code and school location</th>
<th>Type of school location</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Years of mindfulness experience</th>
<th>Current occupation</th>
<th>Date of interview</th>
<th>Length of interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MP2-1 San Francisco</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Music therapist in a primary school</td>
<td>11/02/2016</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP2-2 San Francisco</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Primary school teacher</td>
<td>08/02/2016</td>
<td>42 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP2-3 New York</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Primary school teacher</td>
<td>12/02/2016</td>
<td>35 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP2-4 New York</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Primary school councilor</td>
<td>12/02/2016</td>
<td>50 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP2-5 Boston</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Primary school teacher</td>
<td>15/02/2016</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP2-6 Boston</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Primary school teacher</td>
<td>16/02/2016</td>
<td>50 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP2-7 Texas</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Primary school teacher</td>
<td>17/02/2016</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP2-8 Texas</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Primary school teacher</td>
<td>17/02/2016</td>
<td>55 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 4: The Child Focus Group (FG) Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School location</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Length of focus group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York = FG1</td>
<td>FG1-1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>40 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FG1-2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FG1-3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FG1-4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FG1-5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FG1-6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco = FG2</td>
<td>FG2-1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>44 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FG2-2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FG2-3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FG2-4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FG2-5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FG2-6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston= FG3</td>
<td>FG3-1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>35 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FG3-2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FG3-3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.6 Methods

In the following section, descriptions and rationales for each method will be provided.

Three methods of data collection were employed for this study: semi-structured interviews, Skype interviews, and focus groups. Each method was employed at a different phase of the study. The table below presents an overview of the phases and data collection time frame.
### Table 5: The Data Collection Timeframe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>Method of data collection</th>
<th>Further Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1</td>
<td>7-29 July 2015</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews</td>
<td>Employed semi-structured interviews with clinical participants affiliated with a clinical centre for mindfulness, in San Diego.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>8-17 February 2016</td>
<td>Skype interviews</td>
<td>Employed Skype interviews with primary school teacher participants who were based in New York, San Francisco, Boston and Texas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 3</td>
<td>22 February- 6 March 2016</td>
<td>Focus groups</td>
<td>The primary school teacher participants in New York, San Francisco, Boston conducted focus groups with child participants. I was then emailed the video camera data.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.6.1 Phase 1 of data collection: Semi-structured interviews

The first phase of data collection in this study involved semi-structured interviews with six clinical participants who were affiliated with a clinical center for mindfulness, in San Diego. These participants teach mindfulness with children in clinical settings. Table 1 provides further details on the participants.

Mindfulness initially entered the mainstream of western society through health contexts, and different forms of mindfulness programs have therefore spread into other pockets of society, including education (Kabat-Zinn, 2003; Ryan, 2012; Wilson, 2014; Kucinskas, 2019). There are established mindfulness healthcare interventions, such as MBSR and MBCT, which are evidenced by science and applied in medicine and clinical psychology (Kabat-Zinn, 2017). Therefore, including interviews with clinical participants who mobilize mindfulness with children in health contexts adds value to exploring how mindfulness is mobilized with children, and specifically the differences in understandings, scope, uses, functions and approaches of mindfulness. The semi-structured interviews were employed with three rationales in mind. Firstly, to uncover how mindfulness can be mobilized with children in a clinical context. Secondly, to explore how a clinical context shapes the deployment of mindfulness. Thirdly, to capture the views and possible value teachers of mindfulness have concerning the mobilization of mindfulness with children.

In order to address the three rationales of the semi-structured interviews, the interview questions were carefully constructed. This process was guided by Charmaz’ (2006) grounded
theory interview questions. This comprised of framing initial open-ended questions, intermediate questions, and ending questions (Appendix A). For example:

| **Initial open-ended semi-structured questions** | Can you outline and describe the mindfulness practice at UCSD Centre for mindfulness, what is the process?  
What is the purpose of mindfulness at the centre? |
| **Intermediate semi-structured questions** | Does mindfulness replace a past or existing medical, remedial practice?  
What triggered the implementation of mindfulness here? |
| **Ending semi-structured question** | Do you feel there is a field that imperatively requires the practice of mindfulness? |

The interviews created an opportunity for the clinical teachers of mindfulness to convey in-depth accounts of how and why mindfulness in mobilized with children, how mindfulness purportedly supports the emotional wellbeing of children, and why clinical teachers of mindfulness consider mindfulness to be valuable for children. Charmaz’ (2006) grounded theory approach to interviewing provided an opportunity for the views, experiences, and actions of the participants to become illuminated. This particular approach facilitated questioning that was sufficiently broad to cover a range of views and experiences, however also narrow enough to elicit more detailed and complex information (Charmaz, 2006). The interviews ranged from thirty-five minutes to one hour in length.
Strengthen and limitations of semi-structured interview method

A key strength of the semi-structured interview approach was the flexibility of the process. The order of the questioning, and the opportunities to emphasize and elaborate on important areas created ample opportunities to elicit rich data. During the interview process, I sought to create an informal interaction that reflected more of a conversation. There was some structure to the interview process as I had the interview questions to hand; these questions however guided the interview process. Charmaz (2006, P.29) points out that an interview guide with well-planned open-ended questions can increase confidence and greater opportunities to gather data. A flexible approach is argued to produce dynamic, holistic data (Arskey and Knight, 1999). Open questions were strategically used to encourage the participants to provide detailed, in-depth responses. This approach provided the participants an opportunity to express their ‘voice’; the questions stimulated a multitude of reactions and responses. Depending on the focus and content of the question, participants provided lengthier and, sometimes, passionate responses, however there were also shorter responses, which offered factual information. The variation of responses and reactions from the participants suggest that participants felt free to express themselves.

The exploratory and flexible nature of this interview approach is argued to reflect inter-subjectivity. On one hand the interviews sought to establish inter-subjectivity, however, on the other hand, the conversation needed to be directed in order to address the rationale and aims of the interviews. Edwards and Holland (2013, P.5) warn, during the interview process, both the interviewers and interviewee’s “concepts, ideas, theories, values, experiences and multiple intersecting identities” are present. Although I sought to capture the reality of the
teachers of mindfulness views and experiences, the interview experience is shared. Spradley (1991) argues, “interviews are not entirely objective or subjective, they are an inter-subjective process”. Edwards and Holland (2013, P.85) further argues, “researchers are not neutral and objective enquirers in qualitative interviews. Language itself has an inherent instability, with contested meanings and ambiguity” (Edwards and Holland, 2013, P.52). Furthermore, Denscombe (2010, P.193) warns, “Objectivity can be hard to achieve through interviews”. Although the teachers of mindfulness shared accounts that were predominately subjective, the interview process can be considered an inter-subjective process. It was therefore important that I guided and directed the interview process in such a manner that the rationale and aims of the interviews could be addressed.

This set of interviews was carried out in the clinical center for mindfulness. Conducting the interviews in a setting that was dedicated to mindfulness, can arguably add to enriching the data retrieved (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006). For example, additional opportunities for probing and ‘mini-tour’ type questions occurred as a result of the interviews taking place in the setting dedicated to mindfulness (Spradley, 1991; DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006). On the other hand, limitations may also be inherent. Due to the context of the interviews, the diversity of the views expressed from the participants may have been limited (Edwards and Holland, 2013).

3.6.2 Phase 2 of data collection: Skype interviews

The second phase of data collection was the Skype interviews. These interviews were employed with eight primary school teacher participants who mobilized mindfulness in
primary schools. The Skype interviews ranged from thirty-five minutes to one hour in length. Table 2 provides further details on the Skype interview participants.

Although theoretically and methodologically this method held similarities to the semi-structured interviews, this method was employed with two different rationales. Firstly, the participants mobilized mindfulness in primary school settings. The context was therefore educational, and not clinical. This allowed opportunities to uncover how participants mobilize mindfulness in a classroom, explore how educational contexts shape the deployment of mindfulness, and capture the views and possible value participants have for the mobilization of mindfulness. The second rationale concerned the locations of the primary schools: New York, San Francisco, Boston, and Texas. These locations were selected in order to access cross-cultural data (Davidov, et al., 2018). Typically, locations such as New York and Boston are renowned to be fast paced, competitive, uninhibited cultures that are somewhat progressive in their societal trends and policies, however these locations typically promote traditional and conservative values (Rentfrow et al., 2013). On the other hand, San Francisco is renowned for its open-mindedness, innovative and often radical societal trends (Rentfrow et al., 2013). Texas, however, is generally more conservative and values traditionalism; a large portion of the population identifies with Christianity (Rentfrow et al., 2013). It was hoped that interviewing participants from these locations could shed light on the diversity and multiplicities of how and why mindfulness in mobilized with children, and explore the views and experiences of primary school teachers of mindfulness, cross-culturally.
The Skype interview questions were also guided by grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006). Initial open-ended questions, intermediate questions, and ending questions thus framed the Skype interview questions. Seeing as there was a difference in the rationale for the Skype interviews, in comparison to the semi-structured interviews, the questions were therefore adjusted accordingly (Appendix B).

The interview questions aimed to elicit in depth-details regarding participants reasoning for implementing mindfulness in their classrooms, what tools and resources they are relied on, the benefits and or limitations in mobilizing mindfulness, and the purported changes and outcomes for children. Examples of these questions were:

| Initial open-ended Skype interview questions | How did you hear about mindfulness? What drew you to it?  
How long have you been implementing mindfulness in your classroom? |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Intermediate Skype interview questions      | Is mindfulness solely implemented to facilitate and increase educationally related skills and abilities in students?  
What do you see as the outcome of implementing mindfulness with the students in your classroom? |
| Ending Skype interview question             | Do you consider the mindfulness practice a priority in your classroom/school? |

During the interview process, I also sought to create an informal interaction that reflected more of a conversation. Again, some structure was present as I had the interview questions
to hand, however the questions provided guidance and direction for the interview process.

Seeing as the grounded theory approach to interviewing was influenced by a constructivist approach, the interview process drew out participants’ definition of terms, situations, and events, and sought to tap into their assumptions, implicit meanings (Charmaz, 2006, P.32).

**Strengths and limitations of Skype interview method**

Seeing as the participants were geographically dispersed, conducting the interviews by way of Skype allowed the researcher to access to data with few financial, or logistical restrictions. The Skype interviews, therefore, enabled the “transcendence of boundaries of time and space, reaching beyond the constraints of face-to-face contact” (Edwards and Holland, 2013, P.26).

Although the Skype interviews were carried out in real time, this approach did, however, have some limitations. It is argued that the socio-emotional signals that would inherently be reciprocal signals between the researcher and participants can be impeded when usual audio-visual techniques, such as Skype, are used (Edwards and Holland, 2013). Although the visual clues were projected, the socio-emotional distance of the Skype method was distinctly prominent.

Alternately, strengths may be inherent within the socio-emotional distance. It can be argued that the Skype approach to interviewing “can act as an equalizer” in that social-emotional ‘noise’ is reduced (Turner and Boynes, 2002). Therefore, the extent to which socio-emotional context is attenuated in the Skype interviews; the Hawthorn effect is likely to be reduced (Edwards and Holland, 2013).
As the Skype interview participants were geographically dispersed, this can provide opportunities for the spatial triangulation of data. Spatial triangulation occurs when data is collected from more than one cultural and geographically divergent context (Denscombe, 2010; Rucks-Ahidiana and Bierbaum, 2015). Opportunities in the data for spatial triangulation can address the rationale for this method; to access cross-cultural data, and thus illuminate the diversity and multiplicities of how and why mindfulness in mobilized with children, and explore the views and experiences of primary school teachers of mindfulness, cross-culturally (Davidov et al., 2018).

3.6.3 Phase 3 of data collection: Focus Groups

The third and final phase of data collection was the focus groups with child participants. Four focus groups were employed with children, who experienced mindfulness pedagogies in the primary schools in New York, San Francisco, Boston and Texas. The focus groups ranged from thirty-five to fifty minutes in length. A total of twenty-four children (six per focus group) participated. Table 3 provides further details of the child focus group participants.

There were two main rationales for conducting child focus groups. Firstly, this study explores how mindfulness is mobilized with children. It was, therefore, important to collect data from children’s perspectives, so as to explore how children view and participate in mindfulness pedagogies. It was anticipated that collecting data from children would capture data outside the bounds of adult thinking, and thus offer opportunities to explore unexpected differences in the perceptions of adults and children (Mishna et al., 2004).
Christensen and Prout (2002) argue that children are competent persons and equal actors, and thus, important subjects in research. In line with Christensen and Prout (2002), this study does not emphasize children as vulnerable and dependent objects of research, and therefore, did not seek to collect data, which concerns children, solely from adults.

Secondly, grounded theory is concerned with capturing multiple understandings and experiences of a new phenomenon. Therefore, collecting data from child participants, while the other methods in this study have obtained data from adult participants, contribute to exploring the multiplicities and diversities of mindfulness with children (Charmaz 2006; Creswell, 2006).

I designed the focus group procedures in such a way as to enable the primary school teacher participants to conduct them in their own classrooms. Having teachers conduct the focus groups does raise issues about the degree to which children would be free to express themselves and about the quality of the focus group method. The key advantage of this approach was that it allowed the research project to overcome logistical restrictions faced by the researcher. The researcher assessed the quality of the conduct of the focus groups. This involved ensuring the teachers were aware of the clarity of purpose of the focus groups, the appropriate environment (the classroom) was used, the resources (video camera) were sufficient and functioning, the teachers had the abilities to skilfully moderate and ensure the child participants were safe and comfortable during the focus groups, and finally that data was handled carefully through encrypted files that were only accessible to the teachers and myself.
In order to address the two rationales of the child focus groups, the interview questions were constructed with consideration for acknowledging ‘children’s voice’ (Christensen and Prout, 2002). When developing the focus group questions, Charmaz’s (2006) grounded theory interview questions influenced this approach of data collection, however a modified version was created (Appendix C). It is important to consider that research with children may not always be conducted in the same manner as with adults (Gibson 2012; Hill 2005). The questioning for the focus groups, therefore, did not include intermediate questions or ending questions. The questioning for the focus groups solely consisted of initial open-ended questions. Seeing as participants were in reception classes, and therefore between the ages of four and five, the questions were constructed in an explicit, concrete and condensed format (Hill, 2006). For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial open-ended focus group questions</th>
<th>What does Mindfulness do?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How does it make you feel?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you think other people should try Mindfulness?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is your favourite kind of Mindfulness exercise?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Strengths and limitations of child focus group method**

I was instrumental in the procedural and design of the focus groups, however due to logistical restrictions, the teachers of mindfulness carried out the focus groups in their classrooms. Although the children may have felt more comfortable participating in the focus
groups with their teacher leading, rather than myself, this methodological design however has some limitations. Firstly, it can be argued that there is an unequal power relation between adults and children. An adult-centered society results in the child being under the control of the adult (Punch 2002). The deconstruction of children’s marginal position and related power inequalities is a fundamental issue when researching children (Punch 2002). There is reason to believe that the children in the focus groups may be exposed to persuasion and manipulation from their teachers when participating in the focus groups (Hill 2005). The child participants may have been motivated to impress their teacher by providing answers, which they believe will be viewed positively (Punch, 2002). This can consequently influence the data (Mayall, 2000). It is therefore important to recognize and consider that adult power relations may have influenced the data obtained from the child participants.

It is also important to consider the age of the participants in the focus groups. All the participants were between the ages of four and five. Seeing as the focus groups were captured through a video camera, in addition to the focus group experience being a relatively unfamiliar situation, some children were understandably distracted. Their verbal competence, in terms of their verbal skills, understanding the questioning, and abilities to articulate their responses is an undeniable factor in collecting data from children (Hill, 2005).

This issue may, however, be reconciled through triangulation of data sets. Skype interviews were conducted with the teachers of mindfulness who lead the focus groups, thus when discrepancies and issues of interpretation arise, triangulation of Skype interview data may strengthen validity and confirm the findings (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Additionally, the schools where the focus groups took place were consistent with where the Skype interviews took place. It is, however, important to note that triangulating with data drawn from adult
participants has limits as to the value in securing children’s views. All data with children faces similar issues and this study is using the methods that are currently deployed with children within the childhood research community (Christensen and Prout, 2002; Hill 2005; Gibson 2012). This design rationale further encouraged cross-cultural data to be collected, and therefore contributed to illumining the multi-layered and complex nature of mindfulness (Davidov, et al., 2018). Maintaining consistency among methods can contribute to the reliability, validity and accountability of findings (Mertens, 2015).

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

3.7.1 Data analysis: rationale for selection

The selection of an appropriate data analysis method is an important part of the research process. There are, however, several approaches to qualitative data analysis, which represent “a diverse range of epistemological, theoretical, and disciplinary perspectives.” (Guest, MacQueen and Namey, 2012, p.3).

The methodology of this study was informed by grounded theory, however, the analysis stage called for an analytical method that drew out themes to capture participants’ diverse understandings and experiences of mindfulness, rather than generate theory. Sokolowski (2000) points out that although the goal of grounded theory analysis is to produce theory, some researchers, however, seek to identify patterns within the data. Such truncated analyses produce conceptual thematic findings rather than substantive theory (Sokolowski, 2000). The key focus of grounded theory is to understand a new phenomenon and develop new
theory about the phenomenon or process (Saldana, 2016 and Charmaz, 2006). Indeed, the aims, research questions, and methodology of this study compliment the exploration of a new phenomenon (mindfulness with children), however the latter goal of grounded theory, producing theory, did not compliment the outcome of the analysis in this study. As stated earlier, there are commonalities among grounded theory, thematic analysis, and interpretative phenomenological analysis (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). It is important the choice of data analysis approach be based upon the goals of the research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). The goal of the analysis was to capture and address a wide range of diverse understandings and experiences of mindfulness, rather than generate new theory about mindfulness (Saldana, 2016 and Charmaz, 2006).

Inductive thematic analysis was thus chosen as a suitable fit to the aims and goals of the analysis: to identify commonalities, differences, and tensions in experiences and understandings across participants and contexts in relation to a shared phenomenon (mindfulness with children). Employing thematic analysis in the context of grounded theory enabled themes to be drawn out of the rich and detailed accounts of data, and addressed the research questions and aims systematically (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis can be applied across a range of epistemologies and research questions (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Due to the flexible nature of thematic analysis, it is not bound by theoretical restraints, and thus compatible with the constructionist paradigm (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

3.7.2 Data analysis: thematic analysis

The data sets were analyzed by using a six-phase process. This process was guided by phases outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), as shown in table 2.
### Table 2: The phases of Braun and Clarke’s thematic analysis (2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Description of the process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Familiarizing yourself with your data</td>
<td>Transcribing data, reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Generating initial codes</td>
<td>Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Searching for themes</td>
<td>Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Reviewing themes</td>
<td>Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set generating a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Defining and naming themes</td>
<td>On-going analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Producing the report</td>
<td>Selection of vivid, compelling extracts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.7.3 Thematic analysis process

The first phase of analysis consisted of transcribing the interviews from the Dictaphone (see appendix D for example). Pseudonyms were assigned to the transcripts. Transcription of the data involved paying attention to the verbal nuances, both implicit and explicit (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Once all the interviews were transcribed, the transcripts were read through several times. This enabled the researcher to become familiar with data.

The second phase involved generating initial codes. The purpose of these codes was to capture important features and occurrences in the data that were considered valuable in addressing the research aims and questions. The initial codes captured extracts within the data and were noted on the right side of each transcript. For example, ‘approach adopted in mindfulness program’ and ‘different forms mindfulness can take’ (see appendix E).

For the third phase, the initial codes were organized into potential themes. The themes were noted on the left side of the transcript. For example, ‘the hybrid nature of mindfulness’ and ‘mindfulness can be used to support a range of children’s needs’ (see appendix E). This occurred in an inductive manner in order to identify commonalities across the data. During this phase the codes were compared and contrasted, which resulted in some codes being merged or made redundant.
The themes were reviewed and refined in phase four. The purpose of this was to verify that each theme spoke to a distinct commonality within the coded extracts. Duplicate themes were either removed or merged, while redundant themes were discarded. It was important that the themes jelled together meaningfully, however clear and identifiable distinctions between themes were prominent (Braun and Clarke, 2006). It was during this phase that theoretical saturation was reached as no remaining accounts within the data formed the themes (Guest et al., 2012).

During phase five, thematic maps were then generated (see appendix F for example). Thematic maps created a rich overview of the themes, whereby the themes were then clearly defined and named.

Finally, phase six involved re-reading the coded extracts within the contexts of the themes. This was an iterative process of moving between the coded extracts, research questions, and literature in order to ensure the extracts offered vivid and compelling participant accounts.

The analysis process occurred over 33 days. Throughout this process, the researcher revisited previous analysis sessions. This upheld the iterative approach to the analysis. Reflexivity was also maintained throughout the data collection analysis process. This involved the researcher consistently locating and relocating themselves in the analysis process, and maintaining dialogue between the methodology, particularity the participants and the research questions (Hammersley, 2012). This occurred through the use of self-reflective notes. Engaging in supervision discussions and exploring the emerging findings also encouraged reflexivity.
3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical protocols were adhered to during all stages of this study. This involved gaining ethical approval from the Ethics Committee at the University of Warwick, in addition to adhering to the British Educational Research Association ethical guidelines for educational research (2011). This sub section will address the key ethical issues in this study: informed consent, respect for participants’ rights, and privacy and confidentiality.

Informed Consent

Informed consent concerns the knowledge and consent of those involved in the study. Due to the nature of this study, the collection of data was carried out in the United States of America. It was, however, imperative I maintained and adhered to the same ethical standards as research conducted in the UK (BERA, 2011). Due to the locations of the settings and the methods by which data is collected, consent was sought initially via email communication and “additional regulations and cultural sensitivities of the host jurisdiction were observed” by the researcher (BERA, 2011). Transparency in communication was adopted throughout the research process in order to foster mutual respect, confidence, and rapport between the participants and the researcher.

The consent for data collection was systemically and sequentially carried out. Table 6 outlines when consent was obtained to carry out each stage of data collection.

**Table 6: Obtaining Consent for Data Collection**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Action taken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semi-structured interviews</td>
<td>May 2015 prior informed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During January 2015 request for permission to collect data commenced. This involved applying for ethical approval from the University of Warwick (Appendix G). Following this, requests for permission to conduct the semi-structured interviews and Skype interviews commenced. This involved developing participant approval forms (Appendix H). The key objective for developing the participant approval form was to highlight the nature of the study, identify the fundamental rights of the participants, and thus seek approval and obtain written agreement from the participants. The participant approval form therefore outlined the “clear appreciation and understanding of the facts, strengths and limitations, and future consequences” of the research process and study (Bell, 2005, P.44).

Participant approval forms were sent to the participants via email (See table 5). This process sought and obtained prior informed consent. For the semi-structured interviews, although prior consent was obtained, upon arrival at the setting, the participant approval form was presented to the participants and written consent was obtained (BERA, 2011).

It is however important to note that for the focus groups, this method included child participants. Mishna et al., (2004) warn that qualitative research with children in particular has the potential to present unique ethical issues for the researcher. A different consent process and protocol was therefore adhered to. BERA (2011, P.7) points out that, “researchers must seek the collaboration and approval of those who act in guardianship or as
‘responsible others’ for the welfare and wellbeing of the participants”. Furthermore, BPS (2014, P. 16) highlights that “when research involves data using audio-visual device, where an individual may be identifiable, it is important to consider additional informed consent procedures”. A separate consent form was, therefore, required to secure consent from the teachers of mindfulness leading the focus groups, senior staff members and parents (Appendix J). Written parental consent is required for children (under 16 years of age) to participate in research (BPS, 2014).

A section of the focus group consent form stated “An agreement of this consent maintains that the Mindfulness practitioners’ seek consent from children involved and share a clear dialogue of the focus group objectives and outcomes with the children” (see Appendix J). The focus group consent form, therefore, demonstrated respect for children through consulting them in regards to their willingness to participate (assent) in research, once their parent or guardian had provided consent (Mishna et al., 2004). Although, in the first instance a child requires the consent of a responsible caregiver, when consent is given, the child can still refuse to participate through the assenting process (Mishna et al., 2004). ‘Opt-in’ consent was provided by all parents/guardians.

**Respect for participants’ rights**

As recognized by the British Educational Research Association (BERA) an ethic of respect involves the reciprocal discourse and dialogue with the absence of personal, social or political prejudice, bias, and discrimination in which the researcher and participants operate. This ethic of respect thus applies to both the researchers and participants (BERA, 2011).
An ethic of respect was consistently held paramount throughout this study. During the semi-structured interviews and Skype interviews, I was consistently aware if participants expressed an uneasiness or sensitivity during any stage of the data collection. I recognized that if participants expressed concerns regarding their safety and protection, adjustments would be made and alternative options would be made available. I maintained the responsibility, as a researcher, to ensure participants were protected from any harm (HPMEC, 2006).

For the focus groups, children’s assent was sought, and therefore, recognized children’s rights. Articles 3 and 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child were adhered to in this method. Article 3 requires that in all actions concerning children, the best interests of the child must be the primary consideration. While, Article 12 requires that children who are capable of forming their own views should be granted the right to express their views freely in all matters affecting them, commensurate with their age and maturity (BERA, 2011, P.7).

**Privacy and confidentiality**

A fundamental ethic of respect involves the anonymity and privacy of participants (BSA, 2017). The data obtained from all the methods of data collection were treated with the utmost confidentiality and anonymity. Pseudonyms were used for the all the participants’ names. The identification of the settings in which participants were affiliated also remained anonymous. Audio recordings of interviews and audio-visual recordings of focus groups were stored on an encrypted laptop, and deleted from the Dictaphone following transcription. The researcher only accessed the audio and audio-visual recordings. Prior to
conducting the research, the implementation of General Data Protection Regulation took place (BSA, 2017).

The opportunity for participants to view the data specific to their contributions was offered. This promoted transparency of communication and further recognized the ethical considerations throughout the data collection process (BSA, 2017).

**Conclusion**

This chapter has provided the rationale for the methodology of this study and this chapter has also described the research design for this study. The constructivist paradigm was adopted in this study in order to capture the multiple realities that can exist in participant’s experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The use of grounded theory complimented this study in providing a ‘bottom up’ approach to explore and identify the emerging themes and patterns that characterize the mobilization of mindfulness with children and the diversity of approaches in the settings under study (Thomas, 2017). Descriptions of the participants, the recruitment process, participant samples, and eligibility criteria were also highlighted in this chapter. Both adult and child participants were selected for this study in order to explore the diversity of understandings and experiences of the mobilization of mindfulness with children. Three methods for data collection were, therefore, chosen: semi-structured interviews, Skype interviews, and focus groups. Each method was employed at a different phase of the study and addressed different objectives. The semi-structured interviews were employed in San Diego. The semi-structured interviews facilitated an exploration of how and why mindfulness is mobilized with children in a clinical context, how a clinical context can
shape the deployment of mindfulness, and what value participants associate with the
mobilization of mindfulness with children. The Skype interview method, however, gained
insights into how participants mobilize mindfulness in a classroom context. This method
also facilitated an exploration into how educational contexts can shape the deployment of
mindfulness, the views and possible value participants connected to the mobilization of
mindfulness. The Skype interviews were employed with participants who were based in New
York, San Francisco, Boston, and Texas. It was anticipated that interviewing participants
from these locations would encourage cross-cultural data collection, and thus illuminate the
diversity and multiplicities of the mobilization of mindfulness with children (Davidov, et al.,
2018). Child focus groups were the third method employed in this study. Child focus groups
were chosen as they served the needs of the study for collecting data from children’s
perspectives, capturing multiple diverse understandings and experiences of a new
phenomenon, and potentially offering opportunities to explore unexpected differences in the
perceptions of adults and children (Creswell, 2006; Mishna et al., 2004; Charmaz 2006). As
pointed out previously, this study does not categorize children as dependent objects of
research, and therefore, chose not to collect data, which concerns children, solely from
adults (Christensen and Prout, 2002). This chapter also discussed the rationale for using
inductive thematic analysis in this study. Inductive thematic analysis was guided by the needs
of the study and thus chosen to identify commonalities, differences, and tensions in
experiences and understandings across participants and contexts in relation to the shared
phenomenon of mobilizing mindfulness with children. Inductive thematic analysis aligned to
the context of grounded theory as this form of analysis facilitated themes to be drawn out of
the data, and addressed the research questions and aims systematically (Braun and Clarke,
2006). Finally, the ethical considerations of this study were examined at the end of this
chapter. The standards and processes involved in participant’s informed consent, respect for participants’ rights, and privacy and confidentiality were highlighted. Although data collection was employed in the United States of America, this study adhered to the same ethical standards as research conducted in the United Kingdom (BERA, 2011).
4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Four presents the findings from the inductive thematic analysis. The overarching themes and subthemes will be presented with thematic maps and excerpts from the interview and focus group transcripts in order to further illustrate the findings. It is important to note that participants are making claims, giving reports, and providing accounts as to what they might claim is the ‘truth’ about mindfulness. The overarching themes are broad, umbrella, themes that have captured important features in the data in relation to the research questions, and represent a level of patterned response or meaning within the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Subthemes are, thus, “...themes-within-a-theme”, which aid in substantiating the overarching themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.92). Participant anonymity has been upheld by using pseudonyms. All participants have been assigned a number, in addition to a prefix, which identifies them as a clinical participant (CP), a primary school teacher participant (TP), or a child participant (CHP).

The inductive thematic analysis produced forty-four codes across the eighteen transcripts. During the data analysis process a higher number of codes were created, however, the codes were either removed or merged into other codes due to redundancy or irrelevance to the research questions. Each data set for each method was conducted separately. Following the
creation of themes from each method, comparisons across data sets (clinical participants, primary school teacher participants, and child participants) were drawn out.

**4.2 Presentation of Themes**

Three overarching themes were generated from across the data sets: (1) Understandings of mindfulness with children; (2) How mindfulness pedagogies are mobilized with children; and (3) Why mindfulness is mobilized with children. As this is an exploratory study, comparisons between themes and the identification of patterns in the data will also be presented in this chapter.

**Theme 1: Understandings of Mindfulness**

This theme encapsulates participants’ views on what they define mindfulness to be. Although all adult participants work with children in either clinical or education contexts, participants expressed diverse understandings of what mindfulness is and represents when mobilized with children. There were participants who had singular views of mindfulness, however there were also participants who had multiple, and arguably, contradictory understandings of mindfulness. For some participants mindfulness is understood as cognitive, intellectual, or behavioral process, whereas some participants referred to mindfulness on a more grandiose scale describing mindfulness as a social movement. This sub-theme, will therefore, shed light on the diverse understandings and views of mindfulness that emerged.
**Mindfulness as a behavioral intervention**

Some clinical participants referred to mindfulness as an intervention to develop or change children’s behavior. These participants spoke of the implementation of mindfulness as an alternative to using medication to facilitate change in children’s behavior:

“Mindfulness is a non-pharmacological option. Mindfulness is a behavioral intervention for children” (CP 1-1)

“It’s a clinical intervention, well in my practice with children, to bring out behavioral change and to develop healthier ways of living day to day” (CP 1-5)

“Mindfulness is the development of altruistic behavior” (CP 1-4)

The three participants quotes presented above relate mindfulness to behavior. There are, however differences in their understandings of mindfulness. The first quote implicitly compares mindfulness to medicine and indicates that while both have their place there might be circumstances in which mindfulness is more appropriate. The second, however, shares the view that this is a clinical intervention that works through behavioral change. The aim would seem to be not just to intervene once as you might with a medicine, but to intervene over time and to change a way of life, perhaps by enabling the patient to ‘intervene’ in ‘themselves’ ‘day to day’. Both the first and second participant’s quotes above envisage an exchange of agency or self-efficacy that is not available with a prescribed medicine where the patient remains reliant on the prescribing medic. When we reach the third participant’s quote, there is yet another version of behavioral change. This is not just about stopping ‘negative’ or pathologized behaviors, however, rather about promoting a specific kind of value-oriented and other directed behavior and with lasting results.
Mindfulness as a tool

There were, however, both clinical and primary school teacher participants that identified mindfulness as a ‘tool’.

“Mindfulness can be a tool to recognize and manage emotions and behaviors” (CT 1-3)

“Mindfulness can be a tool for regulating emotions and improving overall wellbeing” (TP 2-1)

“Mindfulness is an excellent tool that aids in the development of children’s social and emotional skills” (TP 2-7)

The metaphor participants use to refer to mindfulness as a tool places participants in a position of making informed choices about which tool to use in which circumstances. This metaphor of a tool suggests that participants construe themselves as experts in deployment of this tool, however, at the same time also allow the possibility that children may use the tools themselves. By identifying mindfulness as a tool these participants suggest that mindfulness is ‘work’, and thus a suitable and practical way to address the objective, make the change, and achieve the expected outcomes with no complications. Although participants describe mindfulness as a tool, they explain that the purpose of that tool is to achieve outcomes: improving emotional control, regulating emotions, improving wellbeing, and the development of social and emotional skills. The first participant characterizes mindfulness as a tool to distinguish and pinpoint the emotions and behaviors that need to be curtailed. They seem to suggest that there are boundaries in which emotions and behaviors successfully occur, and mindfulness is a mechanism to reinforce these boundaries. The second participant also expresses the notion that mindfulness can rein in emotions. However, for this participant, this is not just about emotions, this is about the positive transformation of children’s wellbeing. It seems once certain emotions have been shaped
and adjusted accordingly, an improved child has the opportunity to develop. When we get to the third participant, they see mindfulness as a tool that can encourage the development of specific types of skills. This is not just about any skill; this is only about the developments of skills that are assumed to be absent or inactive, which are called social and emotional skills.

These participants share the assumption that children typically require some form of emotional and behavioral refinement and improvement. Overall, this set of interview excerpts suggests that mindfulness as a tool in order to change and fix children emotionally and behaviorally. The set of interview excerpts that follow, however, focuses on teaching and learning.

There were participants who still referred to mindfulness as a tool. These participants prioritized using mindfulness to benefit children’s attainment in school:

“I brought mindfulness into the classroom to aid the teaching and learning process. It’s a tool I use frequently. It can help students with their learning experience and attaining their learning goals. Everyone learns differently, it’s a tool that aids in regulation, calming and attention skills. This all contributes to enriching students personal learning process and experiences” (TP 2-6)

“I see it as a learning facilitation tool for kids. It is a tool to help them regulate and control their impulses. It is an academic support tool to help them reach their goals” (TP 2-8)

“Mindfulness is one of multiple tools I draw on to facilitate learning. I have lots of tools I use, but mindfulness enables me to teach regulation and calming skills. (TP 2-5)

The first participant presents mindfulness as a means to accelerate teaching and also children’s overall learning trajectory. This participant infers that they rely on mindfulness in
order to aid both their teaching and children’s learning. Although the first participant in the set above acknowledges that not all children learn the same way, they claim that mindfulness can produce a range of skills and abilities that can not only help children reach their academic goals but also aid in making the overall learning experience pleasant. The second participant in the set above also suggests mindfulness can facilitate learning for children, however they seem to infer that mindfulness can also contain children’s emotions and behavior that can impede their learning. It seems the second participant relates to mindfulness as a form of scaffolding to secure, usher, and essentially keep children on ‘the right track’ so that they can achievement those academic goals. Once we reach the third quote, for this participant mindfulness is one tool that is amongst a range of tools, however, mindfulness is one that can achieve control and calmness in the classroom. The participants in this set speak of the outcomes of mindfulness that can facilitate children’s learning and thus add value across the curriculum. Perhaps these participants favour the mobilization of mindfulness with children as they subscribe to the idea that calmer children can learn more efficiently and effectively. Furthermore, it was apparent that the participants who were predominately focused on academic attainment were based in private schools. Perhaps, due to the expectations from management, stakeholders, and parents, these participants might feel they need to reach for a tool, in which they view as practical, for the purpose of facilitating children’s learning and attainment in school. Participants also seem to access mindfulness as a tool that can ensure perimeters and thus keep in check that the appropriate emotions and behaviors are present in order for children to successfully reach those academic goals. Mindfulness is seen as ‘work’ in these excerpts as thus has specific goals, outcomes and purposes such as emotional wellbeing and attention skills. This set of interview excerpts thus raise the questions of who is the agent of change in the mobilization
of mindfulness with children, and where do the goals expected from mindfulness derive from? The focus the participants have for facilitating children’s learning and attainment in school is a response to the circumstances they find themselves in, in school. Overall, the participant’s accounts in the excerpts above present mindfulness as a means to reach particular goals and thus direct children’s learning, and encourage self-control. These quotes essentially present mindfulness as being drawn into a very particular construction of what a child’s life and motivations should look like.

It is important to note that there was a clinical participant who disputed mindfulness being a tool. This excerpt is an exception to tensions noted in the interviews of whether mindfulness is seen as ‘work’ or ‘not work’. This participant explicitly stated that mindfulness is not a tool:

“Mindfulness is not a tool; it is taught to embody the mindfulness practice.” (CP 1-2)

The participant quoted above considers mindfulness as rather a practice that is developed from within a person. For this participant, mindfulness is presented not as an external tool that is accessed by choice and that remains outside of the person. This participant, however, presents mindfulness as a practice that becomes internalized and personified. This is about mindfulness not being a disposable tool, however, about mindfulness being embodied, non-instrumental and becoming an inherent part of a person.
**Mindfulness as a strategy and a skill**

Offering a slightly different take on mindfulness, there is a participant who refers to mindfulness as a strategy that they use amongst other strategies:

> *Mindfulness approaches are one of many strategies I use in my classroom. I have been teaching forever and do love this additional strategy for the classroom*” (TP 2-2)

This participant has a lot of experience as a teacher and presents mindfulness as a strategy that has its place in their classroom as a means to reach desired outcomes. This participant reports that they have found a place for mindfulness amongst all the other approaches they have deployed over the years. Instead of identifying mindfulness as an intervention or a tool, perhaps this participant frames mindfulness as a strategy in order to guard against the idea of imposing and enforcing children’s learning. This participant may view a strategy as still giving children agency, a form of shared effort in learning, and opportunities for goal directed self-control. Additionally, identifying mindfulness as a strategy also infers that there is are clear, feasible objectives that will result in expected outcomes.

There were primary school teacher participants that identified mindfulness as rather a skill for working through challenging situations or emotions:

> “Mindfulness is a coping skill. It’s a wonderful skill to have when coping with stress. Often people forget children experience forms of stress too, or they assume children don’t experience any stress. This is far from the truth” (TP 2-2)
Mindfulness as inherent in humans

Along similar lines of mindfulness being used to contend with stress, one clinical participant reported that mindfulness has the ability to internally shift the association with the entity that is causing the stress:

“Mindfulness contributes to shift the relationship with the stressor” (CP 1-2)

The participant’s quote above suggests there is a relationship between the child and the stress entity. This is about mindfulness having the ability to modify and essentially weaken
the relationship between the child and the stressor. In essence, the participant quoted above presents mindfulness as a means for children to decrease experiences of stress.

Similarly, across participant groups, there were participants who believed mindfulness to be already inherent in all humans, however requiring some form of development:

“Mindfulness is a human capacity; it is a greater insight, intuition and awareness, and an emotional piece within everyone. Mindfulness is a human quality that is cultivated” (CP 1-6)

“What mindfulness develops is already in us. It takes mindfulness to stimulate the growth of abilities like resilience, compassion, and self-regulation, which is already in us” (TP 2-3)

“Everyone has some mindfulness in them so yes also teachers and parents can be mindful and feel better” (CHP 4-2)

The first participant in the set of quotes above believes mindfulness is something that resides in all humans; however, in order for mindfulness to be function, it requires some cultivating. This first participant relates to mindfulness as perhaps some form of enlightenment, that encourages a higher cognitive level. The second participant has a similar view; however, they suggest that mindfulness is some form of power or fuel that starts the development of important human qualities. There is a sense from the second participant that mindfulness is waiting dormant to be activated, and once mindfulness becomes activated, it can stimulate important human qualities, that are also waiting dormant inside humans. The third participant also shares the view that mindfulness is present in all humans. This third participant believes that all humans have the opportunity and potential to improve
themselves through practicing mindfulness. Overall, the set of participant quotes presented above, highlights the idea of mindfulness being inherent in all humans, however, in order to benefit from mindfulness, a process involving the stimulation and cultivation of specific human qualities is required.

Pertaining to the idea of mindfulness being inherent in humans, across participant groups it was apparent that participants felt that mindfulness can be used in any place and at any time. The set of quotes from the participants below suggest that environments or resources are not necessarily dependent on the use and function of mindfulness.

“As mindfulness is a human quality, you don’t need to have the perfect conditions, you know, you can tap into this human quality when you are in the car, or even in the presence of a loud busy environment. If anything, it is in those situations when you need to connect with your inner capacities” (CP 1-2)

(Of course, especially for kids, added resources and changes in the learning environment stimulate the learning of mindfulness, but in reality, the only resource you need is yourself. It is the person that is the most important part of participating in mindfulness, the person is what becomes of the mindfulness approaches” (TP 2-5)

“It’s something that is with me all the time and I can use mindfulness whenever I want” (CHP 3-5)

The first quote above infers that because mindfulness is already built into humans, mindfulness does not require the use of external stimuli. In fact, this participant suggests that external stimuli can create unpleasant environments, and it is during those unpleasant situations when accessing mindfulness needed. The second participant shares somewhat of a contradictory statement. On the one hand this participant is suggesting that mindfulness is a
supplementary resource that can enact change in the classroom, and essentially stimulate
learning with children; however, this second participant also has the view that mindfulness is
built into humans. They offer the idea that mindfulness and the human merge and unify,
however, it is the human that enacts and facilitates this process. There is a sense that this
second participant relates maturity to mindfulness and the human. This participant presents
mindfulness as an added resource for children, whereas for adults, this participant presents
mindfulness as a means to evolve and unify. It seems for the second participant they present
mindfulness as being used differently for children than for adults. Perhaps they see children’s
latent development as a factor that dictates how mindfulness can be used and to what extent
it can be used. The third participant relates to an attachment to mindfulness, such as a
safeguarding device or a security blanket. The idea of convenience and accessibility of
mindfulness is also apparent from the third participants’ quote. They speak of having agency
and choice as to whether they access mindfulness or not. In summary, the set of quotes
presented above point to the notion of mindfulness being inherent in humans. The
participants referenced above feel that mindfulness does not necessarily require any
particular settings or resources. These participants, therefore, believe that mindfulness can be
used in any circumstance, and mindfulness is especially helpful in demanding situations.

Mindfulness as a lifestyle

The idea of mindfulness being attached and built into humans continued with several other
participants. It is apparent that there are tensions among participants between the idea that
humans already have mindfulness inside of them and the idea that mindfulness needs to be
added to humans. As presented below, both clinical and primary school teacher participants spoke of mindfulness as an all-encompassing approach to living:

“Mindfulness is a lifestyle, a way to be, a way of living, and not a tool or technique” (ST 2-4)

“If mindfulness is cultivated appropriately, genuinely and consistently, you could actually call mindfulness a way of being, a way of living, a lifestyle. We are all equipped; it’s a matter of personal cultivation. I know many people that would agree with that” (CP 1-2)

Both of the interview experts from the participants above do not present mindfulness as an accessible object that can be used then discarded, they present mindfulness as a means to cultivate a desired lifestyle. This is not just about regulating emotions and developing altruistic behaviors; mindfulness is more than that. There is a sense that these participants relate to mindfulness to be is some form of a micro culture, spiritual or evolved sub group. The second participant, however, suggests that there are particular apt routes and approaches in order for the desired mindfulness lifestyle to develop. The participants above regard mindfulness as having a significant contribution and impact on the lifestyles people lead.

**Mindfulness as a form of intelligence**

Aligned to the idea of mindfulness influencing and contributing to a particular lifestyle, there were clinical participants who related mindfulness to a form of intelligence:

“Emotional intelligence is a cousin or sister or brother to mindfulness” (CT 1-4)
“Emotional intelligence is mindfulness. A higher level of, a higher state of consciousness is developed through mindfulness practices. That higher level of conscious thinking, awareness and gratitude is emotional intelligence” (CT 1-6)

The first participant above suggests that there is a relationship between mindfulness and emotional intelligence. For this participant mindfulness and emotional intelligence share some distinct similarities and a collective relationship. However, for this participant, mindfulness and emotional intelligence are not identical, they exist and function separately. On the contrary, the second quote makes clear that for this participant mindfulness and emotional intelligence are synonymous, they are not separate. This second participant thus shares the view that a process takes place with mindfulness and that process results in a higher, informed level of intelligence. The interview experts above have shown that there were clinical participants who related mindfulness to a form of intelligence. How they presented the association between mindfulness and intelligence was, however, different. For the first participant although mindfulness functions separately, they believe mindfulness and emotional intelligence share a collective relationship. Whereas for the second participant mindfulness and emotional intelligence exists and function synonymously. Interestingly, it was apparent that primary school teacher participants did not use the term ‘intelligence’ in their interviews. Although the primary school teacher participants can be referred to as educators, working in educational institutions, with the objective to educate and therefore enhance students’ intelligence, the term ‘intelligence’, was however not used. Clinical participants, on the other hand, felt very strongly about mindfulness and its association to emotional intelligence.
Mindfulness as a growing social movement

Moving beyond the notion of participants relating mindfulness to being inherent in humans or mindfulness having associations to emotional intelligence, across participant groups the reference to mindfulness, as a growing social movement was clear:

“The mindfulness movement is at a boom. It has gained momentum and is continuing to be implemented into society. There is a lot of hype around mindfulness and it’s a frenzy state right now” (CP 1-2)

“Mindfulness is most certainly an emerging movement. I believe the mindfulness movement has emerged because it has been lacking in our greater society and we are in need of a balance. Also, Eastern and Western cultures are blending more and more now” (TP 2-4)

“The world is at a tipping point. The amount of suffering is far greater than human mindful awareness. Suffering has triggered the development and implementation of the mindfulness movement in society. It is the core of wisdom and beneficial to human kind. The mindfulness movement has transformed to meet the suffering of humans. It has become secularized in the West” (CP 1-4)

The interview excerpts from the participants above claim mindfulness to be something larger than a practical piece of a curriculum to facilitate children’s learning and development. These participants suggest that mindfulness has permeated into society. The participants above, therefore, speak about mindfulness as a form of status or obligation. It may be that due to the altruism and humanity related development associated with mindfulness, participants feel compelled to be part of and contribute to the dissemination of mindfulness. For instance, the first quote from the participant above emphasizes that mindfulness is a movement, and there is also a lot of attention and excitement surrounding this movement. For the second quote, this participant suggests that mindfulness has permeated into society as a result of disjointed societies that are lacking in the fundamental offerings of mindfulness. This
participant, however, infers that mindfulness, or at least part of mindfulness derives from Eastern cultures, and that combination of Eastern and Western cultures is what has created the mindfulness movement. The third quote from a clinical participant shares a fearful and somewhat pessimistic view of humanity and the future of humanity. For this participant they, therefore, believe that the mindfulness movement has been brought about in order to remedy and alleviate the increasing ills in humanity. Overall, this set of interview excerpts emphasizes that for these participants mindfulness represents a growing social movement, which has come about in society as a means to heal suffering and generate a societal balance.

There were clinical participants who emphasized the multi-remedy nature of mindfulness:

“Mindfulness is to relieve suffering. It’s a means of contending with pain and illness. I mean that not only on a physical level, however, also a psychologically level” (CP 1-3)

“It is to heal and or relieve psychological related dysfunctions or concerns. Mindfulness generally treats and improves” (CP 1-5)

In the quotes presented above, these participants talk of mindfulness remedying suffering that is both physical and psychological. Both participants present mindfulness as having the ability to relieve suffering that derives from different areas. These quotes emphasize the versatile and multifaceted nature of mindfulness and the range of benefits it can supposedly offer.
Mindfulness as a form of Zen

It is important to note that one participant from this study acknowledged and described historic roots of mindfulness:

“Mindfulness derives from Zen, the beginners mind, it’s all about contemplation, contemplative practices. The teachings from Zen, focusing on breathing, stilling and calming the mind, recognizing thoughts and thought processes, self-regulation, you know, the list going on and on. That’s Zen!” (CP 1-2)

For this participant referenced above, the teachings of Zen, which include contemplative practices, are synonymous with mindfulness. There is a sense that this participant considers that contemporary mindfulness has been adapted and modernized from Zen in order for mindfulness to be accessible and suit the needs of modernized and Westernized societies.

The quote presented above illustrates that for this participant, mindfulness has a history that derives from Zen. However, this was the only participant who spoke of the history of mindfulness.

Theme 1: Summary

Overall, theme 1 of the findings has revealed participants’ diversity of expression for identifying mindfulness. Although all the participants work with children, albeit in different capacities and contexts, there are distinct differences in understandings of what mindfulness is. Key tensions are present in this theme: mindfulness is a tool and mindfulness is not a tool; mindfulness is something added and mindfulness is inherent in people; mindfulness is about individuals and mindfulness is a social movement. The professional culture, such as clinical settings or private school versus public school settings influenced how participants frame mindfulness. It is evident from this theme that although there are some similarities in
how participants identify mindfulness, some understandings are contradictory. While some participants strongly believe mindfulness is a tool that has primarily academic benefits, others believe it can have both academic and wellbeing benefits for children. There were also participants who considered mindfulness as already built into humans; they believed it was a matter of stimulating and cultivating those human qualities. On the other hand, some participants felt that mindfulness is incredibly influential and powerful to the extent that it can become a way of living, a lifestyle, and some participants described Western societies' surge of interest into mindfulness as a social movement. There is a diverse range of definitions and understandings of mindfulness described by participants. It is possible to apply a secular-religious frame to make sense of the recent history of the adaption and adoption of mindfulness, however that does not suggest that the findings necessarily follow this pattern. In sum, a good deal of the variation in the general cultural reception of mindfulness and the ways that the concept has been adapted and adopted, if not all, lies along a secular-religious continuum:

Theme 1: Figure: Continuum of participant’s understandings of mindfulness
**Theme 2: How Mindfulness Pedagogies Are Mobilized with Children**

This theme captures the approaches participants take in order to mobilize and assimilate mindfulness pedagogies into their classrooms. As with the diversity of expression for defining mindfulness in the previous theme, this theme reveals that there are multiplicities of approaches to mobilizing mindfulness with children. There are, therefore, multiplicities of resources, environments, and approaches that can facilitate the mobilization of mindfulness pedagogies. This theme illustrates some of the resources, environments, and approaches used when mindfulness is mobilized with children. The primary school participants offered insights into how mindfulness pedagogies can look within the context of a classroom, and in doing so specific mindfulness pedagogies were described. It is important to note that participants did not disclose if they were formally certified or trained to teach mindfulness. Participants were also not directly asked in the interviews as to whether they had received formal training to teach mindfulness in schools.

This theme is divided into three sub-themes: mindfulness pedagogies and resources; teaching approaches used to facilitate the mobilization of mindfulness pedagogies; and the
adaptability and assimilation of mindfulness.

Theme 2: Sub theme 1: Mindfulness pedagogies and resources

This sub theme captures illustrations of the mindfulness pedagogies that are mobilized by primary school teacher participants. The participants also described the resources and environments that are involved in the pedagogies. This theme emphasizes how varied and diverse mindfulness pedagogies can be. A mindfulness lesson may appear as a simple instruction from a teacher reading a book to students. Mindfulness can also be presented in a dedicated space in a classroom with a range of comforting materials and resources, whereby students choose when they want to spend time in that dedicated classroom space. The thematic map below provides an overview of the findings in this sub-theme.

Thematic Map of Theme 2: Sub theme 1: Mindfulness pedagogies and resources
Participants mentioned the ‘Peace Corner’, which also can be known as ‘the Safe Space’. This can be described as an allocated space whereby children can access and use calming and comfortable resources such as pillows, blankets, calming audio resources, and objects from nature. This form of pedagogy was described as an option for children to use when they feel the need to use it. This mindfulness approach was also described as remaining relatively consistent within the classroom, however the ways in which the Peace corner was presented varied. The interview excerpts presented below illustrate what this form of mindfulness can entail:

“I have a Peace Corner in my classroom and I couldn’t imagine not having it. It’s a staple in my classroom now but themes and resources can change. It’s reassuring for students to know there is a safe area to connect
with yourself, find your balance and get into a mindset that helps you learn and make the most of the day at school” (TP 2-3)

“Our Safe Space is loved by the kids. We have lots of calming and relaxing resources, which help kids regulate, find a sense of balance and comfort, clear their minds. It’s fascinating to see how often kids use the safe space. We allow kids to bring in items from home such as pillows or blankets, books; you know familiar items that remind them of home. There’s also some bells and chimes that were donated from the music teacher. As much as possible I try to have fresh flowers or I bring in ferns, you know parts of nature brought inside to add to the balanced, relaxing environment” (TP 2-5)

For the participants above, the naming of this form of mindfulness differs. The underlying objective of this mindfulness pedagogy is, however, similar. Both participants emphasize that this space in the classroom is a means for children to find balance, connect with themselves and regulate themselves. Although the second participant explains in further detail the resources that are in the ‘Safe Space’, from both quotes there is a sense that these spaces in the classroom remain in the classroom for quite some time. The first participant speaks of the ‘Peace Corner’ as a ‘staple’ in the classroom, while the second participant speaks of a range of items in the ‘Safe Space’ including, notably natural resources from outside. Both of these comments thus emphasize the long-term nature and physical environment of this mindfulness pedagogy.

Participants also mentioned Mindful Listening as another mindfulness pedagogy:

“A strategy I like to use is vibra-tone. It gains the kids attention and helps centre them” (TP 2-6)
“Sometimes vibra-tone works well, other times taking the students for a Mindful listening lesson outside works well. Listening to the birds, the wind, walking through dry leaves, or even the sound of cars passing by are all useful ways to practice Mindful Listening” (TP 2-7)

Both participants in the quotes above explain that they use an audio resource such as ‘Vibra-tone’ for mindful listening lessons. This resource is similar to a Buddhist bell or a chime that when it is rung, the sound can reverberate for approximately thirty seconds. For the second participant they also speak of using the outdoors as a means to facilitate mindful listening pedagogies. It was apparent that the ‘Vibra-tone’ resource was very popular amongst the primary school teacher participants. This form of mindfulness, mindful listening, is aligned to Kabat-Zinn’s (1994) mindfulness practices. Although these participants were based in major cities, which were thousands of miles apart; the same resource was used to facilitate a mindfulness lesson.

Rather dissimilar from mindful listening, there were primary school teacher participants who described a mindfulness approach, which represents a form of yoga:

“Not sure if you have heard of ‘Super Stretch?’ Yes? Well, it’s a form of mindfulness that is centred around kids focusing on their breathing. They take different positions and stretch their bodies and balance. The kids love it, they have a lot of fun with it. They move, take poses, and stretch like different animals...cats, cows, frogs, elephants. Not only is a great for regulating and calming, I think it also contributes to their coordination and motor skills” (TP 2-3)

For this participant, the ‘Super Stretch’ approach to mindfulness offers numerous benefits for children, including regulation and coordination skills. Although the participant’s quote above lists some methods/goals of mindfulness such as focusing on breathing and
regulating, this quote claims that children seem to thoroughly enjoy this approach to mindfulness.

Contrary to a mindfulness approach that represents a form of yoga, one participant commented on using ‘HeartMath’ as a resource to help children learn about their emotions through games and music:

“I use HeartMath as a form of music therapy and mindfulness with my students. HeartMath offers music and games that are specifically for young children” (TP 2-1)

For the participant quoted above, ‘HeartMath’ is about ensuring the mindfulness pedagogy offered a therapeutic experience for children, in addition to a pedagogy that was geared towards engaging children through music and game activities, which were at children’s specific age level.

In remaining with music-related mindfulness pedagogies, there was a sense that there was ample room for flexibility in terms of the materials and resources that can facilitate and contribute to and pedagogies. There were participants who spoke of music acting as a channel to filter mindfulness teachings:

“I recently started playing guitar as a hobby. So, I thought why not bring in into the classroom! So yeah, I often bring my guitar to school and use it in my different mindfulness lessons help to regulate kids and just switch things up a bit” (TP 2-8)

“I have chimes, also a triangle instrument. Actually, there are quite a few instruments now in the Peace Corner. What else is there, oh, some mini bells too” (TP 2-3)
The first quote presented above highlights that the guitar is something that the teacher enjoys playing; therefore, the teacher was motivated to include the guitar in the mindfulness teachings. Using the guitar as a resource to facilitate the mindfulness lesson is also about ensuring children are engaged and motivated to participate in mindfulness, and essentially develop the desired outcomes. The second quote is different in that the teacher isn’t directing the use of the musical instruments. The second participant above indicates that they are providing music-related resources, however, those resources are left in a common area for children to use at their own discretion. Between the two quotes presented above, there is a difference in the agency offered to children. The first is a guitar that does not offer explicit choice or agency, however in the second quote, the musical instruments are placed in a mutual location, and thus offers children a sense of agency.

There were also participants who mentioned the use of books as a resource to teach mindfulness:

“I use books including 'Moody Cow Meditates'. This is a great little light-hearted story that helps kids understand that everyone has bad days when everything seems to go wrong. It gets kids thinking about being aware of their feelings and how to centre themselves” (TP 2-7)

The quote above emphasizes that the power of storytelling can offer children opportunities to relate to negative situations and thus understand emotions and learn techniques to regulate themselves. There is also a synthesis of old and new in this participant’s statement; traditional storytelling with a book combined with the contemporary teachings of emotions and emotional regulation. For this participant, the book is about using a practical and
established resource while creating a particular learning experience so that children increase their knowledge of emotions and emotional functioning.

A further resource that participants spoke of using was a ‘snow globe’:

“I use the snow globe as a resource to facilitate learning of brain functioning. Visually for kids, this is a very helpful way to teach them how the brain can react, and how mindfulness can come in to help those impulses, and encourage emotions and behavior that is more suited for learning and for the classroom” (TP 2-5)

In order to explicitly teach mindfulness to children, the participant quoted above uses the snow moving inside the snow globe as a visual metaphor for teaching children how thoughts, feelings, and emotions can be overwhelming. Once the snow settles in the snow globe, this can be an additional teaching and learning opportunity as the settling of the snow can be used as a visual metaphor to facilitate learning around regulating, thinking clearly, and understanding feelings and emotions.

Similar to the snow globe, another participant commented on using a glitter ball:

“I have a glitter ball which I use when I notice students are wound up and struggling to regulate. It is a simple tool to quickly get students to focus, calm down, and bring them into the present moment, you know encourage the importance of what is happening in the here and now. You can buy a glitter ball, you can also make them, yes, they are relatively easy to make out of glass jars. Just need some glue, glitter, glass jar and some colouring I believe” (TP 2-7)

The quote presented above highlights that for this participant, the glitter ball is a practical ‘quick fix’ tool to access in order to encourage students to regulate themselves. The
participant also describes how the mindfulness glitter ball tool can be made. In essence, this participant presents the glitter ball as means to facilitate mindfulness teachings, specifically regulating, focusing, and calming down.

Furthermore, there were other primary school teacher participants who explained that they access several online teacher-training resources:

“When I blend in mindfulness into my teaching I feel I am spoilt for choice for online teacher resources. Just to name a few, you've got ‘MindUp’ and ‘Mindful Education’ those are both great teacher resources. Oh, and also ‘The Way of Mindful Education’. This is like a curriculum, very flexible and doable. It presents mindfulness as literacies. It has some wonderful lessons for children to be more mindful about having compassion for themselves, but also understanding and caring about the environment, climate change for example” (TP 2-8)

“There are curriculum guides and teacher resource tool boxes online. ‘MindUp’ offer great resources and it’s easy to implement. It’s for K-12. If a teacher is just new and starting to implement mindfulness in their classroom, this resource, ‘MindUp’ is a great place to start, even to only get ideas” (TP 2-5)

Both participant quotes presented above indicate that for teachers there are multiple online resources and toolboxes available. For the first participants’ quote, they can pick and choose and essentially construct a mindfulness pedagogy or lesson that can be blended into their current curriculum. Additionally, this participant indicates that they can choose what the objective and goals of the mindfulness lessons entail such as compassion, caring for the environment or climate change. The second participant quote above emphasizes similar benefits and options from online mindfulness resources, however they highlight that these resources are age level specific and practical in the sense that implementing the online
resources into the curriculum is straightforward. The online resources that the participants have accessed indicate that have they been influenced by some of the prominent and established mindfulness organisations and programs. It does, however, seem that the participants were not influenced by Langer’s concepts of ‘mindfulness/mindlessness’ or Weick’s five characteristics of ‘mindful organising’.

**Theme 2: Sub-theme 1: Summary**

This sub theme has provided an insight into how mindfulness pedagogies can look within the context of a classroom. Mindfulness is not always a singular pedagogy, resource or environment. As presented in theme 1, participant’s understandings of mindfulness were diverse. Theme 1 found that some participants understood mindfulness as a tool, a strategy or a skill, whereas some participants described mindfulness as inherent in humans, a form of emotional intelligence or even a lifestyle. It is, therefore, not surprising that for this theme, exploring how mindfulness pedagogies can look within the context of a classroom, mindfulness pedagogies were found to be diverse and numerous. In terms of the resources used to mobilize mindfulness pedagogies, the resources appear to be plentiful and, for the most part, easily accessible. It seems teachers use resources and create environments that will be fun, engaging, and appealing for children. Some participants obtained resources from their own homes, and also encouraged their students to do the same, while, some participants found that online resources were helpful to integrate mindfulness lessons into their classrooms. In terms of how the pedagogy was presented to children, this was highly varied. Mindfulness could be presented as an instruction from the teacher. For example, a teacher visually demonstrating brain activity and brain functioning while shaking a snow
globe or a glitter ball. Mindfulness can also look more conventional with a teacher reading a book to their class. Alternatively, mindfulness can involve more physical activity where children hold poses, stretch and engage in physical activities that resonate with yoga.

Mindfulness can also be embedded, maybe even in a permanent location within a classroom. Participants spoke of having ‘Peace Corner’s and ‘Safe Spaces’ with a range of material and resources to help children relax and regulate themselves throughout the day. Overall, this theme indicates the hybrid nature of mindfulness pedagogies. Participants have highlighted that mindfulness pedagogies and lessons can be extremely flexible, accessible, and simple to construct. A teacher may wish to create a mindfulness lesson using more ‘grassroots’ and original resources such as a guitar or flowers and ferns. However, on the other hand a teacher may wish to access a more standardized resource and use an online teaching guide from a mindfulness organization.

What is, however, contradictory from these findings in comparison to theme 1 is that some participants in theme 1 believed that no special environments or specific resources were needed to mobilize mindfulness. Theme 1 found that some participants felt that specific environments or resources are not necessarily dependent on the use and function of mindfulness. However, the findings in this theme have uncovered rich descriptions of very special environments that participants have set up with key resources as a means to mobilize mindfulness pedagogies. Although these findings are contradictory, these opposing positions or preferences for mobilizing mindfulness based on the interviews, do not seem to create difficulties in the way mindfulness is used or how it functions. Perhaps an underlying common thread of theme 1 in relation to this theme is the educability of mindfulness. There can be diverse understandings of mindfulness, and specifically the contexts in which
mindfulness is deployed can be diverse, and thus shape how it looks. As shown in theme 1, mindfulness does not necessarily need a context, however as found in this theme, mindfulness can have a hybrid nature and thus call on a diverse range of resources and approaches.

Theme 2: Sub theme 2: Teaching approaches used to facilitate the mobilization of mindfulness pedagogies

In addition to the resources and environments that can facilitate the mobilization of mindfulness with children, participants spoke of specific teaching approaches that they adopt when mobilizing mindfulness pedagogies. Participants highlighted factors that can inhibit and influence mindfulness pedagogies, such as time of day and weather conditions. Autonomy for children was also commented on as an important part of some mindfulness pedagogies. Additionally, creativity and trial and error were also brought up as an essential part of mobilizing mindfulness pedagogies with children. This sub theme speaks to the educability of mindfulness and thus highlights the approaches participants employ in order to mobilize mindfulness with children, in addition to what can influence their decisions in mobilizing different forms of mindfulness. The thematic map below provides an overview of the findings in this sub-theme.

Thematic Map of Theme 2: Sub theme 2: Teaching approaches used to facilitate the mobilization of mindfulness pedagogies
The primary school teacher participants felt that the time of day can influence the mindfulness pedagogies. For example, particularly in the morning:

“The mindfulness practice, ‘Generating gratitude’ is a great way to start the day! It puts us all in a positive and refreshed frame of mind to start off the day” (TP 2-6)

For the participant quoted above, they felt that mindfulness approaches that offered opportunities for children to talk about what they were grateful for was a beneficial approach, particularly at the start of the day. For this participant, they believed that this approach to mindfulness has the potential to create a positive and harmonious classroom environment.

Similarly, a child participant also expressed how the grateful pedagogy in the morning contributed to an increase in positive feelings:
“When we share our grateful mornings, I can remember my parents making sure I had breakfast. Sharing this with my friends makes me feel good in the mornings” (CHP 4-4)

On the contrary, in the afternoon, or when children had a lot of energy and needed encouragement to focus on tasks, participants explained that ‘body scan’ and ‘anchor breathing’ mindfulness pedagogies were used:

“After lunch I often use body scan or anchor breathing to help kids regulate. They have been running around, socializing, you know, burning off steam. But some can be over stimulated or not transition too well from a lunch break to sitting and reading or focusing on an art project. That transition can take a while for some kids to settle” (TP 2-4)

For the participant quoted above, it is apparent that using the ‘body scan’ or ‘anchor breathing’ approach is specifically suitable when children are over-stimulated. The participant highlights that at different times throughout the day children may be over-stimulated and therefore require some assistance in regulating. The quote above highlights that for this participant ‘body scan’ or ‘anchor breathing’ are approaches that are specifically geared towards situations when children are rather energetic, and in need of encouragement to regulate, decrease their energy, and ease during times of transitions. There is a sense that the quote above speaks to an issue for teachers across the years; that is, how to render children to learn minute by minute and how to encourage children to focus. Perhaps in the context of education, mindfulness is seen as a new answer to an old problem.

Participants also spoke of the weather seasons and the time of a year influencing their decisions in selecting mindfulness approaches. For example, one primary school teacher
participant explained that a more physically active approach to mindfulness was geared towards the winter season:

“The ‘Super Stretch’ activities in winter are fabulous. Stretching and holding different positions gets kids moving and warmed up. In the winter here, kids often don’t get outside as much, they may be more sluggish and irritable, you know. They probably don’t get as much physical activity as they should, and you know, obesity in childhood is an increasing health concern now, right” (TP 2-6)

The quote above reinforces the idea of mindfulness approaches and pedagogies contributing to a range of outcomes. For this participant, they present mindfulness as a means to warm children up in the winter time, in addition to increase their energy levels and prevent irritability. There is a sense that for this participant, they are offering children an alternative to being outside and thus providing children with the opportunity to continue to engage in physical activities even though due to the weather, children are spending more time indoors. Furthermore, this participant also expresses concerns for children’s health, specifically obesity in childhood. The motivations and objectives underlying these particular participants use of ‘Super Stretch’ may have associations to their views and concerns surrounding childhood obesity. Furthermore, on a practical level, the motivations underlying this participants use of ‘Super Stretch’ may be for the immediate and everyday classroom experience of solving key issues in professional educational practice; classroom management, children’s energy levels, and children’s productivity.

Conversely, a primary school teacher participant referenced that the summer season influenced their choice of mindfulness approach:

“If kids are hot and bothered I will often try and fit in ‘the body scan’. Kids can stay seated or lay on the floor if they choose. Find a position where they are comfortable. It gives them a chance to check in with
themselves and notice how they are feeling. It’s a quick and easy way for kids to accept and be ok with the feelings of being hot and bothered in the summer” (TP 2-4)

The quote above emphasizes that weather conditions can in fact influence what teaching approach and mindfulness pedagogy teachers implement. For this participant, they present the mindfulness pedagogy, ‘the body scan’ as a means for children to connect with themselves and accept their current situation of being hot and bothered in the summer. As ‘the body scan’ approach to mindfulness offers children a sense of grounding and regulation, for this participant the ‘the body scan’ approach compliments the summer season encourages changes that can benefit children, specifically in the summer season.

In participant interviews, student autonomy was found as an important component to successfully mobilize mindfulness. Several primary school teacher participants highlighted that mindfulness is an available option for students, and therefore, a choice for the students:

“Mindfulness needs to be presented as a positive tool and not a means to control kids. The locus of control needs to rest with the kids, not the teacher” (TP 2-2)

“The Peace Corner is a perfect example of students excising control and autonomy as to when they choose to participate in a form of mindfulness” (TP 2-3)

Both of these quotes presented above are about encouraging children to take charge of their development. In essence, the participant’s quotes above show that mindfulness can be presented in different forms, such as the ‘Peace Corner’, as a means to for the teacher to encourage interdependence rather than dependence in how children learn.
Aligned to participants highlighting student autonomy as an important component to successfully mobilize mindfulness, there were also participants who described that children’s involvement in mindfulness activities was not forced. It appears that the participants are providing children with agency. However, a certain kind of agency is preferred for children and essentially useful to the school environment, that is the agency of self-regulation. The quotes presented below indicate that children were provided with the option to participate in mindfulness:

“When I am working with children, I ask them to join me in a practice, I don’t tell them they have to participate in mindfulness. That’s the beauty of mindfulness, it’s always on offer, it’s always available, and when you accept the invitation it is your experience” (CP 1-2)

“When I blend in a mindfulness practice or decide to switch things up, I invite the class to get involved. Mindfulness is not an authoritative top down, part of teaching. It’s the complete opposite” (TP 2-7)

Along similar lines, there was a primary school teacher participant who mentioned that for children with special needs, options to accommodate them, whilst including them in the mindfulness activity was part of their approach:

“I have had some students in my class who have been diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, for example. It is a lot to expect from these students to remain seated of focus during certain mindfulness sessions. I make accommodations for those students. If they do not wish to participate, or can only do so for a shorter period of time that is of course ok” (TP 2-7)

For the participant quoted above, this is not just about providing children with agency, providing options and accommodations for children with special needs is also about
inclusivity and empowerment of all children involved. The quote above emphasizes that there is no right or wrong way in which children can participate and engage with mindfulness in the classroom. It is however important to note that although mindfulness pedagogies can be diverse, and approaches to mobilize those pedagogies can be diverse, there is a common thread within the findings that suggest mindfulness should boost children’s educability by shaping the kind of agency they perform.

Additionally, there were child participants who spoke of the option to spend time in the ‘Peace Corner or Safe Space’ as a helpful and positive option:

“In my classroom we have a place that’s called the peace corner. The teacher always gives us the choice. It is not really like the rest of the classroom. We just spend time in there to feel happier. This can happen at any time. It’s nice to have a place in the classroom like this” (CHP 2-4)

“The safe space is my favourite place in the classroom. Our teacher lets us go there when we want, especially when we are frustrated or not having a good day. It is there for us to take some time out and relax a bit” (CHP 3-1)

For the child participant quotes above, it is evident that they value and appreciate the option of having an area in the classroom, which can be accessed easily, in order to gain a sense of happiness and relaxation. The first participant above emphasizes that there is a difference to the ‘Peace Corner’ and to the remainder of the classroom. There is a sense that for this participant, they associate the ‘Peace Corner’ to having happier experiences to that of in the main classroom. The second participant quoted above explicitly states that the ‘Safe Space’ is their favourite aspect of the classroom. Again, similar to the fist quote, this second participant speaks of a positive associating to their experiences of relaxing and regulating in the ‘Safe Space’.
Aligned to providing children with agency in mindfulness approaches, a clinical participant reinforced the importance of learning mindfulness through a self-directed way:

“We all have the capacity to learn through mindfulness. Not in a didactic manner though. That is not at all what mindfulness is about or represents” (CP 1-5)

For this participant, they feel that fundamentally mindfulness is not taught didactically. This participant emphasizes that everyone has the abilities to engage and participate in mindfulness; however, there are authentic manners in which mindfulness should be taught.

A primary school teacher participant brought up the importance of explicitly teaching children mindfulness:

“Telling students to focus and calm down does not work. Students need to be explicitly taught and given the opportunity to develop those skills through a range of mindfulness lessons and approaches. I incorporate different mindfulness lessons into my teaching of brain activity and teach students how to understand emotional and behavioral reactions. This helps with how they learn at school. We all hold the ability to be more mindful and it’s a matter of teaching students how to develop mindful skills” (TP 2-8)

The participant’s quote above suggests that formally and verbally directing children to pay attention and regulate their emotions is not useful. Their perspective is aligned to both Langer (1997) and Rechtschaffen (2014) who speak to the attention-distraction-otherwise attracted dichotomy. For this participant they believe that when children are explicitly giving the opportunities to develop skills associated with focusing and calming down, this is by way of mindfulness was explained as beneficial. It is apparent that from this participant’s account
that they value active learning approaches that can engage children, rather formal didactic than approaches as a means to facilitate mindfulness pedagogies.

Along similar lines of encouraging active learning in order to engage children in mindfulness pedagogies, there was a child participant who spoke of teaching involvement:

“Our teacher does Mindfulness with us so it’s for anyone, not only for kids. She joins in with us” (CHP 4-5)

The quote above highlights that for this child participant, they have experienced mindfulness pedagogies whereby their teacher has joined in with the mindfulness activities. This child participant thus shares the view that mindfulness is for everyone. Particularly for children aged four to five, if their teacher is actively involved in the mindfulness activities, this may encourage children to participate and help children to further understand the goals and objectives of the mindfulness activities.

Although the findings in this theme emphasize that teachers are taking the initiative, accessing resources, and essentially teaching themselves, the quote below infers that there are standards in which teachers should be meeting:

“Mindfulness for children starts with the teachers. If teachers can practice mindfulness themselves, understand and immerse themselves in it. If teachers are on board with the practice of mindfulness it can trickle down and teachers can then transfer the skills, or specifically the practice, so that children can also benefit” (CP 1-3)

The participant’s quote above suggests that although there is flexibility and innovativeness in how mindfulness in mobilized, it is also important that teachers have the abilities to appropriately and authentically teach mindfulness practices to children. This quote however
raises a tension. There is a notion of mindfulness being a ‘professional’ skill the teacher needs to be trained to teach, however, also a personal practice, which does not require professional training, and can thus be implemented in very idiosyncratic and diverse ways.

Primary school teacher participants also commented on creativity and trial and error as a further teaching approach that can be used to facilitate mindfulness pedagogies:

“Creativity, thinking out of the box as not all students may take to the mindfulness practice. I would say that teachers need to be of course creative and willing to use like a trial and error approach with mindfulness use” (TP 2-3)

“Oh, wow, creativity is a must I’m forever adapting and trying newer things. Especially at this age level, you have to continuously keep the kids engaged and excited and wanting to be involved. That’s how and when the learning happens. Nothing is ever in stone. A mindfulness teaching may work one day but not for the next day. That’s just how it goes” (TP 2-6)

“As I mentioned, I have a tool bag of strategies for teaching children to regulate. Mindfulness is a go to strategy, most definitely. But trying different ways, removing, and changing things up, you know, the kids don’t take to every approach or transition every time. So, adding in more or different resources keeps kids engaged and interested” (TP 2-8)

The participant’s accounts presented above emphasize that it is important for teachers to be creative and test out different ways of mobilizing mindfulness pedagogies. The first quote highlights that for this participant not all children learn the same way and it is therefore important that teachers are open to being creative and using trial and error approaches when mobilizing mindfulness pedagogies. For the second quote, this participant also speaks of
creativity as an important element in using mindfulness approaches in the classroom, however, this participant talks of the adaptability of mindfulness as a means to keep children engaged and exciting in the mindfulness teachings. For this participant, they believe that when children are interested and keen to participate, this is when learning occurs for children. In the third quote, this participant they are frequently trying new approaches and changing approaches in order to ensure children remain engaged and interested. It is apparent that this participant values the options and flexibility that mindfulness provides for their teaching approaches; resources can be added and removed in order to suit the needs of both the teacher and student. In essence, these findings indicate that primary school teacher participants implement trial and error approaches and creativity when mobilizing mindfulness as a means to engage children and facilitate learning. The three participants accounts presented above point to the diversity in the teaching approaches used to facilitate mindfulness pedagogies.

**Theme 2: Sub-theme 2: Summary**

This sub-theme has provided an insight into some of the approaches primary school teacher participants adopt in order to mobilize mindfulness. It is apparent that there is a range of influences that can prompt primary school teacher participants to mobilize diverse forms of mindfulness. For instance, the time of day and even weather conditions can trigger, impede, or influence the use of certain mindfulness pedagogies. Some participants spoke of warming children up during the winter with ‘Super Stretch’, while another participant mentioned using ‘Body Scan’ in the summer to cool down and calm down children. Providing children with the option to practice mindfulness was also commented on, as was explicit instruction
for teaching children about brain activity and functioning. There were some child participants who found that having the choice and opportunity to access and use options such as the ‘Peace Corner or Safe Space’, was beneficial for them to calm down and relax. An issue of agency is at play in this theme. Some adult participants spoke of providing children with agency, however, it seemed there was a preferred agency of self-regulation that complimented and aligned to the expected school conduct and behavior. It was also noted that teacher involvement in the mindfulness practices were important in order for children to properly understand and engage in the practices. Additionally, creativity and trial and error were also mentioned as important factors for mobilizing mindfulness. These data suggest that participants consider mindfulness teachable. A tension was however found between mindfulness being a ‘professional’ skill the teacher needs to be trained to teach, however, also a non-professional practice, which does not require professional training, or commitments to a standardised curriculum. The findings, therefore, emphasize that in practice, mindfulness implementation involves a creative approach from teachers. Their approach is adaptive to the range of resources and environments available and time of day and weather conditions. Overall, this theme has brought to light the educability of mindfulness and thus captured some of the approaches primary school teacher participants employ when mobilizing mindfulness. It is apparent that the approaches are diverse in order to mobilize mindfulness, keep children engaged, and facilitate learning.

Similar to theme 1, there is a distinct commonality of the diversity in how mindfulness is mobilized with children. Theme 1 revealed that participant’s understandings and identifications of mindfulness were diverse and also contradictory. There were participants
who identified mindfulness as a tool, a skill, a strategy, or a lifestyle, among others. The theme previous to this theme indicates the hybrid nature mindfulness pedagogies can have. Mindfulness can be mobilized in a simple manner with very few resources, mindfulness can represent yoga movements, or mindfulness can be an elaborate and long-term location within a classroom. Due to the diversity in how mindfulness can be identified, mobilized, and the differences in contexts that mindfulness requires, or for some participants context that mindfulness does not require, it was expected that this theme would showcase multiple teaching approaches used to facilitate mindfulness. Perhaps what participants saw mindfulness as, in addition to what resources and contexts they chose to present and mobilize it with, influenced their choice and preference of teacher approaches. For example, if a teacher saw mindfulness as a strategy to regulate children, they may notice that towards the end of the school day during the winter season children are lacking in energy and motivation. The teacher may then decide to use ‘Super Stretch’, however to keep children interested, the teacher uses ‘Super Stretch’ in the gymnasium, instead of the classroom, and also incorporates music, instead of having silence. This teacher in the example, therefore identifies mindfulness as strategy, this mindfulness strategy is influenced by the time of day and the weather season, and this teacher draws on creativity and trial and error by incorporating music and the gymnasium as a means to keep children engaged and interested in the mindfulness strategy.

When reflecting on the earlier themes presented in this findings chapter, there are certainly diverse instances and features within the mobilization of mindfulness with children. Not only can the resources, environments, and context differ, the teaching approaches can differ,
and the agency provided to children can appear to be subtly covert or explicitly overt. 

Although these diverse instances of mindfulness speak to the educability of mindfulness, these findings also speak to the flexible, hybrid nature to mindfulness. Exploring the flexible and adaptable nature of mindfulness further, the following theme will shed light on participant’s views and experiences of the assimilation of mindfulness.

**Theme 2: Sub theme 3: The adaptability and assimilation of mindfulness**

When participants were asked about how mindfulness was mobilized and assimilated into their classrooms and teaching approaches, several participants spoke of how flexible and adaptable mindfulness pedagogies can be. This sub theme thus emphasizes participants’ views and experiences of assimilating mindfulness and reinforces the flexible nature of mindfulness pedagogies. The thematic map below offers an overview of the findings that will be further presented in this sub-theme.
Using the ‘Peace Corner as an example, one participant emphasized how mindfulness can continuously change and evolve in their classroom:

“The Mindfulness techniques in my classroom are constantly changing and evolving. I have a Peace Corner and the theme changes every month or so. Sometimes in a color scheme, other times it could be a science topic, I often put students art work in there. At times I have just had a pure nature outdoor type theme. Mindfulness practices are incredibly flexible and can be tailored to fit almost any situation” (ST 2-6)

As the participant above emphasizes, mindfulness has the ability to change and involve. For this participant, they are able to tailor mindfulness practices in order to fit into existing curriculum or current topics they are teaching children.
More specifically, the participant below further emphasizes how mindfulness can be assimilated and complement a musical context:

“I have changed and adapted most of the mindfulness techniques to fit within what I am already doing within a musical context. Sometimes I weave it in during drumming sessions. I do drum circles with the kids. They get really into it! It can be lots of fun, a great way to focus and regulate. Mindfulness creates a lot of flexibility in how I work it in and shape it in. The types of resources, learning situations, and learning environments that can be created are plentiful. It can be meshed in so well” (TP 2-1)

This participant’s account explains how mindfulness, for them, can be customized in order to suit an already existing music curriculum. For this participant, this is about the malleable and customized nature of ‘mindfulness’. In essence, the account above illustrates that mindfulness is not just about a self-contained, singular pedagogy or teaching approach; it can be moulded into a variety of teaching methods, contexts, and environments.

In remaining with the malleable and customized nature of mindfulness, several primary school teacher participants highlighted that particularly during times of transitions mindfulness can be effortlessly assimilated:

“Mindfulness folds in quite naturally. Especially during transitions. No drawbacks” (TP 2-2)

“If I’m wrapping up a lesson and in the process of getting a different activity started, and I sense the kids are a little restless I will quickly fit in some mindfulness anchor breaths or body scan. Just a few minutes of these straightforward mindfulness practices eases transitions I find” (TP 2-4)
“Changes in activities can be tough. Some students to settle, you know, or coming in from break, even in the morning being dropped off by my parents. These are all situations that can be uneasy and challenging transitions for students this age. I’m noticing that using a mindfulness practice masks some of the uneasiness and unsettled energy and feelings some of the students have. I’ve started using this more and more” (TP 2-5)

The three participants accounts above value the use of mindfulness in order to manage their classrooms and implement a buffer during times of transition throughout the day. For these participants they feel that mindfulness can decrease some of the uneasiness or anticipation children may experience, especially during transitions such as after break time and being dropped off by parents. For the first participant’s quote above, they are confident in mindfulness folding in naturally into their teaching approaches. The second participant’s account draws on the practicality and convenient nature of mindfulness quickly fitting into classroom transitions. Similar to the two previous quotes, the third participant’s quote indicates the benefits of using mindfulness during transitions. This participant has noticed that children’s behavior has improved as a result of mindfulness to the masking children’s feelings of uneasiness.

There were also participants who commented on mindfulness having the flexibility to target specific age groups:

“I adapt a range of mindfulness techniques to target kindergarten children. I gauge what approach to use. Not every technique compliment how kids are feeling. I need to figure out which is the best technique for that day and time, you know. Gauge and adapt” (ST 2-7)

Similar to the participants’ accounts earlier in this theme, this participant also shares the view that mindfulness can be adapted. For this participant, it is however, apparent that they value
the option to gauge and adapt the range of mindfulness approaches so that the techniques are targeted specifically for kindergarten aged children.

There were several participants who felt that recognizing and discerning which mindfulness techniques are appropriate to how children are feel was as an important part of the mobilization and assimilation of mindfulness:

“The mindfulness process in my classroom has somewhat evolved as the kids acclimatize to it” (TP 2-2)

“I'm an experienced teacher so I can gauge what the students will understand and what will inspire and get their attention. I mean, every day is different, and every class is different. Its about gauging what will work best” (TP 2-3)

“I check in with the kids. I get a sense as to how comfortable they are. In my experience you don’t want the kids to get to use to and even bored of the mindfulness practice. You don’t want them doing it if they feel like they have to, you know, like it’s a chore or something. They won’t learn or benefit if that’s the case” (TP 2-5)

“At this age and stage of development, children need to be interested and with something like mindfulness you need to keep their interest and focus, so once that interest starts dropping I either make the mindfulness lesson slightly more challenging, or adapt it” (TP 2-6)

“I integrate many different practices into my approach, depending on what I feel the kids need most in that moment. I go with the kids. It’s the kids that are often the underlying indicators as to decide whether or not, or what approach to use” (TP 2-8)

The accounts presented above emphasize there is an underlying sense of agency that teacher offer children. As stated by the participants above, they attempt to gauge what children will
understand and what children will be inspired by. This is about teachers using the students as a means to indicate if the mindfulness approach is having the desired outcomes, or if the mindfulness approaches needs to be adapted. Participants commented on recognizing when students have become familiar with the mindfulness pedagogy, the pedagogy can then be further modified. In essence, the five participant accounts presented above speak to the flexible and customized nature of mobilizing mindfulness with children.

**Theme 2: Sub theme 3: Summary**

Overall, this sub-theme emphasizes the flexible and adaptable nature of mindfulness. Participants give the sense that mindfulness can neatly blend into the curriculum, and in some cases align and resonate with curriculum goals. Participants did not mention whether mindfulness disrupts their teaching or core curriculum goals; it seems it can be inserted into a range of curriculum contexts. Particularly during times of transitions, several participants spoke of mindfulness being used. They explained that mindfulness was incredibly useful to ease transitions for children. The adaptability of mindfulness in regards to age and level of children was mentioned, in addition to adjusting and altering the mindfulness pedagogies in order to encourage and motivate children. It is apparent that participants value the adaptable and customized nature of mindfulness, and thus use it to their advantage.

When considering the findings in theme 1, some participants identified mindfulness as a skill, a strategy, a tool, inherent in humans, a resource within humans that can be used at any time, a lifestyle, Zen and also a growing social movement among others. What stands out from those identifications of mindfulness is that although participants identified mindfulness differently, this theme shows that across participant groups participants share a common
view that ‘mindfulness’ can be adapted, customized and blended for specific purposes to reach desired outcomes. Due to this nature of mindfulness, the findings emphasize that mindfulness is teachable. Although it can represent a strategy, a skill, tool, a lifestyle, or have historic ties to Zen, mindfulness is capable of being taught. As this theme indicates, participants can tailor mindfulness to suit the needs of children. It is apparent that both theme 1 and theme 2 speak to the transformative nature and perhaps suggest that there is also transformative process of mindfulness at play. It may be that in order for mindfulness to become educable, it transforms to fit onto the needs of those mobilizing it, those receiving or engaging in it, and thus neatly assimilate into the contexts. Furthermore, a prominent commonality from theme 1 is that some participants believed mindfulness can be used at any place at any time, and mindfulness does not always require specific contexts or resources. This finding compliments the overarching finding in this theme that ‘mindfulness’ can have a malleable nature, which can compliment and fit into existing curriculums and specific objectives and goals in classroom settings.

When considering the findings in theme 2 subtheme 1, ‘Mindfulness pedagogies and resources’, this theme further reinforces the diverse and hybrid nature of what mindfulness can look like in a classroom. Theme 2 subtheme 1 found that mindfulness pedagogies are typically not singular, they can be elaborate areas within a classroom or they can be simply mobilized with very few or no resources. For instance, mindfulness pedagogies can be constructed with ‘grassroots’ resources such as flowers and musical instruments, or mindfulness pedagogies can simply entail students sitting quietly with their eyes closed, listening to the rain outside. Relating those findings of the diverse and hybrid nature of what mindfulness can look like in a classroom, this theme compliments the flexible and adaptable
nature of what resources can be used, what environments can be created, and essentially the diversified and transformative nature of mindfulness.

Relating the findings in this theme to the previous theme, ‘Teaching approaches used to facilitate mindfulness pedagogies’, the previous theme showed that providing children with autonomy and a sense of control during mindfulness was important. However, it was also noted that teacher-led and formally instructing mindfulness was also an approach that was used. The previous theme also indicated that trial and error and gauging students’ interest and motivation in the mindfulness pedagogy guided how mindfulness was best mobilized. Furthermore, the previous theme highlighted that the time of the day and weather conditions could impact and, therefore, dictate the approach adopted to mobilize mindfulness. Overall, the previous theme indicated that there is not necessary one singular approach in terms of best practice for mobilizing mindfulness with children.

Correspondingly, this theme illuminates the transformative, customized and evolving nature of mindfulness. This theme specifically emphasizes that mindfulness can be effortlessly assimilated to support children during uncomfortable situations such as transitions, mindfulness can target and stimulate children’s level of interest and level of learning, and mindfulness can be adapted to meet the needs of children. It can therefore be assumed that ‘mindfulness pedagogies’ can have an adjustable and evolving nature, and thus call for diverse approaches to proactively facilitate the pedagogies.

**Theme 3: Why Mindfulness is Mobilized with Children**

This theme captures participants’ views as to why mindfulness is mobilized with children.

This theme, therefore, speaks to the uses, functions, and outcomes for mobilizing
mindfulness with children, in addition to how participants assess the value of mindfulness. This theme also teases out some negative implications of mobilizing mindfulness with children, and presents participants' motivations and justifications for mobilizing mindfulness with children. This theme is divided into five sub-themes. The thematic map below offers an overview of the sub themes what will be further illustrated in this theme.

Theme 3: Sub theme 1: Uses and functions associated with mobilizing mindfulness with children

Although participants felt that mindfulness was valuable for children, differences emerged as to what participants considered to be the uses and functions of mindfulness. There were
participants who reinforced that there are more advantages in mobilizing mindfulness with children in comparison to adults. Although the use of mindfulness with children is relatively new, in comparison to adults, there were participants who explained that teaching mindfulness to children was easier. There were, however participants who felt that regardless of age, everyone can benefit from mindfulness. The development of social and emotional skills was reported as a prominent use for mobilizing mindfulness. There were participants who emphasized that social and emotional skills are required for children in order to succeed academically. Additionally, several participants explained that behavioral and emotional regulation and promoting resilience in children was found as a prominent use and function for mobilizing mindfulness. There were also participants who expressed very high expectations for mindfulness. They perceived mindfulness could positively influence children; to the extent that, mindfulness can positively contribute to their adult lives and essentially contribute to enhancing overall quality of life. The thematic map below presents an overview of the findings from this sub-theme.
During the interviews, when the initial discussion occurred on why mindfulness is mobilized with children, there were clinical participants who emphasized the advantage of mobilizing mindfulness with children:

“It is easier to teach children mindfulness. The younger the better as they do not have the ego in the way. Ego often blocks the abilities of adults and some teens in cultivating the mindfulness practice however children have yet to develop the ego so their ability to grasp the practice and cultivate it is far easier than for adults” (CT 1-2)

“Mindfulness has only developed recently in pediatrics because it was believed that children were not mature enough to learn mindfulness. Children were seen as too immature. In fact, at any age children can practice mindfulness” (CP 1-1)
The participants’ accounts presented above point out that participants believe that due to children’s latent development of traits including self-esteem, self-image, and pride, children are more receptive to learning and embracing mindfulness. This is about the accessibility, usability, and learnability of mindfulness. For these clinical participants they share the view that there are obstacles and restraints when it comes to mindfulness and adults, however for the most part those barriers are not present in children. The second quote emphasizes the assumptions that have been made in regards to mindfulness and children. As mentioned in previous themes, the notion of maturity and mindfulness is brought up. The second participant explains that mindfulness was predominantly adult-centered. However, there seems to have been a shift in the readiness and the assumptions associated with children and mindfulness.

Although there seems to be a distinctiveness and innovativeness in terms of mobilizing mindfulness with children, it was, however, noted across participant groups that mindfulness was accessible and anyone at any age could reap the benefits of mindfulness:

“Mindfulness is not specific to age. It’s not specific to profession. Being a human, whatever age you are, certainly requires skills and abilities to regulate and cope with the ups and downs of life. Of course, some people resort to unhealthy options, but mindfulness offers a healthy option to stabilize and ground yourself and find calm. Mindfulness does not discriminate” (CP 1-4)

“I’m in the position to help teach kids mindfulness, but we can all benefit. It doesn’t mean that if you are an adult that you know how to perfectly deal with stress. That’s when mindfulness techniques can help, you know, and it’s not just sitting on a cushion doing what some consider traditional meditation” (TP 2-4)
“I think parents can use mindfulness too because my teachers do the mindfulness with us and they are around the same ages. Mindfulness can help everyone feel better about themselves” (CHP 3-6)

Although childhood was mentioned as a critical window to implement mindfulness, the participants’ accounts presented above acknowledge that mindfulness is for everyone. As pointed out in the previous theme, mindfulness has an adaptable nature, which can be suited for diverse needs and diverse outcomes. The accounts presented above further reinforce the notion of mindfulness helping all humans.

When primary school teacher participants were asked whether mindfulness was solely implemented with children to facilitate and increase educationally related skills and abilities, participants’ responses revealed that educational goals were more of a secondary objective:

“Yes and no. If kids have the skills to focus on the task, share, work with others and know how to deal with upsetting emotions when they arise, all these social and emotional type behaviors and skills make the learning process easier for everything. Teachers included!” (TP 2-5)

“The goals with implementing mindfulness are mostly social-emotional goals. The purpose for implementing mindfulness is to facilitate educational related skills and also social and emotional skills. Actually, it’s the social and emotional skills that create that stable platform to facilitate educational skills” (TP 2-8)

The participants’ accounts presented above reflect the importance of initially focusing on children’s social and emotional development. Primary school teacher participants felt that developments in children’s social and emotion skills could contribute to children’s educational progress. The first quote draws connections between children’s social and emotional behaviors and skills acting as a facilitator for creating an easier learning process.
Similarly the second quote also emphasizes that there is a connection between social and emotional skills development in children, however, this participant shares the view that social and emotional skills create a stable foundation as a means for children to develop educational-related skills.

Children’s ability to recognize and prioritize their emotional health and wellbeing emerged as a further use and function of mindfulness:

“Mindfulness is implemented with children so they can become aware of their emotional health and wellbeing. Mindfulness is a foundation for children’s emotional health. It is the foundation from their mental health stems from. This has a huge impact throughout their life” (CT 1-2)

“Emotional wellbeing is important to our overall health. I mean, emotional and psychological issues can impact physical health. It’s all connected. Mindfulness opens us up to this awareness and children need to be aware of this and start to take care early on of their emotional wellbeing and work on developing their emotional wellbeing” (TP 2-4)

Both the clinical and primary school teacher participants above express that this is not just about mindfulness being used to facilitate regulated emotions and behaviors within the walls of the classroom. The participants quoted above believe that the mobilization of mindfulness with children is about improvements in children’s overall health, which is believed to have long-term effects and even make a difference into adulthood. Both commented on children being aware of their emotional health and wellbeing.
Across participant groups, behavioral and emotional regulation was found as a prominent use and function of mindfulness. For instance, clinical participants explained that:

“Mindfulness taps into our emotional hub, it aids to navigate emotions. It helps deal with emotions. Children need mindfulness as it provides the ability to remove automatic reactivity; they can develop the ability to choose healthy responses” (CT 1-2)

“Mindfulness is an important way to help children find a sense of calm, stillness, grounded-ness and peace with themselves. Difficult situation will always arise, it’s a matter of children developing skills to manage and control their emotional and behavioral responses and processes. We all have a choice as to how we will react or respond. Through mindfulness we can hone into skills and make them habits to regulate and balance emotions” (CP 1-5)

It was apparent in the findings that several participants spoke of mindfulness regulating children’s emotions in order to direct and change behavior. The ways in which participants articulated behavioral and emotional regulation was somewhat different, however, across participant groups the regulation of emotions and behavior emerged as a central objective for mobilizing mindfulness with children.

Similarly, primary school teacher participants also felt that regulating and finding emotional and behavioral balance was important, and could be cultivated through mindfulness:

“The kids come into kindergarten after being surrounded by overstimulation. They need to learn to be calm and centred. Then they will be more able to learn. My desire is that they be able to be comfortable in their own skin” (TP 2-2)
“Psychological and emotional balance is found through mindfulness practices. It grounds emotions and directs behavior. It directs and changes behavior positively so that they can embrace their learning experience and make the most of it. If they were unregulated their learning experience would be much different” (TP 2-3)

Similar to the clinical participants, the primary school teacher participants spoke of mindfulness regulating children’s emotions in order to direct and change behavior. The primary school teacher participants, however, emphasized that when children are able to direct their emotions, and thus facilitate changes in their behavior, this can contribute to children’s learning experience.

There were child participants who also offered their interpretations for what can be understood as mindfulness offering opportunities to develop emotional and behavioral regulation. In contrast to theme 1, where mindfulness is described as a tool, and essentially seen as ‘work’ due to the goals, outcomes, and purposes involved, the excerpts below offer a very different understanding of mindfulness.

“Mindfulness gives you a break, time to rest, time out. Mindfulness makes it easier to think, makes me sleepy; feels like a break from school” (CHP 2-5)

“Mindfulness is like having a short break, a step out from time, a break from everyone; it gives you calmness” (CHP 1-2)

“When I do mindfulness I feel comfortable, relaxed, it’s like having a nap and feeling better about who you are; it’s like having a short vacation” (CHP 2-3)

As reflected in the accounts above, child participants feel that mindfulness provides them with some kind of cognitive distance from their immediate school environment. For
instance, some the first two child participants quoted above offer an analogy of mindfulness offering ‘a break’. While similarly, the third child participant refers to the analogy of mindfulness as having a ‘vacation’. Not engaging in schoolwork, suggests that mindfulness is seen as ‘not work’ and thus creates opportunities for children to re-group, and essentially re-charge their batteries.

Furthermore, there were other child participants’ articulated mindfulness as offering a ‘quiet space’ in order to make positive behavior changes:

“When I do mindfulness it gives us a chance to do things differently, it gives me a chance to be nicer to our friends at school, it gives me a quiet space” (CHP 4-4)

There is a sense that from the account above, having some time alone, and in essence a chance to reflect represents how this child associates with and perceives mindfulness in an educational context.

Aligned to the regulation of behavior and behavior change, there were clinical participants who felt pro-social behavior resulted from mindfulness:

“Pro-social behavior, like thoughtfulness, sharing, helping, volunteering, overall selflessness is developed through mindfulness” (CP 1-5)

Additionally, it was also noted across participant groups that resilience could also be a product of mindfulness:

“With mindfulness, children can cultivate awareness and resilience skills” (CP 1-1)

“Mindfulness strategies promote resilience in children” (TP 2-4)
“Resiliency is also something that I feel mindfulness can contribute to in children’s skills development” (TP 2-6)

“When I am mindful I feel stronger. My body and my thinking feels happier and stronger in a good way” (CHP 4-5)

Interestingly, the primary school teacher participants in the West coast locations did not mention resilience during the interviews. It was only primary school participants in cities on the East coast, which are typically renowned to be fast paced, uninhibited, competitive cultures (New York and Boston), which commented on the development of resilience skills though mindfulness. For the child participant, they articulated mindfulness as contributing to resilience by explaining that they ‘feel stronger’.

The findings have indicated that clinical participants believed that mindfulness could be used to enhance emotional and cognitive intelligence:

“An elevated emotional and cognitive intelligence develops from mindfulness” (CT 1-6)

For the clinical participant quoted above, the diverse skills, abilities and outcomes from mindfulness can amount to a form of intelligence. For this participant, they present mindfulness as a means to develop emotional and cognitive intelligence.

Across participant groups, however, it was found that participants’ expectations for mindfulness reached beyond the classroom:

“With mindfulness, children can cultivate the skills and to apply these skills later in life to support later years, you know, college, university, into adulthood” (CP 1-3)

“Mindful skills are helpful for academic progression and life beyond school. Mindfulness approaches is one of many strategies I use in my classroom” (TP 2-8)
“When I do mindfulness it helps in everyday life. Even with doing my school work.” (CHP 3-5)

It is apparent that from the quotes presented above that not only did participants comment on mindfulness contributing to academic development, claims of mindfulness having the potential to positively contribute to children's adult life, was also clear.

Likewise, it was also found that participants held mindfulness in such a high esteem, they believed mindfulness could contribute to enhancing overall quality of life, and thus evolve into wholesome member of society:

“The benefits of mindfulness can be extensive, if practices are embodied and embraced consistently, and so much so if those practices are filtered into a person’s life, they can evolve and be at one with themselves and others. Evolving to that extent considerably improves their life, those around them, and branches out also into society, you know, a shift, like a ripple effect. That influence is possible” (CP 1-2)

“The purpose overall for mindfulness is to improve quality of life through presence, acceptance and awareness which will hopefully lead to more effective communications and interactions with one another and the community at large” (TP 2-1)

“It is a time to focus and relax; you can think better, act in more polite ways; mindfulness helps you be a better person” (CHP 1-1)

From the participants’ accounts expressed above, these participants feel that mindfulness can make a difference beyond children’s skills development and social and emotional behaviors. The first two quotes above suggest that the qualities that develop as a result of mindfulness, specifically effective communications and interactions, can emanate into society and further influence others in society. The third quote presented above, reflects that child participants also present mindfulness as means to overall improvement as a person, rather
than only improvement on specific skills and abilities.

In fact, there was, however, a clinical participant who explained mindfulness could stimulate a change in consciousness:

“Mindfulness triggers an orthogonal shift of 180-degree turn. It brings people to look inward. We are by default looking outward” (CP 1-2)

The participant above believes that humans are preoccupied with a sense of reality that is predominantly based on external interpretation. This participant believes that adjusting that reality to focus on the functioning and development of oneself is key in the mindfulness process.

**Theme 3: Sub theme 1: Summary**

In summary, this sub-theme has presented participants’ views on what they consider are the uses and functions of mindfulness. This sub-theme reflects diversities in what participants perceive the uses and functions of mindfulness are. There were participants who reinforced that there are more advantages to mobilize mindfulness with children, however there were also participants who felt anyone at any age could reap the benefits of mindfulness. There were a range of skills and abilities that were mentioned as key uses for mobilizing mindfulness with children. Some participants felt that social and emotional skills were a fundamental objective for mobilizing mindfulness. While, some participants felt behavioral and emotional regulation was the main function for mobilizing mindfulness. The promotion of resilience was mentioned as a prominent use and function for mobilizing mindfulness, however this seemingly only emerged among participants based on the East coast. There
were also participants who held mindfulness in high regard, and thus believed that mindfulness can function as a positive contribution in children's adult lives, and also to enrich overall quality of life. The uses and functions of mindfulness listed by participants, namely resilience, behavioral and emotional regulation, and social emotional skills point to the shaping of children according to neoliberal ideals. There is evidence in these findings that the uses and functions of mindfulness can reflect a therapeutic and medicalized pedagogy in that children are identified as the subject position of the entrepreneur, and required to become resilient to challenges.

Additionally, the explicit goals, outcomes, and purposes of mindfulness that were mentioned suggest that some participants see mindfulness as ‘work’. However, when mindfulness was spoken of in terms of calming down, relaxing, or taken a break, this can be seen as ‘not work’. This tension between whether mindfulness is seen as ‘work’ or ‘not work’ aligns to theme 1, as mindfulness is identified as a tool, and thus a suitable and practical way to address the objectives proposed. It seems mindfulness can vary in the extent to which it is ‘work’ or ‘not work’ depending on who is practising it, and what they are practicing.

Although this theme shows that there are differences in what participants consider to be the uses, functions and expectations of mindfulness, the common thread of mindfulness and educability arises. Within this common finding, there is however inconsistencies and somewhat of an ambiguity about when the benefits or other effects of mindfulness are likely to show themselves. In theme 2 for example, participants have indicated that mindfulness is used for immediate and everyday classroom experience of solving key issues of classroom management such as easing transitions throughout the day or encouraging children to concentrate and learn. Theme 2 has also indicated that participants consider mindfulness as a
‘quick fix’ tool, or as new answer to an old problem. In this theme, however, whilst exploring what participants consider to be the uses and functions of mindfulness, it is apparent that some participants emphasize the impact mindfulness can have on the future of children when they are grown citizens. A prominent finding in this theme, which was apparent across all participant groups, was the expectation participants had for mindfulness preparing children for the future and thus having mindfulness contribute to children’s adulthood. Again, this finding aligns to mindfulness being used to influence neoliberal ideals; and thus shape children to become self-regulated, self-controlled and resilient individuals.

Within this theme there are tensions and questions surrounding the immediate or future effects of mindfulness on children. There are also tensions and questions surrounding the agency of mindfulness. Some participants share accounts of providing children with agency, however if mindfulness is used as a preparation for children’s adulthood, the notion of proving children with agency may appear somewhat redundant or superficial. The idea of mindfulness and educability adds further layers of complexity to these tensions. Perhaps in order for mindfulness to sit neatly and compliment existing curriculums, features such as flexibility, student autonomy, agency and academic development that are attached to mindfulness in education, give purchase to the acceptability, appeal, and educability of mindfulness.

**Theme 3: Sub-theme 2: Reported outcomes from mobilizing mindfulness with children**

When participants were asked about how mindfulness could make a difference in children, and specifically support and influence the emotional wellbeing and development of children,
participants’ view and experiences were diverse. This subtheme thus describes what participants consider as outcomes as a result of mobilizing mindfulness with children. The outcomes reported from participants’ experiences of the mobilization of mindfulness were numerous. There were multiple similarities, however also some outcomes that were contradictory. Some participants felt that mindfulness encouraged children to look inward, have more empathy, and were able to work together in a more harmonious manner. While others reported that mindfulness encouraged emotional and behavioral regulation and thus had a calming effect. On the other hand, some participants reported feeling energized and having an increase of energy. Other participants felt that children's organizational skills and memory had improved since mindfulness had been implemented, which may suggest executive functioning developments. Some distinctions emerged as to the locations and public/private schools in terms of the outcomes reported from participants. The thematic map below shows the ranges of diverse outcomes, which participants suggest are outcomes from mobilizing mindfulness with children.
There were child participants’ accounts that suggested taking part in mindfulness pedagogies could enact the development of intrapersonal skills:

“Mindfulness in our class helps with feeling our feelings properly” (CHP 1-2)

“Helps with understanding yourself; feeling better about who you are; it helps to feel your feelings properly, helps with getting to know who I am and helps me understand why I get sad or angry” (CHP 4-1)

“Mindfulness gives you a time to check in with yourself” (CHP 2-4)

“Mindfulness gives you a chance to understand why you are sad or upset” (CHP 2-6)
For the child participants quoted above, as a result of experiencing mindfulness pedagogies, they felt a greater connection to themselves, and subsequently learnt how to gauge what they are feeling and why they feel a certain way.

Aligned to intrapersonal skills and abilities, some primary school teacher participants felt that children had developed some somatic abilities, particularly spatial awareness, as a result of mindfulness:

“I’ve noticed kids gradually improve their bodily awareness. I wouldn’t go as far to say that their coordination has changed or developed because of mindfulness, but having more spatial awareness of themselves, others, and things around them” (TP 2-5)

For this primary school participant, this account above is about mindfulness acting as a conductor of what teachers consider appropriate, well managed, considerate behavior in the classroom.

Similarly, there were several child participants who expressed gaining greater awareness of their bodies:

“Mindfulness helps you think about how your body is feeling; it helps think about how your mind is feeling” (CHP 2-2)

“I can feel more comfortable with my body and where I am after doing mindfulness in our classroom” (FG-2-5)
“It’s fun; it calms down my body silently. It helps you feel quiet. Mindfulness calms your body, calms your head” (CHP 3-4)

The participant’s accounts above reflect child participants becoming more connected to their bodies and having abilities to regulate how they were feeling was reported. The findings indicate that child participants’ felt mindfulness helped them gain a greater sense of somatic proficiency.

Primary school teacher participants commented on increases in children’s interpersonal skills development and empathetic traits:

“I can see changes in how students interact with each other; they consciously make the effort to practice positive interpersonal skills, and empathy. I most definitely see compassion and understanding which was not always present before” (TP 2-7)

“Most importantly I can see developments are taking place through their body language and interactions with one another, generally there is more empathy coming from them. There is less tension, less disputes of sharing. Teamwork has become more enjoyable for everyone. That is one of the big positive developments, in my opinion, from mindfulness” (TP 2-1)

It was apparent that the participants who were more concerned about altruistic behavior traits, including sharing, working well with others, and empathy, were participants who were based on the West coast. Typically the West coast is renowned for its open-minded, relaxed, and often alternative culture where positivity and altruistic behavior is valued. Participants’ accounts below, therefore, indicated that children were more thoughtful and considerate in
their interactions with other children since mindfulness had been introduced in their teaching pedagogy.

Additionally, child participants, predominately based on the West coast, also felt that their interpersonal skills, in addition to empathetic traits had improved as a result of practicing mindfulness:

“*When you are mindful you act in more polite ways; mindfulness helps you be a better person*” (CHP 1-1)

“*When I do mindfulness at school it helps me have more time for other people. I am kinder towards other people and I am understanding of their feelings*” (CHP 2-4)

“*Mindfulness makes me want to be nicer and kinder to other people and be helpful to my friends*” (CHP 2-2)

The child participant accounts above suggest that having been involved in mindfulness at school, the child participants feel that multiple positive changes and developments associated with altruistic behaviors have occurred. For instance, being politer, making time for other, and making an effort to be pleasant and helpful around others.

As brought to light in the use and function of mindfulness theme, the ability for children to regulate themselves also emerged as an outcome noticed by several primary school teacher participants. The excerpts below speak to children’s agency, way of regulating, governing and controlling the self:
“I can see changes in students’ behavior. I see students utilizing centering skills without facilitation” (TP 2-2)

“Increases in their abilities to self-regulate is a biggie. You know, improvements in behavioral and also emotional regulation I can see that in quite a few kids” (TP 2-3)

“I’ve even had some kids ask to do a ‘Silent Sixty’ or some ‘Balloon Breaths’. These are both short, like one minute activities, which is all about focusing on breathing, being present in the moment and just taking note of where you are, what you are doing, and how you feel. In my opinion, from mindfulness, self-regulation is probably what kids take to first and grasp pretty well” (TP 2-5)

“Emotional regulation strategies, yes, I have noticed students using those more often. In general, regulation is the most positive change I’ve observed. If they are getting frustrated with something, or towards the end of the day, at this age kids can easily slow down and get tired toward the end of the day. I have observed multiple students take a moment or two for themselves, looks like they use anchor breathing techniques, or visualization techniques” (TP 2-7)

Similarly, several child focus group participants talked of mindfulness contributing to their abilities to self-regulate. These excerpts below indicate that students felt they had autonomy, and a sense of responsibility to be rational, choice-making citizens and thus govern and controlling their emotions:

“Mindfulness gives you new ways to calm down; this is helpful in school when you are so busy” (CHP 3-4)

“Even when you are sad or angry or not feeling good it’s very helpful” (CHP 2-6)

“We are mindful so we can calm down faster” (CHP 2-2)
On the contrary, there was child focus group participants who reported having increased levels of energy as a result of experiencing mindfulness:

“When I get to do mindfulness at school I have more energy I feel like” (CHP 1-4)

“After my favorite mindfulness the ‘Super Stretch’ I’m more awake. The best is doing the ‘Super Stretch’ in the morning” (CHP 3-5)

“Mindfulness always gives me more energy so then I can be nicer to everyone” (CHP 2-2)

For these child participants quoted above, they feel that mindfulness didn’t always necessary calm them down, they spoke of mindfulness waking them up and contributing to higher energy levels. In particular, the third child participant in the set above points out that as a result of having more energy, they felt this also contributed to their empathetic traits. It is, however, important to point out that the outcome of children experiencing increased energy was not consistent with any of the accounts from the primary school teacher participants.

Both primary school participants and child participants felt that a greater sense of elevated mood and mindset was a result of mindfulness in their classrooms:

“Once mindfulness practices are finished, there is a refreshing sense of balance and harmony in the classroom. In this setting I hope to help create a more balanced, communal and joyful experience for our kids and staff. The balance in the classroom and learning environment changes for the better. I can often tell students feel refreshed and in a more positive mindset. It doesn’t always stay that way for as long as I would like though!” (TP 2-7)

“Mindfulness helps me feel really good, happy again, it takes away sadness, and makes me feel like smiling” (CHP 1-5)
“It can help you feel happier about your day, even if you are having a bad day it can change that” (CHP 1-6)

“We are mindful to have a happier classroom, happier teachers, and everyone works better together in the classroom after taking that quiet time to focus and check in” (CHP 4-2)

In the accounts presented above the participants feel as a result of mindfulness, improvements in children’s mood and mind set can occur, in addition to improvements in the atmosphere and ethos of the classroom. Again, these accounts above highlight children self governing themselves, taking responsibility for controlling and improving their emotions and behavior, exercising their freedom to choose how they live, and essentially resembling entrepreneurs.

A further outcome that was found linked to the mobilization of mindfulness with children was increased focus and attention:

“I’ve noticed increases in their ability to stay engaged and inspired. They are just more involved in what is asked of them. I suppose you could even say they don’t seem as distracted, or not as easily distracted” (TP 2-1)

“I do get a sense that their attention abilities have developed since I’ve been using mindfulness. They can pay attention for longer periods of time, and when I ask them to stop an activity and listen to direction, I do find the majority of the class is able to do that. Stop, and listen attentively to the instructions. Sort of more care, you know, they take more care in paying attention” (TP 2-5)

“I can see behavior changes definitely with focus, concentration, clarity. I find they are less distracted. You know, if a child near them is fidgeting or moving around, I have noticed some children don’t let that influence them or distract them” (TP 2-6)
The participants’ accounts presented above suggest that with the mobilization of mindfulness, children can develop greater abilities to stay focused at the task at hand, in addition to having more motivation to stay involved in the task.

Additionally, child participants further explained how mindfulness helped them to focus and pay attention while at school:

“Mindfulness makes it easier to think, so I know what I am supposed to be doing” (CHP 3-6)

“Mindfulness makes you quiet and see new details; like a microscope and binoculars you can look more closely” (CHP 3-4)

“Mindfulness helps me make new observations; you can look carefully, and pay attention to new things” (CHP 4-2)

The quotes above make clear that for these child participants, mindfulness can help them to organize their thought processes by encouraging the prioritization of tasks, and also the ability to concentrate. These quotes also infer that children are exercising a sense of self-control in order to stay on track and reach the requirements expected of them.

Additionally, there were primary school teacher participants who felt mindfulness had contributed to improvements in children’s memory:

“I have noticed greater efficacy of recalling information in my students” (TP 2-4)

“Another improvement is ability to retain information. Yes, this has increased” (TP 2-6)
In the interview excerpts above the participants suggested that mindfulness contributed to memory improvements in their students. The primary school teacher participants who emphasized memory improvements as a result of mobilizing mindfulness in their classrooms were based in cities in the East coast that are typically renowned to be competitive, uninhibited, fast paced cultures (New York and Boston). It is, however important to note that one school was public and one school was private.

There were also some primary school teacher participants that felt children’s organizational skills had developed since using mindfulness in the classroom:

“I do see improvements in my students organization skills and abilities. When its time to clean up and getting ready for lunch time, things flow easier. Fewer hiccups” (TP 2-5)

“If I give kids a warning of what is coming up next, I do see quite a few of them plan ahead and get themselves ready and organized. So, priority, planning, and organizational. I see positive changes. Once a few of them show the initiative, others usually follow suit” (TP 2-6)

It is apparent that from both of the accounts above, participants feel that positive improvements have been made in children’s abilities to clean up and plan ahead. These primary school participants quoted above feel that mindfulness has contributed to the improvements in children’s organizational skills. It is important to note that both participants were based at private schools, on the East coast.

In fact, one participant explicitly commented that the development of children’s executive function was a result of implementing mindfulness in the classroom:

“This may sound overly optimistic, but I would even go as far to say that I feel mindfulness can help with children’s executive function. I mean this, like, I find, yes their organization skills have developed. Their
ability to focus and pay attention over longer periods of time. These are all part of executive function skills (TP 2-5)

Theme 3: Sub theme 2: Summary

Overall, participants’ views and experiences of what they consider as outcomes or goals from mobilizing mindfulness with children, were numerous. Some participants reported children developing somatic abilities and were able to have greater spatial awareness of themselves, others, and objects in the classroom. There were also participants who felt that mindfulness promoted empathy and encouraged children to work together in a more harmonious manner. It was evident that participants who spoke of empathetic traits and the development of altruistic behavior were participants who were based on the West coast. There were reports of mindfulness elevating children’s moods, and subsequently created positive and harmonious environments in the classroom. There were several participants who reported mindfulness encouraged emotional and behavioral regulation and thus had a calming effect. However, on the other hand, there were participants who reported feeling energized and having increased energy levels. Other participants felt that children’s organizational skills and memory had improved since mindfulness had been implemented, which may suggest executive functioning developments. These findings suggested that children were maximizing their agency in that they were monitoring, regulating and governing themselves.

There are, however, tensions that present themselves in this theme. Whilst participants share accounts of the several diverse possible outcomes as a result of the mobilization of mindfulness, the question arises again if mindfulness is already inside humans or if mindfulness needs to be added to humans. As also highlighted in theme 1, the findings
suggest that for some participants mindfulness is drawn out, however, for other participants mindfulness needs to be added in order to train or shape children. Are these developments, skills and abilities from mindfulness dormant in children and waiting to be stimulated, or are they added to children as a means of mindfulness practices and trainings, or both? A further tension also arises again in terms of the use and the value of the possible outcomes participants claim to have developed in children as a result of mindfulness. Are these outcomes for the immediate classroom experience or are these outcomes a form of preparation to benefit the child into adulthood, or both?

Across all the themes presented in this findings chapter thus far there is a corresponding finding that mindfulness is diverse. Whether it is the identification of mindfulness, the resources and contexts used in mindfulness pedagogies, the teaching approaches used to facilitate mindfulness pedagogies, the uses and functions of mindfulness, or even what participants considered to be the outcomes of mobilizing mindfulness with children; how and why mindfulness is mobilized with children is diverse. There is indeed a process at play or a sequence that unfolds in order to mobilize mindfulness with children. The findings thus far suggest that depending on what the mobilizer identifies and therefore presents mindfulness as, in addition to what immediate or future goals they have for children influences the mobilizer’s choice of resources, environment, approach and level of agency offered, and thus contributes and steers the outcomes of children. In summary, it is apparent that there are multiple and diverse factors at play that can slightly or proactively inform and form the mobilization of mindfulness with children.
Theme 3: Sub theme 3: Assessing the progress of mindfulness

Seeing as participants listed multiple goals, which they perceived resulted from mobilizing mindfulness with children, it was important to understand how participants measured the progress of mindfulness with children. This sub-theme reveals the ways in which participants assessed the progress of mindfulness. The majority of participants spoke of using teacher observation, whereas some participants chose to use self-report surveys in order to determine if there were any positive changes in children. There was a participant who spoke of feedback from parents was a useful way to gauge the progress of mindfulness. On the other hand, there were also participants who felt it was not possible to measure mindfulness. The thematic map below highlights the findings in this sub-theme.
Several participants commented on observing positive behavioral changes in children. It seems teacher observation was the most prominent method in measuring progress in mindfulness:

“Behavior is the biggest indicator. How children are able to handle situations differently. If they automatically react or respond differently and show emotional and behavioral signs of regulating that’s a big indicator. If they are able to spend longer periods of time focused on a task and are less distracted, again that’s another big indicator” (CP 1-6)

“We look at their success in the program here. Most importantly I can see in the moment and week to week if it’s working through their body language, interactions with one another and their ability to stay engaged and inspired” (TP 2-3)

“It’s all about observation. Spending so much time working with kids, observing their behavior and changes in how they learning processing, how they engage with other, and of course their progress in core curriculum goals. As a teacher you are always observing, and interacting with students” (TP 2-8)

Alternately, some participants asked students to complete self-report surveys:

“I give them surveys around empathy before and after” (TP 2-1)

“I give students a before and after questionnaire with different faces and emotions to gauge if there have been any improvements after mindfulness” (TP 2-5)

Both of the participants’ quotes above comment on giving children surveys and questionnaires, however both participants did not elaborate on particular surveys in terms of where they were retrieved. There was a sense that participants created their own surveys or modified surveys that have had other uses.
Furthermore, a participant reported having conversations with children’s parents. These conversations suggested that mindfulness might have some positive outcomes when children are at home:

“Observation of behavior for the most part. I have also had conversations with parents, and parents have talked about seeing some positive changes in their kids’ behaviors, like, more willing, less fussing to do their homework. Reading is very important for this age group, so I have some parents talk about their kids understanding the importance of doing their reading homework so they will understand classroom activities the next day. This could be executive functioning development from mindfulness or maturity, or just a bit of both” (TP 2-7)

There were, however, participants who were unsure if mindfulness had any positive outcomes for children when they were at home:

“The children have a knowledge of centering. Don’t know if they take it home, but they use it while interacting with each other [at school]” (TP 2-2)

“I’m not convinced if kids take mindfulness home with them. You know, they may only associate mindfulness with school, learning, the teacher initiating and guiding them with it. The resources I have in the classroom and how I integrate different mindfulness tools into what we learn here, I’m not sure if that would be carried over when they are at home. If I specify some homework that involved one of our many tools, that is probably how students would use some form of mindfulness at home” (TP 2-6)
On the contrary, there was however other participants, however, stated that there was no explicit way to measure mindfulness:

“No measurement” (TP 2-2)

“Developments and changes in human capacity and human qualities are not realistically measureable per se. There is neuroscientific research on mindfulness meditation, with adults, which uses brain scans to show changes in brain activity. As of now though, an honest personal evaluation would be the most reliable measurement, so, no, there isn’t one definitive way to measure mindfulness” (CP 1-4)

Theme 3: Sub theme 3: Summary

This sub theme has shown that there are different ways in which primary school teacher participants measure the progress of mindfulness. The majority of participants reported that they use teacher observation in order to determine if children are demonstrating any positive behavioral changes. There were some participants that did, however, mention using self-report surveys in order to measure positive changes, in particular; empathy. Furthermore, there was a participant who explained that parents of children have offered updates on children’s developments, which are assumed as a result of mindfulness. There were also participants who stated that there was no measurement for determining the success of mindfulness.

The diversity and multiplicity of findings in this subtheme come as no surprise. Due to the diversity in how participants identify, engage, construct and use mindfulness, it was assumed that how or whether participants assessed the progress of mindfulness would be varied.

What is however, surprising in these findings is the polarity of what participants consider to
measure the progress of mindfulness. On one hand participants offer accounts of using teacher observations and surveys, while some participants rely on feedback from parents. However, on the other hand there are participants who believe mindfulness is unmeasurable in educational contexts, and there is no explicit method to measure or assess mindfulness. Participants’ polarity in the measurement of mindfulness relates to their original beliefs and assumptions of mindfulness. For instance whether they consider mindfulness to be inherent in humans, a strategy, a lifestyle, or a form of intelligence. Furthermore, depending on what participants also foresee as the goals, objectives, functions, urgency or delayed outcomes of mobilizing mindfulness with children may also implicate how they measure or not measure the progression of mindfulness.

Theme 3: Sub theme 4: Negative implications from mobilizing mindfulness with children

During the interviews, participants were also asked if there were any drawbacks or negative implications from mobilizing mindfulness in their clinical practice or classroom. There were participants who felt there were no negative repercussions; they felt here was a sense that mindfulness was embraced in their schools. There were, however some participants who expressed some concerns in regards to religious connections to mindfulness, time management, teacher roles and teaching subjects. The thematic map below offers an overview of the findings in this sub-theme.
There were some clinical and primary school teacher participants who didn’t feel that there were many drawbacks from mobilizing mindfulness at all.

“No, I’m not aware of anything negative. Maybe a child may not be ready or comfortable to do a mindfulness activity, however there are no major issues I’ve ever seen” (CP 1-5)

“No, there isn’t a negative impact I’ve noted at all. All the different ways I work in mindfulness into my teaching, it’s all quite straightforward. I’m just thinking now of some of the resources, the mindful literacies and ‘MindUp’, yeah, they all work in well into the learning environment. I haven’t experienced drawbacks yet” (TP 2-2)

In fact, there were primary school teacher participants who felt mindfulness was embraced within their school community:
“In terms of usage in the school, mindfulness is only used in the expressive arts department, where it is supported. I believe, maybe other departments don't have the funding or don't want to implement it due to time constraints or probation, school regulations, and rules. For the most part children, staff, and parents are open and accepting of new approaches to teach and emotionally support children” (TP 2-1)

“No, no, no drawbacks. Mindfulness is all about positive changes. I can gently blend it in. If there was one drawback or issue with it, I find that it would be great to have more resources. Of course there are ideas you can get online for free and lots of ideas out there, but some things cost, and we don’t always have the funding to stretch that far. Other things are considered a priority, if you know what I mean. It is unfortunate” (TP 2-4)

The participant’s accounts above highlight that in their school communities mindfulness is accepted and therefore presented as a supportive resource that can bring about positivity in children. However, at the same time funding for mindfulness resources can be an issue. It was noted that the participants who commented on funding concerns were participants that were based in public schools.

There were, however, some primary school teacher participants who expressed concern as to religious connections to mindfulness. Participants framed mindfulness as fully ‘secular’ and gave accounts that claim mindfulness is separate from any religiosity. It is important to note that the participants who expressed these concerns were participants based at a private school:

“I also sometimes worry it will be seen as a religious practice, but that is getting less and less I suppose” (TP 2-5)
“I must admit I have had some questions, you know, some queries from parents. I mean maybe a few parents have shown more of a curiosity as to what mindfulness was, and why I have blended it into my teaching. There were some questions about religion and spirituality. That’s not what mindfulness is about. The goals are social-emotional goals. It influences behavior, cognition. That’s what it’s about” (TP 2-8)

There were also primary school teacher participants who commented on not always having enough time as a drawback for implementing mindfulness. In this sense, participants are indicating that mindfulness is not equal or not part of the curriculum:

“I would like to weave in mindfulness more often, but sometimes there just isn’t the time there to do it. There is so much curriculum content to cover” (TP 2-4)

“Time, I guess, is the only drawback I can think of. There is so much do fit into the day and there are curriculum goals to be met so I find myself rushing quite often to make sure I can include mindfulness as part of the curriculum. It’s important to include it in the day but some days it just doesn’t work out unfortunately” (TP 2-5)

“I’ve heard many teachers say they don’t have time in their curriculum. They value the practice but at the end of the day they have requirements and there isn’t enough time” (CP 1-4)

The participant’s accounts above indicate that although they feel that children can benefit from mindfulness, the curriculum and educational tasks took precedent. This is about conflicting priorities. There is a sense that participants value mindfulness and would like to have more time spent on children being involved in mindfulness, however, there are compulsory goals and standards to be met in the curriculum. The teacher, therefore, has the responsibility to ensure these standards are met, despite their interests and motivations for
mindfulness. For the third participant quoted above, who is based in a clinical context, they also share the view that time is a concern for teachers mobilizing mindfulness in educational contexts.

Teacher roles and teaching subjects was found as somewhat of an implication when mobilizing mindfulness for one primary school teacher participant:

“Bringing in my guitar has been a great help, but it did raise some hairs and eye brows, I must say. It ruffled a few feathers for a few members of staff. I got the impression the music teacher felt I was stepping on his toes kinda thing, I know he is a fantastically talented musician and plays guitar. I don’t think he was too pleased that I have brought my guitar in. He isn’t also up with mindfulness so, yeah, I don’t think he truly gets how I can mix in guitar, mindfulness and the curriculum content” (TP 2-8)

From the participant’s account above, choosing to bring in their musical instrument into the classroom, a guitar, was questioned by other staff members. It is important to note that this participant was based at a private school, and perhaps teacher roles and curriculum content may have specific expectations and requirements that have limited flexibility.

**Theme 3: Sub theme 4: Summary**

This sub theme shows the mixed and contrary views of participants regarding drawbacks or negative implications from mobilizing mindfulness with children. There were participants who stated that there were no negative repercussions. Some emphasized mindfulness was embraced in their schools. On the other hand, there were participants who mentioned concerns in relation to the religious links to mindfulness. There were also participants who mentioned time restraints. They explained that balancing the curriculum in addition to
incorporating mindfulness was at times, challenging. Additionally, one participant shared tensions among teacher roles and teaching subjects.

This sub theme raises some tensions in findings that have been presented in previous themes. Firstly, for the participants who reported that there were no negative repercussions from mobilizing mindfulness with children, this finding raises questions as to the immediate classroom experience and outcomes of mindfulness and the futurity of mindfulness outcomes for children. It seems that for the participants who feel there are no drawbacks to mobilizing mindfulness, their goals and objectives they have for mindfulness are being addressed and met. In terms of participants emphasizing that mindfulness is welcomed in their schools, perhaps there are some unresolved issues within their school communities and they, therefore, welcome new ideas and solutions in attempting to address those issues.

Additionally, depending on how or if these participants assess mindfulness, this can also play a factor in their views of mindfulness having no drawbacks. The second tension that arises in the findings of this sub theme relates to participants’ concerns of the religious and spirituality links to mindfulness. Perhaps if religion, namely Buddhism, Hinduism, and Christianity, become associated with mindfulness in education, the validity, accountability and educability of mindfulness can weaken. Perhaps in order for mindfulness to remain appealing, promotable, safe and educable, when mindfulness is mobilized with children in education it is framed as fully ‘secular’. This framing thus results in the omission of any religious language, and suggests mindfulness is necessary for the wellbeing of students.

Although in this theme some participants highlighted that time restraints tensions among teacher roles and teaching subjects were drawbacks from mobilizing mindfulness with children, this finding somewhat contradicts the findings in theme 2, which illustrate the adaptable, flexible and transformative nature of mindfulness. If mindfulness can effortlessly
assimilate in diverse forms, and in an ad hoc and adjustable fashion, time restraints and tensions among teacher roles and teaching subjects should be relatively limited. In summary, although there are diversities and multiplicities of how and why mindfulness can be mobilized with children, perhaps there are boundaries and indeed instances at which the mindfulness mobilization process or unfolding sequence can breakdown.

Theme 3: Sub theme 5: Rationales underpinning the mobilization of mindfulness with children

This final sub theme further seeks to understand why mindfulness is mobilized with children and whether rationales are diverse. In doing so, this theme sheds light participants’ motivations and justifications for mobilizing mindfulness with children. Participants’ offer their views as to why they feel there is a need for mobilizing mindfulness with children, and therefore believe mindfulness to be a valuable asset for children. Although the participants mobilize mindfulness in either clinical or school contexts, this theme reveals similarities in participants’ views for the rationales underpinning the mobilization of mindfulness with children. Participants explain that there is no policy in education, however they take the initiative to mobilize it. Increasing mental health and behavioral concerns, in addition to academic and societal status demands as motivations for participants to mobilize mindfulness with children. Participants, therefore, felt that there was a need to expose and teach mindfulness to children in order to support them emotionally and encourage the development of essential mindfulness skills. Participants explained that there is a gap in education systems in terms of caring for children on a psychological level. Participants commented on children lacking in essential skills and abilities, alluding to their motivations
for mobilizing mindfulness with children. There were multiple participants who, therefore, expressed concerns for children's future. Some participants offered their views on the future of the mobilization of mindfulness with children; it was clear that their views with mixed. The thematic map below offers an overview of the findings that will be subsequently illustrated.

![Thematic Map](image)

When understanding why participants mobilize mindfulness with children, participants took their own initiative to mobilize and assimilate mindfulness in order to support children. There were clinical participants that stated:

“No policy. There isn’t a care component in education or curriculums particularly compassion” (CT 1-6)
“There is absolutely nothing at all, there should be. Don’t get me started, but is not, no, but, mindfulness is developing within western societies. The rapid growth of research shows this” (CP 1-5)

Both of the quotes above state that there are no policies, or compulsory curriculum components that require the mobilization of mindfulness. It is apparent that clinical participants believe there is value and a need to mobilize mindfulness with children, and these participants therefore, incorporate mindfulness into their already existing clinical practices.

Furthermore, there were primary school teacher participants further explained that there are currently no educational policies, or compulsory curriculum components that require the mobilization of mindfulness:

“No, there aren’t any mindfulness policies or initiatives to implement mindfulness into my work. I want to improve the quality of how I work, teach and support children so I rely on mindfulness for that. Mindfulness is certainly out there in society is gosh a lot of forms to help people. There is now mindful birthing classes, and also mindful parenting” (TP 2-1)

“Nothing concrete. I often hear of policy developments here and there. As far as education systems are concerned there isn’t anything tangible for mindfulness in curriculums. Its up to us, the educators, to incorporate mindfulness if we choose to. Although not all schools are open to it. I’m fortunate I can weave in mindfulness approaches, not all schools would be accepting I’m sure” (TP 2-3)

“No, and there should be! Kids need all the emotional support they can get. School is the perfect place to learn how to take care of yourself psychologically. Yes, it is about academic success, but we are humans and we all need to understand ourselves and learn how to cope” (TP 2-4)
“No, it is up to us, the teachers. As a teacher if you can implement it and it works well, the kids take to it, that’s great but it is up to you” (TP 2-7)

The first participant quoted above acknowledges that there is an element missing in educational policy and protocol. They, therefore, feel a need to enhance their teaching so that children’s learning experiences can also be enhanced, and mindfulness seems to deliver on those needs. The second participant quoted above feels an obligation as a teacher to make up for that lack of mindfulness-related elements in the curriculum. Although this participant expresses an obligation to mobilize mindfulness, they are also grateful to have the opportunity and flexibility to do so in their school. The third participant seems to feel very strong about the need to mobilize mindfulness with children, in addition to the need for mindfulness to become standardized within educational policy. Although this participant acknowledges that schools are institutions for academic development and attainment, they, however, also seem to feel mindfulness has a place in school in order to support and enrich children’s psychological development. The fourth participant emphasizes that teachers have a responsibility to uphold with their students. Thus, if teachers feel obligated to that responsibility, and if they specifically care about children’s overall development, not just their academic development and futures, they can take the initiative to mobilize mindfulness.

Participants also shared how they became aware of mindfulness and mobilizing it into education:

“I heard about mindfulness through a family member who was practicing it as well as in the meditation community and in some of the facilities I was working in. I’ve used it in my work since I’ve started practicing
in 2008 and more recently in workshops and conferences in 2015. I have seen and experienced how it works in my own personal life. I want to share what I’ve learned. I believe in its principals” (TP 2-1)

“I’ve been introduced to mindfulness through different teacher conferences, workshops, professional development days. There is so much out there, so many resources, lots of guides” (TP 2-7)

“There are so many workshops, resources, online toolkits, and guides out there. Recent conferences I have been to, mindfulness is of course present in new teaching strategies. I know lots of teachers have hopes of implementing it and some can incorporate it well. It is popular. It does have that popularity side of it added to it” (TP 2-6)

The participant’s accounts above reflect that they have learnt and picked it up mindfulness in various pockets of society, and those initial introductions and experiences to mindfulness have left a positive impression. For some participants, the lasting impression of mindfulness has influenced them to the extent that they started using it for personal use, in addition to in their classroom with students. Participants did not disclose if they were certified or trained to teach mindfulness, and whether teachers were formally trained in mindfulness was not directed asked in the interviews.

When participants were, therefore, asked what encouraged them to access and mobilize mindfulness into their work with children, there were a range of experiences and influences that participants mentioned:

“Children come into my classroom sicker now. Psychologically and emotionally children have more to contend with. I had to find something to incorporate into my teachings. Of course I am a teacher, not a support worker, or health worker, but there is potential in every child and I felt in order to harness their potential and
support their learning, I had to add something in. Mental health problems in young people are definitely increasing” (ST 2-3)

“Just look at the stats. Mental health affects kids, not only adults. More and more kids I work with have complicated emotional issues” (TP 2-4)

“More and more students have more complex behavioral concerns now. You’ve got to help children with their learning. Mindfulness, I feel it is very important. It sets the stage for everything else. Mindfulness is a priority for me, in my classroom” (ST 2-6)

It is apparent that from the participant’s accounts above they perceive that mental health is a growing concern for children. It comes across in participants accounts that they feel a sense of responsibility to support children, and put in place opportunities to prevent mental health concerns for children. In essence, the quotes above suggests that increasing mental health and behavioral concerns underpin primary school teacher participants’ motivations for mobilizing mindfulness in their classrooms.

There was, however, a clinical participant who had an alternative view:

“Children are not necessarily ‘sicker’ now, it is different kind of suffering experienced now. Also, there is a shift in communication- a revolution in communication. Humans are in greater contact with advances in communication and this may ‘feel’ as is there is a greater suffering being experienced for children. Prior to advances in communication, societies were unaware of other societies, and subsequently other humans experiencing forms of suffering” (CP 1-2)

The clinical participant’s account above, highlights that they believe as a result of advancements in communication, and essentially technology, this has somewhat heightened
and sensitized people and societies to illness including psychological diagnoses and mental concerns. This participant infers that perhaps the interconnectedness of societies and humans has contributed to a hypersensitive or unreasonably assumptive attitude towards diagnosing children.

There were participants who felt that academic pressure and competition, in addition to societal status demands is factor that influenced and motivated them to mobilize mindfulness with children.

“We are dealing with a different generation. These kids are growing up, living very different lives. There is a generational shift. There is an increase of pressure, expectations and standards placed on children now. I am talking across the westernized world” (TP 2-4)

“Social media, materialism, perfection, status, money. Kids are influenced from a young age and they assume they have to meet these standards. Giving them the skills they will need now, at his young little age, is important for their future” (TP 2-5)

“Also, students are under so much pressure, especially once they get into higher grades. They have standards and required to reach if they want to do well. If we can teach them skills to regulate and focus, that will of course help them in succeeding academically” (TP 2-6)

“There are competitive standards for academic success, straight A’s, and on top of the standards I have seen more students cracking under that pressure. This is why I incorporate mindfulness at the age level I do. Hopefully I can give kids some skills that will be of great use once they hit those critical teenage years and they can deal and cope with the rising competition and pressure” (TP 2-8)
Furthermore, both clinical and primary school teacher participants felt an urgency and a need has triggered the exposure of mindfulness with children:

“There is a growing need for clinical interventions to support children. We don’t take care of children” (CT 1-1)

“There is a lack of other good options for children without resorting to medication” (CP 1-4)

“Education is limited to teaching and promoting the development of emotions and emotional wellbeing. It’s a huge part missing in education curriculums” (CP 1-5)

“We don’t take care of our young people. This needs to change as young people are entering increasingly divided societies. There is a need to support young people psychologically. There is a demand for this.

There is a hundred percent a growing need for mindfulness, definitely. The direction the world is going in, there is a desperate need for future generations to develop empathetic, interpersonal, non-judgmental skills” (TP 2-4)

The accounts presented above indicate that participants believe there is a gap in caring for children on a psychological level and expressed concerns as to children navigating the complexities of life in the future. The accounts highlight that this perceived gap underpins participant’s motivations for mobilizing mindfulness with children.

Both clinical and primary school teacher participants emphasized that there are important skills which children are lacking in, and should, therefore, learn. Participants, therefore, felt that these skills that can be learnt and developed through mindfulness:
“Kids (and adults) lack the skill of just ‘being’ and need to be explicitly taught. Kids being able to ‘just be’ is a skill that is often missing. This gives them this ability” (TP 2-2)

“Social and emotional type of skills; kids are in need of these essential skills. That’s why mindfulness is brought into the classroom” (TP 2-5)

“The skills developed from mindfulness, you know, social and emotional type skills. Clarity and focus, interpersonal skills, regulating, staying calm, empathy, are important for the overall development of students. A majority of students have limited development in these skills. These type of skills are lacking in our greater society and we are in need of a balance, especially when we see children are being diagnosed with special needs so often now. We need an alternative to medication” (TP 2-8)

Although the participants quoted above feel that children are lacking in important skills, there are, however, differences in what the participants below perceive to be the skills that children are lacking in. The first participant’s quote references a skill that relates to acceptance and contentment of the present; thus, essentially having no anticipation for what is to come, however also no reflecting or fixating on events that have happened previously. The second participant believes the skills that child require through mindfulness are categorized as social and emotional skills. The third participant, not only do they mention social and emotional skills, they also reference altruistic behaviors in addition to regulation-related behaviors. They then go on to express their concern for the lack of these skills and abilities in society, and therefore infer that due to children increasingly having complex needs, they believe there is a greater call for the mobilization of these skills throughout society.
Finally, participants offered their views on what they claim to be the current state of mindfulness and, in their account, what they foresaw for the future of mindfulness:

“I see a bell curve- we could actually be at the top of the bell curve. Mindfulness has become a ‘buzz word’ and every buzzword has a downfall. If any mindfulness programs are forced they will fall away. If there is substance it will have longevity- to be honest I have no idea- we will know in a thousand years if and how mindfulness has improved the lives of humans” (CP 1-2)

“Yes, mindfulness has become ‘McDonald-ized’. It has emerged in the mainstream. There is lots of emerging mindful practices, trainings. What is most important is how mindfulness is taught. The integrity of the practice has to be supported. The fundamentals of the integrity of mindfulness must be upheld in moving forward” (CP 1-4)

“It’s great people are excited but the legitimization of the true roots of mindfulness is essential in order for the practice to emerge successfully” (CP 1-3)

“I hope, for kids and their future that mindfulness expands in education and keeps reaching kids mindfulness is an important way to help our children find a sense of peace yet also have resilience skills to survive in an increasingly chaotic and stimulating world” (TP 2-3)

“Organizations and individuals that have clear intentions will be successful, however organizations and individuals with unclear intentions or alternative motives will become exposed and be shut down. It is important for us, the ones with clear intentions, not to believe our own press. There is a frenzy now. A bust will happen on the superficial developments and organization of mindfulness. You can’t deny the core value. There will be a point where nobody needs convincing.” (CP 1-2)

It was apparent that there are participants who are confidently optimistic, however, there were others who were not entirely confident and felt determining the future of mindfulness
and or the success of mindfulness would be unattainable short-term. The views expressed by the participants above point to the legitimization of mindfulness as a key factor that can contribute to the future of mindfulness.

**Theme 3: sub-theme 5: Summary**

This final sub theme has revealed participants’ motivations and justifications for mobilizing mindfulness with children. There is a sense that participants have resorted to mobilizing mindfulness as they feel children are experiencing greater levels of mental health concerns, behavioral issues, which impacts their learning progress. Participants spoke of gaps in education systems. They commented on a deficit in education systems supporting children psychologically. Participants thus expressed concerns for key skills, particularity social and emotional skills, which they believe are lacking in children. Participants, therefore, feel that the skills and abilities developed from mindfulness can contribute to improving children’s mental health concerns, complex behavioral needs, accelerate children’s educational skills, and thus equip children to navigate their perceived turbulent future. When participants spoke of the future of the mobilization of mindfulness with children, it was apparent that some participants were confidently optimistic, however, there were others who questioned the progression of mindfulness.

For some participants mindfulness is about the immediate classroom experience and in order for children to get the most of out their learning at school, mindfulness is used to expedite children’s learning processes. As highlighted in previous themes, these findings also speak to the idea of perhaps in the context of education; mindfulness is seen as a new answer to an old problem. Furthermore, perhaps participants are trying to operate amidst
traditional standards of schooling and more child-centred pedagogies in the hopes of shaping children who have important skills to learn in school. These findings, however, also suggest that participants may be operating between traditional standards of schooling and more child-centred pedagogies as a means to shape children who have the potential to be resilient yet have morality to navigate the complexities of adulthood.

**CHAPTER CONCLUSION**

This chapter, chapter four, has presented the findings from the inductive thematic analysis. The three overarching themes that were generated across the data sets were presented: (1) Understandings of mindfulness with children; (2) How mindfulness pedagogies are mobilized with children; and (3) Why mindfulness is mobilized with children. Subthemes were also presented with thematic maps and excerpts from the interview transcripts in order to further illustrate the findings. As this is an exploratory study, this chapter has also presented comparisons, tensions and patterns between the data and themes.

Theme one captured the diversity of expression for identifying mindfulness. The diverse range of definitions and understandings of mindfulness described by participants was illustrated across a continuum, with mindfulness defined as a behavioral intervention and a tool, across to mindfulness defined as a growing social movement and Zen. Theme two focused on how mindfulness pedagogies are mobilized with children. This theme shed light on the resources and environments that can facilitate the mobilization of mindfulness, the adaptable and flexible nature of mindfulness pedagogies, in addition to the specific teaching approaches adopted in order to mobilize mindfulness pedagogies. Theme three concentrated on why mindfulness is mobilized with children. This theme, therefore, captured the uses,
functions, and outcomes for mobilizing mindfulness with children. This theme also drew out the negative implications of mobilizing mindfulness with children, and participants underlying motivations and justifications for mobilizing mindfulness with children.

Overall, these three themes have led to the illumination of tensions and patterns between the data, and this has shed light on the major patterns and features in the findings. The identifications of mindfulness are diverse and broad, which leads to differences in the uses and functions of mindfulness. Mindfulness is understood as added to children as they are assumed to be lacking in key skills and qualities; however, mindfulness is also understood as already existing in children and needing to be drawn out.

The idea of mindfulness being an educable proposition presents itself throughout the findings in this study. The educability of mindfulness raises multiple questions and tensions. For instance, in the contexts of classrooms, the findings indicate that mindfulness does not require resources; mindfulness can be essentially context free. However, the findings also indicate that elaborate environments, that are in contrast to traditional classroom environments, are being set up to facilitate the mobilization of mindfulness. The approaches used to mobilize mindfulness are varied. For instance, mindfulness can be teacher-led, child-centred, or child-initiated. Mindfulness can also be used intermittently or consistently, and it can also be used in a covert fashion that is blended into the existing curriculum or overt and explicitly taught. The uses of mindfulness and the approaches involved in the mobilization of mindfulness also raise issues of the authenticity of mindfulness in education. A mindfulness lesson can be guided by an online resource that is considered standardized. Meanwhile, a mindfulness lesson can be constructed in a ‘grassroots’ fashion with resources from teachers and children’s homes. This variation and inconsistency in mobilization raises
issues of validity, legitimacy and credibility. Furthermore, the uses of mindfulness and the approaches involved in the mobilization of mindfulness also raise issues in regards to the agency of children. There are contradictions in the findings as some findings suggest children are provided with agency, mindfulness gives agency, however, there are also findings that indicate the specific type of self-regulation agency is preferred.

The functions of mindfulness in addition to the outcomes associated with mobilizing mindfulness with children are also relatively contradictory in the findings. There seems to be tensions among traditional classroom practice and child-centred pedagogies. Perhaps mindfulness offers a hybridized pedagogy whereby children can experience the best of both worlds. The function and expected outcomes do not always align. For example, mindfulness can be seen as a tool to develop resilience, however that outcome is intended to support children in the future. Mindfulness can also be described to help children focus and pay attention, this outcome is intended to contribute to children’s learning and academic progression, however, this outcome can also aid in classroom management. Thus, when considering the functions and outcomes of mindfulness there is a difference at play in terms of the immediate classroom experience and the futurity of children.

In summary, this chapter has presented the findings from this exploratory study, which has comprised of the three overarching themes. In doing so patterns and features across the data and themes have been illuminated, and in doing so, comparisons and tensions have been drawn out. In the following chapter the findings with be critically discussed and synthesized in relation to the research questions and existing social science research and literature.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will interpret and discuss the findings from this explorative study, while also draw out the significance of the data in relation to the relevant literature and existing research.

This study is an education studies contribution to mindfulness studies involving a small-scale exploration of mindfulness in primary schools in the United States. In doing so, three research questions were asked:

Overarching research question: How is mindfulness mobilized, and how is it specifically mobilized to support the emotional wellbeing of children?

1: How do the contexts in which mindfulness is mobilized shape its deployment?

2: What motivates teachers of mindfulness to mobilize mindfulness pedagogies into their teaching practice?

3: How do teachers of mindfulness assess the value of mindfulness?

As the literature review established, not all contributors to academic and popular discussion of mindfulness are confident that mindfulness is entirely beneficial. There are significant concerns about the degree to which the expansion and possible standardisation of mindfulness programmes have reduced the authenticity of practice in some parts of the field (McMahan, 2008; Salzberg, 2016). Further, where mindfulness is considered alongside childhood and education more specific concerns arise; that in some circumstances
mindfulness represents a medicalization of childhood and of educational experience that is inappropriate (Ecclestone, 2004; Hayes, 2008; Thompson, 2007; Reveley, 2016); that in some circumstances mindfulness acts to discipline and shape children's emotional experience and expression in ways that are inappropriate (Gagen, 2013; Mills, 2016).

The data places the thesis in a good position to evaluate these claims and to consider whether they are borne out in the specific contexts of this research.

Following the summary of the key findings, the discussions of the key findings are organized under six sections: (5.3) understandings of mindfulness (5.4) the uses and functions of mindfulness; (5.5) how is mindfulness mobilized? (5.6) the outcomes from mobilizing mindfulness with children; (5.7) how is mindfulness assessed? and (5.8) what motivates participants to mobilize mindfulness with children?

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE KEY FINDINGS

Mindfulness is construed in a variety of ways by people working with children and by children themselves. Mindfulness can be understood as a behavioral intervention, tool, skill, or strategy. Mindfulness can also be identified as way of living, a lifestyle, a form of intelligence, or a social moment. The findings from this study have shown that are multiplicities of approaches to mobilizing mindfulness with children. Mindfulness can be mobilized in the form of instruction from the teacher, or simply as a teacher reading a book to their class. On the other hand, mindfulness can be mobilized as a form of physical
activity, or mindfulness can take the form of a long-term allocated location within a classroom. The findings also highlighted factors that can affect the mobilization of mindfulness, such as the time of the day or weather seasons. This study demonstrates that mindfulness has a malleable nature. Mindfulness was reported to suit already existing curriculums, aid classroom transitions, and target specific age groups. In relation to how mindfulness could specifically support the emotional wellbeing of children, this study indicates that there is diversity in the purpose, outcomes and rationale for mindfulness in schools. The participants present a range of uses and functions associated with mobilizing mindfulness including social and emotional skills development, behavioral and emotional regulation, and the promotion of resilience. The findings suggest that there can also be multiple reported outcomes as a result of mobilizing mindfulness with children. The outcomes that were reported included: the development of somatic abilities, empathetic traits, altruistic behavior, and emotional and behavioral regulation, in addition to organizational skills and memory. The explicit goals, outcomes, and purposes of mindfulness highlighted tensions of mindfulness seen as ‘work’ or ‘not work’. There was a sense that if a teacher or student practiced mindfulness, and what activity this entailed, depended on whether mindfulness was seen as ‘work’ or ‘not work’. In order to assess the progress of mindfulness, it was reported that mindfulness could be measured through teacher observation, self-report surveys and feedback from parents. However, some teachers stated that there was no measurement for gauging the progression of mindfulness. While the data suggested generally, that there were no negative repercussions from mobilizing mindfulness with children, there was however, some concern as to the religious connections to mindfulness, time management, in addition to teacher roles and teaching subjects. Finally, the findings indicated that the participants’ motivations for mobilizing mindfulness
represented a general consensus for the concern of children’s emotional wellbeing and development. These concerns included: increasing levels of mental health concerns, behavioral issues, and limited social and emotional skills. This study thus emphasizes the value, dependence, and expectation placed on mindfulness in contributing to improving children’s psychological health, emotional wellbeing, educational skills, and essentially children’s life trajectories.

This summary of the key findings raises considerations as to the significance of the diversity of mindfulness. It is apparent that how mindfulness is construed and how it is mobilized and deployed with children is notably diverse. This study has found that as a whole, there is a diversity of uses for mindfulness rather than a single dominant educational mindfulness tradition. It seems it is the diversity of mindfulness that attracts education. Mindfulness can offer practical and appealing programs, pedagogies, and ideas for teachers and learners. Perhaps it is the diversity and educability of mindfulness that has contributed to the increasing implementation of mindfulness in education. The diversity in the uses, functions, outcomes and pedagogies of mindfulness are perhaps what has given purchase to the acceptability, appeal, and educability of mindfulness.

Amidst the diversity of mindfulness there are contradictions in the identifications, uses, functions, and outcomes. Mindfulness can be used for children as a means to encourage altruistic behavior developments such as empathy, or mindfulness can be used for children to develop executive functioning skills such as organizational skills and time management. Some of the uses and functions of mindfulness represent outcomes that are geared towards immediate behavior change in classrooms; however, some also represent skills and
developments that are geared towards the futurity of children such as resilience and executive functioning.

The diversity of mindfulness also raises considerations as to the authenticity of mindfulness. On one hand it appears that due to the diversity in how and why mindfulness is mobilized with children, this signals that the mindfulness community is being authentic, and thus not standardizing or ‘McDonalidizing’ mindfulness (Purser, 2019). However, on the other hand, the diversity of mindfulness may be to a fault. The broad and transformative nature of the mobilization of mindfulness can also represent a reductive and instable nature of mindfulness. The diversity of mindfulness may, therefore, be taken to signal invalidity and illegitimacy.

In summary, mindfulness is construed in multiplicities by people working with children and by children themselves. The mobilization of mindfulness is diverse and there are contradictions within that diversity. However, that diversity seems to attract and appeal to teachers and learners; the multiplicities of what mindfulness offers is accessed, shaped and capitalized on.

5.3 Understandings of Mindfulness

As the literature view established, mindfulness can be defined in a variety of ways. Due to this diversity in understandings and thus the mobilization of mindfulness, there are significant concerns surrounding the reduced authenticity, legitimacy and credibility of mindfulness (McMahan, 2008; Kucinskas, 2019; Wilson, 2014) Furthermore, where
mindfulness is considered alongside childhood and education, more specific concerns arise. Some critics argue that the mobilization of mindfulness can represent a medicalized pedagogy (Gagen, 2013; Mills, 2016; Reveley, 2016). Some commentators argue that mindfulness can act as a neo-liberal discipline as a means to shape children's emotional experience and expression in ways that are inappropriate for children (Hall, 2007; Gagen, 2013; Rustin, 2016; Sanchez-Allred and Choudhury, 2016).

The findings in this study position the thesis to evaluate these claims and to consider whether they are borne out in the specific contexts of this research. The diverse understandings of mindfulness found in this study inform the overarching research question of how mindfulness is mobilized with children. In order to answer the overarching research question, it was important to capture participants’ understandings of what they identify mindfulness to be. Initially, exploring how participants identified the mobilization of mindfulness with children, it was assumed that as all adult participants work with children, there would most likely be a general definition and understanding of mindfulness. However, this proved not to be the case. As the continuum of participant’s understandings of mindfulness (Theme 1 Figure) illustrates, the participants had multiple understandings of mindfulness, some of which were very different. The results have, therefore, demonstrated that mindfulness is identified in a diversity of ways by people working with children and by children themselves. The data suggests that it is the diversity of mindfulness that attracts the mobilizers and receivers of mindfulness. These diversities in understandings of mindfulness can thus result in a transactional interplay between traditional schooling and child-centred pedagogies (Hyland, 2009; Mendelson et al., 2010; Rempel, 2012, Rechtschaffen, 2014; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015).
There were some clinical participants who identified mindfulness as a behavioral intervention and an alternative for medication. It seems clinical participants saw mindfulness as an opportunity to change and improve children’s behavior, however, also replace or decrease medication for children. As established in the literature review, there is a host of literature that speaks to the medicalization of mindfulness (Barker et al., 2008; Reveley, 2016; Barker and Mills, 2018), however, in terms of identifying mindfulness as a behavioral intervention and an alternative for medication, there are commentators who believe that mindfulness has become professionalized as the property of psychologists and doctors (Wilson, 2014). Within this view, the medicalization of mindfulness in combination with the increasing mobilization of mindfulness in education raise concerns for some mindfulness critics (Gagen, 2013; Reveley, 2016; Mills, 2018). The blending of mindfulness and education is, therefore, argued to produce a medicalized pedagogy, that in turn encourages psychiatrization and psychologization of students (Reveley, 2016; Mills, 2018). There is evidence in the data, in part, to support the identification of mindfulness influencing pedagogies in a medicalized, psychiatrized, or psychologized fashion. Firstly, there are participants working in clinical contexts including psychologists, doctors, and a psychiatrist. There is also a teacher who is a music therapist. Secondly, there are adult participants who explicitly state mindfulness is for social and emotional learning, emotional regulation, emotional intelligence, emotional wellbeing, mental health, general wellbeing; enhances executive functioning; can be a behavioral intervention; and gives children agency, autonomy, choice, control, resilience, empathy, kindness, compassion, and ways better to respond to stress (as presented in Theme 1, Understandings of mindfulness). These findings speak to the enhancement of positive human capacities, and thus align to the concept of biopolitics. Mindfulness can influence pedagogies in a medicalized, psychiatrized, or
psychologized fashion in that children are identified as human capital, and used for their own good, and for the good of society (Lemm and Vatter, 2014). Based on the data presented in this study, it appears in some instances mindfulness is being applied in education in highly ‘therapeutic’ ways and is mediated through psychological, cognitive scientific, and neuropsychological forms of expertise, knowledge and practice, as specific norms. A consensus view amongst participants was that mindfulness is something that people can be educated about and that improvements in children’s social, emotional and academic development can be achieved within educational contexts, although those educational contexts are ‘therapised’. In sum, the data presented in this study provides evidence of mindfulness being used as a therapeutic and medicalised pedagogy, which identifies children as the subject position of the entrepreneur, and thus shapes children according to neoliberal ideals.

There were primary school teacher participants who spoke of mindfulness as a tool and strategy. However, there were participants who understood mindfulness as rather a skill in and of itself. As reflected in the literature, mindful awareness is argued to be a trainable skill. Black and Fernando (2013, P. 1242) suggest that mindful awareness is the trainable skill of intentionally paying attention to the “present moment without habitual reaction”. For example, paying attention without unnecessary emotional or behavioral reactivity, or unnecessary exaggeration of thoughts (Black and Fernando, 2013; Koch, 2016).

While on the contrary, there was a clinical participant who stated mindfulness was not a tool, rather a practice that individual children can engage in to shape themselves. Although participants used different terms to identify mindfulness, it seems mindfulness is mobilized to enact change in children, whether that to improve children’s psychological functioning,
emotional or behavioral skills development, or enhanced learning aptitudes. There is reason to believe the resources, programs, or training teachers have been exposed to influence the ways in which participants identify mindfulness. For instance, MindUp refers to mindfulness giving children the ‘knowledge and tools’, whereas Mindful Schools emphasizes ‘the development of skills from the inside out’ (MindUp, 2019; mindfulschools.org, 2016).

While for some participants, mindfulness was identified as inherent in all humans. This finding is similar to some commentators who identify psychological and neurophysiological links to mindfulness. Rechtschaffen (2014) argues that humans are born with mindful awareness; mindfulness is, therefore, not a novel invention. Similarly, Velmans and Schneider (2006) claim that innate biological abilities, including awareness, attention, and emotional control are skills and abilities involved in mindfulness.

Further along the continuum of participant’s understandings of mindfulness (Theme 1 Figure), mindfulness was identified as a lifestyle. Notably, all the participants in this study, with the exception of one, spoke of mindfulness as a way of living or being. This resonates with Williams and Kabat-Zinn (2013) as they present mindfulness as a ‘universal dharma’, which is sacred as well as secular. Another view to consider is the idea of mindfulness as a product that has been transformed and moulded from Buddhist monastic disciplines to fit into the westernized needs of American culture (McMahan, 2008; Wilson, 2014). McMahan (2008) argues that as a result of the complex relationships of modernization, scientization and Westernization, Buddhism has been dramatically adapted over 175 years. This idea may suggest why among participants’ understandings of the mobilization of mindfulness there is
Buddhist references and nuances without explicitly mentioning Buddhism. It is important to note that in the United States, the “establishment Clause of the First Amendment to the Constitution prohibits government institutions, such as public schools, from supporting a particular religion” (Kucinskas, 2019, P.87). Brown (2019) further explains that schools are assigned with the responsibility to not eliminate every trace of religion, however, to avoid religious endorsement and coercion. This may also be the case as to why the primary school teacher participants in particular did not refer to mindfulness as associated in any way with religion.

Emotional intelligence was reported as having connections to mindfulness, and one participant stated emotional intelligence is, indeed mindfulness. The findings revealed that only clinical participants spoke of emotional intelligence having connections to mindfulness. Perhaps primary school teacher participants chose not to reference emotional intelligence as they felt this was not part of mindfulness, or that ‘intelligence’ represented more of a cognitive, academic association and not an emotional association. Nonetheless, there is literature that suggests emotional intelligence is connected to mindfulness. Goleman (2005) claims mindfulness to be the foundation of emotional intelligence. Goleman (2005) explains that self-awareness is the most influential characteristic of emotional intelligence, and Bar-On (1997) suggests that emotional intelligence involves emotional self-awareness. Similarly, (Baer, 2011) suggests that mindfulness involves a specific form of attention to emotions and therefore mindfulness should be positively correlated with emotional intelligence. There is reason to believe that both emotional intelligence and mindfulness share similar characteristics, and possibly influence each other.
The use of mindfulness in education is distinguished from medicalization. Educational mindfulness however does not stand-alone. Some participants did draw connections between educational mindfulness and the use of mindfulness in other areas of human experience. Across data sets there were adult participants who referred to mindfulness as a growing social movement. Although the participants in this study were mobilizing mindfulness with children, to contribute to children’s development in some shape or form, it was clear some participants spoke of the considerable scope of mindfulness and therefore identified it as a movement. This finding aligns to arguments made by multiple commentators.

Boyce (2011) claims that over the last decade, ‘Mindfulness revolution’ has become popularized throughout western societies. Mindfulness can be found in pockets of society, including medical practices, governments, military, education, and successful organizations and high-risk industries, which would typically be independent from a concept such as mindfulness (MAPPG, 2015; Jha et al., 2015; Wilson, 2014). Within these pockets of society mindfulness can be mobilized for different purposes. For example, in a medical context mindfulness can be mobilized as a form of occupational therapy and rehabilitation for pain management, musculoskeletal disorders, and neurocognitive and neuromotor disorders (Hardison and Roll, 2016). In an educational context, mindfulness can be mobilized in order for students to regulate their emotions and behavior, whilst develop a range of skills and abilities such as emotional regulation, empathy, executive functioning, and resilience (Maloney et al., 2016; Rechtschaffen, 2015; Schonert-Reichl and Lawlor, 2010). While in
corporate organizations and high-risk organizations, mindfulness can be mobilized to enhance performance and leadership skills of employees, in addition to increase effective management and safeguarding of unexpected events (Good et al., 2015; Rupprecht, 2016). However, on the other hand, ‘mindfulness’ can be found in popular culture in the form of health or self-help trends. ‘Mindfulness’ can therefore be marketed in an array of forms from books, films, memoirs, meditation apps, and spiritual manuals to outdoor retreats, hiking, popular online platforms, and cookbooks and diets (Wilson, 2014; Kucinskas, 2019). It is apparent that the scope in which ‘mindfulness’ can be mobilized is diverse, widespread, and increasing. Furthermore, the type of individual in which mindfulness is geared towards is diverse. For instance, the form of mindfulness mobilized for hospital patients and people with disabilities would differ from the form of mindfulness used by eccentric monks; while, those individuals interested in secularized popular culture mindfulness trends to loose weight or stop smoking may access a different form of mindfulness, in comparison to teachers who seek to cultivate emotional and behavioral regulation in students (Wilson, 2014).

It can be argued that the explosion of interest and prolific mainstreaming of mindfulness is a result of developments in neuroimaging and neuroplasticity (Moses and Choudhury, 2016). There are, however, also commentators who argue that mindfulness has gained public legitimacy and credibility, which has resulted in a movement across the western world (Kucinskas, 2019; Wilson, 2014; Ryan, 2012). Although mindfulness can be mobilized in different forms for different uses, there are commentators who claim the proliferation of mindfulness into mainstream society is due to the successful brand recognition. For instance, successful organizations such as Google, national basketball teams, and prominent
investment banking corporations have mobilized and promoted mindfulness, which some commentators argue has accelerated the public legitimacy, credibility, and acceptance of mindfulness to wider audiences (Ryan 2012; Kucinskas, 2019). Wilson (2014) argues that with each new iteration mindfulness reaches a larger and more diverse audience, which thus expands the cultural penetration and international scope of the mindfulness movement.

As mentioned previously, there was one clinical participant who highlighted historic Buddhist roots of mindfulness, for which they argued, derived from Zen. The participant specifically emphasized that contemplative practices are prominent in both Zen teachings and contemporary mindfulness. Although contemporary mindfulness may be packaged and mobilized as a groundbreaking intervention, tool, lifestyle, or movement that can offer extensive benefits, there are commentators who argue mindfulness has historical Buddhist roots (Kucinskas, 2019; Gunaratana, 1992, 1999; Nanamoli and Bodhi, 1995; Kang and Whittingham, 2010). Brown (2019) argues that overlaps between religion and secularity are inevitable. Brown (2019, P. 297) explains that mindfulness programs in education have secular goals and effects, however these programs also “communicate assumptions, values and world views that have both historical and ongoing associations with religion”. There are proponents of mindfulness that argue mindfulness occupies a significant role in Buddhist practices and philosophies. Proponents of mindfulness thus identify mindfulness as a vehicle in order to reach Buddhist goals (Kang and Whittingham, 2010). However, it is apparent that for this study, all of the participants, with the exception of one, framed mindfulness a ‘secular’ and made no explicit reference to Buddhism. In the context of mobilizing mindfulness with children, specifically from this study in clinical and educational contexts,
participants frame mindfulness as seemingly existing entirely outside of Buddhism (Wilson, 2014). The data in this study established that mindfulness education is mobilized and framed as not part of medicine, psychiatry, or a religious movement. Mindfulness is a diverse set of practices in use in education that sits amongst a growing range of other institution specific applications.

As established in this study, mindfulness is identified as a behavioral intervention, tool or strategy, whereas there are other participants who suggest mindfulness is a form of emotional intelligence, inherent skill, or derives from Buddhism. In line with the diversity of expression from the findings in this study, there are commentators who speak to the mainstreaming of a mindfulness movement, which is claimed to be international in scope (Wilson, 2014; Kucinskas, 2019).

Although the findings demonstrate that the diversity of expression for mobilizing mindfulness with children was broad, there is a key distinction. This distinction rests in the idea that on one hand, mindfulness is to be added to children as a means to train and shape children. However, on the other hand, mindfulness is already within children and it is a means of drawing those mindfulness qualities out. These opposing views in the findings signify two different ideas and objectives within the theory of education and child development. The first view of mindfulness being added to children suggests that education is a means to pass down knowledge, preserve knowledge and shape children (Craft, 1984). This view of education prioritizes children developing skills associated with memorization, time-management, self-discipline and self-control. This first view of mindfulness aligns to the idea of mindfulness as a vehicle for neo-liberal influence and control of education and children (Gagen, 2013; Mills, 2016; Reveley, 2016). On the contrary, the latter view of
mindfulness already within children aligns to educational theory that suggests education is a means to prepare a new generation for the unexpected changes ahead, and thus “readying children to create solutions to problems yet unknown” (Bass and Good, 2004, P.161). This latter view of education calls for children to develop skills such as curiosity, problem-solving, creativity and critical thinking (Craft, 1984). It is apparent that these two views on education and child development amount to the differences in traditional schooling in comparison to child-centred pedagogies.

In summary, within these data mindfulness is understood in a diversity of ways by people working with children and by children themselves. This supports the view that mindfulness is understood to facilitate the emotional well-being development of children and subsequently enhance their academic development (Kaiser-Greenland, 2010; Jennings and Greenberg, 2009; Rechtschaffen, 2014). Additionally, this study offers evidence that the applications of certain mindfulness pedagogies encourage autonomy in children and promote opportunities for children to take control of regulating their behavior. These findings align to therapeutic and medicalized pedagogies and the neo-liberal shaping of children as the subject position of the entrepreneur (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009; Thompson, 2007; Hall, 2007; Gagen, 2015; Rustin, 2016; Sanchez-Allred and Choudhury, 2016; Reveley, 2016; Barker and Mills, 2018).

In addition to the two distinctions of educational theory and mindfulness, this study suggests that mindfulness is involved in a transaction and interplay between traditional schooling and child centered pedagogies (Hyland, 2009; Mendelson et al., 2010; Rempel, 2012, Rechtschaffen, 2014; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015). On the whole, the data suggests that the diversity of mindfulness seems to attract and appeal to teachers and learners. The
multiplicities and diversities in what mindfulness offers those who work with children, addresses the mobilizers and receivers needs and mindfulness, is therefore accessed, shaped and capitalized on.

5.4 THE USES AND FUNCTIONS OF MINDFULNESS

As highlighted in the literature review, some contributors to popular mindfulness discussion claim that mindfulness is well suited for children’s latent development (Kabat-Zinn, 2003; Rechtschaffen, 2014; Semple and Lee, 2014). The rapid critical and sensitive developmental periods children progress through are believed to augment and work in concert with mindfulness practices (Arshavsky, 2009; Rechtschaffen, 2014; Semple and Lee, 2014). When considering mindfulness alongside childhood and education there are multiplicities of uses and functions for mindfulness that are found in the literature. Mindfulness is used to develop children’s social and emotional skills (Durlak et al., 2011; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015), mindfulness functions as a contributor of academic skills development (Rempel, 2012; Ryan, 2012; Jennings, 2016; Ryan, 2018; Poynter, 2004; Wrigley, 2006), mindfulness is also used to promote resilience in children (Velmans and Schneider, 2006; Greenberg and Harris, 2011; Ryan, 2012). There are, however, concerns as to these uses and functions of mindfulness. These uses and functions of mindfulness can reflect the emotionalization, medicalization, psychiatrization, and psychologization of education (Hardwood and Allan, 2014; Gagen, 2015; Reveley, 2016; Sanchez-Allred and Choudhury, 2016; Barker and Mills, 2018), in addition to the manipulation of neo-liberal disciplining and the shaping of children (Hall, 2007; Rustin, 2016; Sanchez-Allred and Choudhury, 2016; Barker and Mills, 2018).
The diversity in the uses and functions for mobilizing mindfulness with children found in this study informs the overarching research question of how mindfulness is mobilized with children. This key finding also contributes to addressing research question 2, what motivates teachers of mindfulness to mobilize mindfulness pedagogies in their teaching practice? The data in this study demonstrates that the uses and functions for mobilizing mindfulness with children are diverse, multiple, and divergent. Mindfulness is thus not solely mobilized to support children’s emotional wellbeing. This reinforces the idea that mindfulness is educable, however, there are distinctions in the use of mindfulness for immediate and everyday classroom experience in comparison to the use of mindfulness for the futurity of children. Further, this study also demonstrates that children’s agency is prioritized in the mobilization of mindfulness, however, the extent to which adult participants attribute children with agency varies with the distinction of mindfulness used for the immediate experience or preparations for the futurity of children.

In order to mobilize mindfulness with children, the participants described seven uses and functions of mindfulness. Akin to participants’ definitions identifications of mindfulness, the findings indicated that participants held several diverse views. Seven uses and functions of mindfulness are: social and emotional skills development, the recognition and awareness of emotional health and wellbeing, behavioral and emotional regulation, the promotion of resilience, contributing to adulthood, contributing to the overall quality of life, and a change in consciousness.
The findings also highlighted that the clinical participants believed that there are more advantages to mobilizing mindfulness with children in comparison to adults. Seeing as children are in the process of developing their self-image and self-esteem, the clinical participants felt that it is for this development that children are in an advantageous position to learn and benefit from mindfulness. This finding indeed resonates with commentators who also emphasize that children, at any age, can be more open to learning mindfulness practices, which can thus enable them to embrace and embody the practices far easier than adults (Kabat-Zinn, 2003; Rechtschaffen, 2014; Semple and Lee, 2014).

The seven different uses and functions of mindfulness described by participants was an unexpected finding. Existing literature tends to refer to mindfulness as used in singular contexts and within a singular fashion (Jennings and Greenberg, 2009; Kaiser-Greenland, 2010; Schonert-Reichl, et al, 2015). It was thus assumed that across data sets there would be far greater consistency as to what participants considered to be the function of mobilizing mindfulness with children. Further, as found in existing literature, it was also assumed that clinical participants would typically ascribe mindfulness a therapeutic function in order to enact behavioral and cognitive change in children (Kabat-Zinn, 2006; Rossi et al., 2008, Siegel, 2010). To some extent, this did occur, however, the clinical participants showed a greater preoccupation with focusing on children’s overall health and emotional wellbeing, in addition to positively impacting the lifespan of children. It was also posited that primary school teacher participants would see the function of mindfulness as directly enacting educational-related goals and skills such as reading, writing, counting or spelling (Kaiser-Greenland, 2010; Rempel, 2012; Ryan, 2012; Jennings, 2016; Ryan, 2018; Poynter, 2004; Wrigley, 2006).
The emphasis on the functionality of mindfulness being primarily geared towards academic progression, however, proved not to be the case. There was a sense that the primary school teacher participants viewed educational related skills and goals as a secondary function of mindfulness. While, using mindfulness to contribute to children’s morality, prosocial behavior, and essentially citizenship was seen as the initial function of mobilizing mindfulness with children in education.

The seven uses and functioning of mindfulness that were identified by the participants can be reflected in some of the literature and previous studies. There were participants in this study who felt that the fundamental function for mobilizing mindfulness with children was to encourage the development of social and emotional skills. As highlighted in the literature review, there are previous studies and existing literature that claim mindfulness is a successful approach for increasing students’ social-emotional skills and promotion of emotional regulation (Durlak et al., 2011; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015).

In this study, it was apparent that some participants believed that the core function of mobilizing mindfulness with children was to promote and encourage behavioral and emotional regulation. There are multiple studies that have reported that mindfulness can be used to improve students’ emotional and behavioral self-regulation, in addition to decrease levels of anxiety (Rosaen and Benn, 2006; Beauchemin et al., 2008; Wisner, 2008; Wisner et al., 2010). There are also commentators who claim mindfulness plays an important function in regulating social behaviors and emotions, which in turn supports children’s learning processes (Rechtschaffen, 2014; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015).
In relation to mindfulness being used as an effective method for building resilience, Greenberg and Harris (2011) and Schonert-Reichl, et al. (2015) believe that mindfulness can promote the development of resilience in children as mindfulness functions as a preventative mechanism to mitigate social and emotional concerns. Pertaining to this study, it was evident that the use of mindfulness in order to encourage resilience in children was for the most part emphasized among the participants based on the east coast. Generally, the east coast has a more individualistic, uninhibited, competitive, fast-paced culture, thus perhaps the primary school teacher participants anxieties and concerns for children’s future, is reflected in their use of mindfulness to build children’s resilience. This may be somewhat of an overly optimistic or overstated function for mindfulness to prepare and equip children with resilience for the future. Furthermore, it may be that the primary school teacher participants on the east coast feel that children are growing up in a different reality as to previous generations (Duff and Roberts, 2016; Rempel, 2012). For example, realities that are heavily influenced with technological advances, however also climate change, economic uncertainty, and on-going civil tensions (Duff and Roberts, 2016). The participants may, therefore, view those new realities as contributing to greater levels of emotional and mental health pressures to the lives of children (Rempel, 2012; Flor Rotne and Flor Rotne, 2013).

The range of skills and abilities that mindfulness is claimed to encourage the development of in children, is argued to aid also in the navigation of adulthood. There is existing literature that supports the idea that mindfulness can play an important role in coping with the responsibilities and pressures often experienced in adulthood, and in turn enrich the overall quality of life (Ihlo and Nantais, 2010; Moffitt et al., 2011).
The uses and functions of mindfulness that are found in this study, particularly regulation and resilience, speak to the literature on ethical concerns of neo-liberal discipline used to shape children's emotional experience and expression (Gagen, 2015; Barker and Mills 2018; Reveley, 2016). Shaping children’s behavior and emotions and promoting resiliency are significant concerns in popular discussions of mindfulness in childhood and education (Ecclestone, 2004; Hayes, 2008; Thompson, 2007; Sanchez-Allred and Choudhury, 2016). Teachers also feel that ‘traditional schooling’ approaches are no longer sufficient to serve the needs of children, and thus child-centred pedagogies that encourage social and emotional development, self-regulation, and resiliency better serve children’s needs (Hyland, 2009; Rechtschaffen, 2014; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015). Teachers therefore feel there is need in education to mobilize mindfulness-based pedagogies as a means to encourage children to develop into neoliberal self-responsibilizing citizens (Reveley, 2016). As seen in the data from participants in this study, there were explicit goals, outcomes, and purposes involved in the mobilization of mindfulness. However, there was a tension between whether mindfulness was seen as ‘work’ or ‘not work’. These findings speak to the notions of choice and agency, to work with themselves, observe, monitor, and regulate their attention and emotions. This kind of orientation to mindfulness is a way of regulating, governing and controlling the self (Gagen, 2013; Reveley, 2016). These findings are thus aligned to neoliberalism and in particular the notion of autonomous, rational, choice-making citizens who resemble entrepreneurs, and thus maximising their agency and especially their freedom to choose how they live.
Seven diverse and divergent uses and functions were found in the data. This key finding suggests that depending on where teachers are located, and the cultural influences that are at play in those locations, may influence teachers as to what they consider to be the important uses and functions for mobilizing mindfulness with children. The idea that mindfulness is educable is illuminated in this key finding, however, there are distinctions in the use of mindfulness for immediate and everyday classroom experience, use of mindfulness for the futurity of children, and the extent to which children are credited with agency. In the literature, although are tensions surrounding the uses and functions of mindfulness alongside childhood and education, such as the emotionalization and medicalization of education (Gagen, 2015; Reveley, 2016,) or the neo-liberal shaping of children (Hall, 2007; Rustin, 2016; Sanchez-Allred and Choudhury, 2016; Barker and Mills, 2018), this study demonstrates that mindfulness, however, remains attractive and appealing to teachers and learners.

Whether mindfulness is used for immediate classroom experience, to encourage academic progress, or to function as a preparation to become a resilient adult, there are participants who believe mindfulness meets those needs. As a whole, this key finding emphasizes the diversity of the uses and functioning in mobilizing mindfulness with children and in doing so, contributes to what the functionality of mindfulness can consist of when mobilizing with children. This variation that is borne out of the specific contexts of this research is, however, surprising. Although all adult participants in this study work with children and mobilize mindfulness with children, the extensive variation in what they consider to be the uses and functions of mindfulness was notable. This variation speaks to the concerns surrounding the authenticity and standardization of mindfulness, in addition to the efficacy, validity, feasibility, and ethics of what mindfulness is used for in childhood and education.
5.5 How is mindfulness mobilized?

As highlighted in the literature review, not all existing literature on mindfulness in education support the mobilization of mindfulness. There are significant concerns that when mindfulness is mobilized in education on a large scale, this threatens the authenticity of mindfulness (McMahan, 2008; Kang and Whittingham, 2010; Hunter, 2016; Salzberg, 2016). In particular, the mindfulness programs offered, specifically the neuroscience-based mindfulness programs, raise significant concerns for the debasement, feasibility, validity, standardization, and commercialisation of the programs on offer (Geake and Cooper, 2003; Eklöf, 2017; Reb and Atkins, 2015). Further, there are concerns that the approaches used to mobilize mindfulness with children demote and undermine children’s human agency (Thompson, 2007; Eccelstone and Hayes, 2009).

This section of the chapter will discuss these claims in relation to the findings that speak to mindfulness pedagogies, and in particular the resources, teaching approaches, and challenges associated with the mobilization of mindfulness with children. This section, therefore, informs the overarching research question of how mindfulness is mobilized, in addition to sub question 1, how the contexts in which mindfulness is mobilized shape its deployment.

When exploring how mindfulness pedagogies are mobilized with children, this study demonstrated that there is no singular form, teaching approach, resource, or environment in which the mobilization of mindfulness occurs. The teachers do not mobilize any standard or manualised mindfulness ‘curriculum’. Some of the teachers were certainly influenced by the established mindfulness organizations and founders, however, they have the opportunity to be creative and customize the mindfulness pedagogies to fit into their teaching goals. Teachers, therefore, have the flexibility to distinguish what mindfulness curriculum is
mobilized, and how the delivery method of mindfulness takes place. Although the critiques in existing literature of the inauthenticity of mindfulness (McMahan, 2008; Kang and Whittingham, 2010) to neoliberal discipline (Gagen, 2013; Sanchez-Allred and Choudhury, 2016; Mills, 2018; Reveley, 2016) make a coherent assessment of the state of play of mindfulness in education, the findings derived from the participants in this study who are enacting mindfulness in education do not fully bear on these critiques. The findings, however, illustrate creative practitioners working with an inherently flexible concept of mindfulness to meet their teaching goals.

5.5.1 Mindfulness pedagogies and resources

Participants spoke of the different resources and materials used in mindfulness pedagogies such as, using a snow globe or a glitter ball to teach children about brain functioning, having a dedicated location in the classroom for children to calm down and use comforting resources, or alternately, instructing children to stretch and hold poses. The resources the participants used in order to mobilize the mindfulness pedagogies were diverse and extensive. There seemed to be no ‘boundaries’, distinct ‘type’, or standardization of resources and materials required to mobilize mindfulness pedagogies with children. For instance, some participants used resources from their own homes, and also encouraged their students to do the same. Some participants used online resources for inspiration and to guide the mindfulness pedagogy. There was a sense that participants had the freedom to construct mindfulness pedagogies how they wished to do so, and thus the resources and materials were also somewhat used at their own discretion and impromptu. Participants’ accounts did in fact emphasize the flexible nature of mindfulness. Participants spoke very
highly of how mindfulness pedagogies can fit into the curriculum, ease transitions for children, and thus be fine-tuned for the ages and levels of children and to further engage and inspire children. This finding resonates with similar studies of social science research on mindfulness. Kucinskas (2019) found that mindfulness appealed to teachers in that the skillset promoted through mindfulness programs eased classroom management.

Additionally, Kucinskas (2019) found that teachers have increasingly incorporated mindfulness into both public and private schools, and therefore, adapted mindfulness around the structures and requirements of existing curriculums to ensure mindfulness does not compete with existing curriculums. For example, mindfulness activities can be adapted to make mindfulness age-appropriate and playful by incorporating “toys such as stuffed animals or candy” and shortening mindfulness activities to only thirty seconds, or five minutes (Kucinskas, 2019, P.89).

In terms of mindfulness-related resources, some participants mentioned accessing online programs and resources including ‘MindUp’, ‘Mindful Education’, and ‘The Way of Mindful Education’ to construct the mindfulness pedagogies in their classrooms. It seems as though participants were not influenced, inclined to access, or draw out aspects of Langer’s ‘mindfulness/mindlessness’ or Weick’s five characteristics of ‘mindful organising’. The online resources that the participants did however mention were reported as very helpful and rich in ideas. These programs can be found to have different objectives, philosophies, and even different languages. This raises questions as to the credibility and efficacy of what teachers are using to mobilize mindfulness.
For example, the ‘MindUP’ program claims to be based around positive psychology, and social-emotional learning based, and promotes the program as based on cutting-edge neuroscientific research and the science of neuroplasticity (MindUp, 2016). ‘MindUP’ has a framework for teachers, which is structured by skill sets that promote the development of children’s empathy, compassion, optimism, and gratitude (MindUp, 2016). The ‘Mindful Education’ program also offers a curriculum that promotes the development of altruistic related skills and abilities including gratitude, impulse control, compassion, and communication skills (Mindful Education, 2016). However, this program prioritizes teachers developing introspective and compassion-related skills, before teaching students. It seems the ‘Mindful Education’ philosophy values supporting and equipping teachers with the mindfulness-related skills and abilities initially, then, teachers can pass those on to their students. Alternatively, ‘The Way of Mindful Education’ offers a variety of lessons plans that are centered around five literacies: somatic literacy, cognitive literacy, emotional literacy, social literacy and ecological literacy (Rechtschaffen, 2015). Each literacy has objectives such as gaining an awareness and proficiency of emotions or developing an awareness of others with the absence of judgment, bias, and assumption (Rechtschaffen, 2015). Each literacy also includes outcomes such as greater impulse control and emotional regulation, assumptions or an increased interconnectedness to the world, environment, environmental processes (Rechtschaffen, 2015).

It is evident that the mindfulness programs and online resources accessed by participants can vary in what is emphasized, promoted and valued, and what is not. Some programs and resources emphasize the promotion of neuroscience and claim their program is based on neuro-science research. However, other programs have no mention of neuroscience, and
promote teachers developing mindfulness-related skills and abilities and self-care before teaching their students. Kucinskas (2019) claims that mindfulness programs, specifically MindUP, are couched in science rather than Buddhism in order to avoid concerns from educational gatekeepers such as parents, administrators, and other teachers.

Furthermore, it was apparent from participants’ accounts that not only did they have the freedom to construct mindfulness pedagogies, the extent in which they incorporated mindfulness programs and resources, such as ‘MindUp’ or ‘The Way of Mindful Education’, was also used at their own discretion.

The findings in this study demonstrate that mindfulness pedagogies and the resources used to mobilize mindfulness are diverse and in multiplicities. These findings build on existing evidence that mindfulness is accessed in variety of ways by those who work with children (Rechtschaffen, 2015; Kucinskas; 2019. Further, these findings reinforce that mindfulness can be mobilized in both public and private schools, and therefore, customized by using a range of resources in order to fit into the requirements of existing curriculums (Rechtschaffen, 2015; Kucinskas; 2019). This variation, however, speaks to the concerns surrounding the debasement, domestication, feasibility, validity, standardization, and commercialisation of the mindfulness programs on offer (Lopez, 2008; Reb and Atkins, 2015). In light of the data in this study, it seems that these concerns are not as pronounced from those who work with children and mobilize mindfulness with children. Perhaps for those participants in this study, the benefits of mobilizing mindfulness with children outweigh the debasement of the authenticity of mindfulness. Furthermore, rather than
evaluate mindfulness in education by comparisons with an 'authentic' version of mindfulness, these participants evaluate it by reference to their own and children’s experience of it. It may be that from a given point of view this is inauthentic, but it is also clear that authenticity is not the only possible or even the mostly highly salient standard by which to assess mindfulness in education.

5.5.2 Teaching approaches used to facilitate the mobilization of mindfulness pedagogies

The literature review established that there are concerns that mindfulness demotes and undermines children’s human agency (Thompson, 2007; Eccelstone and Hayes, 2009), and mindfulness subsequently drives neoliberal discipline in childhood and in education (Gagen, 2013; Sanchez-Allred and Choudhury, 2016; Mills, 2018; Reveley, 2016). Furthermore, in some circumstances when mindfulness is considered alongside childhood and education, this can result in the debasement and detraditionalization of mindfulness (Lopez, 2008). On the other hand, the literature review also highlights that mindfulness can promote both traditional and contemporary child-centred pedagogies, which in turn, promote children’s agency and emotional wellbeing (Rechtschaffen, 2014; Flor Rotne, et al., 2013; Schonert-Reichel et al., 2015). This section of the chapter will, therefore, discuss the findings that speak to the teaching approaches used to facilitate mindfulness with children and evaluate the corresponding existing literature in the context of this research.

Similar to the flexible approach participants spoke of when accessing resources for mobilizing mindfulness, the teaching approaches adopted by the participants also appeared
to be relatively varied and impromptu. Three prominent teaching approaches were reported from the primary school teacher participants: explicitly teaching mindfulness, encouraging student autonomy and creativity and trial error.

The primary school teacher participants described instructing mindfulness through an explicit and formal approach. They spoke of different mindfulness activities such as formally teaching students about brain functioning in order to teach how the brain reacts to overwhelming emotions. As Meiklejohn et al., (2012) explain, mindfulness can be taught through a direct method. This approach involves the teacher formally instructing mindfulness lessons to students, who then learn the proposed objectives of the mindfulness lessons (Meiklejohn et al., 2012).

Across participant groups, it was claimed that involvement in mindfulness was optional. It seems that if teachers formally and directly instructed mindfulness, the students were encouraged to participate, however, if they did not wish to participate, that option was available. Additionally, the allocated mindfulness space within the classroom, typically known as the ‘Peace Corner’ or ‘Safe Space’, was offered as a choice and opportunity that was available throughout the day. There were no participants who mentioned when the ‘Peace Corner’ or ‘Safe Space’ was unavailable or off bounds. There was a sense that in order to reap the benefits of mindfulness, it was important that students did not feel like mindfulness was a chore or felt pressured into any of the mindfulness activities. It is, however, important to note that in educational contexts, where there are power imbalances,
and especially when there are stark age and power differences between adults and children, ‘invitations’ can sometimes be taken as ‘commands’.

These findings are in line with some of the key areas in the literature. Meiklejohn et al., (2012) point out that mindfulness can in fact be taught in an indirect method. Additionally, there are commentators who argue that mindfulness promotes agency, self-acceptance, and a sense of belonging (Rechtschaffen, 2014; Schussler et al., 2015; Jennings, 2016). This literature thus speaks to the importance of teachers to creating learning environments whereby students are in control of their mindful experience, as this can encourage student autonomy and trust in their learning and mindfulness experience (Rechtschaffen, 2014).

While the participants in this study emphasized autonomy, agency, and choice for students as an important factor involved in their teaching approaches during the mobilization of mindfulness, these findings contradict the claims of some commentators. Ecclestone (2004) and Thompson (2007) argue that mindfulness in education characterizes students as emotionally vulnerable, and it essentially removes agency from students. Additionally, Hayes (2008) argues that mindfulness is mobilized as a result of students lacking in autonomy.

It is apparent that although participants in this study felt that mindfulness encouraged agentic behavior in students, there is in fact a distinct contradiction in some of the existing literature, which expresses concerns for mindfulness restricting student’s agency (Ecclestone, 2004; Thompson, 2007; Hayes; 2008; Mills, 2018; Reveley, 2016), and reinforcing a marginalized and vulnerable representation of children (Gagen, 2013; Sanchez-Allred and Choudhury, 2016).
Creativity and testing out different ways of mobilizing mindfulness pedagogies were reported as essential approaches used by the primary school teacher participants. Participants spoke of using trial and error approaches that involved regularly trying new mindfulness exercises, and implementing and removing resources, while trying to ensure children remained engaged in the mindfulness pedagogies. In line with the research conducted by Kucinskas (2019), mindfulness educators mobilize “interactive contemplative exercises by using trial-and-error process” with students (Kucinskas, 2019, p.89). This finding resonates with multiple commentators. Kabat-Zinn (2014, P.xxi) explains that mindfulness is not “a cookie-cutter, one size fits all approach; there is no right way to teach mindfulness”. While Rechtschaffen (2014) explains that incorporating mindfulness into the classroom at any age level requires teachers to be creative, innovative, and essentially experiment with mindfulness in order for mindfulness to function successfully in the classroom. It is apparent the findings from this study and the literature indicate that teachers have the opportunity to be creative with their delivery method of mindfulness; they have the flexibility to adopt the approaches that best suits their needs (Meiklejohn et al., 2012).

Having discussed the three prominent teaching approaches for mobilizing mindfulness in this study, the findings also revealed that there are factors that can influence, hinder, or dictate the teaching approaches. The time of day and even weather conditions were reported as a factor that can affect teachers’ decisions in the teaching approach, resources, and mindfulness lessons. In particular, the participants reported that during times of transition between lessons, after breaks, and in the morning were found to be essential situations that
called for mindfulness. As Foder and Hooker (2008) suggest, there are ideal situations and times of the day whereby mindfulness can be most effective. Foder and Hooker (2008, P. 90) explain that “teaching mindfulness at the beginning and end of the school day as well as during transition points can have positive effects on students”. Furthermore there are commentators who suggest using the weather as a tool to facilitate mindfulness exercises. For example, using the weather outside to encourage children to develop intrapersonal skills by noticing how they feel when it rains, in comparison to when it is sunny, or using the sounds of the rain or wind to develop children’s attention abilities (Kaiser-Greenland, 2010; Rempel, 2012; Rechtschaffen, 2016).

It was also noted in the findings that it was important for the teachers who mobilize mindfulness to have the appropriate knowledge and skills to teach mindfulness to children. There is therefore a tension between a narrative of mindfulness being a ‘professional’ skill the teacher needs to be trained to teach, on the one hand, and a somewhat non-professional practice, which does not require professional training. As highlighted in the methodology chapter, it was not a requirement for the participants in this study to be formally trained to teach mindfulness in schools. The teachers in this study are on the ‘on-the-ground’ educators who are implementing mindfulness in idiosyncratic and individual ways, and who are not bound to a standardised curriculum of mindfulness delivery. These teachers are therefore taking the initiative to seek out mindfulness programs and resources as they see value in mobilizing mindfulness in their classrooms. The findings suggested that if teachers were comfortable and confident in their knowledge, skills and abilities of mindfulness, this would become transparent through their teaching methods. However, it was not explicit in the
findings if participants had any formal mindfulness training or qualifications. Participants solely spoke of being introduced to mindfulness through professional development and conferences, and developing their own personal mindfulness practices. As Kabat-Zinn (2003, P.149) points out mindfulness “cannot be taught to others in an authentic way without the instructor’s practicing it in his or her own life”. In order to authentically teach others mindfulness, it is therefore, suggested to “practice what you teach. Mindfulness is not something you learn about at a seminar or read about and then pass along” (Kabat-Zinn, 2003, P. 150).

These data suggest that mindfulness is assumed to be teachable by participants through a variety of approaches, and that, in practice, mindfulness implementation involves a creative approach from teachers that is adaptive to the range of resources and environments available and time of day and weather conditions. These data also suggest that it is assumed that primary aged children can be educated through mindfulness, and that mindfulness can advance children’s educability by shaping the kind of agency they perform.

Although these findings compliment some of the existing literature and research (Kabat-Zinn, 2014; Rechtschaffen, 2014; Kucinskas, 2019), this variation in how mindfulness is mobilized; namely the pedagogies, teaching approaches and mindfulness training/qualifications, does not sit well for some contributors to academic and popular discussion of mindfulness. These findings point to concerns as to the debasement and detraditionalization of mindfulness (Lopez, 2008), the marginalized profiling of children (Gagen, 2013; Sanchez-Allred and Choudhury, 2016), in addition to the restriction and
controlling of children’s agency (Ecclestone, 2004; Thompson, 2007; Hayes; 2008) for possible neoliberal imperatives (Gagen, 2013; Mills, 2018; Reveley, 2016).

Seeing as mindfulness can be mobilized with children through multiple forms, using multiple resources that can be acquired online or from their own homes, and essentially, mobilized through an impromptu fashion, with teachers using their own discretion, it can, therefore be argued that across mindfulness pedagogies, there appears to be very little standardization.

The findings in this study contribute to a clearer understanding of how mindfulness can be mobilized with primary school aged children, in the United States. The findings have revealed that three prominent teaching approaches were reported, however, it is clear that there is still a broad variation in teaching approaches available. The findings, therefore, suggest that the mindfulness pedagogies mobilized by participants appear to have no singular clear objectives, outcomes, or distinct procedures or ‘manualization’. It seems that the variation, diversity, and scope mindfulness offers is what appeals to the mobilizer’s needs and goals. This diversity in distinct procedures or ‘manualization’ can, however, raise concerns as to the efficacy, validity, and accountability of how mindfulness pedagogies are mobilized with children, what resources are being used, and to what extent programs and resources are used. Nonetheless, the findings in the study indicate that these concerns are not explicitly shared amongst the participants. Whether it is for reasons of practicality, teachability, immediate classroom experience, or a new answer to an old problem, the participants in this study adopt varying teaching approaches to mobilize mindfulness with children.
In light of these findings, there is perhaps a need for on-going, rigorous research in order to strengthen and tease out the efficacy of these mindfulness approaches and pedagogies; in particular, research focused on the transportability of mindfulness pedagogies (Meiklejohn et al., 2012). Investigating the transportability may contribute to establishing the feasibility, flexibility, and sustainability of mindfulness pedagogies (Meiklejohn et al., 2012).

5.5.3 Challenges with mobilizing mindfulness with children

As the findings suggest, the mobilization of mindfulness with children can take many forms, with teachers accessing and using a range of resources, and modifying teaching approaches, in addition to mindfulness lessons, to fit into the desired curriculum or situation. Due to the malleable, convenient, and arguably, inconsistent nature of mobilizing mindfulness with children, it was assumed that teachers might encounter some obstacles when mobilizing mindfulness in education. Based on the findings, there were mixed responses from the participants. Some participants felt there were no drawbacks and explained that mindfulness was in fact welcomed in their schools. Other participants found that mindfulness represented religious links, overlapping teacher roles and teaching subjects, funding, and time restraints were found to be challenges when mobilizing mindfulness in schools.

For the participants who spoke of mindfulness being welcomed and embraced in their schools, it is important to note that those participants were located in public schools. However, there were participants located in private schools who expressed concerns of
religious links to mindfulness and overlapping teacher roles and teaching subjects. This finding was not a surprise as existing literature does argue that mindfulness in education can represent religious doctrines, in addition to psychologized and medicalized pedagogies (Hayes, 2008; Reveley, 2016; Sanchez-Allred and Choudhury, 2016; Mills, 2018). The idea of mindfulness representing religion and its association to religion provides considerable debate in the literature. Some of the literature argues that there are indeed Buddhist roots in mindfulness. Mindfulness is, therefore believed to be a way in which Buddhist teachings, philosophies, and goals can be practiced and achieved (Kucinskas, 2019; Gunaratana, 1992, 1999; Nanamoli and Bodhi, 1995; Kang and Whittingham, 2010). Alternatively, McMahan (2008) argues that the secular form of Buddhism now present in the western world represents a new Buddhism, Buddhist modernism, which encompasses the demythologization and psychologization of Buddhism.

Although some primary school participants expressed concerns as to mindfulness representing religious ties, especially as parents had raised some questions, it was apparent that throughout this study all primary school teacher participants spoke of mindfulness in a secular manner. As a study conducted by Kucinskas (2019, P.88) found, primary school mindfulness programs are purposefully secularized, and therefore use secular language to “cohere with the instrumental aims of the American education system”. For instance the use of secular language that explicitly refers to the teaching of mindfulness, social-emotional learning or brain training. Brown (2019, P.297) however argues that “subtracting religious language and adding scientific framing may not go far enough” as mindfulness programs are typically grounded in metaphysical, values, and assumptions that are informed by Buddhist, Hindu and Christian traditions.
The findings from this study, in addition to a study conducted by Kucinskas (2019), demonstrate that the mindfulness programs that are mobilized alongside childhood and education are framed as secular and embedded in science rather than Buddhism. Kucinskas (2019, P.87) believes this approach is strategic in order to “get past educational gatekeepers such as parents, administrators, and teachers”. In order for mindfulness to fit in education, complement curriculums, and appeal to all those involved in educating children, there is reason to believe that mindfulness can seemingly be mobilized and function entirely outside of Buddhism (Wilson, 2014). Brown (2019) however argues that mindfulness cannot be taught in a fully secular manner as mindfulness programs; overlaps between the secular and religious are inevitable.

In relation to this study, seeing as all primary school teacher participants spoke of mindfulness in a secular manner, this may indeed offset concerns from parents, administrators, and other teachers, and thus further enable mindfulness to fit into the desired contexts. However, this secularism of mindfulness is argued to reduce the authenticity of what mindfulness is supposed to be (McMahan, 2008; Hunter, 2016; Salzberg, 2016). Further, this secularism of mindfulness in education also speaks to the commercially driven nature of mindfulness in terms of its growing accessibility, mainstreaming, and essentially the McDonaldization of mindfulness (Purser, 2019; Wilson, 2014; Reb and Atkins, 2015; Kucinskas, 2019). These current debates within the literature will now be evaluated with the evidence from this study.

Participants based in public schools explained that funding was a challenge for mobilizing mindfulness programs. This was not a surprising finding. This finding might suggest that due
to educational policy priorities, budgeting restraints, and lack of credibility for the mindfulness programs, the public schools in this study did not have sufficient funding. Lack of funding, does not however, necessarily prevent the mobilization of mindfulness. As mentioned previously, the findings in this study and the literature, indicates that mindfulness can be implemented and taught in a classroom through multiple techniques with accompanying resources, and with very little or no resources (Rechtschaffen, 2014; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015; Kucinskas, 2019). There appears to be very little standardization across the mobilization of mindfulness in schools in terms of the resources, or teacher training (Meiklejohn et al., 2012). Therefore, seeing as some participants obtained resources from their own homes, and there is currently a lot of flexibility in how teachers mobilize mindfulness, a need for funding, should not necessarily limit teachers use of mindfulness in their classrooms.

A further finding for challenges associated with mobilizing mindfulness was time restraints. Participants felt that working towards all the goals and requirements of the curriculum, in addition to fitting mindfulness pedagogies into the curriculum, was at times difficult. This finding was not unexpected. As reflected in the literature, there are growing demands and pressure on student academic success, in addition to mounting mental health concerns for students, and this demand effectively amounts to growing pressure on the expectations of teachers (Hayes, 2004; Jennings, 2016; Mills, 2018). Montgomery and Rupp (2005) claim that school teachers face several stressors, yet they are provided with limited resources with which to alleviate them. Previous studies have found that both primary and secondary teachers in the United States report experiencing a moderate to high level of stress, which
has developed into a vicious cycle (Montgomery and Rupp, 2005; Jennings and Greenberg, 2009). It is therefore, to be expected that difficulties arise when teachers are attempting to incorporate mindfulness, which is not considered a recognized or compulsory part of a curriculum, into a curriculum that already requires and demands so much from teachers.

This study has also found that the resources used by the primary school teacher participants to help facilitate mindfulness pedagogies could create tensions among other members of staff. One participant in particular explained that her use of a guitar during mindfulness instruction raised tensions with a music teacher. There was a sense that there was conflict of interest. Seeing as this participant was based at a private school, the teacher roles and expectations, in addition to curriculum requirements, may be rather rigid and conventional in comparison to public schools. Furthermore, it may also be the case that other staff members are questioning the abilities and mindfulness training of the primary school teacher participant. As pointed out earlier, one of the key findings in this study is the lack of standardization and manualization in mobilizing mindfulness in schools. There is also limited accountability of determining who is ‘qualified to teach’ mindfulness to children (Meiklejohn et al., 2012). Further, it may also be the case that other staff members are concerned as to the associations mindfulness has to medicine and psychology (Reveley, 2016; Mills, 2018). Other staff members may therefore question the therapeutic uses of mindfulness and its place in education (Ecclestone, 2004; Hayes, 2008; Thompson, 2007). There is a flurry of popular culture and proliferation of marketing surrounding mindfulness, in addition to ‘neuro-hype’ and ‘neuromyths’ that can inflate or misrepresent neuroscience research (Wilson, 2014; Willis, 2015; Sanchez-Allred and Choudhury, 2016; EklöF, 2017). It is,
therefore, to be expected, in institutions akin to schools, that other members of staff raise questions and concerns as to the validity and efficacy of mindfulness.

The drawbacks and challenges in mobilizing mindfulness faced by the participants in this study emphasize that where mindfulness is considered alongside childhood and education, this is a relatively new and developing phenomenon. As a result, challenges from religious ties, to funding and time restraints, and to whether mindfulness is portrayed as a medicalized therapy or a commodity will perhaps continue alongside childhood and education due to the diversity of how mindfulness can be mobilized in combination with the growing interest in mindfulness. Further, it is clear that establishing the feasibility of implementation of mindfulness, efficacy of the programs, and the qualifications of teaching mindfulness requires much attention if mindfulness is to be accepted as a credible, and possibly funded, component in schools.

5.6 THE REPORTED OUTCOMES FROM MOBILIZING MINDFULNESS WITH CHILDREN

Although the data showed that participants spoke of a total of ten outcomes as a result of mindfulness, which can be associated with positive emotional, behavioral and cognitive developments, there are contributors to academic and popular discussion of mindfulness who argue otherwise. There are concerns that mindfulness does not necessarily encourage the positive development of outcomes such as empathy, self-regulation, increased energy, elevated mood, memory improvement, and executive functioning. As emphasized in the
literature review, mindfulness can repress and curtail children’s emotions and behaviors (Barker et al., 2008), dictate what are considered to be good, bad, acceptable, and unacceptable emotions, and essentially hinder children’s agency (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009; Gagen, 2013). This argument on the selective moulding and shaping of children’s emotions and behaviors can be understood in existing literature as a discipline of neoliberal social influence and control (Hall, 2007; Gagen, 2013; Rustin, 2016; Barker and Mills, 2018).

As stated previously, this study does not claim to measure or assess children’s outcomes of mindfulness, or analyze whether children developed and experienced these outcomes. With that being said, this study found that participants considered the mobilization of mindfulness resulted in multiple outcomes. This section of the discussion, therefore, informs the overarching research question, as well as research questions 2 and 3. The findings revealed that a total of ten outcomes were reported across data sets from the participants: interpersonal skills, somatic abilities, intrapersonal skills, empathy, self-regulation, increased energy, elevated mood, increased focus and attention, memory improvement, and executive functioning. The findings also revealed that participants did not speak of any direct negative repercussions in children’s emotional wellbeing or behavior. These findings are important as they suggest that the potential outcomes of mindfulness are not contained to one area, but rather appear to contribute to the overall well-being of children.

The outcomes from mindfulness in this study, as described by participants, can be found in studies that have investigated the implementation and effects of mindfulness in primary schools. In a study that evaluated the effects of an intervention trial of a 5-week
mindfulness-based curriculum in a primary school, the findings showed that teachers reported an overall improvement in students’ behavior, particularly in students’ abilities to pay attention, self-regulate, and to have greater consideration and respect for others (Black and Fernando, 2013). Semple et al., (2010) found that using mindfulness in primary schools can increase students’ attention skills and academic skills. Furthermore, a study conducted by Schonert-Reichl et al. (2015) reported an increase in empathy with students who practiced mindfulness compared to the control group in their study. This study found evidence of a gain of “20% in self-reported well-being and prosociality” (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015, P.61).

The perceived outcomes reported by participants in this study resonate with previous school-based mindfulness research. Studies have found that students have shown developments in a range of areas including decreased anxiety, and increased abilities to concentrate and pay attention for longer periods (Beauchemin et al., 2008; Wisner, 2008). Mindfulness is also claimed to have a positive effect on the school climate (Wisner, 2008). Studies have also reported that mindfulness can lead to improving students’ emotional and behavioral self-regulation, increases in self-esteem and facilitate emotional intelligence (Rosaen and Benn, 2006; Wisner et al., 2010). There are also studies that suggest mobilizing mindfulness with students can have the potential to enhance students overall psychosocial and coping abilities (Barnes, 2004; Rosaen and Benn, 2006). There is also research that shows positive associations between mindfulness and academic achievement. Schonert-Reichl et al. (2015) found that when teachers used the MindUP program there was a 15% gain in math achievement. The same study found that children who participated in the MindUP program, “outperformed children who had not participated in the MindUP in
executive functioning tasks that required working memory, and cognitive flexibility” (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015, p. 61). This literature and existing research emphasize that mindfulness may have the potential to facilitate a range of skills and abilities, some of which may contribute to children’s emotional wellbeing or academic attainment.

The findings in this study suggest that certain outcomes in children are valued and promoted more in some locations than other locations. The analysis indicated that participants who were located on the west coast of the United States, spoke highly of increases in children’s interpersonal skills development and altruistic behavior such as having compassion for others, sharing, and working well with others. It may be the case that participants located on the West coast value altruistic traits due to the typically collective and positive psychology cultural values present within that location (Rentfrow et al., 2013).

A further distinction revealed in the analysis was that the participants who appeared to value children’s memory improvements, organizational skills, and executing functioning skills were located on the east coast (New York and Boston). Moreover, participants based at the two private schools located in Boston emphasized children’s development of memory, organization, and executive functioning skills as a result of mobilizing mindfulness in their classrooms. New York and Boston are typically renowned to represent individualistic, fast paced, competitive, temperamental, and uninhibited cultures (Rentfrow et al., 2013). It is apparent that the participants who spoke highly of children’s developments, which can be associated with executive functioning, are located on the east coast, and include two private schools in Boston. Based on these findings, there is reason to suggest the cultural and
societal values and norms may influence which developmental traits are prioritized and encouraged through the mobilization of mindfulness with children.

Across data sets in this study, it is important to highlight that ‘regulation’, whether that was emotional regulation, behavioral regulation, or self-regulation was found to be the collective objective for mobilizing mindfulness with children. Although a diverse range of reported outcomes, such as children developing spatial awareness and working together in a harmonious manner were mentioned, it is apparent that ‘regulation’ was found to be fundamental to the overall mobilization of mindfulness. This evidence in the data speaks to mindfulness enhancing, shaping and controlling children’s emotional expression. This evidence is thus aligned to biopolitics and neoliberalism, as mindfulness is being applied in education as a means to enhance children’s positive human capacities, and regulate children in such a way that they can develop into ‘good’ students and ‘responsible’ citizens (Hall, 2007; Gagen, 2013; Lemm and Vatter, 2014; Rustin, 2016).

Although this study found that participants considered the mobilization of mindfulness resulted in multiple outcomes, which were reported to be positive and beneficial for the students, teachers, and learning environments, these findings, in part, contradict with the views of some commentators. There is literature that suggests mobilizing mindfulness in education does not result in positive developmental outcomes, as described in this study and previous studies. There are commentators who argue that using mindfulness in education has the opposite effect of controlling and suppressing students’ emotions and behavior. Barker et al., (2008) believes that mindfulness is used to suppress emotions, such as anger, and turn it into a more positive emotion. Barker et al., (2008) argue that mindfulness
curriculums portray and categorize emotions as either positive or negative emotions; however, Solomon (2007) believes that there are no inherently positive or negative emotions. Similarly, Gagen (2013) argues that students are now tested on their skills and abilities to manage their emotions and neurological impulses. Education prioritizes the controlling of student’s emotions and thus inhibits their sense of agency (Gagen, 2013). There is also literature that suggests mindfulness takes away from the fundamental objectives of education as it encourages therapeutic pedagogies (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009; Thompson, 2007), and subjects students to a form of psychiatrization, medicalization, and psychologization (Hardwood and Allan, 2014; Reveley, 2016; Sanchez-Allred and Choudhury, 2016; Barker and Mills, 2018). When taken together, this literature aligns to arguments of mindfulness being used as a biopolitical and neoliberal influence. In part, this study provides evidence of mindfulness being used as a neoliberal and biopolitical influence. The reported outcomes, in Theme 3 sub theme 2 of the findings, include interpersonal skills, somatic abilities, intrapersonal skills, empathy, self-regulation, increased energy, elevated mood, increased focused and attention, memory improvement, and executive functioning. These outcomes of mindfulness reported by participants provide evidence of mindfulness being used to enhance children’s positive human capacities, and shape and control children’s emotional expression as means to produce responsible citizens and reshape social order (Hall, 2007; Gagen, 2013; Rustin, 2016).
5.7 How is Mindfulness Assessed?

It has been established throughout this thesis that there is diversity in what participants consider mindfulness to be, what mindfulness can do, how they use it with children, and what the functions, objectives, and goals of mindfulness are. Although all these pieces involved in the mobilization of mindfulness are broad, the participants in this study share the pursuit of value for mobilizing mindfulness with children. There is existing literature that denounces mindfulness due to concerns of medicalizing (Reveley, 2016; Mills, 2018) and emotionalizing education (Gagen, 2013), controlling and stunting children’s agentic development (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009; Gagen, 2013), in addition to concerns for the reductionism and commodification of mindfulness (Spector and Johnson, 2006; McMahan, 2008; Wilson, 2014; Hyland, 2015). However, in the pursuit of value, it seems mindfulness has a way of coexisting, and arguably becoming increasingly prominent in education and society (Ryan, 2012; Wilson, 2014; Kucinskas, 2019), among such concerns.

In this study, the ten outcomes from mobilizing mindfulness with children that were reported across data sets appear to resonate with previous school-based mindfulness research. However, there is less a consensus about whether and how the outcomes of mindfulness can be assessed. It is, therefore, important to consider and discuss the manner in which participants measured the outcomes and progress of mindfulness. Participants’ accounts indicated that they assessed the progress of mindfulness through three methods: self-report surveys, teacher observation, and feedback from parents. There were, however, some participants who felt that there was no method to measure mindfulness. This section of the discussion contributes to specifically address research question 3.
In terms of self-report surveys, participants spoke very generally and did not identify any specific surveys or questionnaires or mentions, as to where the surveys were accessed. Participants explained that they specifically used self-report surveys to determine if students had developed empathy, however there was a sense that the teachers themselves created the surveys. Surveys and questionnaires can, however be subject to biases. Although the students may have been honest in responding to the survey, Baer (2011, P. 255) argues that respondents are “unable to report accurately on their own tendency to be mindful as they are unaccustomed to noticing these aspects of their own functioning”. Additionally, Grossman (2015) argues that attempting to characterize, quantify, and measure mindfulness through self-report surveys may distort the meaning of mindful awareness, and subsequently adversely affect further development of mindfulness-based interventions.

In relation to teacher observation, it is important to consider that the mindfulness programs and resources that the teachers rely on may have influenced participants’ opinions on the positive outcomes they described. Mindfulness programs can be promoted and marketed as innovative, deriving from neuroscience research, and therefore promise several positive outcomes and benefits for students and teachers (McMahan, 2008; Wilson, 2014; Reb and Atkins, 2015; Kucinskas, 2019). There is reason to suggest that due to the methods participants used to monitor the success of mindfulness, and the positive outcomes from mindfulness reported by the participants, it can be argued that participants may be influenced by the promotional materials included in the mindfulness programs and the proliferation of marketing hype around mindfulness. Additionally, when considering the
positive outcomes participants reported from mobilizing mindfulness with children, the lack of highlighting any direct negative repercussions for children’s emotional or behavioral outcomes, in addition to the somewhat bias, and unreliable methods used for measuring mindfulness, there is reason to suggest the placebo effect may be at play. Whether intentionally, or not, teachers and parents are inclined to talk optimistically about and promote the development of their students and children.

Contrary to the participants who described measuring the progress of mindfulness through self-report surveys, teacher observation, and feedback from parents, there were participants who did not use any methods for determining the progression of mindfulness. These participants felt that there was no method for measuring mindfulness within the context of education. This finding relates to literature that expresses caution for measuring mindfulness. Baer (2011) argues that it is not entirely clear how mindfulness-related practices can produce their beneficial outcomes. Thus, selecting and using a form of measurement to assess the process and progress of mindfulness, such as a questionnaire, is a challenge (Baer, 2011).

Mindfulness is also argued to be subtle and elusive, and therefore defining it in precise terms, let alone measuring it, is difficult (Block-Lerner et al., 2005). Moreover, Buddhist scholars, in particular, contest the idea of measuring mindfulness as they believe the fundamental meaning of mindfulness can be exploited, or distorted, or abstracted from its essential ecological niche in ways that may threaten its deep meaning, its integrity, and its potential value (Williams and Kabat-Zinn, 2013).
Having discussed the findings of how participants assess or do not assess mindfulness, these findings should be taken into account when considering all participants in this study assume mindfulness to be teachable. As highlighted previously, the participants refer to mindfulness and describe its uses and function in multiple diverse terms. While there is a consensus that mindfulness is teachable, there is less a consensus about whether and how the success of that teaching can be measured. The findings in this section point to the limited consensus of how to assess mindfulness within the context of education. These findings, however, also point to the array of opportunities for future research.

Overall, there is shared consensus that participants in this study are in the pursuit of value and attach value to mindfulness. Participants purposefully access mindfulness pedagogies and resources in order to mobilize and deliver mindfulness to children. Although throughout the process of mobilizing mindfulness, diversity is prominent and a hybridized process and form of mindfulness can typically be the result, mindfulness offers value; whether that value is in the form of having a harmonious classroom environment, increasing motivation levels in children, ensuing noise levels remain low in the classroom, or offering reassurance to teachers that they have contributed to the development of well-rounded future adults.

**5.8 What motivates participants to mobilize mindfulness with children?**

This final section of the chapter will discuss participants’ motivations for mobilizing mindfulness with children. This section will, therefore, address research question 2. As
mentioned earlier, the findings suggested that mindfulness could be mobilized at the
discretion of the teachers. Both clinical and primary school teacher participants' accounts
indicated that they take their own initiatives to mobilize mindfulness into their existing
teaching and clinical practices. Their motivations for doing so were numerous. Five
rationales underpinning participants' motivations for mobilizing mindfulness were found: (1)
no mindfulness policy; (2) mental health and behavioral concerns in children are increasing;
(3) academic pressure and societal status demands; (4) limited mental health support for
children in education systems and curriculums; and (5) children are lacking in important
skills.

It was apparent that both clinical and primary school teacher participants felt very passionate
about exposing children to mindfulness. They explained that although there is a need and a
gap in education systems, there are no policies or compulsory components in existing
standardized curriculums that call for mindfulness-related pedagogies. Despite participants’
motivations for mobilizing mindfulness with children and their advocacy for mindfulness
policy, literature does suggest that mindfulness has entered into mainstream society (Wilson,
2014; Kucinskas, 2019). Not only has mindfulness become popularized in education, it
seems every pocket of society from hospitals to hedge funds, and from law firms to national
basketball teams, a form of mindfulness can be found (Goguen-Hughes, 2010; Wilson, 2014;
Rupprecht, 2016; Kucinskas, 2019). Due to the proliferation within society, in addition to
the novel and emerging nature of mindfulness in education, it may be necessary that
mindfulness-based education programs provide evidence to educators and policymakers,
most notably, evidence on improved academic achievement for students (Meiklejohn et al.,
2012). Education is considered a high-stakes accountability context, therefore if mindfulness
is to merit policy considerations, rigorous research that validates student improvement in
important areas such as classroom behavior and reduction in violence and bullying would most likely increase the appeal of mindfulness-based programs to educators and policymakers (Meiklejohn et al., 2012).

Although the findings in this study emphasize participants’ aspirations for mindfulness to be further recognized and implemented in education, and thus to become a compulsory component in education, there is literature that argues otherwise. Some of the literature argues that the increasing mobilization of mindfulness subjects students to evaluations of abilities to control and regulate their emotions (Gagen, 2013).

It is apparent the findings in this study indicate that participants assume mindfulness is educable and value mindfulness in education. Participants, therefore, have high hopes and expectations for mindfulness to amount to a form of policy and part of standardized curriculums. It is, however, also apparent that there is no shortage of literature that contests and disagrees with the potential uses and functions of mindfulness in education.

Increasing mental health and behavioral concerns among students were also found to be a motivator for participants to mobilize mindfulness. Participants emphasized that mental health is a growing concern and they, therefore, feel some responsibility to support children, and play a part in preventing mental health concerns. As reflected in the literature, predominantly in the global North, teachers are on the ‘front-lines’ in identifying children’s mental health concerns and thus taking on hybridized, semi-official roles and responsibilities.
aligned to that of psychologists and social workers (Hayes, 2004; Jennings, 2016; Mills, 2018). There are commentators who argue that mental health concerns and learning dysfunctions have increased in children as a result of globalized communities, and the resilience of children will most likely also become increasingly strained (Hayes, 2004; Melillo, 2009; MHF, 2013). For instance, in the United States one in six children, aged 2–8 years, (17.4%) have a diagnosed mental, behavioral, or developmental disorder (Cree et al., 2016). While in the United Kingdom studies have found that 10% of children and young people, aged 5–16 years, had a clinically diagnosable mental health problem (DHSE, 2016). There is evidence that has shown that most mental health problems start in childhood or adolescence; however, most mental health problems are also preventable (MHF, 2013). It seems the participants in this study have noticed children in their classrooms with more complex needs than they have seen in previous years. It seems participants were also aware of the child mental health statistics. It is argued that children now have different needs in comparison to previous generations, and teachers are typically not aligned, required, or trained to assess or support children’s mental health concerns (Hayes, 2004; Duff, 2016).

It may, therefore, be the case that the participants in this study feel that they are in a position of responsibility to offer some form of mental health support to indirectly facilitate children’s academic progression, and mindfulness is believed to meet that need.

The findings also revealed that participants felt the need to mobilize mindfulness in order to help children cope with academic pressure and competition, in addition to societal status demands. As Meiklejohn et al. (2012) suggest, students are contending with high levels of toxic stress, specifically deriving from challenges of learning and achievement.
Commentators point out that some children in the global North are being ‘hot housed’; attending specialized educational settings in order to accelerate their academic success (Winter, 2010). There is research that suggests children who are exposed to educational acceleration and the pressure associated with those demands will likely result in children experiencing emotional and behavioral concerns, and emotional exhaustion and burnout (Mendelson et al., 2010; Rempel, 2012; Palmer, 2006). Substantial and/or sustained childhood stress can negatively impact children’s well-being, as well as factors connected to learning, such as executive function and working memory (Palmer, 2006; Schonert-Reichl and Lawlor, 2010; Meiklejohn et al., 2012; Rempel, 2012). Given that school settings might offer ideal environments for encouraging healthy brain development and function, it may be that teachers, akin to the participants in this study, are motivated to mobilize mindfulness to create some form of a buffer for the academic pressures experienced by children (Meiklejohn et al., 2012).

The findings in this study also indicated that participants felt there is a gap, and urgency, in education and more broadly in society for nurturing children on a psychological level. Smalley and Winston (2011) and Wilson (2014) suggest, contrary to mindfulness, modern society tends to validate mindless productivity, busyness, speed and efficiency. Seeing as primary school teachers are responsible for students’ learning experiences and development, there was a sense that the participants in this study also felt a duty to contribute to childrens’ mental health and wellbeing. In particular, the participants felt that children in their classrooms are increasingly experiencing complex concerns. Participants also felt that there are important social and emotional related skills in which children are typically not taught in
school, and thus lacking. It therefore seems to be the case that due to the limited options to positively contribute to children's mental health, the important skills children are considered to be lacking, in combination with the perceived gap and urgency of these concerns, and their duty of care, the participants in this study are using mindfulness to remedy those concerns.

As reflected in the existing literature, contributors to academic and popular discussion of mindfulness argue that there is an urgent need in education to mobilize mindfulness-based pedagogies (Rechtschaffen, 2014; Rempel, 2012; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015). Proponents claim that children need to build essential skills such as empathy, resilience, and emotional regulation in order to combat the stress and pressures of living in today’s highly charged world (Rempel, 2012; Ryan, 2012). Although participants in this study have divergent understandings, objectives, motivations and goals for mobilizing mindfulness with children, they share passion and value in what mindfulness can offer within their respective contexts, and thus believe that their respective needs can be addressed through mindfulness.

5.9 SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION CHAPTER

This chapter has discussed the findings from this study. In doing so, the discussion was presented across six sections: (5.3) understandings of mindfulness (5.4) the uses and functions of mindfulness; (5.5) how is mindfulness mobilized? (5.6) the outcomes from mobilizing mindfulness with children; (5.7) how is mindfulness assessed? and (5.8) what motivates participants to mobilize mindfulness with children? These discussions have
interpreted the findings in this explorative study, and drawn upon the existing literature and previous research in order to further convey the findings.

This study has demonstrated that the identification, use, and function of mindfulness in education can be diverse. In terms of how mindfulness is mobilized, this study shows that there is no singular form, teaching approach, resource, or environment in which the mobilization of mindfulness occurs. The nature of mindfulness in education is notably flexible, and can therefore be modified and customized to fit into existing curriculums. However, there are factors including the time of day and weather conditions, which may influence, hinder, or dictate how mindfulness is mobilized. Although, overall, participants spoke very highly of mindfulness in education, there were some challenges noted. These included: mindfulness representing religious links, the overlapping of teacher roles and teaching subjects, funding limitations, and time restraints. Although this study did not intend to or claim to measure the children’s outcomes of mindfulness, ten outcomes were reported: interpersonal skills, somatic abilities, interpersonal skills, empathy, self-regulation, increased energy, elevated mood, increased focus and attention, memory improvement, and executive functioning. Based on these reports of outcomes, this enhancement of psychological, interpersonal and academic abilities align to biopolitics, as mindfulness is being used as a neoliberal discipline to control and shape children into responsible citizens (Lemm and Vatter, 2014; Gagen, 2013; Mills, 2016). In large part, this study indicates that mindfulness is taught to children in highly therapeutic ways, and is mediated through psychological, cognitive scientific, and neuropsychological forms of expertise, knowledge and practice.
The findings suggest the cultural and socio-economic contexts may, however, influence the use, function, and outcomes that are prioritized when mobilizing mindfulness with children. In order to assess the progress of mindfulness, participants spoke of using self-report surveys, teacher observation, and feedback from parents. There were, however, some participants who felt mindfulness cannot be measured. Although there was a general consensus that mindfulness was teachable, there was a lack of consensus on the training or qualifications involved in the teaching of mindfulness. Participants were motivated to mobilize mindfulness as they felt that children in this generation are experiencing higher levels of complex needs and mental health concerns. Student academic pressure, societal status, in addition to a lack of policy and compulsory mindfulness-related components in curriculums were highlighted as rationales for mobilizing mindfulness.

As highlighted, the findings in this study align to some of the existing social science research and literature on mindfulness (Schonert-Reichl and Lawlor, 2010; Wilson, 2014; Reb and Atkins, 2015; Maloney et al., 2016; Rechtschaffen, 2015; Kucinskas, 2019). However, as discussed, some existing social science research and literature on mindfulness raises multiple tensions and concerns for the mobilization of mindfulness with children. The increasing implementation of mindfulness with children, and specifically in education raises questions as to the authenticity of mindfulness (McMahan, 2008; Kang and Whittingham, 2010; Hunter, 2016; Salzberg, 2016), in addition to the debasement, feasibility, and validity of mindfulness (Lopez, 2008; Geake and Cooper, 2003; Eklöf, 2017; Reb and Atkins, 2015). In terms as concerns for children, ethical questions arise. Mindfulness can represent a medicalization of childhood and of educational experience that is inappropriate (Ecclestone, 2004; Hayes, 2008; Thompson, 2007; Reveley, 2016). Further, in some circumstances
mindfulness acts as a neoliberal discipline to shape children's emotional experience and expression in ways that are inappropriate (Gagen, 2013; Mills, 2016), and can subsequently undermine children’s agency (Thompson, 2007; Eccelstone and Hayes, 2009). The findings and discussion in this study indicate that these tensions and concerns for the mobilization of mindfulness with children were not explicitly shared amongst participants in this study. There were participants in this study that indeed expressed differences in their understandings, objectives, motivations and goals for mobilizing mindfulness with children. However, this study demonstrates that participants they share a keen interest and value what mindfulness can offer them within their respective roles and contexts, and therefore trust that their respective needs can be addressed through mindfulness. Concerns about authenticity or neo-liberal subjecthood are not the only or always the most salient means to assess mindfulness in education. Participants presented a range of ways of using, thinking about and assessing mindfulness that were shaped by their commitments to the education of children. Participants thus found mindfulness to be something that was ready to be taught and learned, that was likely to improve classroom experience and that was flexible enough to be creatively shaped and adapted to their particular circumstances.
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This chapter will conclude the thesis and will be organized into four sections. These are: (1) summary of the findings; (2) the strengths and contributions of the study; (3) the limitations of the study; and (4) recommendations for future research.

6.1 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

This exploratory study has investigated mindfulness in educational contexts and the diversity of ways in which it is defined, enacted and mobilized to address the emotional wellbeing of children. In order to explore the understandings and experiences of teachers of mindfulness in both clinical and educational settings, in addition to children who experienced mindfulness pedagogies, a qualitative approach was adopted. Three research methods were employed with participants: semi-structured interviews, Skype interviews, and child focus groups. Purposive sampling in the United States was the means by which participants were selected (Creswell, 2006). The recruitment process and eligibility criteria resulted in six participants from a clinical centre for mindfulness in San Diego, a total of eight primary school teachers, and twenty-four children in primary schools in New York, San Francisco, Boston, and Texas. The locations where data were collected encouraged cross-cultural data collection (Davidov, et al., 2018). Further, the constructivist paradigm allowed the researcher and the participant to interact and produce findings based on the understandings and the experiences of the participant. The inductive thematic analysis identified similarities, distinctions, and tensions in experiences and understandings across participants and contexts.
in relation to the diversity of mobilization with children. The analysis process uncovered and identified three overarching themes: (1) Understandings of mindfulness with children; (2) How mindfulness pedagogies are mobilized with children; and (3) Why mindfulness is mobilized with children. Sub-themes were also identified: mindfulness pedagogies and resources; teaching approaches used to facilitate the mobilization of mindfulness pedagogies; the adaptability and assimilation of mindfulness; uses and functions associated with mobilizing mindfulness with children; outcomes from mobilizing mindfulness with children; how the progress of mindfulness is assessed; negative implications of mobilizing mindfulness; rationales underpinning the mobilization of mindfulness with children. These findings contribute to addressing the three core research questions in this study. Below presents a summary of the findings with the associated research questions.

Overarching research question: How is mindfulness mobilized, and how is it specifically mobilized to support the emotional well-being of children?

This study has found that there is no singular form, teaching approach, resource, or environment that is required for the mobilization and delivery of mindfulness with children. It is apparent that mindfulness is diverse in how it can be mobilized. There are no explicit boundaries, distinct 'type', or standardization of how mindfulness pedagogies are mobilized with children. Those who mobilize mindfulness with children have the opportunity to do so at their discretion. There is a malleable nature to mindfulness. In the participants’ accounts it was clear that they customize and adjust mindfulness pedagogies to fit into parts of the curriculum, certain situations, or to compliment and encourage particular learning goals. Teachers, therefore, have the flexibility to distinguish what mindfulness pedagogy is mobilized, and how the delivery method of mindfulness takes place.
In terms of how mindfulness can look when it is mobilized with children, this was also found to be in multiplicities. Mindfulness can be mobilized and delivered through collective classroom activities and games, individualized practices, which can be teacher-led, or child-initiated. Although the teaching approaches adopted by the participants were also conveyed as relatively diverse and periodic, this study found that three prominent teaching approaches can be used with mobilizing mindfulness with children: explicitly teaching mindfulness, encouraging student autonomy and creativity and trial error.

Overall, this study demonstrates that the mobilization of mindfulness is diverse. Participants construe mindfulness in multiplicities, and a hybridized process and form of mindfulness is typically the result. However, it seems this diversity and hybridity is what raises concerns in existing literature. The notion that mindfulness can be mobilized through multiple approaches, with a range of goals, using various resources and environments, some argue represents a debasement and domestication of mindfulness, and thus threatens the authenticity, feasibility, and validity of mindfulness (Lopez, 2008; Reb and Atkins, 2015). Although these concerns may be valid, in light of this study, participants capitalize on the diversity and hybrid opportunities mindfulness can offer. This study, therefore, indicates that participants’ concerns surrounding the debasement and authenticity of mindfulness were not as pronounced.

In relation to how mindfulness is specifically mobilized to support the emotional wellbeing of children, this study captured participants’ accounts and experiences of mindfulness, which in turn, illuminated their subjective understandings and views on how mindfulness may support the emotional wellbeing of children. There is diversity in the purpose, outcomes and rationale for mindfulness in schools, which cater towards children’s emotional wellbeing.
The findings reported ten outcomes: interpersonal skills, somatic abilities, interpersonal skills, empathy, self-regulation, increased energy, elevated mood, increased focus and attention, memory improvement, and executive functioning. Given that the mobilization of mindfulness is diverse, forms multiplicities, and can result in a hybridized process and application, establishing how mindfulness is specifically mobilized to support the emotional wellbeing of children can amount to multiple iterations of approaches, environments, and pedagogies. This study, however, demonstrates that the ten outcomes reported by participants are not typically associated with outcomes that are promoted and prioritized in traditional standards of schooling; these outcomes appear to be associated with child-centered pedagogies, and thus give purchase to contributing to the emotional wellbeing of children.

**Sub question 1:** How do the contexts in which mindfulness is mobilized shape its deployment?

There is a sense that those who deliver mindfulness, the contexts in which it is mobilized, the added resources or materials, and those who are participating in the mindfulness pedagogy or program shape how mindfulness is deployed. The extent that deliverers and receivers of mindfulness access, engage, and construct it is for the most part at their discretion. There were, however, circumstances in which mindfulness was prioritized and favoured in order to enhance and curtail situations. For example, participants spoke of times of transition in the classroom and warm temperatures in the summer being occasions when mindfulness was needed.
Although the malleability and customization seem to be one of the many appealing factors participants have for mindfulness, the diversity of mindfulness in education and the ad hoc nature of its development does raise the question of quality about its delivery. The findings in this study show that participants believe in and are committed to the benefits of mindfulness. It is however important to point out that the issues of the quality of mindfulness in education does need further research.

Furthermore, this study indicates that those who deliver mindfulness, and the contexts in which it is mobilized can shape how mindfulness is deployed; questions of the feasibility and validity of mindfulness can also be raised. Perhaps for the participants in this study, their needs, goals, and expectations of mobilizing mindfulness with children are being met, and although the contexts can influence and shape diverse forms of mindfulness, this ability to customize mindfulness is appealing and attractive. Participants expressed concerns as to religious associations to mindfulness, time management, teacher roles and teaching subjects.

**Sub question 2: What motivates teachers of mindfulness to mobilize mindfulness pedagogies in their teaching practice?**

This study demonstrated that participants were motivated to mobilize mindfulness with children as they feel that an increasing number of children are unable to maintain focus, regulate their emotions and behavior, and thus inability to engage in conducive learning experiences. This finding provides evidence that mindfulness can be seen as a form of bio-power as participants’ motivations to mobilize mindfulness with children align to neoliberal ideals; the shaping of childrens’ behavior and emotions identifies children as ‘neoliberal subjects’ and entrepreneurial individuals, who can self-regulate and become resilient to
challenges. Participants’ motivations for mobilizing mindfulness are also underpinned by the underlying assumption of education holding a responsibility to recognize and address children’s emotional wellbeing, and thus mobilize a call to action to teach emotional wellbeing related skills. In summary, five rationales underpinning participants motivations for mobilizing mindfulness with children were found: (1) no mindfulness policy; (2) mental health and behavioral concerns in children are increasing; (3) academic pressure and societal status demands; (4) limited mental health support for children in education systems and curriculums; and (5) children are lacking in important skills.

There are, however, contributors to academic and popular discussion of mindfulness who would not necessarily agree with participants’ motivations for mobilizing mindfulness. Aligned to the findings in this study, existing literature argues that attempts in education to address and support children’s mental health and behavioral concerns, and teach social and emotional skills encourages therapized and medicalized pedagogies (Furedi, 2004; Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009; Thompson, 2007; Reveley, 2016). Rather than supporting children’s development, some argue the opposite; that mindfulness in education encourages marginalization, vulnerability, and victimization of children, and essentially inhibits children’s agentic development (Gagen, 2013; Sanchez-Allred and Choudhury, 2016, Reveley, 2016). Further, also aligned to the findings in this study, some argue that motivations to mobilize mindfulness are driven by neoliberal discipline that seeks to shape and control children’s emotional expression as well as futurity (Gagen, 2013; Mills, 2016).

As the findings in this study indicate, participants’ motivations and rationales for mobilizing mindfulness with children are, in part, distinctively different. This has not been noted in the existing literature. The diversity of mindfulness in practice has been seen as a problem rather
than empirically investigated (Finn and Petrilli 1998; McMahan, 2008; Salzberg 2016).

Although this study shows that how mindfulness can be mobilized is diverse and
participants’ motivations for mobilizing mindfulness are varied, participants do, however,
share a consensus of a pursuit of value and attach value to mindfulness. Further to the five
rationales that were found to underpin participants motivations to mobilize mindfulness, this
study suggests that it is also the diversity, teachability, and practicality of mindfulness that
attracts teachers and learners. Although not made explicit by participants, this study indicates
that mindfulness can represent a therapeutic and medicalized pedagogy, which shapes
children according to neoliberal ideas. This study also suggests that participants’ motivations
for mobilizing mindfulness are perhaps a new answer to an old problem, or that mindfulness
offers a hybridized pedagogy whereby traditional classroom practice and child-centred
pedagogies can co-exist.

Sub question 3: How do teachers of mindfulness assess the value of mindfulness?

This study has found that participants feel that what mindfulness offers them is of value, and
they therefore have high expectations as to what mindfulness can offer. Although the
findings have demonstrated that participants’ identifications, uses, functions, constructions
and outcomes of mindfulness are diverse, there is a general consensus of the value placed on
mindfulness as contributing to improving children’s psychological health, emotional
wellbeing, educational skills, and essentially children’s life trajectories. In terms of specifically
how participants assessed the progress of mindfulness, the use of self-report surveys, teacher
observation, and feedback from parents was reported. There were also participants who did
not use any methods for determining the progression of mindfulness as they felt
mindfulness was unmeasurable in educational contexts. These findings highlight the assumption that all participants in this study assume mindfulness to be teachable. This study shows that there is, however, less of a consensus about whether and how the success of that teaching can be measured within the context of education.

6.2 Strengths and Contributions of the Study

This study has explored, qualitatively, how mindfulness was mobilized with children, and specifically how it is mobilized to support the emotional wellbeing of children. Existing social science research on mindfulness makes clear that mindfulness in education is a largely understudied phenomenon, and therefore an important area to investigate (Wilson, 2014; Greenberg and Harris, 2012; Weare, 2012).

The findings from this study emphasize that within the context of mobilizing mindfulness with children, mindfulness is diverse and can be mobilized in a hybrid fashion. This key finding builds on existing evidence that mindfulness is a complex and expansive phenomenon, which is difficult to reduce to a simple definition or statement (Wilson, 2014; Kucinskas, 2019). This study also contributes to a greater understanding of what the functionality and outcomes of mindfulness can consist of when mobilizing mindfulness in educational contexts. This study suggests that some of the functions and outcomes associated with mindfulness may constitute positive developments in children’s emotional wellbeing. As reflected in the findings and in the literature, there is a call for prioritizing children’s emotional wellbeing and mental health; the mobilization of mindfulness in
education is claimed to be one feasible way to address these concerns (Rechtschaffen, 2014; Rempel, 2012; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015).

Existing literature does not establish what this value of mobilizing mindfulness in education is. Specifically, existing literature does not establish whether this value is identical for all or whether it varies in different circumstances. Concerning the difference that some wish to mark between authentic and debased mindfulness, this study has examined the issue of diversity in practices of mindfulness and thus informed how a diversity in how mindfulness is framed in primary educational settings. Most noteworthy, this study has offered findings from primary school educational settings, in addition to children aged four and five. This specific lens contributes to the existing research gap of qualitative studies on mindfulness in education (Wilson, 2014). This study has empirically investigated the complexity and diversity in how and why mindfulness is mobilized with children. This has not been noted in existing literature, in fact it has been seen as a concern (McMahan, 2008; Salzberg, 2016). The age bracket of the child participants in this study also contributes to the gaps in existing research (Wilson, 2014; Greenberg and Harris, 2012; Weare, 2012). Most noteworthy, contributions have been made to illuminating the tensions of agency within the mobilization of mindfulness with children.

This study has also offered findings that illustrate what mindfulness pedagogies can entail, how these pedagogies are constructed, how the goals and objectives of the pedagogies are realized and achieved, and how mindfulness pedagogies are reconciled within the existing settings, practices and curriculums. In doing so, this study has provided understandings of the factors, which are at play in the mobilization of mindfulness with children.
Further, existing literature does not speak to the tensions of agency within the mobilization of mindfulness with children. This study suggests that the applications of certain mindfulness pedagogies encourage autonomy in children and promote opportunities for children to take control of regulating their behavior. This key finding aligns to neoliberal subjectivity as bio power involves the shaping of active, autonomous, agentic subjects who have the opportunity to exercise their ‘freedom’ through practices such as mindfulness. In sum, this study indicates that teachers of mindfulness are teaching students, children aged four to five years old in the case of this study, how to monitor, regulate and control themselves in ways that seem to reflect neoliberal norms.

This study has also emphasized that mindfulness is mobilized, understood, and valued differently for diverse purposes and diverse outcomes. The findings have therefore provided insights into the reasons as to why participants, who have some degree of discretion as to whether they engage with it, have sought out mindfulness resources and ideas in order to implement mindfulness into their settings with children.

This thesis makes a valuable contribution towards the knowledge and research base concerning the diversity among the emerging trend of mindfulness in education. This knowledge adds value to understanding the complexity and diversity in how and why mindfulness is mobilized with children, specifically how mindfulness teachers attempt to enhance the emotional wellbeing of children, and the underlying motivations and values for mobilizing mindfulness with children.

In sum, there is work that theorises mindfulness as having an essential core that is not fully reflected in commercial and popular applications. An ‘essence’ of mindfulness is a theoretical commitment of that work. It is a theoretical commitment that allows this work to undertake
assessment of the relative value of uses of mindfulness. This study shows that it is possible and fruitful to address the important question of ‘value’ without asserting such a core identity, by hearing from teachers and students. This study presents a case that makes a difference to the range of questions that people ask about mindfulness in education, and thus encourages people to think differently about mindfulness in education. This study has, therefore, moved the study of mindfulness in schools beyond the current research and scholarship of proponents and critics of mindfulness.

6.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The literature review in this study is the product of a process, which in some aspects, differs from standard literature review approaches. This is due to the influence of grounded theory. Some proponents of grounded theory assume that conducting literature review in the early stages of a grounded theory study can have detrimental consequences, not only to the methodological underpinning, however also, to the epistemological framework (Ramalho, Rodrigo et al, 2015). In Glaser and Strauss’ (1967, 1978) view, they do not want the researcher to see the data through the lens of earlier ideas, known as ‘received theory’ (as cited in Charmaz, 2006, P.165). It is recommended that in order to maintain theoretical sensitivity, the researcher is to enter the field with as few predetermined ideas as possible (Glaser and Strauss, 1978).

While recognising the traditions of grounded theory literature reviews, many argue that it is both practical and important to engage with a range of literature early on in the grounded theory study (Dunne, 2011; McGhee, Marland & Atkinson, 2007). Accessing and engaging
with existing literature can attune to the problems that sit within theoretical or conceptual frameworks, and guard against duplicating extant work, or irrelevant literature (Dunne, 2011). Therefore, the literature review in this study began as a preliminary foundation, which was used to inform and contextualize the focus the research process prior to data collection (Hallberg, 2010). Once the data collection and analysis were complete, I drew on the preliminary literature, and treated it similar to a source of data. In grounded theory, literature is considered a slice of data (Glaser and Strauss 1967, P.65). Following the data analysis, the preliminary literature review evolved. Through a process of refinement and dialogue, the preliminary literature review evolved into a substantial literature review that engaged with the current conversation in the field of mindfulness and the Nexus, and thus contributed to the discussions in subsequent chapters (Silverman, 2000).

Researching a new under-researched area was motivating, however, it was also challenging. In terms of methods employed, as this study explored the diversity of the mobilization of mindfulness with children, the study called for more than one research method. As a result, semi-structured interviews, Skype interviews, and child focus groups were employed. Furthermore, participants (14 adults and 24 children) were based in various locations of the United States: San Diego, New York, San Francisco, Boston and Texas. Although this diversity of locations facilitated the collection of cross-cultural data, and essentially highlighted the diverse and multi-layered nature of mindfulness, as I was the sole researcher, I found that the methodology required for this study was, however, at times challenging and complex.
Participant bias is a further limitation to consider for this study. In terms of the adult participants in this study, this may be representative of a group that has positive preconceived notions and ideas towards mindfulness and are, therefore, advocates for mobilizing it with children. Due to adult participants interests and motivations for mindfulness, this may have influenced how they speak about mindfulness and also influenced the extent to which they consider its benefits. Additionally, for the child participants in this study, bias may also be present. Child participants may have answered questions in the focus groups in order to impress or please their teachers. Child participants may have also memorized or repeated what they have heard from their teacher or what they learnt from their teachers. Therefore, child participants’ responses in the focus groups may not be necessarily representative of their true opinions or experiences.

Finally, a key methodological limitation of the study is that mindfulness lessons in primary schools were not observed directly. Although the interviews offer rich accounts and reports, and thus provided insights into the mobilization of mindfulness, directly observing mindfulness lessons in primary schools would have complimented and further maximised the findings in this study. For practical reasons concerning travel logistics and financial budgeting, directly observing mindfulness with children was not feasible for this study.

6.4 Recommendations for future research

This study explored the mobilization of mindfulness with children through multiple vantage points in order to gain an understanding of the dynamic relationships, diversity of mindfulness. There are, however, recommendations for further research to consider. As with
any novel and emerging area of research, broad recommendations for further research can be considered.

Due to the international scope of mindfulness in education, particularly in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada and Australia (Wilson, 2014), a transnational study of the mobilization of mindfulness in education has the potential to offer noteworthy findings. Deriving from the conclusions made in this study, empirical investigations into the quality, feasibility, and validity of mindfulness practices is an important area for future social science research on mindfulness. The knowledge gained from a transnational has the potential to further inform a broad range of educators, globally, in terms of best practices for developing mindfulness pedagogies in educational contexts.

Future directions for research may also involve transnational and interdisciplinary research that explores teachers’ motivations for mobilizing mindfulness with children. A key finding in this study shows that adult participants are motivated to implement mindfulness within their teaching practice as they feel that mental health concerns among students are increasing. As previously discussed, there is also literature that speaks to increasing concerns for children’s mental health, the implementation of preventative measures, and pressures on the education systems in the global North (MHF, 2013; DHSE, 2016; Mills, 2018). The findings from these potential studies may contribute not only to education systems, however also clinical services for children.

Directly observing mindfulness lessons in primary schools, and specifically observing the teaching of mindfulness practices can offer valuable insights and aid to inform the mobilization of mindfulness in education. Future studies of this kind can contribute to the development of teaching and learning, addressing behavioral and emotional concerns in
children, curriculum development, and mindfulness approaches used within primary school settings (Goswami, 2006; Geake, 2009).

There is a call for further mindfulness in education research, however, with a distinct focus on supporting children with disabilities (Beauchemin et al, 2008; Chapman, 2013). The data from this study shows that adult participants felt children are lacking important skills, particularly social and emotional skills. As an attempt to develop these skills, participants are thus using mindfulness as one approach to facilitate social and emotional skills development. Although these findings shed light on reasons as to why mindfulness is an emerging trend in education, there is limited research that explicitly focuses on the mobilization of mindfulness with children who have disabilities (Antle, et al. 2007; Beauchemin et al, 2008; Chapman, 2013). Furthermore, there is limited research and literature that recognizes the importance of emotional wellbeing behaviors and trajectories for young people with disabilities (Antle, et al. 2007; Duff, et al, 2019). There is research that demonstrates young people with disabilities are at a heightened risk for developing mental health concerns (Kalnins, et al, 1999; Soubhi and Potvin, 2000).

There are existing studies and literature that reports on a range of positive outcomes for children including improvements in their emotional regulation, executive functioning, resilience, and interpersonal skills (Jennings and Greenberg, 2009; Kaiser-Greenland, 2010; Oberle and Schonert-Reichl, 2014; Rechtschaffen, 2014). As mindfulness is considered an adaptable intervention that can be tailored for different needs in different contexts (Mendelson et al., 2010; Flor Rotne and Flor Rotne, 2013; Rechtschaffen, 2014), there is a call for future research to explore the area of mindfulness in education with a focus on children with disabilities (Beauchemin et al, 2008). This area of research may contribute to
the development and improved delivery of education for children with disabilities, in
addition to social, emotional and behavioral developments in children with disabilities.

There is a gap in existing literature and research in relation to mindfulness science and direct
classroom practice and observations (Goswami, 2006; Geake, 2009). The data in this study
offers accounts of mindfulness pedagogies, approaches, and resources, in addition to reports
of children developing executive functioning skills, self-regulation skills, and increases in
memory among others. Although this qualitative data concludes that participants feel that
the mobilization of mindfulness can facilitate and enhance multiple outcomes,
neuroscientific approaches to research can further compliment and strengthen this emerging
research base (Bruer, 1997; Geake, 2009; Olson, 2014).

Future research on mindfulness may benefit from the use of more qualitative longitudinal
designs (Beauchemin et al, 2008). Studies of these kinds can offer rich findings concerned
with life trajectories, developmental indicators, individualized education plans. Longitudinal
designs may also contribute to the knowledge base in terms of curriculum and pedagogy
development and process, in addition to socio-emotional-related outcomes and academic-
related outcomes for students.


APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: EXEMPLAR OF SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Can you outline and describe the mindfulness practice at [NAME] centre for mindfulness, what is the process?

What is the purpose of mindfulness at the centre?

Do you collaborate with other practitioners during this process?

Are undiagnosed conditions detected?

Does mindfulness replace a past or existing medical, remedial practice?

Does mindfulness always solve a diagnosis? what stops it?

When was mindfulness implemented here?

What triggered the implementation of mindfulness here?

Was the implementation of mindfulness a straightforward process?

In your opinion, does the practice of mindfulness reflect a new or emerging era?

I understand mindfulness is also practiced within the field of business, law, and education. Do you feel there is a field that imperatively requires the practice of mindfulness?
APPENDIX B: EXEMPLAR OF SKYPE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Derived from overarching research question and sub question 1:

The mindfulness practice that you practice in your classroom, where is the origin of this practice? Is it retrieved from an educationally based source or a curriculum source? Or have you adopted and constructed your own practice?

How did you hear about mindfulness? What drew you to it? How long have you been implementing mindfulness in your classroom?

When you first implemented the practice in your classroom, has the practice changed at all?

How do you determine the age appropriateness of the mindfulness practice you implement in your classroom?

In your opinion, does the context in which mindfulness is offered alter the quality or impact?

Is your practice usually set in classrooms? Are there lots of opportunities to practice mindfulness in classroom environments? Are there drawbacks to a classroom setting?

Are there other environments you practice mindfulness with your students? Or are there other environments you intend to practice mindfulness with your students?

Derived from research question 1:

Is mindfulness solely implemented to facilitate and increase educationally related skills and abilities in students?

How can you tell if mindfulness practice is making a difference for a student?

In your opinion, how can mindfulness support children? Can mindfulness influence the emotional wellbeing and development of children?

To what extent or in what ways can it be tailored to fit different individuals or circumstances?
Have you observed any changes in your students since implementing mindfulness? If so, what are the changes?

Are you aware of implications or side effects children experience as a result of practicing mindfulness?

**Derived from research question 2:**

Why practice mindfulness with children/ in schools? What is the purpose?
What has influenced your motivation to implement mindfulness in your classroom?
Have there been any influences that have deferred you from implementing mindfulness in your classroom?
Why exclusively implement mindfulness? Have you considered other practices, or implemented other practices?
What do you see as the outcome of implementing mindfulness with the students in your classroom?
What are your perceptions about the benefits associated with mindfulness?
In your opinion, why in education, has mindfulness emerged? What are your thoughts on the present and future of mindfulness with children and in education?

**Derived from research question 3:**

How do you measure the progress of mindfulness with your students? Do you use an observational measurement tool/approach to gauge the progression of your students?
In your opinion, how important is it for you to expose children to the practice of mindfulness? And specifically, how important is mindfulness in the context of the classroom?
Do you consider the mindfulness practice a priority in your classroom/school?
Has your school encouraged and/or accepted mindfulness? If so, how? If not, why?
How important is mindfulness in the context in your education system? Do you know of the general consensus of your education system; does your education system encourage or deflect the mindfulness practice?
Are you aware of policies, movements or initiatives associated with mindfulness?
APPENDIX C: EXEMPLAR OF FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

What is mindfulness?
What does mindfulness do?
How does it make you feel?
How does being ‘mindful’ help you?
Do you think other people should try mindfulness?
Should parents and teachers practice mindfulness too?
What will it help them with?
What is your favourite kind of mindfulness exercise?
How does that kind of exercise make you feel?
APPENDIX D: EXEMPLAR OF THE FIRST PHASE OF ANALYSIS

Section 1

(Researcher) How did you hear about mindfulness? What drew you to it? How long have you been implementing mindfulness in your classroom?

(Participant) I heard about Mindfulness through a family member who was practicing it as well as in the meditation community and in some of the facilities I was working in. I've used it in my work since I've started practicing in 2008 and more recently in workshops and conferences in 2015. I have seen and experienced how it works in my own personal life. I want to share what I've learned. I believe in its principals.

(Researcher) The mindfulness practice that you practice in your classroom, where is the origin of this practice? Is it retrieved from an educationally based source or a curriculum source? Or have you adopted and constructed your own practice?

(Participant) My work is therapeutically based. I have changed and adapted most of the techniques to fit within what I am already doing within a musical context.

(Researcher) When you first implemented the practice in your classroom, has the practice changed at all?

(Participant) Yes! It is constantly changing and evolving. I have changed and adapted most of the Mindfulness techniques to fit within what I am already doing within a musical context. Sometimes I weave it
in during drumming sessions. I do drum circles with the kids. They get really into it! It can be lots of fun, a great way to focus and regulate. Mindfulness creates a lot of flexibility in how I work it in and shape it in. The types of resources, learning situations, and learning environments that can be created are plentiful. It can be meshed in so well.

(Researcher) How do you determine the age appropriateness of the mindfulness practice you implement in your classroom?

( Participant) As a therapist I am already aware of how to meet the clients at their level. If it needs to be more complex and deep we go there. If it needs to be basic and simple and straightforward in order to be the most effective, that’s what we do.

(Researcher) In your opinion, does the context in which mindfulness is offered alter the quality or impact?

(Participant) Yes, I believe context is important. The environment can influence and make a big difference in how kids get involved and become inspired in the mindfulness practices.

(Researcher) Is your practice usually set in classrooms? Are there lots of opportunities to practice mindfulness in classroom environments? Are there drawbacks to a classroom setting?

(Participant) I have a lot of flexibility in how I work and shape my sessions.

(Researcher) Are there other environments you practice mindfulness with your students? Or are there other environments you intend to practice mindfulness with your students?
(Participant) Sometimes I weave it in during drum circles, childbirth and even birthday parties. I also use it in a performance context both with myself and the youth.

Section 2

(Researcher) Is mindfulness solely implemented to facilitate and increase educationally related skills and abilities in students?

(Participant) No, in my context the goals are mostly social-emotional.

(Researcher) How can you tell if mindfulness practice is making a difference for a student?

( Participant) I give them surveys around empathy before and after. We also look at their success in the program here. Most importantly I can see developments are taking place through their body language and interactions with one another, generally there is more empathy coming from them. There is less tension, less disputes of sharing. Teamwork has become more enjoyable for everyone. That is one of the big positive developments, in my opinion, from mindfulness.

(Researcher) In your opinion, how can mindfulness support children? Can mindfulness influence the emotional wellbeing and development of children?

( Participant) Yes, I believe mindfulness is an important way to help our children find a sense of calm, stillness, grounded-ness and peace in an increasingly chaotic and stimulating world.

(Researcher) To what extent or in what ways can it be tailored to fit different individuals or circumstances?
(Participant) I believe mindfulness practices are incredibly flexible and can be tailored to fit almost any situation.

(Researcher) Have you observed any changes in your students since implementing mindfulness? If so, what are the changes?

(Participant) I use HeartMath as a form of music therapy and mindfulness with my students. HeartMath offers music and games that are specifically for young children. The kids I work with appear to have increased awareness, focus, communication skills and empathy. I’ve noticed increases in their ability to stay engaged and inspired. They are just more involved in what is asked of them. I suppose you could even say they don’t seem as distracted, or not as easily distracted.

(Researcher) Are you aware of implications or side effects children experience as a result of practicing mindfulness?

(Participant) Not that I’m aware of. Perhaps a side effect of joy.

Section 3

(Researcher) Why practice mindfulness with children/ in schools? What is the purpose?

(Participant) Our purpose overall is to improve quality of life through presence, acceptance and awareness which will hopefully lead to more effective communications and interactions with one another and the community at large. Mindfulness can be a tool for regulating emotions and improving overall wellbeing.

(Researcher) What has influenced your motivation to implement mindfulness in your classroom?
(Participant) I have seen and experienced how it works in my own personal life. I want to share what I've learned. I believe in its principals.

(Researcher) Have there been any influences that have deferred you from implementing mindfulness in your classroom?

(Participant) Sometimes I feel there is too much to do not enough time I also sometimes worry it will be seen as a religious practice, but that is getting less and less.

(Researcher) Why exclusively implement mindfulness? Have you considered other practices, or implemented other practices?

(Participant) I don't exclusively implement mindfulness I integrate many different practices into my approach, depending on what I feel the kids need most in that moment.

(Researcher) What do you see as the outcome of implementing mindfulness with the students in your classroom?

(Participant) In this setting, I hope to help create a more balanced, communal and joyful experience for our kids and staff.

(Researcher) What are your perceptions about the benefits associated with mindfulness?

(Participant) I think it helps with focus, concentration, clarity, acceptance, awareness, peace, stillness, calm, compassion and understanding.
(Researcher) In your opinion, why in education, has mindfulness emerged? What are your thoughts on the present and future of mindfulness with children and in education?

(Participant) I believe it has emerged because it has been lacking in our greater society and we are in need of a balance, especially when we see how our children are being diagnosed with special needs so often now. We need an alternative to drugs. Also, Eastern and Western cultures are blending more and more now.

Section 4

(Researcher) How do you measure the progress of mindfulness with your students? Do you use an observational measurement tool/approach to gauge the progression of your students?

(Participant) I give them surveys around empathy before and after. I ask them.

(Researcher) In your opinion, how important is it for you to expose children to the practice of Mindfulness? And specifically, how important is mindfulness in the context of the classroom?

(Participant) I feel it is very important. It sets the stage for everything else.

(Researcher) Do you consider the mindfulness practice a priority in your classroom/school?

(Participant) It’s a priority for me, but I’m not sure about the other staff. Doesn’t seem like they use it or know about it.

(Researcher) Has your school encouraged and/or accepted mindfulness? If so, how? If not, why?
(Participant) In terms of usage in the school, mindfulness is only used in the expressive arts department, where it is supported. I believe, maybe other departments don't have the funding or don't want to implement it due to time constraints or probation, school regulations, and rules. For the most part, children, staff, and parents are open and accepting of new approaches to teach and emotionally support children.

(Researcher) How important is mindfulness in the context in your education system? Do you know of the general consensus of your education system; does your education system encourage or deflect the mindfulness practice?

(Participant) I don't think they use it or are aware of it at the school on campus here. It's only used in the expressive arts department, where it is supported.

(Researcher) Are you aware of policies, movements or initiatives associated with mindfulness?

(Participant) No, there aren't any mindfulness policies or initiatives to implement mindfulness into my work. I want to improve the quality of how I work, teach and support children so I rely on mindfulness for that. Mindfulness is certainly out there in society is gosh a lot of forms to help people. There are now mindful birthing classes, and also mindful parenting.
## APPENDIX E: EXEMPLAR OF THE SECOND PHASE AND THIRD PHASE OF ANALYSIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential themes</th>
<th>Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mindfulness is defined as an intervention</td>
<td>Can you outline and describe the Mindfulness practice (name of centre). What is the process?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Teaching approaches for mobilizing mindfulness</td>
<td>(Program name) is a clinical intervention for children. It is a 9-week program with 9 sessions in total. It is a formal and informal approach to teach children to reach a greater level of awareness and become fully present in the moment. These skills aid children in handling psychological distress, anxiety and depressive symptoms and chronic pain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Objective for mobilizing mindfulness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Expected outcomes from mindfulness interventions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The skills developed from mindfulness can contribute to children's psychological and emotional wellbeing development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Mindfulness is used to support children's psychological needs</td>
<td>What is the purpose of Mindfulness at the centre?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Mindfulness can contribute to the quality of life for children and their families</td>
<td>There is a need in supporting children psychologically. There is a lack of other good options to treat children. Medication is anxiety tolerant. I truly believe Mindfulness can help and make a big impact in the lives of children and families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Who is involved in the mobilisation of mindfulness</td>
<td>Do you collaborate with other practitioners during this process?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes directly and indirectly. It is essential. I work with lots of other professions; psychiatrists, psychologists, physiologists.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Comments:

- **Comment [1]**: INITIAL CODE: Identification of a mindfulness program for children, within a clinical context
- **Comment [2]**: INITIAL CODE: Details of the length and structure of the delivery of the program
- **Comment [3]**: INITIAL CODE: Approach adopted in mindfulness program
- **Comment [4]**: INITIAL CODE: Purpose of program and objectives for children
- **Comment [5]**: INITIAL CODE: The outcomes and benefits for children having attended the program
- **Comment [6]**: INITIAL CODE: Mindfulness can help children psychologically and this is of importance
- **Comment [7]**: INITIAL CODE: Limited ways to help children psychologically
- **Comment [8]**: INITIAL CODE: Medication is not always the answer
- **Comment [9]**: INITIAL CODE: Mindfulness can facilitate positive developments for both children and families
- **Comment [10]**: INITIAL CODE: Additional professionals involved in the mobilization of the program and supporting children's psychological development
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9- The adaptability of mindfulness</td>
<td>Are undiagnosed conditions detected? Yes, all the time. The children are not always diagnosed. Children express particular symptoms, but we don’t label within the program. There are no labels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10- Mindfulness can be used to support a range of children’s needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11- Mindfulness can be mobilized as an additional intervention</td>
<td>Does Mindfulness replace a past or existing medical, remedial practice? It does not replace. I would say mindfulness is a compliment. The purpose of the program is not to replace. Mindfulness is not an alternative. Mindfulness is a non-pharmacological option, a behavioral intervention. Mindfulness can be a meaningful tool. Mindfulness is a foundation or umbrella for children to become aware of their health and well-being.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12- Mindfulness can be mobilized and delivered in different forms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13- The hybrid nature of mindfulness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14- Outcomes as a result of children participating in mindfulness</td>
<td>Does Mindfulness always solve a diagnosis? What stops it? With Mindfulness, children can cultivate awareness and resilience skills and to apply these skills later in life to support later years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15- The outcomes from mindfulness can contribute to children’s life trajectories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16- Why mindfulness is mobilized with children</td>
<td>What triggered the implementation of Mindfulness here? There is a growing need for clinical interventions to support children. We don’t take care of children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17- Motivations for mobilizing mindfulness with children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18- There is limited wellbeing support available for children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment [11]: INITIAL CODE: Children attend the program with a range of conditions, some of which are not diagnosed.
Comment [12]: INITIAL CODE: Confidentiality of diagnoses is paramount in the program.
Comment [13]: INITIAL CODE: Mindfulness can work in combination with other options to support children psychologically.
Comment [14]: INITIAL CODE: Different forms mindfulness can take.
Comment [15]: INITIAL CODE: The outcomes and benefits of mindfulness for children.
Comment [16]: INITIAL CODE: An increasing demand for clinical programs to help children psychologically.
Comment [17]: INITIAL CODE: There is a gap in this society for helping children.
APPENDIX F: EXEMPLAR OF PHASE FIVE OF ANALYSIS
APPENDIX G: ETHICAL APPROVAL FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK


Signed:
Student: [Signature] Date: 23/02/15

Supervisor: [Signature] Date: 17/2/15

Please submit this form to the Research Office (Andy Brierley, room WE133)

Office use only

Action taken:

☐ Approved
☐ Approved with modification or conditions – see below
☐ Action deferred. Please supply additional information or clarification – see below

Name: [Signature] Date: 23/02/15

Stamped:

Notes of Action: Sentences are unclear
APPENDIX H: PARTICIPANT APPROVAL FORM

Dear Participant,

As previously confirmed via email, I will be meeting with at _____(location)_____ on ______(date and time)______. This meeting will involve a _____(description of method carried out)______.

The purpose of my visit is to gain a greater understanding of the practice of Mindfulness. My PhD research positions Mindfulness as a phenomenon that will be investigated; encompassed within my research lies educational policy and neuroscience. My PhD thesis will thus provide an exploration of the dissemination of Mindfulness and an investigation into the wellbeing-Mindfulness-education Nexus.

Please be advised of your entitlement of fundamental rights as a participant within my research. Your rights of privacy, confidentiality, anonymity, and right to withdraw will be upheld throughout this study.

I would like to confirm that this study has received ethical clearance through the University of Warwick Research Ethics Committee. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact myself.

I am requesting your permission and agreement of the terms and conditions listed above. Please sign and date below.

Celeste Duff
C.Duff@warwick.ac.uk

I understand the procedures above. I agree to the terms and conditions.

Signature

Date

_________________________
APPENDIX J: FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT APPROVAL FORM

Dear Participant(s),

As previously confirmed via email, I will be receiving child focus group audiovisual data from your school and classroom.

My PhD research positions Mindfulness as a phenomenon that will be investigated; encompassed within my research lies educational policy and neuroscience. My PhD thesis provides an exploration of the dissemination of Mindfulness and an investigation into the wellbeing-mindfulness-education Nexus. Please be advised the entitlement of fundamental rights as participant(s) within my research. The rights of privacy, confidentiality, anonymity, and right to withdraw will be upheld throughout this study.

Due to the nature of the child focus group, I am seeking consent from the Mindfulness practitioners, senior staff members, parents of children (maintained by school protocol), and children involved. Recognizing Articles 3 and 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, this consent includes the consent of children involved.

I would like to confirm that this study has received ethical clearance through the University of Warwick Research Ethics Committee. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact myself.

I am requesting your permission and agreement of the terms and conditions listed above. An agreement of this consent maintains that the Mindfulness practitioners’ seek consent from children involved and share a clear dialogue of the focus group objectives and outcomes with the children. Please sign and date below.

Coleste Duff
C.Duff@warwick.ac.uk

I understand the procedures above. I agree to the terms and conditions.

Mindfulness practitioner signature and date: __________________________
Senior staff member signature and date: __________________________
Parents of children signature and date (if applicable): __________________________