



RESEARCH SUMMARY

Results of a Mindfulness-Based Social-Emotional Learning Program on Portuguese Elementary Students and Teachers: A Quasi-Experimental Study (2017)

MindUP™ is an evidence-based program grounded in neuroscience, mindful awareness, social and emotional learning, and positive psychology, providing children with the knowledge and tools they need to manage stress, regulate emotions and face the challenges of the 21st century with optimism, resilience and compassion.



What did researchers examine?

Researchers examined the degree to which the MindUP™ program made a difference on several areas of student and teacher well-being.

How did the researchers conduct the study?

Students in both the MindUP™ classrooms and the classrooms that did not participate in MindUP™ (comparison) completed surveys at the beginning of the study and at the end of the school year. These surveys asked them questions about:

- positive affect (for example, happiness)
- negative affect (for example, sadness)
- emotional control (reappraisal and suppression of emotions)
- self-compassion (self-kindness vs self-judgement, common humanity vs isolation; mindfulness vs overidentification)
- mindfulness (being aware of ones' personal state of being)

Teachers who were trained in MindUP™ and teachers that did not receive training in MindUP™ (comparison) completed surveys at the start of the study and again at the end of school year (after the MindUP™ group completed the program in their classrooms). Teachers were asked questions about:

- emotional control (reappraisal and suppression of emotions)
- self-compassion (self-kindness vs self-judgement, common humanity vs isolation; mindfulness vs overidentification)
- mindfulness (observing, describing, acting with awareness, non-reactivity to inner experience, non-judging of inner experience)

Teachers were also asked about three areas of burnout:

- emotional exhaustion (for example, "I feel emotionally drained from my work")
- depersonalization (for example, "I feel I treat some recipients as if they were impersonal objects")
- personal accomplishment (for example, "I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job")

Research Location

Lisbon, Portugal

Study Design

Quasi-experimental

Research Participants

- 6 classrooms that received MindUP™ (223 students)
- 6 classrooms that did not receive MindUP™ (231 students)
- All students were in 3rd and 4th grade (ages 7 to 9)
- 48.5% of students were female
- 95% of students were Portuguese
- 20 teachers (100% female) from 12 classrooms (from 12 different schools)

MindUP™ Teacher Training for this study

50 hours of MindUP™ training facilitated by a Certified MindUP™ Trainer (25 hours by an expert and 25 hours of implementation practice). Note that more extensive training was conducted as many of the concepts (for example, social and emotional learning, mindfulness, and neuroscience) were new to teachers and it was deemed important to include a practical component to reinforce learning.





What did the researchers find?

Overall, both students and teachers reported gains in several areas. Specifically, more than half of the MindUP™ students and more than two thirds of the MindUP™ teachers reported higher scores when compared to the comparison group in several areas of well-being.

Student Outcomes

Students who participated in MindUP™, when compared to the students who did not participate in MindUP™, reported higher scores in:

- being able to take perspective on personal shortcomings and difficulties
- experiencing more positive emotions
- being less likely to suppress their emotions

Teacher Outcomes

MindUP™ teachers, when compared to teachers who did not receive MindUP™ training, reported making gains in their ability to:

- observe (for example, “When I’m walking, I deliberately notice the sensations of my body”)
- experience personal accomplishment
- experience self-kindness

Final Summary

This was a unique study in that it offered Portuguese teachers extensive training in an area that is relatively new to the Portuguese education system. Both students and teachers reported gains in specific areas of well-being. Interestingly, there were no differences on mindfulness outcomes when comparing those students who participated in MindUP™ compared to those students who did not have MindUP™. Researchers suggest that this finding may be the result of the younger age of the students and the reliance on adolescent measures that were adapted for this younger student population.

This study offers some encouraging results for the changes experienced by teachers as a result of their participation in MindUP™ training and implementation of the program.

Original Research Article

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[Access the original research article here.](#)

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