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**Embedding Mindfulness Practice Within a Higher Education
Organisation: a Living Theory Influenced Approach
Nowlan, Jennifer**

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EMBEDDING MINDFULNESS
PRACTICE WITHIN A HIGHER
EDUCATION ORGANISATION:
A LIVING THEORY
INFLUENCED APPROACH

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements of the University
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Abstract

Background: Neoliberal ideology and policies have influenced the management of higher education leading to ‘a doing more with less’ culture, in turn leading to a negative impact on contemporary working practices of academics. There has been an escalation of poor mental health with rises in referrals to counselling and occupational health. **Purpose:** The core aims were to increase mindful awareness and compassion leading to resilience expressed as a ‘Mindful University of Westminster’. This work took a holistic approach to help facilitate the wellbeing of both staff and students.

Methodology/Approach: The main thread was a Living Theory influenced approach through a recognition of my personal core living values: equity, freedom and compassion. This insider-practitioner insider-researcher study has integrated a methodology and methods also of: action research, reflection, reflexivity, thematic analysis and change management tools. This bricolage approach also used a running metaphor of ‘a play’ throughout to enable interpretation into how the University of Westminster can develop and become a ‘Mindful University’. This research was evaluated utilising a combined approach and included the criteria of: worthy topic, sincerity, audit trails, saturation and methodological cohesion. **Findings/Conclusions:** The development of a multiple faceted approach of mindful offerings for staff and students allowed an initial flow of mindful and compassion ripples. These became larger waves of influence, whilst working within the University’s own systems and processes. **Original Contribution to Knowledge:** Choosing a methodology and methods of Living Theory to investigate developing mindfulness practice in higher education is unique and has not been carried out before. Additionally, most universities offering mindfulness usually have limited events and do not try to assert wider influence or impact, as in this work. **Implications:** Developing a ‘Mindful University of Westminster’ can help towards alleviating some of the suffering for some staff and students and supports general wellbeing at the University.

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I am dedicating this thesis to my two dear friends I lost during the last few years. Both were life friends for over 40 years, and their friendships and our fun times together will never be forgotten and remain in my heart.

Lynda Fay 1959 -2018

Christine Le Rendu 1945 - 2020

Author's Declaration

I declare that all the material in this thesis is my own work.

Abbreviations

AR - Action Research

BABIM - BA Business International Management

BPS - British Psychological Society

CA - Change Academy

CBT - Cognitive behavioural therapy

CETI - Centre for education and teaching innovation

CM - Change management

CPD - Continued professional development

FHEA - Fellow of the Higher Education Academy

FST – Faculty of Science and Technology

HRM - Human resource management

LT - Living theory

MBCT - Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy

MBSR - Mindfulness-based stress reduction

OB - Organisational behaviour

OP - Occupational psychology

PGCHE - Postgraduate certificate in Higher Education

PTVL – Part time visiting lecturer

REBT - Rational emotive behaviour therapy

SL - Senior lecturer

TPS - Teachers Pension Scheme

UoW - University of Westminster

USS - Universities Superannuation Scheme

WBS - Westminster Business School

Publications and Presentations 2013-2022

Publications:

Matthewman, L., **Nowlan**, J., Jodhan-Gall, D., OSullivan, N. and Patel, Z. (2018). Primed, prepped and primed: reflections on enhancing student wellbeing in tertiary education. *Psychology Teaching Review*, 24 (1), 67–76.

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'THE PLAY' FLYER - SETTING THE SCENE – RESEARCH OVERVIEW

"The little things? The little moments? They aren't little" Jon Kabat-Zinn

0.1 Research Aim

This work-based research for the Professional Doctorate (Higher Education Practice and Psychology) documents a Living Theory influenced reflective and reflexive account of my research activities, that aimed to facilitate the University of Westminster (UoW) to become what I recognise as a 'Mindful University'. Perhaps there is not an exact definition of a 'Mindful University' but some parallels can be drawn from a 'Positive and 'Mindful University' (Seldon and Martin, 2017) and a 'Mindful Organisation' (West, 2017). Both of these terms are explored more fully in section 2.8. My perception of a 'Mindful University of Westminster' is one that has mindfulness embedded at every opportunity for academics, professional staff, other staff, students and for visitors to the University (please see figure 2, section 2.8). This synergy of shared practice and understanding between those at the (UoW), whether it be for work or study, takes on a 'life of its own' creating flowing ripples of practice. These ripples then develop into larger waves, allowing the UoW to function in a sustained meaningfully mindful way. The benefits of mindfulness are transparent and visible to everyone, including visitors.

0.2 Methodology

Although I have drawn on different threads to weave together this thesis the golden thread is Living Theory (Whitehead, 1989, 2002, 2009, 2012a, 2012b, 2018, 2020). Living Theory research (Whitehead, 2020) creates a personal valid account of one's own living-educational-theory in a form of self-study research that creates and explores questions that are unique or important to the researcher whilst working with and emphasising one's core values. A living-educational-theory is created and stems from past educational influences, own life learning, the learning of others and of social formations. Its aim is to provide a methodology for improving practice and generating

knowledge. Living Theory research has a significant focus on the researcher and usually begins with the researcher asking themselves a key question such as:

How can I improve my practice?

As this research unfolds and develops throughout, especially highlighted in chapter 5, (Findings and Discussion) I reflect through my living core values and through the vehicle of my objectives on the development of mindfulness at the UoW and also on my own practice. Living Educational Theory, usually abbreviated to Living Theory, began as a methodology and method to improve educational practice but has since been adopted for use outside of educational research. Living Theory is especially useful when the researcher wishes to investigate their own practice (as above) as well as the research phenomenon, question, or gap, they wish to explore. A range of other research methodologies and methods can be utilised to complement Living Theory and methodological inventiveness is encouraged. In this research, I have also chosen to include the cycles of Action Research (AR), reflection, reflexive analyses, thematic analysis (TA) and selected organisational development (OD) tools. A more in-depth critical description of Living Theory can be found throughout and particularly in 4.4.ii Methodology.

Metaphors, as a parallel process, often play a role in qualitative research, just as a concept model does in quantitative research (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2009). Taking a post-modernist approach, metaphors for research can sometimes be seen as 'true fiction' (Clifford, 1986, p6). Alvesson and Sköldbberg have a preference to see various metaphors applied to different parts of the research as they feel that one metaphor alone cannot capture a whole body of work. Drama is often used as a metaphor for social phenomena (Brown, 1976, 1977) and in keeping with this, I propose my play metaphor. I have also utilised a journey metaphor to initially capture this work from a

different perspective and various smaller metaphors throughout, as per the views of Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009).

To enable my aim, the research began with living theory typical questions (Whitehead and McNif, 2006). My personal selected questions at the outset were:

What were my concerns?

Why was I concerned?

What experiences could I draw on to show my concerns?

What could I do about my concerns?

How could I improve my practice and the practices of others?

Answering those questions allowed an embedding of my living core values:

Equity

Freedom

Compassion

Specific objectives were formulated and designed to fulfil my overall aim. These are explored and explained in the form of six parallel adventure stories in my vision of this work as a play. The play naturally stars the key players, other acting roles and even unexpected uninvited characters and events. The latter especially in relation to the global pandemic towards the end of 2019 and beyond.

The play metaphor, as well as giving me a sense of flow, which was especially helpful with the challenging and changing storylines also allowed an ending to the play, with the scope of post-doctoral work. I have acted in all scenes and in this play by default I naturally take the leading actor role and scriptwriter whilst demonstrating throughout this thesis how I have interpreted and created this role whilst orchestrating the movements through my

interactions with university systems and other actors. This is my personal account of my adventures and the celebration of a story at an end-point. It is worth noting though an endpoint does not imply 'everything will be perfect' as in the assumption of more traditional research (McNiff and Whitehead, 2010, p35). I am also, like many meaningful stories, already planning the sequel.

0.3 How I have chosen to communicate writing for the audience and multi-media convention of this type of research

Since I have chosen to use Living Theory as the golden thread of my methodology, I have utilised the freedom and flexibility this approach affords. Therefore, if at times, the reader feels this research is communicated in an unconventional way then I would like to suggest that this is because Living Theory allows utilising 'visual narratives' and 'methodological inventiveness' (Whitehead, 2012a, p9) thereby enhancing my intention to enrich the deeper meanings of my thesis. This will be achieved by allowing multiple layers, not only through the more conventional text where I use reflective and reflexive analyses, but also through digital visual data to help illuminate and communicate the meanings of expressions of my embodied values of my own practice. This helps to convey meaning that mere writing alone could not (Whitehead, 2002, 2009). Therefore, this research uses the convention of Living Theory by exploring multi-media where appropriate and/or feasible.

0.4 Overview of each chapter:

Act I – The Rehearsal

Chapter One - Introduction and Background: as an actor prepares lines and begins to research a character, this part of the thesis sets the scene by way of an introduction which considers my background, initial starting point and then that of my professional identity, both as an educator practitioner and as a Chartered Psychologist. I acknowledge and reflect on how my role crosses the boundaries between teaching, professional practice and working on university research, either as a team member or in the lead role, in a

cross-boundary way, which can be thought of as working in the third space (Whitchurch 2008a).

I consider in some depth what has led to my personal values and how I felt I could action them in the workplace. I note the potential benefits and value of my work before detailing a brief history of the UoW, to align the context of my work to the backdrop of the University. I also consider the current business climate that we all work under with incessant change inherent now being part of normal everyday working life. I conclude this chapter with the acknowledgement for the potential development of stress in the workplace that constant changes and neoliberal education policies can affect, notwithstanding the University duty of care.

Chapter Two - Rationale for my Research: After having established my values in Chapter One I go on to consider the rationale for my research. This focuses on how I could make a difference, through asking classic Living Theory questions: 'What were my concerns'? 'Why was I concerned'? 'What experiences could I draw on to show my concerns'? My subsequent reflections and my personal answers to these questions feed into the deeper rationale for my work as I recognised that something was urgently needed to give both staff and students 'tools' to help deal with constant changes alongside new and more demanding ways of working.

The development of these 'tools' come together and form the basis for my research, to help develop the UoW to become a 'Mindful University', thereby allowing the practices and techniques of mindfulness opportunities to help alleviate some of the more difficult working conditions and situations we might find ourselves in. I believed I could make a difference, even if at times this might be a smaller ripple of difference, and at other times a larger wave of impact. It is important to include both staff and students here who might be needing, or even beginning their own journey of discovery, whilst seeking new ways to deal with ever-increasing workloads, uncertainty, reaching full

potential and ultimately enhancing ways of working. Although mindfulness practices and mindful ways of being, cannot ever be the answer to every difficult work situation through my research on mindfulness and own personal practice in this area I genuinely believe these practices can certainly benefit many of us. This leads to the passion for my research and fit with my own personal values of wanting to fight for equity, freedom and compassion in the workplace for all, inasmuch as a place of work can ever truly be. At the very least a workplace I believe should certainly not cause stress or illness.

The chapter then goes on to document my thoughts and further reflections working with my personal values and what I decided to prioritise and how I formulated sense-meaning categories to guide this research. I then consider the benefits and potential value of my work for both the UoW and myself, before finally finishing this chapter by detailing more on my aim, summary objectives and potential outcomes of my research.

Chapter Three - Literature Review: Although within Living Theory research it is not mandatory to have a separate chapter on a literature review, instead embedding throughout, I decided at my starting point that it was important to do so. I preferred to follow convention here, partly because I acknowledge the call for the importance of evidence-based practice in occupational psychology (eg Briner, 2019). This would also give my research a firm foundation to build on and to move forward from. I also felt it would be especially helpful for selected audiences who might not be too familiar with mindfulness. This chapter began as a review of the literature at my starting point with subsequent updates in later years. Especially noted during this time frame is the increase in mindfulness offerings in general. The literature review considers: what is mindfulness?; its history; myths and barriers; potential benefits of mindfulness, with evidence from education to neuroscience; criticisms of mindfulness; a 'Mindful University' and organisational development (OD). Although it may seem unusual to have personal multimedia images in a literature review, I have chosen to do so to help

enable a sense of living-educational-theory influences and which form part of Living Theory research here. My chosen images are powerful and meaningful to me, and I have aimed to communicate their relevance. Also as is the practice with Living Theory research I bring in, from time to time, other relevant literature in other chapters as my objectives, told in the form of six stories, unfold. This is even if the literature is not originally included in the summary literature review. Act I concludes with a narrowing of the literature most closely related to this research.

Act II – The Play

Chapter Four - Methodology: The opening Scene in Act II begins with my research objectives (table 1) followed by the theoretical framework, methodological rationale and gives my views as a practitioner-researcher on ontology, epistemology and axiology. The chapter then moves on to the methodological approaches chosen, alternative approaches considered, reflects on insider-practitioner research with a consideration of inherent advantages and disadvantages and OD tools. Then, methods of empirical materials collected. Followed by an exploration of varying types of analyses to use (please see table 2), recognising that my empirical materials can ‘inspire, develop and reshape theoretical ideas’ (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2018, p331). Penultimately, I consider validity and conclude with a crucial consideration of ethics in insider-practitioner research.

Chapter Five - Findings and Discussion: Here I recount my in-depth findings, utilising Living Theory , action research , reflection, reflexivity, thematic analysis and organisational development tools on differing selections of my six stories as they unfold. Classic action research cycles do not feature in all my stories, but Living Theory questions do, with reflexive analyses where appropriate. I also note that my interpretations will be influenced by my ‘repertoire of interpretations’ (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2018, p331). Then how my work may have impacted both myself as an individual, as an insider-

practitioner, as an educator practitioner and a mindful practitioner and that of others as we interact together as part of changing multi-disciplinary teams. I delve into what I was able to achieve and also what I perceived I was not able to achieve. I accomplish this by taking a closer look at obstacles that appeared to grow in my path. The chapter concludes with an integration of my overall findings and conclusions that I reached.

Chapter Six - Evaluation of my Work: In this chapter I demonstrate the significance and implications of my research by re-connecting my work, not only to my own background, but also to the original literature review and information/Literature on mindfulness. I demonstrate how I have evaluated and validated my work partly through comparing against the 'Big Tent' criteria (Tracey, 2010; Tracey and Hinrichs, 2017) and through the recommended evaluations of Morse (2018).

Chapter Seven - Significance of my Work and Conclusion: As the final scene of the play is under the spotlight this research then moves onto final reflections, takes account of limitations, original contribution to knowledge, notes recommendations for ways forward and future developments for further research towards a 'UoW Mindful University'.

ACT I – THE PREQUEL

Act I now sets out the initial scenes with the introduction, background, context, research rationale and literature review.

CHAPTER ONE – “Beginning Movement” – Introduction, Background and Context Creating Conditions

*“Nurturing your own development isn’t selfish.
It’s actually a great gift to other people” Rick Hanson*

“The Dance, of all the arts, is the one that most influences the soul” Plato

1.0 My Background

Since as long as I can remember I have had an interest in dance and acting. My interest in acting was no doubt influenced by my father who was an actor and who was totally fascinated by the whole industry. Searching for my own identity I felt that dance gave me a creative expression that at the time I did not find in acting. I then found that dance led me to the path of yoga, and I became absorbed with inspiring Eastern philosophies recognising the relationship between mind, body and spirit. I took a formal teaching qualification in hatha yoga and Eastern philosophies at a very young age. I look back with gratitude to this time in my life for the feelings of peace, compassion and for my own personal growth in self-development these studies gave me. This early period of my life certainly laid some foundation stones for me, not least, decades later, when I progressed from the path of yoga into mindfulness meditation and trained as a mindfulness teacher through the University of Bangor.

However, these Eastern studies also left me with many questions, which I felt I could not gain the answers to from these disciplines. I also had a sense of something that I perceived as having a lack of trustworthiness, seemingly being based purely on belief and faith, with recounted and handed down stories from generations from over 5,000 years ago. This is not to say I did not

completely distrust these disciplines, and I still have a strong affinity to them to this day, but I personally needed something more. I then went in search of, what I might best describe as wanting, partially at least, something more scientific. To that end I undertook two degrees: the first in Psychology (BSc Hons) and the second a master's degree in Occupational and Organisational Psychology (MSc).

My degree studies gave *some* answers, but, in many ways, this led to even more questions. Perhaps most study does? Both Eastern and Western ways of looking at the world partially gave me separately varying 'truths' or 'ways of knowing' which I felt helped towards what I was seeking. I now reflect and wonder if I even fully knew what I was seeking? If it was even possible to know? I also felt a certain difficulty given that generally there seems to be an emphasis to almost choose one discipline over the other and to commit to that one choice. So, the difficulties here were that both these perspectives do not usually seem to fit, or sit together very well. I always felt this to be a false dichotomy and so I had the desire for decades to bring about, at least in my world, and my understanding, a conjoining of the two. I saw a kind of synthesis whereby I at least, could live, reflect and write comfortably within the two psychologies or philosophies of Eastern and Western ways of thinking and being. I had no idea how I could achieve that over two decades ago. At the same time, I also acknowledge that I was not attempting to actually bring both together on all levels; an impossibility I would think. I wanted to find a way that had some meaning for me, and hopefully others, to act in both worlds without overdue pressure to demonstrate an allegiance to either. I needed to feel comfortable within my own positionality.

I acknowledge that there were certain movements during that period, and even before, that do delve into, in varying ways, a deeper sense of the self and might be thought of as having some roots in both psychological disciplines and the more Eastern type philosophies. Each of these though has a different overall emphasis for aligning with traditional psychology. For

example, the Depth Psychologists, sought a type of spiritual integration with the conscious and the unconscious (Bugental, 1965, 1976, 1978, 1980, 1987) with affiliations in Existential psychology and Humanistic psychology. This was very much about therapy to which they referred to as 'life-changing', so ultimately this was not quite the same as the more general approach I was seeking at that time. There was also the Psychosynthesis movement led by Assagioli (1965) with the intention of including a more holistic approach to psychoanalysis with the belief that areas such as spirituality could not be ignored. Ultimately this was seen as growth of the individual by taking a wider account of the personality than that of psychoanalysis and thereby integrating the spiritual self with other facets of personality. Again, this seemed very specific and was aligned to therapy, whereas I was seeking a broader conjoining.

Likewise, Autogenic training, developed in the 1920s by Johannes Schultz, a progressive relaxation technique, originally developed from what was seen as the beneficial state of hypnosis and used to help relieve anxiety, has some alignment with East and West. Autogenic training seeks to teach people stress reduction by using repetitions of visualisations and statements that include "I feel calm" and inducing feelings of bodily warmth and heaviness. Autogenic training is said to lead to calmness in both body and mind (Yurdakul, Hottum and Bowden, 2009). Once again, this seemed a very specific training that did not align with the more generalised approach I was seeking, or at least aspired to, at that time.

A while after my psychology degrees I began working at the University of Westminster in the academic year 2001-2002 teaching mainly in the areas of Human Resource management (HRM), Organisational Behaviour (OB) and Occupational Psychology (OP) and was specifically interested in researching further in the area of wellbeing in the workplace. During this period, I continued with my own further professional development with training in psychotherapy and coaching. This training was mainly from the tradition of

Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT) and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). I chose psychotherapy and coaching to train further and to specialise in as they built on my inner values of my desire to help others with difficulties, to discover further insights with new ways of thinking and working, and to assist others to achieve their full potential in life and work. As I also valued my work as a practitioner, I went through the accreditation process with the British Psychological Society (BPS) chartership system in occupational psychology (OP) to become a Chartered Psychologist, also as an accredited academic member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) and a certified principal practitioner with the Association of Business Psychologists (ABP). My identity by now though was also becoming deeply ingrained as an educator, so I also undertook a Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education (PGCHE), and this led to becoming a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (FHEA).

The desire to research into some form of integration of Eastern and Western ways of being had remained constant with me throughout all my psychological training and years of working as a Senior Lecturer (SL). My initial desires were to work in an area that allowed me to carry out research on Eastern ways of thinking that I could apply or integrate to Western culture, rather than the other way around. I felt that as my culture is Western, I would have more understanding to formulate research from this perspective since my historical, political, and social background is not Eastern. Therefore, as I have more understanding of Western cultures and by applying perhaps just one aspect of an area from Eastern philosophy this would afford a more likely greater scope for my aims. Then timing supported my desires, by way of the opportunity of the establishment of the Professional Doctorate at the UoW, which coincided with my own examining of how to live my personal values in the workplace. It was also at the same time whilst deepening my own practice of mindfulness that I had the realisation that this was the area I needed to research into for all the possibilities that this offered.

Previously and prior to the commencement of this research whilst being aware of my own feelings in trying to live my personal values in the workplace it became interesting to observe my colleagues. I had noticed that many of them seemed to fall into the reported 'rock bottom' stage of morale but also of 'optimism and enthusiasm' for tasks they were working on as noted by Watson (2009, p1), This also seemed to resonate with my own feelings, that of the sense of the general pressure of tighter deadlines and an ever increasing workload leading to low morale at times, however, and at the same time, still feeling that I loved my work. Watson (2009, p3) goes on to state that 'contradictory answers' may well be a culture of Higher Education (HE). My initial ideas began with a desire to help colleagues, during the 'low morale' stages, and this in turn I feel leads to helping the University. I wished to accomplish this using what may be thought of as partly Eastern approaches, and this will be discussed more fully in the next chapter when I detail more wholly the deeper rationale for my research.

The opportunity to commence this research then came to fruition for me in 2012, after a decade of working in Higher Education. As mentioned above by then I had also undertaken the PGCHE, which, after a first degree and a master's degree in a related subject, was also a required qualification for acceptance onto the Professional Doctorate. Also required was, by way of a portfolio, accreditation of prior learning (APL) for the remaining modules of the MA in Higher Education (MAHE) (of which the PGCHE formed the first part). I drew on my (at the start of this research) ten years of teaching in HE to construct the portfolio. Finally, along with my approved research proposal this led to acceptance onto the Professional Doctorate, and then following ethics approval, to the official beginning of this work. It was, and still remains very important for me that this research has a good fit with how I see my professional identity. I am aware I could have undertaken a Professional Doctorate in OP, but the HE part was also important for me, and I felt that if I had taken solely the OP route the education side might not have been easily represented within that discipline. By undertaking a Professional Doctorate, in

HE Practice and Psychology, I have been able to work in a cross-disciplinary style, which fits with my professional identity, whilst expressing my values.

1.1 Professional Identity

Identities can be considered as positions that academics assume according to their subjective beliefs, understanding and feelings, with history and capability making an impact too (Fanghanel, 2012, p.6). My foremost thoughts on my professional role identities exist for me in what I would describe as a blend between: a Chartered Psychologist practitioner and within that discipline specialising in wellbeing in the workplace from an Occupational and Organisational Psychology perspective; as an educator specialising in teaching OB, HR and OP; and also, importantly as a researcher. For me they blend synergistically within my academic post within the Business School. I am grateful to have worked in varying roles at the UoW that have helped enable my educational growth, development and responsibility. I feel that in turn this has also helped progress my academic identity. Mostly my teaching in specialist areas has helped develop the occupational and psychological side. Some examples now follow that have been formative in my identity formation, mainly taken from an educator development point of view.

I was a member of the 'student experience group' chaired by a member of the academic senior management team, and I attended monthly meetings throughout the years to discuss how we could make improvements to the academic lives of our students. We listened to our students' views on all aspects of student life, in order to be able to take action to improve the overall student experience. The student experience group no longer exists as such and became amalgamated into a different group known as the collaborations and partnerships group, which again met monthly. As of 2017-2018, the latter group also no longer exists and has not been replaced. Being a member of these groups widened my horizons as I understood more deeply some of the concerns our students have and how international agreements and

collaborations are initiated and maintained. I have also been a personal tutor for most of my time at the UoW and again feel this has helped in my development as an educator and even as a coach and/or mentor at times. Sometimes the conversations can be difficult or delicate and being able to assist students on a one one-to-one basis takes on a completely different emphasis compared to that of a seminar group/lecture delivery, the former being much more personal.

Further changes to my work portfolio meant that I took on a second course leadership of a BA in Business International Management (BABIM) with the main emphasis on student recruitment through partnership agreements that have in the past focused on universities in China. This had the possibility of being extended to other countries too. I travelled overseas to help recruit students, visit agents, take part in university fairs, join meetings with academics at overseas Institutions and to even carry out some teaching in China with taster sessions of what students could expect at the Westminster Business School (WBS). The BABIM has also now closed and a team of us in 2018-2019 were working towards validating a new course to replace this one. However, for the time being this has been put on 'hold'. In sum, the duties and roles from the collaborations and partnerships group and from the CL roles involved writing and disseminating reports of my trips abroad, consideration of actions to be taken, sometimes actions from others' trips and actions from discussions that we held, including that of partnership agreements and strategies for where WBS might aspire to make new agreements.

Every five years WBS carries out critical reviews of its UG and PG offerings as part of the scrutiny of its courses. After approximately five years of working at the UoW I became heavily involved in this process. This has dictated many of my working hours in order to help revamp, streamline and assist in writing totally new courses and modules in line with various changing strategies. This initial involvement for me was linked to a specific updating of the teaching portfolio and was aligned to the University strategy prevailing at the time,

(please see 1.4.1 for more detail of the changing strategies during the course of my research).

1.2 Third Space

My professional identity/identities also exist in another space, a professional role that many in academia now work within and can be regarded as the third space: a blended role of both professional activities and academic work (Whitchurch, 2008a). In addition, professional staff (Whitchurch, 2008b) have roles and identities that are more complex than job descriptions or company charts display. There is a certain hybridity within our academic work or the work of professional staff that requires us all to also act as unbounded professionals in the sense that we are expected to be able to work in different areas executing varying tasks with ease.

One area of my work that can be considered third space working was through an aspect of the role of Course Leader for the BA in Business Management (BABM), for part-time students (my first appointment as a Course Leader). Third space working, for example, entailed keeping up to date with research on successful specialist recruitment in the part-time market, benchmarking our competitors and keeping up to date with changes on student funding for part-time study. I carried out this type of work by attending conferences, seminars, workshops and by networking with others who had similar roles in other universities. Interestingly though, most staff from other universities who seemed to attend such events seemed to be mainly those who held roles outside of an academic role, sometimes referred to as professional staff, demonstrating that this is a blended role, and does not always fall necessarily to the academic or to professional staff.

During various iterations of course revalidations a decision was made to end part-time study at UG level at WBS, consequently this role no longer exists. My most current role in third space working incorporates being part of the new

'Task and Finish Team'. I was requested to be in this team by my new Head of School. This team was formulated in summer 2021 to explore safe working practices for staff returning to campus after lockdown restrictions were lifted during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the unfolding development of this research where it has necessitated at times that I have worked as an unbounded professional focusing on the broad base of my work and within ever-changing Institutional developments, is also third space work.

In sum it is evident that certain aspects of some of my roles fit into third space ways of working and some into a perimeter role (Whitchurch, 2008b). It seems that other parts of my roles when unpacked can become third space at times.

1.3 My Values Leading to Living Theory and Mindfulness Research

My core living values have largely developed through my cultural background and individual learning opportunities and experiences. My unique pattern of core values are:

Equity

Freedom

Compassion

Throughout this research I aim to demonstrate the living of these core values. As already noted above in Chapter One (Section 1.0) they can be partly lived through coaching and psychotherapy when I mentioned how I was drawn to caring and wanting to help others with difficulties. This is actioned by assisting the discovery of potential insights with new ways of thinking and working, and so to contribute to others' achievement to reach their full potential in life and work. Perhaps most would agree that we are not all born equal, and that life is not fair. Even understanding this, I still have a sense of unease when I know that people are not able to blossom into all that they can become or are discouraged by life or by circumstances. Here I feel my value of equity is

represented and building on this value of helping individuals has led to the overall general aim of this research with the desire to potentially benefit all staff and students within WBS and in turn have some influence on the University as a whole. Waddington (2019, p241) encourages her readers to reflect critically on their workplaces, on the 'organisational dynamics, issues and challenges'. This is precisely the focus this research takes by necessity as it progresses to help others. I delve deeper into core values elsewhere, particularly in 2.6, as I also reflect on organisational issues and challenges.

Clearly all at the University work in leaner times, which is of course reflective of business in general in the 21st century. It is because of these effects that I feel the need has arisen for something, that by necessity is cost effective, that can potentially help to assist people to work in more creative ways, positive ways and in a mindful way; and even help to alleviate suffering in a broad sense. For many people, this can elevate and build on powers and resources that are hidden within them. I acknowledge there will always be other ways to approach any problem but my preferred way to help by drawing on personal experiences, expertise and knowledge, is through the dissemination of mindfulness. To this end and because of my values I propose the practices of mindfulness, as a way forward to help and reach out to people in large numbers, recognising that at the same time it is a deeply personal process.

1.4 Research Context

The above chapter has so far looked very much at my personal background, experiences and values leading to this research. This chapter now moves on to set out the historical context of the UoW, which necessarily also forms the background to this research and finishes with an up-to-date view of current ways of working.

1.4.1 The UoW Brief History

The early beginnings of the University are mentioned briefly here, not only to set some further background context, but because of the fit between my values and the University's history: that of offering opportunities to people who might not otherwise have them, to help reach their full potential. This is sometimes now referred to as 'widening participation'. The University of Westminster had its beginnings in the 1800s when Sir Quintin Hogg, a philanthropist, gave education to poor boys in London prior to the acquisition of the Regent Street site. The University became known as the Polytechnic. In 1891 the Polytechnic became publicly funded and changed its name to Regent Street Polytechnic (Glew, Gorst, Heller and Matthews 2013; The UoW, 2019). Today the university has approximately 22,000 students structured into four main campuses: Regent, Marylebone, Cavendish and Harrow. Overseas operations have seen the UoW being awarded the Queen's Award for Enterprise in 2000 and again in 2005. According to Parr (2015) for universities to be forward thinking they need to look beyond their own national borders and in turn this helps attract high quality staff and students. The UoW currently has 50% international students (Times Higher Education, 2022) and is ranked eighth for international outlook in the UK amongst young universities (The UoW, 2022). For a more detailed account of the history of the UoW please see Appendix i.

1.4.2 Higher Education, Students and Workforce Changes

From the early beginnings of the UoW to more recent times, there continue to be continuous changes in Higher Education, brought about by Government Law and at times the University itself (Nowlan, 2021). Most of these changes in universities have occurred over the last three decades in Neoliberalism terms and reflect the social, political, economic world of 'market mechanisms' and 'managerial control' (Fanghanel, 2012, p3). The speed of these changes seems to ever increase, especially over the last decade, including one of the major and 'controversial' changes that involved how universities were funded.

In a Parliamentary briefing report (Bolton, 2021) explains how the onus moved to the student for payment of fees, rather than by Government funding with the rationale that it is the individual who will benefit, with an initial cap at £9,000 in 2012 (although this has now risen). After graduation, students only start to repay their loans once their income rises above a certain threshold. Others have noted that for some students, just seeking a qualification, with little intention to work afterwards, this might be seen as an advantage as they will never repay their debts. For the majority though this leaves students finishing university with very high long-term debts and interest payable. In addition, in 2016-2017 any remaining maintenance grants were replaced by loans (Bolton, 2021). Coupled with the increased cost of housing this does not leave young students of today in a strong financial position.

A major change in the law that has affected staff employment has been since 2011 there is no longer a default retirement age (Age UK 2019a). People cannot be forced to retire (apart from certain occupations where an age requirement has been agreed, for example, fire fighters) or unless they are suffering from mental or physical bad health (GOV.UK 2019). The State Pension age is currently 66 but will rise to 67 in 2028, although a government review is due in 2023 to see if to raise it further and will be dependent on life expectancy (Age UKb). Clearly people must pay in for longer before they can receive their pensions the later the retirement age. In addition, pension schemes such as the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) or the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) now no longer have a final salary scheme but a career average for new starters and younger members of staff (Teachers' Pensions, 2019). Ultimately this does mean for many employees they will have to pay in for longer to receive less returns. However, the move from the final salary scheme to the career average scheme for younger members of staff was disputed by firefighters under age discrimination laws. In 2019 the forced move between schemes saw a new ruling upheld stating that younger firefighters had been discriminated against by age when older firefighters had been allowed to remain in the final salary scheme. This then

had implications for the pension schemes for all public sector workers and the former decision of younger staff in the career average scheme and older staff in the final salary scheme was reconsidered under the McCloud Inquiry. The results were that all members of the TPS (and various other pension schemes) will be moved to the career average scheme from April 2022 (Teachers' Pensions, 2022).

These various changes in the law could be considered to bring either advantages or disadvantages depending on personal viewpoints. Regarding retiring at a later age many colleagues have spoken to me, and they say they are happy to work beyond 65/66 as they were not ready to retire and welcome this. However, for younger people perhaps wishing to take an earlier retirement this is more difficult to achieve with a longer working life.

Throughout the duration of my research there have been three different university strategies that have driven policies and directions. The first of these was in 2012/13-2016 and was called Learning Futures. The remit was for a vision of a student staff partnership to enhance the student experience (The UoW, 2014). The next strategy was called 'Westminster 2020' and ran between 2017-2020. This strategy focused on globalisation and internationalisation and to bring transparency, more accountability, and 'futureproof' ways of working (The UoW, 2017). After a complete restructure in 2018-2019 we now have a superseded updated strategy called, 'Being Westminster'. The main focus areas are: learning and teaching, research and knowledge exchange, employability and internationalisation (The UoW, 2020). In a recent opening address at the Learning and Teaching Symposium (2021) by the Vice Chancellor, he announced that the mid-term review was being worked on for the 2023 strategy and they were also looking at 2028 and beyond.

1.4.3 Economic Influences

External influences in the world that may have caused instability to the University was notably the credit crunch and recession of 2007 and 2008. As is well known this originated in the US with the bursting of the housing bubble whereby billions of dollars were written off, with the knock-on effect leading to a worldwide financial crisis (Brunnermeier, 2009). Internal impacts to the UoW in 2010 resulted in redundancies to reduce staff costs to around 60% of income when they had previously been running at just under 65%. The School of Architecture was the least affected with a need to reduce by £0.3m and the then School of Electronic and Computer Science with a reduction of £2.8m. This was a period of high uncertainty that the University had to work through. Voluntary redundancies were also offered in WBS, and I witnessed a few of my colleagues accept these offers and leave. This was not, as no doubt can easily be appreciated, a period of feeling safe and secure in the workplace. From my observations staff morale unsurprisingly reflected that and generally seemed very low. These very issues formulated the early seeds of my research, as I felt something was needed to help colleagues. With my desire to help I began my initial reflections on what might be feasible.

As these early beginnings progressed more of my thoughts became concerned about questioning my own values and how I could incorporate them in my work. The questions that Living Theory utilises (eg Whitehead and McNiff, 2006; Whitehead, 2009) allowed me to begin to ask the following questions. I found them to be very useful prompts even if working through them was not necessarily as simple as they first appear:

How can I improve my practice?

How can I improve the practice of others?

These questions and initial responses are specifically recounted in more detail in Chapter Two – Rationale and Introduction to the research. Although the

redundancies and cuts mentioned above afforded reduced outgoing costs and seemingly brought the university back to a more stable period from that of 2010, in 2017 similar problems emerged again. Staff were, once again, being encouraged to consider leaving and some were offered voluntary redundancy coupled with the threat of forced redundancies if insufficient numbers left. This, again unsurprisingly, led to another long period of uncertainty. To also attempt to alleviate the financial situation there was also a complete University wide restructure with whole departments (for example, the former Education department) becoming a casualty with its demise. Inevitably, it would seem there are losses in these types of situations. Some have lost their jobs, some have taken early retirement, and those left remain with the potential for suffering survivor syndrome (Baruch and Hind, 2000) and/or stress.

1.4.4 Stress in the Workplace

Added to the UoW 2017 challenges, the knock-on effect and the general climate that we all now live and work under in the UK having 'to do more with less' has perhaps become an accepted way of working. However, that does not mean it is without consequences and the latest Health and Safety Executive figures clearly demonstrate that there is a worrying amount of stress in the workplace generally, according to previous and the latest figures available at the time of writing (Health and Safety Executive, 2020) and estimates from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) show:

- "In 2019/2020 stress, depression or anxiety accounted for 51% (in 2017/2018 it was 44%) of all work-related ill health cases and 55% of all working days lost due to ill health.
- Stress, depression or anxiety is more prevalent in public service industries, such as education; health and social care; and public administration and defence.
- By occupation - professional occupations that are common across public service industries (such as healthcare workers; teaching

professionals and public service professionals) show higher levels of stress as compared to all jobs

- Disruption to the economy towards the end of 2019/20 due to the emergence of COVID-19 as a national health issue had the potential to impact workplace injury and work-related ill health data for 2019/20. A paper setting out the issues in more detail along with results of the analysis of the data from the Labour Force Survey found that COVID-19 did not appear to be the main driver of changes seen during that period.

Honing more deeply into what is occurring in HE the outlook seems rather bleak. According to Kinman (2014) the university sector across various countries had experienced wide-ranging changes that have removed some of the qualities that would have protected academics to stressors and instead have created complex and unpredictable working conditions. There is a continual student to staff ratio rise (apart from Psychology if the course is BPS accredited as this is protected) and a rise in student numbers. Students are more diverse and have a consumer positioned style added to more accountability from staff.

Grove (2018) writing a summary of a forum presented by Kinman, reported that 55%, so over half of all UK academics have experienced mental health problems including anxiety and depression. In addition when this is compared to other professions, HE has one of the highest rates of stress-linked mental health issues (Grove, 2018). Given the UoW 2017 redundancies and documented stress related figures in HE, coupled with the 'more for less' culture in general in business and in HE this indicates a strong recipe for some staff at the UoW to feel stressed.

Before going any further, it would now seem appropriate to define stress. This is not necessarily an easy task as there are many definitions of stress and some even believe that it is an overused term and is rather vague. A succinct

definition by the Health and Safety Executive defines stress as ‘the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them’ (Health and Safety Executive, 2011, p3). Arnold et al (2016, p380) go on to define contemporary theories of stress as ‘the intervening psychological processes that link exposure to work-related problems to the negative impact of those problems’, whilst also denoting that the Health and Safety Executive do ‘capture’ the essence of stress utilising most of the scientific definitions. They offer this quote from the Health and Safety Executive ‘the process that arises where work demands of various types and combinations exceed the person’s capacity and capability to cope’ (Arnold et al, 2016, p380).

Applying these definitions from theory to practice relate not only to individuals’ own coping capacities but also to the differences in varying circumstances that they find themselves in at the University. Some will suffer more than others, not only because of their disposition but the situations they are in. Staff are in various environments since there is not a consistency in cuts, redundancies or changes across the different Schools in the University. Nonetheless most will have been or will be affected to varying extents by external economic influences, external Government changes contributing to radical changes made at the University. All these factors then impact on our own individual capacity that we each have within us to cope.

1.4.5 University duty of care

Clearly the UoW, like all organisations and workplaces in the UK, have a duty of care towards the health and safety management of its employees (Health and Safety Executive, no date). Of course, employees also have a duty to cooperate within that duty of care (Torrington et al, 2011). It could be argued that as some strategies and offerings are in place at the UoW eg counselling being offered to staff (and for students) that this meets legal obligations. However, my view is that more help is needed at an earlier stage before

stress might officially be diagnosed. Helpful 'tools,' such as mindfulness practices (eg Kabat-Zinn, 1990, 1994; Langer 1989, 2014) can lead to increases in being more relaxed, more compassionate and to the embodiment of resilience. Improving resilience can be a stand-alone training practice (RobertsonCooper, 2019), and to an extent this sometimes seems to be the situation at the UoW. There are workshops offered to staff in this area run from time to time. These initiatives, whether they are stand-alone offerings or slightly longer, can be offered through HR, as development opportunities for staff, run by staff (if they can freely give up their time). Some, at the invitation of HR, are run by external organisations. Staff training can now be offered through the Juice platform which was established at the UoW in 2019 and is an external 'health hub' website that hosts bookable events (Juice, 2021). It also includes articles on health, which currently focus heavily on coping with the safety aspects of COVID-19 in the workplace. Since the beginning stages of this research there have naturally been changes in how staff training and development is offered.

1.4.6 Research Overview Cycles

From my initial reflections and use of Living Theory questions (eg Whitehead and McNiff, 2006; Whitehead, 2009) below I illustrate my early proposed thoughts using action research influenced cycles on my pre-project beginnings, expected implementation stage and expected hoped-for outcomes.

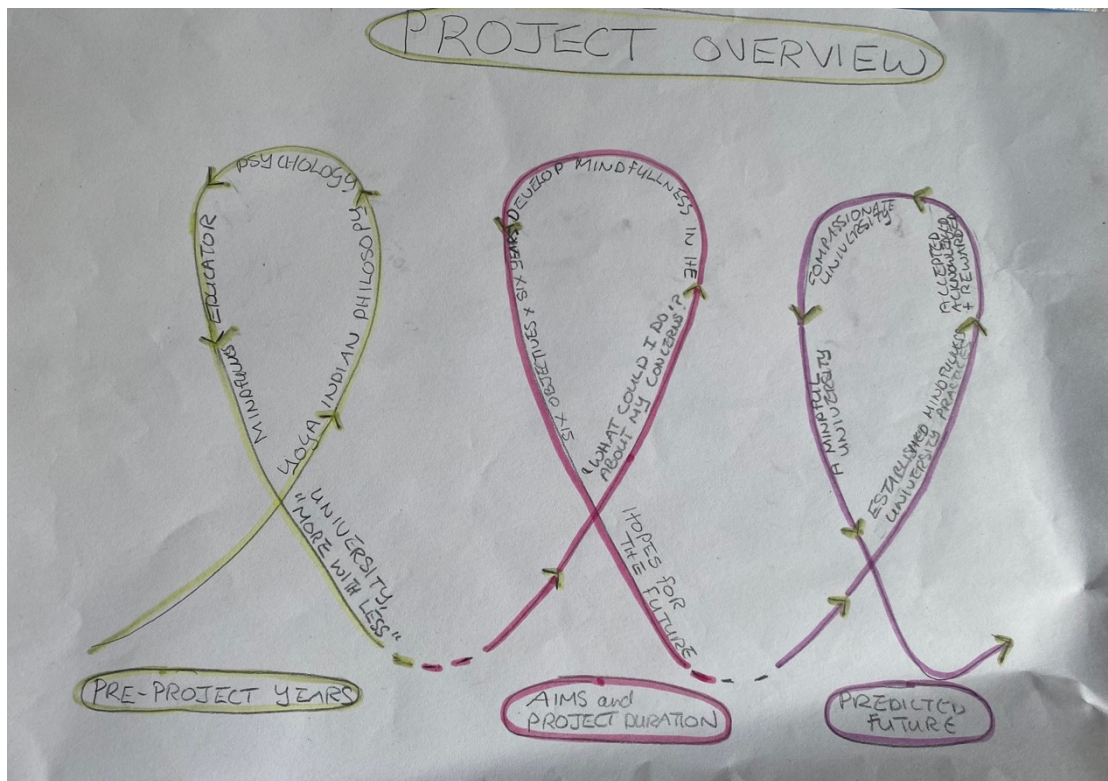


Figure 1 - Research Overview Cycles

1.5 Benefits and Value of my Research

I progressed Living Theory questions, initial reflections and tentative answers together with preliminary diagrams to help formulate the beginnings of the rationale for my work. Further thoughts emerged as to what I perceived to be the benefits to the UoW of the successful implementation of my research and also the learning path that this would provide for me as the researcher.

1.5.1 The benefits for the UoW:

- Firstly, this could perhaps be the largest benefit of all, and that is an enhanced holistic resilience to stress: so, welfare, health and wellbeing, for both staff and students, are implicated here.
- Other benefits might be more individual in nature for both staff and students and tap into enhancing wherever one is now and can clearly

range to many different aspects depending on the person. For example, some of these could be enhanced creativity, more compassion for others in the workplace, more compassion towards the self and stronger emotional control. These will be considered further and in more depth in Chapter 3, Literature Review.

- Other areas of benefit and value for the UoW is the potential revenue that could be gained in teaching mindfulness programmes in the workplace acting as an external consultant for WBS.
- The above could also aid research that could be carried out at the UoW in mindfulness because as mindfulness grows the possibilities of research also grows.
- Finally, this would add to the members of staff who have a Level 8 qualification, as it is now policy to only employ new staff who have a PhD, a Professional Doctorate, or equivalent. Twenty years ago, when I was first employed at the UoW a master's degree was considered the necessary qualification, but times have changed.

1.5.2 The benefits for myself:

- Firstly, this includes the enhanced knowledge and further practice of mindfulness itself with all its inherent benefits that that brings.
- Another benefit is growth as a researcher (which also benefits the UoW on its research agenda).
- I would also consider on successful implementation of my research and gaining the qualification of the Professional Doctorate that this would not only enhance my feelings of self-achievement but also assist me if I

am to be working out in places like China again, where titles appear to be a necessity.

Ultimately the overall benefit of this research could potentially be looked at by way of it becoming more than the sum of its parts and what this could mean for the UoW.

CHAPTER TWO – “The Dress Rehearsal” - Rationale and Living Theory Questions

“So, in meditation practice, the best way to get somewhere is to let go of trying to get anywhere at all” Jon Kabat-Zinn

2.0 Rationale for this Research

This chapter builds on Chapter 1 and sets out in more detail the research rationale and Living Theory questions, builds on my personal values and offers further commentary on how I intended to address the issues. It begins with my reflections on my starting point in 2012 when I initially questioned:

What were my concerns?

Why was I concerned?

What experiences could I draw on to show my concerns?

To recap these questions connected for me a deep concern that I had gathered from a personal observation of members of staff appearing to struggle with faster paced working regimes with ever growing accountability in HE, in form-filling, bureaucracy and ever-increasing changes. This is not intended to imply that ‘some’ of these changes in practices have not been beneficial to the overall efficiency of the University and some have encouraged best practice. This is also not to say that the University stands alone from other institutions in this. It has been well noted in the literature that academia has undergone massive changes in the diverse and multi-faceted types of roles an academic is now expected to undertake (Whitchurch, 2008a; Malcolm and Zukas, 2009; Macfarlane, 2011). These changes have made an enormous impact on how academics now work.

I also observed students increasingly juggling working part-time or even full-time in a few cases alongside full-time studies, necessitated by increased student fees and high accommodation costs. I witnessed some colleagues

going off sick with stress and some students confessing they were finding it hard to cope. Although these were different situations and different reasons, I sought to search for a similar holistic solution in order to discover what I could do to help.

2.1 What were my concerns?

My concerns were that since the last economic downturn with the recession in 2008 and having 'to do more with less' culture now seemingly embedded within our own culture, was that staff could become overworked. This could also have a negative impact on the varying beliefs and values that different academics hold on education. If these values are not realised, meaning we work outside our own values, then this could potentially lead to stress. In those early days this was still in the aftermath of the 2010 round of redundancies. The consequences of this period seemed to be still escalating and still seemingly to be having a negative effect. These were my initial concerns. However, then in 2017, there seemed to be a feeling of history repeating itself, I wonder if 'we' ever did recover fully before sliding into the next crisis so was stress building upon stress?

2.2 Why was I concerned?

My own observations of what was happening around me was not positive. This was also backed up with the Health and Safety Executive figures for stress in the workplace generally (Health and Safety Executive, 2020) and what was happening specifically in HE (Grove, 2018). I felt strongly at the outset of this research to the culmination of my research that this was a serious concern given the potential harm that this could develop into. In the 'Pressure Vessel' report (Morrish, 2019) it was confirmed that there had been a sharp rise in poor mental health from 2009 to 2016. As noted above the Health and Safety Executive (2020) figures also state that work-related stress, depression or anxiety is on the rise and in education those rates are higher than average. The Health and Safety Executive figures were published in

March 2020 to account for the year 2019/2020 so are not confounded with changes due to COVID-19, although they do make a note about this (please see above 1.4.4).

2.3 What experiences could I draw on to capture my concerns?

My experiences that I drew on initially derived from personal observation that I saw over many years, whereby some colleagues were looking worried, showing signs of anxiousness and some unwell. This was not only in times of high change periods (eg the redundancies mentioned above) but also in less eventful years with ever increasing workloads exacerbated by the transfer to the Workload Allocation Model (WAM) where every hour is counted in the year of an academic's working life. From my observations even if this was not the communicated message from management prior to its introduction this has meant, for most, an increase in working hours, and seemingly petty counting of every hour when there is still the expectation that academics will give their time freely as well for tasks not counted. The Pressure Vessel report (Morrish, 2019) states that extreme workloads and workload models are regularly under-counted in the time allowed for tasks. Often these tasks seem 'invisible' to the assessors of these models. Clearly this is a wider HE issue and does not only apply to the UoW and it must be noted that the UoW was not alone in implementing this change to using the WAM model.

Prior to the WAM, from my observations, there was a lot more goodwill on the giving of free time but now if it is all to be counted then this would seem to change thinking for some and to affect the employer–employee relationship. The psychological contract is based on perceptions of both parties in an exchange as 'each party will exchange something they can provide for something the other party can provide' (Conway and Briner, 2005, p1). Some writers refer to the 'old psychological contract' being a relational one and to the 'new psychological contract' as a transactional one, caused by harder economic times (Doyle, 2003, p60). However, interestingly around the same

time (Guest and Conway, 2000; CIPD, 2005) wrote that there was little evidence to show any changes in the nature of the psychological contract, especially in the public sector. Rousseau, Hansen and Tomprou, (2018) state that little revision has been applied to the psychological contract since the 1990s. They formulate a dynamic phase model of the psychological contract where it is constantly evolving and whereby the functions of the key variables change over time and context.

Other experiences that I could draw on was noted in private conversations with academics at viable opportunities about their concerns. I found there was often a strong feeling of their having to show goodwill to get their work done ie work carried out in evenings and at weekends. I also witnessed colleagues going off work with stress. This, of course, also has an impact on those maintaining the workforce and having to cover for them. There seemed with some colleagues that there was a sense of being overwhelmed with the quantities of work that they were expected to get through.

I do recognise though that the inherent nature of academic work means that at times there are 'bottlenecks' demonstrated for example when module marking comes in all at once during an already heavy teaching semester, when it is not physically possible to complete one's work during normal working hours, and even difficult to complete if one factors in evenings and weekends. This can be contrasted with a brief period in the summer, for example for those who are not course leaders, or those who do not have senior positions of management, or are not involved in research or new validations, there is perhaps the potential to work at a slightly slower pace. It might be regarded by some that some of the work overload might be off-set during this period for those who mainly just teach in their roles. Although the question remains, whatever roles are performed, as to whether this is a fair practice for staff to have enforced peaks and troughs.

I felt concerned how long the current goodwill shown can last with staff having to work evenings and weekends at extended periods of the year when 'bottlenecks' occur to complete university deadlines. I was also concerned because I wondered if this was fair. Is it equitable? Many of us have precious family which we may not be able to see; or have other priorities outside of work that we wish or need to pursue. I was also concerned because of the implications that feelings of stress can cause and what this can potentially lead to. Drawing on the psychoneuroimmunology literature it is widely believed that stress can lead to serious and debilitating illness (Martin, 1997; Kusnecov and Anisman, 2018). It is worth noting though that there are differential effects of stress and not everyone will experience the same detrimental impact of stress.

2.4 What could I do about my concerns?

As I continued with the line of thought and questioning that is typical in Living Theory research and since I was now clear about my concerns, I asked myself what I could do about my concerns. It was obvious to me that I wanted to help staff and students overcome potential feelings of stress. I could do this by offering some of my knowledge, skills and tools I had gained and further developed over many years of study and used in practice professionally. I also knew though that whatever I could achieve needed to fit with my own personal values and within my own workload. My own levels of stress have, at times, been high, especially at times of overwhelming deadlines that have been a challenge to meet. This has at times necessitated marking during holiday leave, at weekends, late night emails and writing lectures into the early hours, which I'm sure will sound familiar to other academics.

2.5 Working within my core personal values

Education and learning are said by Whitehead (2018, p1) to give 'life-affirming' and 'life enhancing values in practice', which contribute to the 'flourishing of humanity', the 'humanity of others' and humanity as a species.

Whitehead believes that we each have a responsibility to enhance our educational learning influences to contribute to the 'flourishing of humanity'. As noted, my life-enhancing core values encompass equity, freedom and compassion. It is worth noting that the combination of core values can sometimes sound ambiguous or incompatible. For example, it might seem conflicting if someone chooses freedom and justice, since freedom is seen as being without rules and justice likely to be seen with rules (Berlin, 1969). Each needs to be judged on its own terms (Berlin, 1978, 1998) or find another value that connects with cognitive dissonance (McNiff and Whitehead, 2010) . This holding of different values or positions also has a connection with Reversal Theory (Apter, 2018), a theory of personality and motivation which focuses on an individual's ability to change state, to change focus, to be adaptable. It is based on four pairs of 'meta-motivational states' contrasted with each other which include the telic state and paratelic state and comprise: conformist state and negativist state, mastery state and sympathy state.

Although my personal values felt congruent to me, I felt a sense of incongruity with my values and what I observed around me. Equity did not always seem fair and (at times) scarce resources and incentives seemed rewarded to some in a biased way which led many to have a feeling of unfair distributive justice by management. The decision-making process behind procedural justice did not often seem fair either. This notion of fairness is an important construct in management because of the consequences that can affect job satisfaction (Cropanzano and Folger, 1992). Certainly, the procedural justice decisions did not seem equitable to many colleagues I spoke with. The effort reward-imbalance model (Seigrist, 2017) is also relevant here as failed exchanges between high input at work coupled with low rewards produces strong negative feelings. According to this model, this can then produce stress responses leading to long-term health effects for some individuals. For me the ways that some staff were being expected to work at times of high workload was essentially a denial of freedom, connecting with a denial of one of my values. This was also relatable to students, especially with paying high fees

and consequently often having to work part-time or even full-time (in some reported incidences to me) to help with increasing debts. Of course, these are my strong personal values I am writing of here, but I felt that they were not unreasonable. Other researchers would have different values, of which I acknowledge, which would lead to a different research emphasis.

2.6 What I prioritised

I felt compassion for others when I noticed their suffering and wanted to help alleviate that suffering. I felt I needed to do something about the situation that I perceived as an injustice. I also felt this was the opportunity I had been searching for to bring my perceived Eastern and Western philosophies together in certain ways of working. The time seemed 'right' with the recent popularity of Eastern alternative views and the recent beginnings of a quiet explosion of mindfulness in the workplace, which now in 2022 seems anything but 'silent'. The rate that mindfulness has grown (and the implications of that) will be considered more fully for discussion in the Literature Review (chapter 3) and in the Findings and Analysis (chapter 5). Although at the beginning of this research it was not as large a 'movement' as it currently is today in 2022, I was still able to draw on my past experiences, and I formulated a research proposal to bring in mindfulness as a tool for staff, students and users of the University to help with feelings of stress and other unpleasant, harmful or unwanted associations of coping with work and/or study.

The University as a whole is a large place to be engaged with, and this means that it is an enormous task to potentially impact all of the University at once. My aim was to prioritise the Business School as the centre of focus, and from there ripples of mindfulness would then spread and turn into waves of influence whilst moving towards other parts of the University. Additionally, in the Business School I have the most contacts and access to meetings with senior management. With my long history of having worked in the University

for approximately a decade, at the beginning of this work, I had already built a strong personal network.

In sum I had been able to answer my Living theory questions of: What were my concerns? Why was I concerned? What experiences could I draw on to show my concerns? through exploring the rationale for this work. The next stage and further Living Theory answers were embodied via the plan to embed mindfulness at the UoW and are represented in the aims and objectives. Accordingly, after clearly defining my aim, I then went on to formulate my concrete objectives. These objectives not only would develop my aim but would also serve to help with an appropriate qualitative evaluation of my research when complete.

2.7 Aim

As my aim was to help WBS/UoW become, what I have termed a 'Mindful University', I feel it would be useful here to recap, define and unpack that expression. Perhaps there is no exact definition of a 'Mindful University', however some parallels can be linked with a 'Positive and Mindful University' as defined by Seldon and Martin (2017) and a 'Mindful Organisation' (West, 2017). Seldon and Martin define a 'Positive and Mindful University' as a university that incorporates wellbeing policies, teaches tools of positive psychology and teaches mindfulness from a proactive stance rather than a reactive one. Similarities here with a 'Mindful University' are on the emphasis firstly of the obvious teaching of mindfulness leading to ripples of mindful ways of being as they spread to have wider influence not least helping staff and students to reside in a proactive state rather than a reactive one. West (2017) defines a 'Mindful Organisation' as one that not only has a culture that constantly reinforces mindfulness awareness but most importantly recognises that human individual needs must be acknowledged and met with compassion. Similarities of a 'Mindful UoW' with West's 'Mindful Organisations' are in the ideas that mindfulness as a concept on its own is not

enough, but that the ripples of small waves of influence of mindfulness embedded crucially through various offerings and at various points in time turn into waves of influence that culminate in a much bigger effect. The sum is bigger than its parts. Perhaps this is best conveyed through a diagram I modelled to help conceptualise what this means for me.

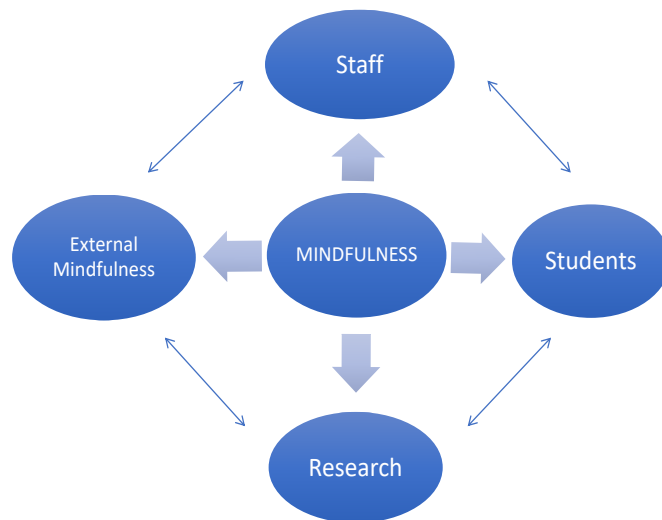


Figure 2 - Model of a 'Mindful UoW'

As can be seen from the above, the initial ripples of mindfulness inform other parts in a multi-level process. This builds knowledge and new ways of being in different areas. The ripples turn into waves and strengthen connections between different areas, whilst also developing further mindfulness, compassion and new ways of being. Ultimately there is a synthesis of mindful knowledge, skills and practice leading to an integration throughout the UoW.

2.8 Summary Objectives

My objectives were derived to achieve my aim and were formulated by answering my Living Theory questions initiating with:

‘What could I do to help improve my practice?’

‘What could I do to help improve the practice of others?’

These are my summary objectives please see 4.1, Table 1, for a more detailed account.

1. External review - how other universities/organisations have brought in Mindfulness practices.
2. Internal review - Explore ‘pockets’ of Mindfulness Practice currently being carried out at the UoW.
3. Consider the influence of specific groups and individuals in the university required to support successful initiatives.
4. Design, deliver and evaluate opportunities and resources on mindfulness for staff and for students at WBS and more widely at the UoW.
5. Build on existing and emerging collaborative networks to discover interest for a mindfulness research community at the UoW.
6. Build a business case/plan to deliver externally, as a Business Consultant for WBS, a work-based version of Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR).

Through the implementation and successful outcome of my objectives I aim to achieve a sense of a 'Mindful University' flowing throughout my place of work that affect all who come to visit, work or study at the UoW.

CHAPTER THREE – “The Curtain Opens” – Literature Review

“It's impossible to change the past or the present: you can only accept all that as it is” Rick Hanson

3.0 Introduction

‘There has been a kind of explosion of interest around mindfulness’ that although has been steadily increasing it has moved to a point where it is ‘not just the big bang but the kind of inflation of the big bang’ (Shonin and Kabat-Zinn 2015, p1). As of July 2021, a Google search for ‘mindfulness’ yielded 270,000,000 results. There are many different traditions, some quite disparate, often using the same term ‘mindfulness’. For clarity this literature review will refer to ‘mindfulness’ as a specific type of mindfulness practice which is largely credited as being brought to the attention of the West from the United States partly by Jon Kabat-Zinn in 1979. He called this mindfulness for stress reduction (MBSR). It is secular mindfulness, and as the term implies the MBSR is free from any affiliations to religion. In addition, Ellen Langer wrote a ground-breaking work on mindfulness in 1989 where mindfulness is expanded to many areas of life including the workplace (Langer, 1989). This work is also considered to be part of the source of the current ‘explosion’ in mindfulness leading on from one of the foundational texts. Other leading work has been that of Mark Williams with the introduction of the mindfulness-based cognitive therapy, (MBCT) for depression (Williams and Penman, 2011). In addition, the following work is also of importance and significance: Weick and Sutcliffe (2006); Weick, Sutcliffe and Obstfeld, (2008) and Vogus, Rothman, Sutcliffe and Weick (2014) who focus on high reliability organizing; and also that of Chaskalson (2011) who focuses on applying mindfulness generally into the workplace.

The overarching aim of the literature review was to understand how other universities had carried out interventions of mindfulness in HE, particularly observing potential benefits and any emerging disadvantages. The UoW library search facility was used - which incorporates all main databases (e.g.

JSTOR; PsycARTICLES; PsycINFO) - alleviating the need to specify any particular database; and also Google Scholar, using the search terms:

- Types of mindfulness
- History of mindfulness
- Benefits of mindfulness
- Critique of mindfulness
- Mindfulness in HE
- Mindfulness in organisations

Inclusion criteria were broad during initial searches at the beginning of this research, as the quantity of information was very limited, and it would have been inappropriate to limit the results. Therefore, inclusion criteria were initially: 'unrestricted time period', 'mindfulness in any sector', 'English language', 'qualitative or quantitative'. Later, inclusion criteria evolved to also include: 'mindfulness in HE in the UK', 'studies with a control group', and a recent date range of '2018-2021'. Again, exclusion criteria were broad in the early years for the same reason as above but included: 'Eastern meditation schools', and in later years included 'mindfulness studies without a control group'. Results were then essentially further refined throughout as an iterative process.

Notably, when this research began, guidance for the Professional Doctorate stated **not to carry out** a complete systematic review of the literature, and instead to include a chapter on 'knowledge and information', which largely equates to a literature review. According to the convention of Living Theory it is not necessary to have a separate literature review in one chapter and instead to add relevant literature at any point throughout the work. My choice has been to carry out a 'knowledge and information' chapter in the form of a literature review. This was chosen on the assumption that it gives the foundation and background to this research. The following is an overview of the chapter:

- Mindfulness is examined, what it is, what it is not, myths and barriers
- Mindfulness interventions
- Criticisms and limitations of mindfulness
- Organisational development (OD) and change management (CM) (as this is a work-based study)

3.1 What is mindfulness?

Just like a 'Mindful University' in various ways mindfulness itself is also not easy to define. One reason is that there are so many diverse mindfulness and meditation techniques related to different traditions and different schools it would be difficult to even include them all in a literature review. What is understood as 'mindfulness and goals of the practice' differ in these diverse 'traditions' (Dorjee, 2010 p152). There is no consensus. At first sight there is also a difficulty in distinguishing between the different traditions because many of these varying schools of thought have also adopted the word 'mindfulness' to refer to their meditation techniques. Some of these schools in the past have used more individually adapted names. A further challenge here is with definition, even if mindfulness is considered from only one style or one school it remains that it is not as easy as it might at first seem to explain succinctly what mindfulness really is. As Chaskalson (2011, p13) states 'it is more like a rainbow than a single colour'.

Nevertheless, there are many definitions of MBSR mindfulness, and this review begins with Kabat-Zinn's (1994, p4) definition: 'Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally.' A further succinct definition that expands and adds 'others' to the meaning is: 'Mindfulness is a way of paying attention, in the present moment, to yourself, others and the world around you' (Chaskalson, 2011, p3). As this section progresses it is anticipated that a deeper clarification for any readers who are new to mindfulness will emerge. I have also chosen to

include here a longer explanation, from the NHS website, as this short description appears especially helpful to begin to set the scene a little further.

Becoming more aware of the present moment can help us enjoy the world around us more and understand ourselves better. When we become more aware of the present moment, we begin to experience afresh things that we have been taking for granted. Mindfulness also allows us to become more aware of the stream of thoughts and feelings that we experience, and to see how we can become entangled in that stream in ways that are not helpful. (Williams, 2018)

Some hold incorrect notions about what mindfulness means and think it is about making one's mind go blank or to go into some kind of trance. This is totally false and is a myth, at least from the perspective of the MBSR, as the opposite is true with the main aim being to become more aware. Another myth that often prevails is that mindfulness is relaxation. This is not correct, rather people are encouraged to go towards their suffering and explore it. This is not easy and can be extremely challenging especially in times of pain. Mindfulness might not be a complete panacea, and it is certainly not indicated for everyone.

As already noted, there are numerous techniques and schools and it is not the intention of this research to review all those schools and methods in great detail, nor to review which claim to be the most effective (and that would necessitate a different research focus). However, for clarity it is important to restate here that the form of mindfulness that is being used for the basis of this work is Jon Kabat-Zinn's secular MBSR. The basis for this choice is firstly because the MBSR, as a 'movement' has grown exponentially in the last decade and it would not seem logical to choose a lesser-known type that would be harder to research the benefits of. So as the MBSR is the 'predominate notion of mindfulness' in the West (Dorjee, 2010, p152) it would also be ultimately more difficult to adopt practices of a less 'mainstream' type into any university where evidence-based practice is likely to sway part of its successful uptake of such practices.

In addition to a larger quantity of research being available on the MBSR there is also further work that some in the UK have extended by way of building on Kabat-Zinn's MBSR. As these bear a distinct similarity to the original work, they are also able to be recommended to those where the need is more appropriate. Examples are Mark Williams' formulation of the Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) programme whereby the emphasis is on alleviating depression rather than stress reduction (Williams and Penman, 2011; Segal, Williams and Teasdale, 2013). Other examples are that of Vidyamala Burch (Birch and Penman, 2013) whose programme focuses on alleviating chronic pain and that of Michael Chaskalson (Chaskalson, 2011) who has applied mindfulness specifically to the workplace. Finally, the rationale for the choice of the MBSR, rather than a different type of mindfulness for this work-based study is that my own training on mindfulness was the MBSR (with the University of Bangor).

3.2 History of MBSR Mindfulness

The work of Jon Kabat-Zinn is credited as having brought probably the most widely taught version of Mindfulness, as many understand it today, into the Western world in the late 1970s. Kabat-Zinn was a molecular biologist at the University of Massachusetts Medical School and became concerned that only 20% of the patients leaving the hospital were cured and 80% were still leaving with pain and/or psychological distress. These included both somatic and psychosomatic disorders, so people were suffering not only physical and/or emotionally but also from 'the full catastrophe of their lives' (Kabat-Zinn, 1990, p18).

Kabat-Zinn, a practitioner himself of Buddhism, felt compelled to help as he wanted to relieve suffering and to bring about greater compassion and wisdom (Kabat-Zinn, 2011). With this aim to help the patients recover he developed the Stress Reduction Clinic at the University of Massachusetts in 1979. He developed a programme of mindful meditation, adapted from his

Buddhist studies but highly tailored to a Western way of being and included removing all associations to Buddhism. The programme required that people attend two hours a week for eight weeks and were asked to practise certain mindfulness exercises at home daily. Kabat-Zinn did not attempt to distinguish between the different ailments that these people had but developed a general mindfulness practice that would benefit all, followed by active discussion as a group what it meant and felt like for them. Discussions included not only their illnesses but moved outwards towards their lives in general too (Silverton, 2012). Later, in 1996, the Stress Reduction Clinic became the Centre for Mindfulness, in the Division of Preventive and Behavioral Medicine. The Centre was subsequently Directed by Dr Saki Santorelli in 2016. Further developments in 2019 (UMass Memorial Health, 2022) saw the mindfulness programmes transition to UMass Memorial Health to allow a deeper integration with health care programmes for the clinical population. Dr Eric Dickson is the current President and CEO .

3.2.i The Way Forward

In the late 1970s whilst Kabat-Zinn was developing his mindfulness course he realised that to have a chance for mindfulness to be accepted in the West he should not let it be seen as 'Buddhist, New Age, Eastern Mysticism or just plain flaky' (Kabat-Zinn, 2011 p282). He therefore always set about to adapt, write, and structure the course very carefully, as already mentioned above keeping it secular and also to make sure there were not any explicit references to Buddhist literature. He is open about where its roots lie, however, and does not try to hide this. So, it is important here to note that mindfulness, as construed by Kabat-Zinn is not synonymous with Buddhism, whether Buddhism is regarded as a religion or a philosophy, mindfulness, as developed by Kabat-Zinn is thus not to be equated with Buddhism. Dorjee (2010) also makes this very clear that mindfulness is not Buddhism and there are many differences. Mindfulness can perhaps best be thought of as a method of mental training that involves attentional instruction, stillness,

interoception and emotion regulation. One example of the difference between the MBSR and Buddhism (Brazier, 2013) is that the Buddha advocated that Mindfulness was about learning and was not used as a treatment for stress or depression (as in the MBSR or MBCT) and so was educational rather than medical. Brazier goes on to explain that in addition, Kabat-Zinn has simplified or removed much of the theory and changed many of the practices from the original context which has significantly repositioned the theory into new associations and sometimes even new meanings. Of course, according to their personal beliefs, individual meditators practising forms of mindfulness can also hold various religious beliefs whilst others may be atheists or agnostics (Williams, & Penman, 2011).

3.3 Purported Advantages

In some ways it is not perhaps surprising that mindfulness has become so popular in the West since various authors have documented many benefits, some of which are: 'feel less overwhelmed; improve sleep quality; positively change the way one thinks and feels about experiences (especially stressful experiences); increase ability to manage difficult situations; make wiser choices; reduce levels of anxiety; reduce levels of depression; reduce levels of stress; reduce rumination; have greater self-compassion' (Be Mindful, 2021). In addition, mindfulness practice benefits are reported as a 63% reduction in depression, a 58% reduction in anxiety and a 40% reduction in stress (Be Mindful, 2021).

Likewise, it is also perhaps not to be unexpected that mindfulness practices would become ever more commonplace in the workplace, as research into mindfulness within organisations is further developed. Some of the earlier benefits have focused on mindfulness at a team level, or from a multilevel perspective (Langan, 1989). This is despite much of the recent work published focusing on the individual level. Some documented workplace benefits are summarised by Chaskalson as:

Higher employee engagement, greater productivity, less conflict, higher levels of job satisfaction, lower levels of employee turnover and higher levels of creativity and innovation, effectiveness at reducing levels of stress, increasing resilience and levels of emotional intelligence, raising levels of self-awareness and awareness of others, increases interpersonal sensitivity and communication skills, lowers rates of health related absenteeism, improvements in increased concentration, extension of the attention span, reduction in impulsivity, improvement in the capacity to hold and manipulate information, lowered levels of psychological distress, raised levels of well-being and overall work and life satisfaction. Chaskalson (2011, p164).

Mindful meditation may also be particularly indicated for some men who have unhelpful patterns of 'restrictive emotionality' (Lomas, Edginton, Cartwright and Ridge, 2014, p22). In a series of published papers these authors investigated male meditators and found overall beneficial effects from males practising meditation in improvements ranging from improved emotional intelligence, new ways of being, and positive health trajectories.

Viewed together all the benefits listed above are clearly vast claims as to the advantages of mindfulness. This chapter now discusses some of the evidence for these assertions.

3.3.i Evidence for the Benefits of Mindfulness

Around the time of 2013 there were approximately 40 journal articles per month published on general mindfulness but not all the articles from that period were of a high quality and there was still a lack of controlled studies (Black 2013). From 2003 to 2016 Chiesa et al (2017) observed a general increase in the number of reviews published on mindfulness. In 2019 that figure had increased to approximately 80 journal articles per month with the added benefit of more controlled studies than were previously carried out (Black, 2019). This is promising to note that publication numbers doubled in approximately six years from 2013-2019. However, several authors, although practitioners and researchers of mindfulness and are in favour of mindfulness overall, write the claims for the benefits of mindfulness are over-exaggerated,

especially those portrayed in the media (eg Heuman (2014) in an interview with Catherine Kerr; Van Dam, 2017; Anālayo, 2021). Generally, they do not dispute the beneficial effects of mindfulness or the MBSR, but they call for a more balanced reporting of the facts. In contrast one area that seems underreported though is on the negative side-effects of potential harmful consequences in vulnerable individuals which can include disassociation, psychosis and depression. Therefore, it is crucial to screen for trauma, depression, and/or bereavement for example so the timing must be 'right'. This needs to be made clearer and to be reported fairly.

In a critique of the literature on mindfulness in the workplace Jamieson and Tuckey (2017) systematically reviewed 40 published articles. Their aim was to classify ways in which mindful interventions could be further developed, and to improve methodological concerns. Half the studies they reviewed used a control group, and of concern just under half of the studies did not measure changes of mindfulness from the intervention. They note this needs to be addressed as it is essential to report on state and trait mindful awareness changes. Attrition, they observed was generally well-reported. They stated that the Brown and Ryan (2003) Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) is overused and compounded by being a self-report measure which adds to their concerns on construct validity. They call for studies to use triangulation of data utilising additional alternative measurements. Most of the studies reported statistically significant results on wellbeing overall but not all. For example, three studies found no change in a physiological measure of stress via salivary cortisol measurement. They argue this could have been because of difficulties in measuring within field studies. The author's aim, to give guidance for future researchers to bring more consistency to improve mindful interventions, seems to have been met and had useful advice to improve the quality of mindful studies.

Donaldson-Feilder, Lewis and Yarker (2019) in a more recent systematic review of the literature on the outcomes of mindfulness and meditation

interventions specifically on managers, and leaders, like Chiesa and also that of Jamieson, found some mixed results. Specifically, from the 19 studies that met their inclusion criteria they found that mindfulness and meditation programmes may benefit managers and leaders' individual wellbeing, resilience, and leadership skills. However, this did not filter down to leaders' direct reports. They also established that although different interventions were used the studies failed to show which interventions were the most effective, in which settings most appropriate and who might benefit the most from these interventions.

Although many of the findings are largely positive from the literature overall, whether focusing on mindfulness generally, in the workplace, or for managers and leaders, it is apparent that many of the studies are of a mixed quality. Clearly a more rigorous advance in research overall is needed. Also, a more consistent approach would assist with comparing like for like. In some cases, more accurate reporting of findings would support the quality of future research. However, and bearing this in mind, it might be argued that some of the strongest evidence for the benefits of mindfulness comes from neuroscience and neuropsychology that report measurable changes in brain structure and function.

3.3.ii Neuroscience

Chiesa, Calati and Serretti (2010) reviewed twenty-three studies from the neuropsychological literature from 2000 to 2010 using quantitative methodologies. Each study reviewed used control groups either using active training, eg a relaxation group or being part of an inactive group such as a wait list control condition. Some studies measured different types of mindfulness meditation, some from different cohorts of participants, and some had varying amounts of mindfulness sessions offered to them. Their results found increases in selective and executive attention and also improved unfocused sustained attention abilities. They note that some of the studies

they reviewed did obtain some negative results and some had methodological limitations but argued this may have been due to poor study design. They called for more studies using 'standardized' programmes to be carried out.

One much-quoted study from the neuroscience literature, mainly because of its specific novel results and findings which also utilised a wait-list control group within its evidence base is that of Hölzel et al (2011). The study looked at pre- and post-changes before and after the 'classic' Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) eight-week programme. They demonstrated increased brain region areas of grey-matter in areas involved in learning and memory processes, emotion regulation, self-referential processing and perspective taking. Further neuroscience evidence also comes from examining changes in complex brain networks. Xue, Tang and Posner (2014) examined network analysis of electroencephalography theta activity data at rest pre and post of one week of body and mind training compared to a group who were only taught relaxation training. Analysis of findings demonstrated 'enhanced capacity of local specialisation and global information integration in the brain'. Findings from this study indicate evidence for meditation-induced network plasticity. This is significant as it 'may provide an interpretation of improvement of information processing in the brain' Xue, Tang and Posner (2014, p4).

Tang and Leve (2016) took these findings further by carrying out an overview of differing meta-analytic studies, using varying research designs, both quantitative and qualitative, and which focused on the results of psychological outcomes such as emotion and behaviour. Focusing on positive effects of these outcomes related to emotion and behaviour Tang and Leve proposed a framework for using mindfulness as a prevention strategy. They proposed that by integrating these results from the neuroscience studies of mindfulness, other work from prevention research and with underlying brain regulatory mechanisms this could lead to a prevention framework via self-regulation.

They state that this framework could be useful for the prevention of low self-regulation and used within schools and communities globally.

Related to neuroscience there is an emerging sub-discipline of neuroeducation, which brings together the disciplines of 'neuroscience, child development, psychology, and education research' (Centre for Educational Neuroscience, 2021). Neuroeducation is sometimes otherwise referred to as being the study of brain-based training. Within this discipline there are studies of mindfulness in education, and these relate mainly to school children.

3.3.iii Mindfulness in Education

In 2012 there were few studies into mindfulness in Higher Education, whether from neuroeducation or other disciplines. Now, in 2021, the literature reflects an international trend towards increasingly well-designed studies that compare the effects of mindfulness whilst using control groups. However, many research studies still lack control groups. The research generally falls into two categories: (i) mindfulness and learning, and (ii) mindfulness and wellbeing, or occasionally a combination of the two. In addition, most of this research is predominantly student-focused rather than staff-focused and has a distinct international perspective. In the literature that follows the international theme is represented and most, but not all, use control groups.

One of the interesting early studies, albeit without a control group and a small cohort, focused on the wellbeing of post-graduate (PG) students in HE in the UK. The aim was to look at whether mindfulness was indeed the mediating factor for positive changes after following the intervention of the MBCT (Collard, Avny & Boniwell, 2008). This study was particularly interesting as it looked at the mediating factor for positive changes, as to whether it was mindfulness or not. A trend was found that signified that participation in the programme did have a mindfulness mediating affect and also had an essential role in the relief of symptoms and of general positive outcomes. However,

some of the students stopped attending the programme, whilst others attended but did not carry out the required tasks in between sessions. Suggestions by the authors are to inform students of the benefits of longer practice sessions and of the continued long-term practice of mindfulness, in the hope this will help with students' motivation to fully participate.

Lynch et al (2018) in a more recent example in the UK, utilised a wait-list control group into mindfulness effects on wellbeing measured by students' coping with university life and also found positive results. Compared to the wait-list group a significant decrease in anxiety was found in the mindfulness group. Again, in this study, just like Collard, Avny and Boniwell (2008) the number of students dropping out was high. Another recent study utilising a control group was carried out with Spanish university students and considered varying levels of self-regulation and effects of mindfulness training on coping strategies (De La Fuente et al, 2018). One group received the mindfulness training, and the other group, the experimental group, received the training at a later date. The authors found that although there were positive results overall there was a difference between the low self-regulators and medium to high self-regulators. They suggest adjusting mindfulness programmes to accommodate for different types of students' characteristics.

As noted, the quality of the literature is improving generally and is also expanding to include diverse groups. A cohort of sub-clinical university students, in another interesting study of UK University students suffering from stress, anxiety and low mood were taught meditation awareness training. Results indicated that they were found to have perceived higher levels of well-being, less emotional distress, positive affect and less negative affect compared to a control group (Van Gordon, Shonin and Sumich, 2014).

Reduction in stress was also found in another cohort of international students practicing mindfulness in HE (Bruin, Meppelink and Bögels, 2015). The main focus was on changes in awareness and attention after the intervention of

mindfulness practices. A wait-list control group was also utilised. The authors reported positive results and suggested that mindfulness may help the students in coping with stress.

Overall, the researched effects of mindfulness practice on students seem to report positive findings. Morgan, Ross and Reavley (2018) advise that given the largely positive outcomes of mindfulness studies, mindfulness training in the years of study for an UG degree could be an appropriate time (and place) for its delivery. This is because around the same time that students come to university this coincides with the age of the peak onset of mental health issues generally. At the outset of my research the Universities of East Anglia, Manchester and Buckingham had offered mindfulness training to their students specifically through their student support systems. This is a fast-growing trend and there are now many other universities who are also beginning to offer help to students which includes some mindfulness training: Bangor, Cambridge, Cardiff, Glasgow, Leeds, LSE, Manchester, Portsmouth, Oxford, Sheffield Hallam, Southampton, Surrey, UCL Glamorgan, Warwick, and others (Mindfulness for Students, 2013). To note the website for Mindfulness for Students which offered free mindful meditation sessions for students unfortunately no longer exists. However, legitimate good quality open access resources on the Internet are becoming ever more readily available.

As well as mindfulness teaching in HE in the UK there is also a strong movement being introduced into secondary schools to teach mindfulness techniques to the students, called the ‘.b’ curriculum for 11-18 year olds (Mindfulness in Schools Project, 2022a). Selected children who have undergone this training made a presentation about how they use their mindfulness practices in everyday school life at an Education Day at Friends Meeting House in London, in 2011. This was led by Jon Kabat-Zinn, who also presented, amongst other well-known figures in the mindfulness world. Following the lead from secondary schools, primary schools are also now

being taught too, with the 'Paws b' programme for 7-11 (Mindfulness in Schools Project, 2022b). Most recently even 3-6 year olds are being taught a version of mindfulness with the 'dots' programme (Mindfulness in Schools Project, 2022c). All programmes have been suitably adapted from the adult version of the MBSR with the programme for the younger years using well-known children's characters such as Kung Fu Panda and others, so as to be more appealing.

As more research emerges it becomes clear that the 'mindfulness movement' is not abating anytime soon. Ongoing qualitative studies and controlled studies are recording ever growing stronger evidence, along with further research from neuroscience. Of course, there are useful critiques of mindfulness, and these will be outlined below in 3.6 Criticisms, Limitations and Critique.

3.5. Organisations using Mindfulness Based Practices

Perhaps because of the positive research claims many organisations, able to see the potential benefits, have taken up the practices of mindfulness. Of course, this taps into the debate on what the motives for this might be and whether this is to improve for example, workplace stress, improve employee wellbeing or to improve employee performance, team performance and/or improve profits. Again, this discussion will be followed up in 3.6 Criticisms, Limitations and Critique.

One globally prominent company that is well known to have taken up mindfulness and associated practices is Google. They have a programme in place entitled 'Search Inside Yourself' or SIYLI. The core training encompasses a 16-hour programme and focuses on emotional intelligence, self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills, including mindfulness practice, science and leadership skills at all levels. The programme has been designed at three different levels available and these are for wellness, for management and also for executive leadership. This

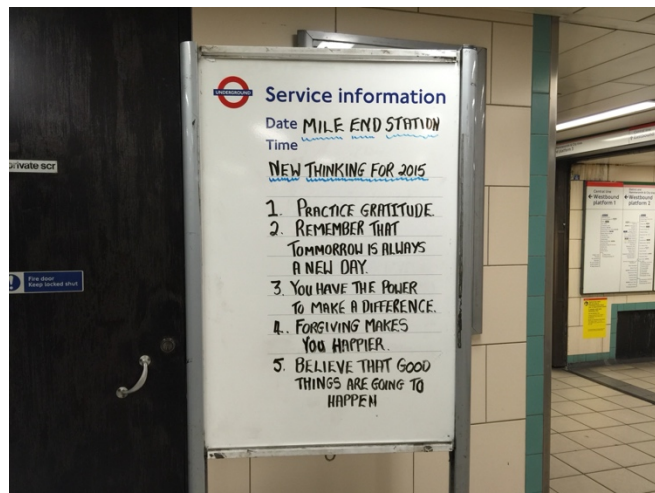
'mastery training' forms a course that runs for one year. The original ideas and aims were the vision of an employee, Chade-Meng Tan, aided by Daniel Goleman and Jon Kabat-Zinn (Tan, 2012). Although it is well documented that Google employees practise mindfulness actually it is part of a wider programme of development (as detailed above) and not a stand-alone offering as often seems to come across from the media.

In the UK, Transport for London have adopted mindfulness ways of working and have reported positive outcomes from a Mindfulness programme. They found days taken off after mindfulness practice, due to stress, depression and anxiety fell by 70% in three years following the intervention (Chaskalson, 2011). In every tube station there is a picture of a different Labyrinth and often 'mindful messages' written on a white board. In keeping with Living Theory research and a multi-media approach below are examples of two artifacts I captured whilst using the London Underground. When I look at both photographs, they remind me of the pleasant surprise I discovered when I turned a corner and noticed the framed labyrinth in a prominent place; likewise for the positive message board. This helped me to feel more connected to others whilst travelling alone by tube, which can often feel quite the opposite.

Photograph 1 - Labyrinth Photograph TFL 2015



Photograph 2 - Mindful Positive Messages TFL 2015



There are also many other well-known companies, organisations, institutions around the world who have adopted varying forms of mindfulness practices, for example: the NHS, the US Marines, Glaxo-Smith Kline, Amazon.

Additionally, as well as organisations and institutions taking up mindfulness practices there is also a growing movement within the Government in the UK. To this end in 2013 Jon Kabat-Zinn and his team met with ministers at 10 Downing Street to give advice on ‘a mindful nation’. The culmination of these talks and subsequent work with government was published and the report is freely available to all (MAPPG, 2015).

Despite the ever-growing adoption of mindfulness in the workplace and in Western society in general there remains ever growing criticism against these practices. The following section will now delve into some of these issues and debates.

3.6 Limitations and Critique of Mindfulness Practices

“It is no measure of health to be well adjusted to a profoundly sick society”

Krisnamurti

In 2012 it was not that easy to find criticisms of mindfulness. However, by 2017 that had changed and certainly by 2019 and beyond there are ever-growing negative articles and books being published. These condemnations stem mainly (but not all) on the motivation of organisations in promoting its practice, the ‘overhyped’ claim of its benefits and even of techniques used. The motivation of some organisations to offer mindfulness practices for their employees is something that I have been aware of from the start of my research, questioning this myself, even before reading these published comments.

One of the earlier criticisms concerns the foundational beliefs of mindfulness itself. Brazier (2013) stated that one of the concepts of mindfulness, that reality only exists in the present moment, is actually harmful and even dangerous when thought of in this way. This is because, he believes it weakens the importance of forethought and responsibility and he goes on further to dispute that an extended sense of the present is not necessarily the most real part of someone’s life. For example, someone who is travelling

looking out of a window, whilst the scenery might be extremely pleasant and beautiful to look at, there could be more serious issues that are going on for that person that should be drawing their attention inwards and is in fact far more real and important for them in that moment. Ultimately, he claims that there is a time and place for being mindful and being aware of the present moment in terms of beauty or in nature, which at times can be restorative, but in times of pain, it is not. Perhaps it is not difficult to disagree with his claims about a correct time and place for the practises of mindfulness. However, given that mindfulness is about awareness of the present moment, if pain is endured from a mindful perspective, it can be explored in a curious way, rather than in an avoiding way. This way the pain experienced can be acknowledged in an altered way and hence becomes 'less painful' and easier to endure. It perhaps depends on how far a person is taking these extremes, as denial is not thought to be healthy from the point of view of most psychotherapies either. Another relevant point here is the myth that those who practice mindfulness are expected to be mindful of the present moment at all times. Mindfulness can be viewed as a tool or a strategy as a means of helping people focus more on the present moment as opposed to being overly caught up in the past or the future, and only to be used and harnessed when needed for most people. It is only extremely advanced practitioners of mindfulness that would likely aim to be in the present moment for much of their lives.

Further criticisms of Mindfulness can be found in the way that some research has been reported with a seeming bias towards its universal acceptability. This does not consider those who might be very anti 'this movement', as some still believe it to be religious; and some even view it as akin to some sort of cult. Indeed, from my own personal experience I was asked the question 'isn't this all just a cult'? at the Q and A session after my presentation to the BPS, London and Home Counties branch in December 2014.

Still others criticise mindfulness, for what they consider to be a very diluted

form that is now known and practiced in the West. This criticism makes the comparison to the pure Buddhist forms which they claim is superior. However, I believe that if the pure forms of the Buddhist teachings were the kind that Kabat-Zinn had originally taught then it would not be the MBSR mindfulness that we know, and it would simply be, Buddhism. In addition, I feel in this guise it would have been unlikely to have grown exponentially as it has in the West. After all Buddhism has been around for thousands of years and it has remained largely in the East having previously only gained a minor following here. In terms of getting acceptance of mindfulness either into the public domain or in the workplace, as Kabat-Zinn reported in the late 1970s, for those tasked with such aims, it needs to be borne in mind that it must be approached in the right way ie not using Buddhist terms, not using Tibetan bells in corporate settings perhaps and generally emphasising the secular feel to it. If it is not approached in this way, then the successful implementation of mindfulness is likely to fail to be adopted by the majority of people in the West.

Purser (2019) discusses 'McMindfulness' and states that although mindfulness may be seen as an antidote to the consequences of capitalism the inward nature of that focus stops us being sufficiently radical enough to try to change society. He also claims that instead of setting those that practice mindfulness free all it does is help them adjust to the circumstances that caused those conditions in the first place. He further likens Kabat-Zinn's MBSR to a franchise just the same as McDonalds since they both do not vary in 'quality or content'. He notes there is little variation in the teaching of the MBSR across the world just as there is little variation in the food turned out at McDonalds.

The debate on the criticisms on the teaching of mindfulness is an interesting one, and some of the points raised certainly foster some legitimate arguments. Safety is of course of upmost importance and those teaching mindfulness need to be fully trained. However, I still feel if the interventions

are approached in a balanced way, if this is something that staff and students want, then the 'McMindfulness' criticisms fade somewhat. Indeed, the consistency of teaching between various trainings is seen by most mindfulness teachers as a positive towards integrity and standards.

This chapter now moves on from the background, history and critique of mindfulness and as this research is a work-based study, also relevant is the selection of relevant organisational development (OD) and change management (CM) theories and practices. This is an area where the literature is very prolific, and it was not the intention here to carry out a complete historical literature review but to select what seemed most relevant to the way forward for developing mindfulness within a Living Theory, action research, reflective, reflexive and thematic analysis research approach.

3.7 Organisational Development

Heller (1998) has stated that OD and CM are approaches that need to be incorporated to help the success of any workplace research that has as its central focus any kind of initiatives that involve changes to peoples' working lives. Heller added further that people generally have a natural resistance towards change, so a consideration of these approaches will be necessary. Resistance to change might be content or process driven but whichever broad type it may be, it is important to be aware of the different criteria to respond appropriately.

OD has different definitions depending on the specific approach taken but still remains arguably the major approach to organisational change, at least in the Western world (Burnes and Cooke, 2012). Although its popularity has gone up and down over the years, OD research is useful to help address relevance in work-based research that is seeking change in culture. OD can help with important areas such as: religious, racial and industrial social conflict (Burnes and Cooke, 2012). In line with the research methodology of this research a focus on the psychological philosophy of change seemed most relevant to include, with a focus on individual personal experiences being concerned with

human development and change (Iacavini, 1993; Stuart, 1995). 'Change transitions' from this approach looks at peoples' lives with their feelings, emotions and the subsequent learning that takes place as all important. This would seem to integrate well with mindfulness as this too focuses on emotions and thoughts, and changes in behaviour from learning new ways of being. Graetz and Smith (2010) state that 'change transitions' implies that changed emotions can happen through learned behaviour, with the culture of the workplace also being a mediator of this.

The cultural philosophy of change that acknowledges the necessity and existence of peoples' own values and beliefs is important. This could be especially of value to note if people were perhaps opposed to mindfulness practices or were just unsure. Opinions can be deeply held, and these could even be increased further if others around them have similar views. Schein (1979, 1984, 1993, 1997) stemming from a psychodynamic view, sees these processes as unconscious.

This postmodern approach views change as a function of socially constructed views of reality, which is further deepened by varying actors and is aligned to 'fragmentation, discontinuity and chaos' but also takes a rational approach (White and Jacques, 1995, p51), whilst at the same time being aligned to flexibility (Clegg, 1992). As the postmodern approach does not and cannot have one agreed view of an organisation this can make communication and influence difficult (Graetz and Smith, 2010). This approach fits well with ambiguity where there will always be other ways of working. Mindfulness cannot be compulsory and must always be a choice. There will always be other ways to achieve aims and goals for those that mindfulness may be contraindicated for.

Organisational change can be approached along a continuum. At one end there are rational linear steps, at the other end is a postmodern approach, and at varying midpoints there is a contingency approach. This research in line with my ontological, epistemological and axiological views (please see

chapter 4) will seek a natural alignment to psychological, cultural and postmodern approaches to change. Also, necessary to consider specifically is Burke and Litwin (1992) as followed by the Professional HR staff at the UoW, in the OD team, who utilised this model (at the start of my research) to inform their work. It would make sense for my research to acknowledge the established OD practices at the UoW. There does not seem much 'fit' with this model and my work, so the description below is more for completeness and informational purposes. Clearly my work is not aligned to this type of CM as I am not seeking to effect top-down change. There is no reason though why my bottom-up approach cannot sit and work alongside HR whilst we influence different types of change.

The Burke-Litwin model (1992) lists twelve drivers of causal change beginning with the external environment and this is seen as the biggest driver. Key questions to ask are: is the organisation aware of the key external drivers, and what their likely impact might be? This is followed by questions on mission and strategy which involve asking if senior managers have a clear vision and mission and how this relates to employees' perception of these. Leadership is next, and key questions to consider are who are the role models, and who is providing overall direction? Style of leadership is also questioned here and relates to the perspectives of the employees. Organisational culture comes next in their ranked order of drivers. Here it is necessary to look not only at overt rules but also the covert. Structure then involves looking at communications and control relationships. Next for consideration is the organisations' policies and practices which are considered under systems. These are followed by what are considered to be the lesser drivers but are still seen as causal drivers: management practices; work unit climate; task and individual skills; individual needs and values; motivation and individual organisational performance

Another OD theory that is relevant to this research and would seem to have a good 'fit' is Theory U which follows the U shape whilst following certain

concepts. These begin with co-initiating, by building intent by stopping and listening to others; then moving further down the U there is co-sensing, so observing with an open mind and heart. At the bottom of the U there is presencing, which is connecting to sources of inspiration fed by silence and allowing inner knowledge to surface. Then, moving back up the U (on the right side) is co-creating, looking at the new living examples and so exploring the future; then finally co-evolving, which is embodying new systems that enable seeing and acting from a whole new perspective (Scharmer and Kaufer, 2013). Although Theory U is often cited as a useful approach beyond mainstream publications especially on leadership Heller (2018) notes that it has also been critiqued as not always capturing sufficient real-world data. However, generally criticisms of Theory U are rare and it mostly affords international acclaim.

To assist universities with bottom-up change in 2011 the Change Academy was formed. This was a partnership between the Higher Education Academy and the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education. This was a national initiative and the UoW, like other self-selecting HE's took part by running their own residential change academies. Events were communicated initially through the university webpages with invitations to apply with ideas for change and preferred team members. Projects were then selected and residential took place to explore ideas for change, usually lasting around three days.

This research has selected certain areas of OD theory and CM tools with a view to integrate some of these tools within this work and are detailed further in the methodological approaches in Chapter Four. By utilising the questions derived from Living Theory and guidance from OD/CM this enabled the development of the objectives for this research linked to the aim of this work: to help the UoW develop towards becoming a 'Mindful University'.

3.8 Conclusion

Drawing together the debates, the myths, the potential barriers to the practices of mindfulness it seems that whether one is for or against such practices it is a tide that is still in full motion and right now looks like it is not stopping. For those of us who are involved in this world it would be sensible to show a certain sensitivity to those who are not interested, such is their right and to reiterate mindfulness must never be forced upon anyone. It is also my view that it is our duty to help spread the word in an informative manner for those that these practices will help. As criticisms and critiques mount up there is still a further need for good quality-controlled studies to provide evidence as to advantages or possible disadvantages of mindfulness to take these ideas and this 'movement' forward.

Since the cultural, historical and political background to mindfulness, after several decades of slow growth, has been undeniably spreading internationally at an enormous rate, the timing was right for this research to develop its aim of helping to develop a 'Mindful UoW'. In some ways, and considering my values here, I feel it is my duty to do so. It seems that the time is right in the external world (evidenced by the huge uptake already in businesses and with people generally). In keeping with this it seems that the UoW is ready too.

The UoW becoming a 'Mindful University' is an altogether different concept to how I note many other universities or organisations have introduced mindfulness practices. It differs in that most universities seem to embed mindfulness either in the personal tutoring system or as part of the counselling service and leave it at that. The aims of this research, as denoted by the model in Figure 2, (Section 2.8) are more synergistic and incorporate the whole University, as much as that is ever possible with approximately 22,00 students. My objectives encompass more than one area, which does not seem to be the norm. Within each area of the UoW that mindfulness can be

successfully embedded, each becomes an enabler of other areas, as ripples spread throughout the University.

ACT II – THE PLAY

Act I set the scene with background, context, rationale, introduction, and literature review. Act II now opens with research summary aims and objectives and research design (Chapter Four); then how the stories/objectives unfolded with reflexive comments (Chapter Five); then moves on to evaluation, and validation (Chapter Six) and concludes with significance of this work, original contribution to knowledge and recommendations for ways forward, possible future research and final reflections (Chapter seven).

CHAPTER FOUR – “The Living Journey” - Methodology

“We have two alternatives: either we question our beliefs – or we don’t” Pema Chödrön

4.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an explanation and a justification of the research design. The overarching aim of this research was to develop the embedding of mindfulness at UoW, framed as a ‘Mindful UoW’. Acknowledging that organisations are complex it became clear that an interpretive approach would be the best fit. However, a positivistic approach was also given due consideration at the very outset (please see 4.4.ii) below for more detail. The text of Denzin and Lincoln (2018) was particularly informative for an overview of qualitative research. Also, the text of Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2018) was useful for in-depth guidance on metaphors and reflexivity. Both feature in this work as two guiding texts. The main vehicles of: Living Theory (eg Whitehead, 1989, 2002, 2009, 2012a, 2012b, 2018, 2020), action research (eg Lewin, 1946; McNiff and Whitehead, 2010) thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006, 2020) reflection and reflexive analysis were chosen. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2018, p11) ‘the interpretive bricoleur produces a bricolage...a pieced together set of representations...fitted to the specifics of a complex situation’. This aptly pointed this research towards a constructive direction piecing together the selected methodology, methods and analyses. This chapter now affords explanation and justification of the detailed research design. Specifically, 4.1 details the research objectives; 4.2 considers the theoretical framework (as used in qualitative work); 4.3 gives the methodological rationale; 4.4 goes on to discuss the methodological approaches chosen; 4.5 considers collection and analysis of empirical materials; 4.6 validity, from the perspective of qualitative research and finally 4.7 ethics.

4.1 Research Objectives

To enable the research aim of embedding mindfulness at the UoW the following objectives were formulated

Table 1 – Research Objectives

Objectives
1. Review how other institutions/organisations have brought in Mindfulness practices for information purposes.
2. Explore ‘pockets’ of Mindfulness Practice currently being carried out at the UoW and to build on any existing and potential emerging collaborative networks within the University involved in mindfulness initiatives.
3. Consider the influence of specific groups and individuals in the University required to support successful initiatives to promote the concept, practices and skills of mindfulness
4. Design, deliver and evaluate a range of mindful opportunities and resources for staff and for students at WBS and more widely at the UoW.
5. Build on existing and emerging collaborative networks within the UoW involved in mindfulness and related initiatives to discover interest for a mindfulness research community of practice
6. Build a business case/plan for the design and delivery of workshops, as a Business Consultant for WBS, of a work-based version of the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) for external businesses

4.2 Theoretical Framework

Using a ‘balanced and centred’ theoretical framework can enhance the qualitative approach and can become integral to the process according to Collins and Stockton (2018, p1). They go on to state that if a researcher ‘cannot articulate a theoretical framework’ (p2) they may not have done the necessary deep preparation work required. However, they do note that scholars have varying views on this. Collins and Stockton (2018) also explain that there are varying definitions in the literature for the theoretical framework. According to their views a theoretical framework is a study that utilises theory,

conveys deep values of the researcher and offers a lens for processing new knowledge. This view seems to have a best-fit with my research.

Lederman and Lederman (2015, p594) also helpfully state that answers to two questions can help the researcher to understand the nature and function of a theoretical framework. The first question is: 'What is your problem or question?'; the second is 'Why is your approach to solving the problem or answering the question feasible?'. To demonstrate the theoretical framework for this research these two questions will be addressed. The answers are intended to be brief here as more detail on approaches appear later in this chapter, and the overall problem has already been well established in the opening chapters.

Succinctly, the problem partly stems from neoliberal policies effecting the management of education (Loveday, 2018). Staff suffer from cutbacks and ever increased workloads; whereas students suffer from having to take out large loans and then having to work to support themselves. This is covered in more detail in Chapter 2. My approach to help with this problem is to offer aid towards an enhanced way of being by sending out ripples of varying mindfulness practices to help the UoW become a 'Mindful University', utilising the well-established benefits of mindfulness (please see chapter three, literature review) to help alleviate some of the suffering. I have used Living Theory , action research , thematic analysis, change management tools, reflection and reflexive comments in a form of bricolage as my research design.

In sum I have chosen to include a theoretical framework in my qualitative research as I feel it helps to communicate the connection between theory, my views on epistemology and my research design.

4.3 Methodological Rationale

Previous studies in Psychology, BSc (Hons) and MSc Occupational and Organisational Psychology were mainly taught with an emphasis on a positivist perspective, so this had early influences. However, postgraduate research and many years of workplace real life experience, where I have seen first-hand how complex organisations, learning and teaching really are, I would now class my researcher viewpoint as being on the interpretive side. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2018) qualitative research comprises of five major interpretive paradigms. This research largely falls into the constructivist-interpretivist paradigm. Interpretivism can be viewed as comprising social theories and different perspectives offering a view of reality as socially constructed, as seen through the eyes of the actors (Putnam and Banghart, 2017). This of course, is in complete contrast to positivism, which can be considered as applying methods of natural science to studies of social reality (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Through the viewpoint of the objective researcher hypotheses are predicted, experimental conditions manipulated, and appropriate statistical analyses applied.

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2015) state it is not necessary to adopt one position or another, in a once only decision, for all the research that one is ever likely to take part in. Niglas (2020) also states contemporary views do not comprise of separate positions but are thought of in terms of a multi-dimensional set of continua. I acknowledge the world can be interpreted with different lenses, and that would create and mean multiple realities to different researchers, and I understand the rationale to seek an approach that is most appropriate to the research being carried out. I acknowledge that not all research lends itself to qualitative methods and I therefore aim to be flexible and pragmatic within my research. I am reasonably comfortable with adopting this position, which I see as being parallel to an eclectic coach who might select appropriate tools from their toolbox to help fit a coachee's individuality for successful achievement of smart goals. The harsh nature of the reality of

the workplace is that sometimes, especially in current climates, it is necessary to work outside our preferences. This could be because the people with whom we work have not studied in the same fields and may have graduated from mathematical, economic or accounting backgrounds. If these colleagues or senior management do not share the same world views as us, numerical 'evidence' may be more convincing to them. Also, to reiterate I am not disputing at times, especially with a very high number of participants and if perhaps the aim is to discover for example differences between groups, then analyses using inferential statistics is called for. This also relates to the understanding for the need for flexibility in the workplace.

When I began this research, some individuals on the senior management team who had specific influence (objective no 3) were informally known as 'quantitative' or 'spreadsheet' colleagues. In order to appeal to their sense making of the benefits of any workplace practitioner research being carried out it seems they would want evidence with statistical significance of data analyses. This is more important to them than the missed context, the missed meaning and the richness that comes with a qualitative approach. I recognise myself as a flexible practitioner and, although I have a calling for and affinity with qualitative methods, I am able to work with more quantitative forms of research in mixed methods designs if required. Noting that my methodological preferences are strongly at the interpretative end of the continuum (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2015) it is clear that my preferences are reflected in and stem from my views and beliefs on ontology, epistemology and axiology.

4.3.i Ontology, Epistemology and Axiology

Ontology is the nature of reality. It is a theory of being, it influences how we see ourselves in relation to our environment and in turn will influence how we view others (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006). On this debate, I see the nature of reality in terms of social phenomena being created through personal perception and the actions of social actors which consequently lie in subjectivism. I do not believe that social entities can exist as a meaningful

external reality as in objectivism. 'The way we think life is and the part we are to play in it – is self-created. We put together our own personal reality' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p73). This leads to reality being socially constructed for me whilst acknowledging that different people will have different perspectives and different changing world views. The knowledge that we construct through lived experiences and interactions with others leads us to participate in the research process with our participants ensuring that we produce knowledge that is reflective of their reality (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018). This last statement has a perfect fit with my choices of Living Theory as my main research design framework and the use of thematic analysis to analyse my focus group findings. Epistemology is the process of thinking. It is a theory of knowledge comprising what is known and how it is known (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006). It is 'the relationship between what we know and what we see. The truths we seek and believe as researchers' (Lincoln, Lynham and Guba, 2018, p115). I believe that in epistemology, which questions the foundations of acceptable knowledge, that this is also constructed, that it is subjective and that it is culturally interpreted. When studying behaviour, it makes sense to me to believe that observable phenomena and law-like generalisations are not possible. Axiology concerns values and basic beliefs (Guba and Lincoln, 1989, 1994). Personal views on axiology are crucial for paradigm selection and Lincoln, Lynham and Guba (2018, p132) state that this is 'part of the basic foundational philosophical dimensions of paradigm proposal'. I would find it difficult to see values not being value free, because our personal values are strongly bound by our historical, political, economic and social worlds. I cannot deny that my personal values therefore have been highly influenced and formed from my socio-cultural and socio-historical background. I am aware of these influences as I take this research forward and am both motivated by my living-theory values and at the same time critically aware of them and the central role they play. Furthermore, Whitehead (2006, p24) notes our epistemological, ontological and methodological assumptions 'can all influence each other and transform into the other'.

4.4 Methodological Approach

From my reflections on the coverage of my background (Chapter One), I can clearly see how the yoga and Indian Philosophy influences have had a strong impact on my values towards being non-judgemental, helping others and living a balanced life. I also see how my parental messages of being able to achieve anything I want as long I have passion for it have influenced me too. This is perhaps not quite so unusual for children these days, but I believe it was less so when I was a child. My background and educational influences have ultimately led to my beliefs and core values of:

- Equity
- Freedom
- Compassion

I wish to have passion in my work and all that I do, to have academic freedom and freedom in my life and to be in a position to be able to help others with difficulties, to feel compassion for others and self-compassion too. Perhaps more values will emerge in the future as I continue to experience new ideas and events whilst my learning continues to develop further.

4.4.i Alternative Research Approaches Considered

As acknowledged above, I believe that there can be a case in certain circumstances for flexibility with methodology, methods and working outside our preferences. Initially I considered that it was worth at least contemplating, this research from a positivistic approach. The rationale for this was to ensure that before deciding on my methodology I could be thorough and confident of my approach. I was also aware, even at the beginning, for some key senior management a positivistic approach might afford my research more support, even though this does not fit well with my world views. I recognised and conceded that as this is workplace research with the expectation of change, it was highly likely that I would be asked for and expected to show some kind of

'objective' evidence. I felt that more people were likely to trust that kind of evidence, rather than 'robustness' that qualitative research may offer. This is not meant to imply that qualitative research is inferior in any way of course, but that I believed others, and especially those in positions of some power, were more likely to hold those views. If I had used this positivistic approach, it would have entailed putting into place mindfulness practices and then measuring them by way of quantitative data analysis. The aim would have been to demonstrate the effectiveness of mindfulness in the workplace, and if results had been positive, this would have had the potential to demonstrate added financial value, and in turn higher management support.

Upon reflection I was soon able to discount the quantitative idea as I could clearly see that it would have been quite limiting. It would not have allowed the richness of empirical materials that I expected to be able to gather through qualitative research, from collaboration with others, the iterative cycles of some of my research objectives and especially through Living Theory questioning. I did not feel that the wide-ranging objectives of my work could be achieved by quantitative methods alone. Another strong reason I was drawn to Living Theory research concerned a deep interest in my own practice as a researcher, as a mindfulness practitioner and as an educator; Living Theory would allow insights and deep exploration of how I could improve my various practices. In addition, quantitative methods did not fit my views on concepts of reality, true beliefs nor my values. I knew that my story, my play, would have more depth unfolding from a qualitative Living Theory perspective and hence the rationale for my choices.

4.4.ii Action research and Living Theory

A major part of this research drew on Living Theory as a particular form of action research (Lewin, 1946). Lewin first defined action research as a technique to learn about organisations through the methods of change. Action research is seen as a spiral, or a cyclical process involving planning change,

acting on the change, observing what happens following the change, reflection, and then planning a further cycle of action and change. Ultimately then action research is practice based, and that practice is both action and it is research. Action research is able to contribute not only to social transformation but cultural transformation as well (McNiff and Whitehead, 2010); it also encompasses a synergy between both research and of practice (Whitehead, 2012b). With these intentions in mind this research then followed the cycles of action research and being an iterative process, this built on a diagnostic stage, then a planning stage, then taking action and finally by an evaluation stage before the cycle could go around again. Personal reflections and discussions with colleagues helped with the diagnostic stage, which in turn led to further discussions and reflections with colleagues at the planning stage, and also with senior management helping to guide what was feasible. I then acted on the results of those discussions and took action; I observed what happened and throughout I collected empirical materials, reflected and made evaluations. This led to further diagnosing, planning, taking action and further evaluation to devise an enhanced cycle for future action and change. The cycles were more clearly distinct for some of the objectives than for others, with some being not so explicit, but observation, reflecting and evaluating were still present. As a researcher conducting action research I recognised that I was an insider-practitioner and at the same time also a stakeholder. According to Zeni (2009) action research is better defined by an insider stance rather than defining as either quantitative or qualitative even. This demonstrates the crucial element of being an insider-practitioner and an insider-researcher and its consequent significance.

There are of course criticisms of action research. Kock (2004) states there are three main fundamental threats to action research. These are: uncontrollability, contingency and subjectivity. Action research may not have control, but in most research of this nature control is not usually being sought and instead, the central idea behind action research is to investigate what happened before moving onto the next cycle. Contingency here refers to

difficulties to generalise research findings, but this is not always required from qualitative research. For example, often it is not possible to generalise from a case study. Zuber-Skerrit (1996) criticises action research by saying if the study is too elaborate then it simply becomes not feasible. I critically evaluated these points during my research journey. My expectations focused on not seeking to quantitatively 'prove the validity' of my research as the focus was not on replication. Instead, my approach has sought to look for 'trustworthiness' in terms of the validity of my work as I pursued developing mindfulness at the UoW and in exploring my own practice as a researcher. My aim therefore was on the premise of having a story to tell with findings stemming from my own empirical materials, evaluations in line with Living Theory research and not to claim generalisability but relatability. More detailed discussion of trustworthiness and validity is explored further in 4.6 and also in detail in chapter 6.

As now well noted the specific form of action research that I used to investigate my own practice drew on Living Theory (eg Whitehead, 1989; Whitehead and McNiff, 2006; Whitehead, 2009; 2012a). The emphasis of a Living Theory methodology seeks to improve practice and to generate new knowledge. Living Theory commences with the living-educational theory values that are important to the researcher, which have been formulated from past learning and experiences. These values are then followed by inquiry into how they might be more fully lived in practice. If personal values are unable to be lived in practice then according to Whitehead one is said to be a living contradiction. The meanings of the values should also be apparent in the lived stories available in their dissemination and in the communication of the research. The researcher's values should also be apparent through multimedia, when used, and are quite usual in Living Theory. Questions typical of Living Theory are examined, and by iteratively answering those questions combined with other methods eg action research this then enables the researcher, along with interpretation of any empirical materials collected, to help to realise their aims and objectives. Accounts of the researcher's

learning then helps to evaluate and to validate the researcher's actions (Walton, 2011). A typical starting point for Living Theory questioning would likely begin by asking: 'How do I improve my practice'? (eg Whitehead, 1989). Further questions and answers are then iteratively worked on and embedded and refined.

Living Theory is viewed by some, to be a new epistemology for educational research resting in a living logic of educational inquiry (eg Whitehead, 2009). The importance of creativity and uniqueness in improving practice and knowledge within historical and cultural constraints or opportunities that lie in the social world of each individual are clearly highlighted in this approach. It is argued that each person has a unique form of Living Theory, informed by their unique constellation of values, which is clearly different to more traditional forms of education theory. These traditional forms draw on more conceptual terms, historically stemming from disciplines such as history of education, psychology, sociology and philosophy (Pring 2000). Living Theory has now expanded, since its original inception, and is now applied to research in different areas of professional practice as well.

Living standards of judgment are expected in the dissemination of the work, enhanced by live links where appropriate and applicable. The practice of making the Living Theory stories available to the public helps to ensure that this affords others the ability to 'evaluate its validity' Whitehead (2008, p107). This is especially useful since criticisms of Living Theory are often rooted in the traditional understanding of generalisability in research (Whitehead 2018). Clearly Living Theory accounts are deeply personal and cannot be something that applies to all. Instead Whitehead refers to relatability instead of generalisability.

It is also worth noting that Living Theory can be identified quite closely with autoethnography as it also places the researcher at the centre of the action whereby the individual is seeking to investigate their own particular

experiences in a reflective study of their own life. Autoethnography 'displays multiple layers of consciousness connecting the personal to the cultural' (Cresswell, 2007, p739). Whitehead (2018, p142) acknowledges the similarity but states the difference lies in the priority given to the 'knowledge-creating' abilities of the person and in addition makes offerings to the 'generation of a culture of enquiry' relating to 'cultural experience and impact' unlike autoethnography.

I also consider that at times during various Change Academy projects that I took part in (either as team leader or team member) we functioned as a co-operative inquiry group. This is whereby all participants work together and they become co-researchers and are also co-subjects. The idea is that everyone involved takes initiatives and can exert influence on the processes (Heron and Reason, 2008). However, the reality of these situations was that some members of the groups were more vocal than others; but the idea in principle applied to some of the Change Academy teams.

Notwithstanding faithful followers of Living Theory, there are those that are highly critical. For example, an educationalist, Noffke (1997) postulated that the focus on individual learning cannot begin to address the social foundation of one's personal belief system. She added that solely through examining ones' own practice through questioning, using action research cycles, and self-reflection cannot be sufficient to make personal transformation emerge. Interestingly Noffke then conceded a little and added that Living Theory may be part of change that is a necessary first step along the way, and that it may contribute towards to a kind of collective agency, but on its own it is not sufficient to evoke social change, especially in the case of educational change.

Being aware of these criticisms of action research and Living Theory I decided to bear them in mind, and after reflection did not allow them to influence or change my decision on the choice of methodology and methods.

This was because I felt strongly that the very nature of my proposed research with its inherent contemplative, compassionate and mindfulness qualities, not only in the aims and objectives of my work, but also of the inherent nature of mindfulness itself, as a practitioner myself, has a natural fit with Living Theory. Taking this approach just seemed 'right' and I decided to follow my intuition. The flow of life affirming energy of Living Theory, said to carry with it hope for the future of humanity (eg Whitehead, 2006), appears to align with an aspect of what practising mindfulness means for me. A search of the literature only locates one previous study exploring mindfulness to support improving practice and leadership whilst CEO of a care home using a Living Theory methodology (Hutchison, 2012). As such, it seems fair to assume that mindfulness and Living Theory have been little used together before, which points towards innovation in researching developing mindfulness in the workplace through core values and Living Theory questioning.

4.4.iii Reflection and Reflexive Methods

Throughout this research reflection has been used to learn from experience about the way my work was carried out and to lead to insights, for example, something possibly not noticed at the time of the occurrence. This continuous reflective learning helped the initial stages of the action research cycles of practice. Reflexivity has allowed me to go deeper and to question my assumptions, values and complex roles in relationship to others, and in situations as they occurred. This helped me to review and adjust whilst engaging with others, in varying circumstances and in different ways of being. In various chapters I have made reflexive comments where appropriate.

However, for further clarification, it is worth noting that there are different meanings for the term reflexivity by different authors, and as Waddington (2010, p312) points out reflexivity 'is an ambiguous and not unproblematic concept.' For this research I take my main meanings from Alvesson and Sköldböck (2009, 2018) who state that the researcher needs to make

research decisions open and transparent throughout the process whilst utilising more than one level, with some levels interacting together and with a likeness of some levels in other levels. Also useful is the concept of 'thinking about who we are in the world' built on realisations that we are not separate beings but are 'always in relation with others' (Cunliffe, 2016, p742). Additionally the work of Fook (2007) has been informative and also acknowledges that reflexivity is defined in differing ways across different disciplines. The main meaning for Fook, involves acknowledging all aspects of ourselves and to recognise that our contexts will influence how we carry out research.

Fook (2007) further differentiates between connected terms such as reflective practice and critical reflection. She states that although they are often used interchangeably she sees critical reflection as being a subset of reflective practice. Reflective practice usually stems from acknowledging and reducing the gap between recognising the embedded theory in practice and in what professionals say what they do (eg Schön, 1983, 1994). Critical reflection involves discovering, investigating and changing deeply held beliefs (Mezirow, 1990, 2000) and what makes reflection critical is maintaining an emphasis on power (Brookfield, 1995) together both leading to transformative change.

4.4.iv Insider-Practitioner Research

As this research is practitioner based, the researcher's contribution naturally affects the research process as the researcher is both an insider-researcher and an insider-practitioner. Noted by Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2010) there are advantages and disadvantages of researching into one's own workplace. Advantages and disadvantages applicable to this research are noted below and further arguments more appropriately discussed under ethics (4.7).

One advantage was having a long history of having worked at the UoW and through my many social interactions I have built up a network and have reasonable day-to-day informal access to some key people. A second

advantage was that I have been able to accumulate insider detailed knowledge of the University and have insights that an outsider or external consultant would not have, such as current issues and debates, ways of working and being part of the shared culture of the University.

One potential disadvantage as an insider-researcher was firstly the consideration of my passion for my research aims which could lead to whether I could (if necessary) accept graciously the possible rejection of my ideas, or some of them at least, especially as I will remain as an insider-practitioner afterwards. Some might even see my passion as a campaign; this is a question that I have been asked and will be explored further in Chapter five, Research Activity and Findings. Another disadvantage of insider-practitioner research is one of bias. This could affect my implementing and interpreting my research. Additionally, a lack of time, as a full-time senior lecturer my work is demanding and comes with a heavy timetabled WAM workload (please see section 2.3 for further discussion on the academic work allocation model). Accommodating the Doctorate research on top of WBS teaching and marking, the pressure within academia to publish, module leadership and course international leadership (although I do not have this in 2021) has been a challenging journey. I was also aware of a further possible disadvantage, since I already had expectations of the people that I wanted to continue to collaborate with, I needed to approach them carefully for their continued collaborative agreement. I also needed to understand that it was their complete right if they did not wish to continue to work any further with me, and without causing any resentment on my part, so that we could remain within harmonious relationships in the workplace. This necessitates the need for acceptance on my part on whatever transpires. Clearly the question of ethics in workplace insider-practitioner and insider-researcher relationships and power dynamics, is a crucial debate here too, and this will be explored below under Section 4.6.

4.4.v Organisational Development Tools

As much work-based research, mine included, involves some kind of change I acknowledged that management of change was a vital element that had to be considered to help with success. Of course, I could not expect to viably seek to change every aspect of my University as due to size and complexities this would be an unachievable aim. My intension was to build ripples of influence, of synergy, that would become larger waves as they further developed, progressed, and powerfully could bind together. It might be useful to refer back to figure 2, a model of a 'Mindful UoW'. In sum, to develop mindfulness at the UoW I drew heavily on action research cycles and Living Theory questioning. Much of this evolved from developing cycles, rather than being known from the outset as to how this research might unfold. That is, even if cycles might still be seen 'as linear' in some ways as they are planned from the outset, I considered that psychological, cultural and postmodern philosophies of change were more relevant to my research as they take account of more emerging forms of change.

To find appropriate ways to address my preferred approaches to change early on in this work I researched various OD and related CM practice tools, models and theories. I selected those that had the best-fit and acknowledged what was already being used by the UoW professional HR OD teams. The most relevant to my research were: (1) the online CIPD toolkit (CIPD, 2010); (2) the HE continuous improvement tool kit from the Leadership and Development Foundation (Bailey, 2011); (3) Theory U (Scharmar, 2009) which claims to lead from the future, Since it is feasible to use parts from one Change Model and some parts from another model (CIPD, 2010) the selection of parts of these tools and integration helped to direct and possibly even allowed a deeper exploration of some of my Living Theory formulated questions, further enabling me as an agent of change. These tools will now be discussed in more detail.

The CIPD toolkit (CIPD 2010, p22) notes that 'all models are wrong... some models are useful' and that it would be acceptable practice if selected parts of it were used. This helped inform my decisions from the outset as I proceeded to integrate different tools from different models. The seven-part framework of the CIPD toolkit includes: set direction, design and plan, mobilise, deliver, transition, consolidate, and improve. These have a fit with action research cycles as the logical flow of steps aligned well to action research, but the toolkit incorporates more directed steps and detail. As I would be using action research for parts of my research the toolkit would allow me to incorporate more detail on selected parts. Firstly this would be between the taking action and evaluating stage of the action research, then the transition stage of the toolkit could be utilised to further develop thinking on what might be occurring during the transitions.

The concept of the continuous improvement toolkit (Bailey, 2011) was in many ways how I saw my research going forward, as I felt that the ripples that were being sent out would help to ensure progress as I recognised, for example, that it would not be possible to deliver mindfulness classes non-stop throughout the whole year. I visualised the ripples travelling outwards in terms of a lasting legacy of what had gone before and what might currently be happening leading to what was still to come. This felt another good fit. I particularly felt the divergent (expanding the list at times) and convergent (narrowing the list at times) thinking of the continuous improvement toolkit could work well too. By re-viewing the stages in my action research cycles, I felt this might help to expand selected steps of the action research cycles and then narrow them again affording an overall tighter focus on some of the cycles. The values activity of the continuous toolkit also began with the need to assess ones' values, just as Living Theory does, so again this was a good fit. Another part of the toolkit is to view seeing the research from other stakeholder's eyes allowing a useful way to observe or anticipate possible obstacles. This was certainly a useful activity to conduct and reflect on.

Theory U (Scharmer and Kaufer, eg, 2013, 2016) invites and offers the encouragement to step into the emerging future which seemed to resonate well with my research ideals. By following and moving down the U shape of co-initiating, co-sensing, then presencing (bottom of the U), then moving back upwards to co-creating and co-evolving. This theory is also said to develop seven key leadership skills. The most important for my research was the fourth skill of 'presencing'; giving the capacity to connect to the deepest source of self whereby the future is allowed to evolve from a bigger whole rather than small, constrained parts. In terms of methodology and methods I felt the fit with Living Theory here also. I aimed to be particularly aware and synergistically use it at points that would become appropriate throughout the research. Theory U also fits well with mindfulness in terms of the suspension of judgement to just let what transpires, to be what actually transpires, rather than trying to mould the world into a false reality.

Finally, the Burke-Litwin model (1992) albeit a causal top-down model of change and therefore not an obvious fit with my work but was used by the UoW HR OD team thus I felt the need to acknowledge it. The crucial point to this model sees the external environment as the key driver. There is a partial parallel here with my research albeit to the extent that I experienced changing internal environments within the university towards mindfulness, compassion and resilience. This was likely in turn to have been affected by the prevailing external environment that aligned with times of changing views. The harsh Neoliberal external environment was mirrored internally, with colleagues consequently adversely affected by increasingly severe working regimes. This of course fed into my beliefs for the necessity for the urgent need of help towards those being negatively affected by cutbacks and redundancies. In sum, the main aim of including the Burke-Litwin model here was to acknowledge it and to accommodate it for informational purposes.

By selecting parts of the above toolkits, models and/or theories this would enable my research to incorporate the insider-practitioner part of this study

regarding change. The selection that was chosen would enable and enhance my action research cycles and my Living Theory questioning.

4.5 Empirical Materials

Guided by Living Theory questions this chapter now moves on to consider different types of empirical materials used in this research including how they were collected and how they were analysed. For example objective 1 (how other institutions and organisations have brought in mindfulness practices) the empirical materials were collected from, for example, various conferences, symposiums and presentations, and analysed through TA. For objective 4 (mindfulness for students) empirical materials were collected from focus groups and through collected week by week students' comments and were also analysed using TA.

4.5.i Collection of Empirical Materials

How and what kind of empirical materials could I gather to fulfil my objectives? To answer this Living Theory influenced question, it was necessary to acknowledge that this research was not ever at a static phase, and it was essential to show the situation as it unfolded over time. Thus, collection of materials could inform, build on and overlap with other collections. Overall, the main empirical materials emanated from a range of formal and informal meetings, conversations with staff, conversations with students, workshops to gain opinions, retreats at change academies with varying teams, formal and informal networking, as a leader and as a participant in various related teams and feedback from delivery of mindfulness sessions. Substantive notes were systematically kept throughout, collated, reflected upon, and further sense making carried out in relation to the objectives. In addition, throughout the duration of the entire research an online fact-keeping journal and also a more personal off-line reflective diary was kept. A summarised table of the collected empirical materials can be found in Appendix ii – Empirical Materials Collected. Throughout, the research process multi-media images to capture

the essence of what was transpiring were also collected. According to Whitehead (eg 2009) rather than mere text alone, multimedia helps with the communication of meanings, hence photographs and video capture is congruent with Living Theory methodology and methods. According to Living Theory video capture, especially, can show one's values in action.

To assist with deepening ways to collect further empirical materials for analysis (whilst continuing to collect current data) the following Living Theory questions (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006) were helpful:

How can I resolve problems that have emerged?

Where do I go next?

In what ways and how can I improve the process I am experiencing?

The action learning cycles were predominantly useful for focusing my thinking and answering the above questions since the differing cycles clearly permitted relevant changes to be made and improved. As well as asking Living Theory questions and action research cycles the tools, models and theories of OD and CM were beneficial whilst collecting the empirical materials. The CIPD 'setting direction' aspects of the online toolkit (2010) along with an awareness of the external causal drivers of the Burke-Litwin (1992) model that HR would be following, helped to formulate realistic research planning. This in turn helped with setting viable objectives. The Continuous Improvement Toolkit (Bailey, 2011) with its widening and narrowing reflections with divergent and convergent thinking helped to both narrow and expand reflection at suitable points enabling the collection of more advanced empirical materials in subsequent action research cycles. Finally, Theory U, (Scharmer, 2007) helped with increasing awareness (whilst at the bottom of the U) through merging thoughts of 'presencing' with mindful awareness which further helped to stay connected to the moment, to shelve judgements and allow inner knowing to emerge.

4.5.ii Analysis of empirical materials?

What kind of analysis could I use to interpret the empirical materials?

Although Living Theory was the 'golden thread' of questioning that guided reflection and reflexive methods as to how I, as an insider-practitioner, insider-researcher and change-agent was able to make sense of the range of empirical materials collected overall I also looked to other techniques to aid with analyses. To analyse the information from Objective 1, how other institutions and organisations have introduced mindfulness TA was used. TA identifies, analyses and details the themes or patterns within the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006, 2021). 'Emerging themes' are often described to denote the patterns from the data analysed. However, Braun and Clarke (2006) seem rather opposed to the terminology of 'emergent themes' as they see it as a passive account, as if 'the data' were there waiting to be discovered denying the active role the researcher plays. Instead, they prefer the use of the term 'thematic map' (Braun and Clarke, 2006, 2001). However whilst acknowledging the importance of the work of Braun and Clarke in this research, as in accord with other work, I have chosen to keep the term 'emergent themes' notwithstanding and understanding the criticism.

To analyse Objective 4, students' experience of the offered mindfulness classes, I first chose to use Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) (Smith, 1996; Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). I believed this would allow the exploration of student participants' perceptions and views and I, as the researcher, would further interpret what was captured. IPA involves a double hermeneutic (Smith 2008). This involves the individual seeking to make sense of their world whilst the researcher tries to make sense of the individual making sense of their world. Clearly the researcher cannot access the participants experiences directly, so interpretation using their own perceptions, enter into the process and inevitably this creates a more perplexing situation. IPA is customarily used for analysis of interviews. However, taking an innovative approach its use has been expanded and

includes the use of interpretation of focus groups, of which this use is growing and various researchers are in favour of this (eg De Visser and Smith, 2006; Dunne and Quayle, 2002; Flowers, Duncan and Frankis, 2000). Using IPA to interpret focus groups is taken with the caveat that they must not detract a participant expressing personal experiences, therefore the researcher must make that judgment if the group has influenced them or not (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Additionally, according to Tomkins and Eatough (2010) and Wilkinson (2008) a focus group can yield more in-depth richness of data compared to one-to-one interviews as there can be interaction between participants. Although the 'interactional complexity' of the discussion may make it more difficult to hear individual voices (Palmer et al, 2010, p100). Therefore, it seems some sort of trade-off needs to be made.

After analysing the focus groups and the collected week by week comments from the students it became apparent that IPA was not the best way to analyse these materials, It seemed that, the richness of data required for IPA was perhaps not forthcoming, with the responses not yielding a deeper level of another layer of interpretation. This I considered was more about the subject matter rather than any lack of engagement from the students in the focus groups. Later I consequently changed to using TA for the analyses, as this seemed the most appropriate for the level of empirical materials I had collected. The double, and indeed even a third hermeneutic still applied here. The third being the reader, and how they make sense of what I have communicated in the analyses of my focus groups.

Ultimately TA was a good fit to use within this research because I felt that it also connects to the exploratory qualities of mindfulness. Other research, such as that by Barley et al, (2019) has connected autoethnography through story telling of five vignettes and used IPA analysis. This research also includes the author's values and gives an account of her life story. This is a phenomenological informative way to see through the lens of others' life affirming changes. Although my research uses Living Theory and TA I felt

there was connection between autoethnography and storytelling leading to a comparison being drawn from the work of Barley et al (2009) and the methodological story telling approach of my research. Table 2 below sets out the final analyses used for the empirical materials collected.

Table 2 - Objectives, Methods and Interpretation

Objectives	Research Approach	Methods	Interpretation/Analysis
<p>1. Review how other institutions/organisations have brought in Mindfulness practices for information purposes</p>	<p>Overarching LT question: How can I embed mindfulness at the UoW?</p> <p>Desk research</p>	<p>Notes from participation in mindfulness in the workplace conferences</p> <p>Review organisations that use mindfulness practices</p>	<p>Review all empirical materials collected</p> <p>Qualitative interpretation of empirical materials /ideas collected</p> <p>LT & TA</p>
<p>2. Explore ‘pockets’ of Mindfulness Practice currently being carried out at the UoW in order to build on any existing and potential emerging collaborative networks within the University involved in mindfulness initiatives</p>	<p>Overarching LT question: How can I embed mindfulness at the UoW?</p> <p>Desk research</p>	<p>Audits of the UoW website</p> <p>Contact established contacts, known communities of practice other individuals/groups for further information gathering</p>	<p>Review all empirical materials collected</p> <p>Qualitative interpretation of empirical materials /ideas collected</p> <p>LT & TA</p>
<p>3. Consider the influence of specific groups and individuals in the University required to support successful initiatives to promote the concept, practices and skills of mindfulness</p>	<p>Overarching LT approach</p> <p>How can I improve my practice?</p>	<p>Meetings notes</p> <p>Emails</p> <p>Reflective journal</p> <p>Logs</p>	<p>Qualitative interpretation of empirical materials /ideas collected</p> <p>LT & Reflexive analysis</p>

	How can I help improve the practice of others?		
4. Design, deliver and evaluate a range of mindful opportunities and resources for staff and for students at WBS and more widely at the UoW	<p>LT approach</p> <p>What are our/my further concerns?</p> <p>What can we/I do about our/my further concerns?</p> <p>How can I improve my practice?</p> <p>AR cycles</p>	<p>Meeting notes</p> <p>Reflective journal</p> <p>Notes from Bangor University Mindfulness teacher-training</p> <p>Pre and post mindfulness inventory (Walach et al, 2006)</p> <p>Focus groups</p> <p>Week-by-week comments</p>	<p>Review all empirical materials collected</p> <p>AR cycles to consider the effectiveness of mindfulness for participants, to inform next cycle</p> <p>LT, AR & TA</p>
5. Build on existing and emerging collaborative networks within the UoW involved in mindfulness and related initiatives to discover interest for a mindfulness research community of practice	<p>LT approach</p> <p>How can I further improve my practice?</p> <p>How can I help to improve the practices of others?</p> <p>How can we improve our practices together as we collaborate?</p>	<p>Meeting notes</p> <p>Emails</p> <p>Diaries</p> <p>Logs</p>	<p>Qualitative review of empirical materials collected</p> <p>Reflexive analysis</p>

<p>6. Build a business case/plan for the design and delivery of workshops, as a Business Consultant for WBS, of a work-based version of Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) for external businesses</p>	<p>LT approach</p> <p>How can I help improve the practices of others?</p> <p>How can I further improve my own practice?</p>	<p>Meeting notes</p> <p>Emails</p> <p>Diaries</p> <p>Logs</p> <p>Notes</p> <p>Audit of time, potential profit and costings for business</p> <p>Notes from Bangor University Mindfulness teacher-training</p>	<p>Qualitative review of empirical materials collected</p> <p>Reflexive analysis</p>
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4.6 How can I demonstrate 'Validity'?

There are two forms of validation applied to action research (McNiff and Whitehead, 2010). The first is personal validation, which is a form of self-validation. The second is social validation whereby others consider the validity of the researcher's claim to knowledge. By putting research out for public scrutiny this further enhances its transparency and critique from others (McNiff and Whitehead, 2010).

I considered using Habermas' (1987) criteria of social validity to validate this work under the following headings:

- Is the account comprehensible?
- Is the account truthful?
- Is the account sincere?
- Is the account appropriate?

Using Habermas' criteria above does fit well with Living Theory but as the research progressed, I felt my work did not need to be strictly tied to a pure Living Theory approach, as indicated in the thesis title of 'a Living Theory *influenced* approach'. An alternative approach I considered was the eight categories of criteria to assess quality in qualitative work originally developed by Tracey (2010). These categories are:

- Worthy topic
- Rich rigor
- Sincerity
- Credibility
- Resonance
- Significant contribution
- Ethical and meaningful coherence

However, in reality this approach did not have the fit that I initially had expected. Some of the categories, although sounding initially quite simplistic and applicable

became unfeasible, when trying to match with my work. The pattern of detail seemed overly intricate and resulted in some circular arguments when I applied to my own work. I therefore sought a more straightforward approach. Fitzpatrick (2018, p.215) states that a 'checklist approach should not be used' and that not all 'validation approaches' are applicable to all methodologies and methods. In essence I felt that the more open range of evaluation criteria from a selection from Morse (2018) had a better fit with my work. According to Morse these can include a range from audit trails, saturation, methodological cohesion, and theoretical coherence.

These categories are discussed in chapter six where a more in-depth discussion of the 'robustness' and the 'validity' of my work takes place. In this chapter I also comment on the helpfulness from belonging to an action learning set, which acted for me partly also as a validation group. This was combined also with a Chartered Occupational Psychologist (with a Doctorate in Occupational Psychology) who acted as a critical friend. Their effective values of judgement also helped to validate my work.

4.7 Ethics

All empirical materials were collected within the bounds of confidentiality and data protection as required under the Data Protection Act (1998) when first carrying out this work, and subsequently under the reformed Data Protection Act (2018) during all of this research. I was also guided by the BPS code of ethics and conduct (2018). In my research, in particular I was aware that I had to be extremely careful to safeguard the anonymity of all participants when reporting my findings. This was a crucial ethical issue that I was aware of throughout the whole development of my research so that when I collected notes from discussions, meetings and interviews, some of which were informal, there existed the need to ask permission to use what I had collected for my further reflections and discussion. In addition, I also initially followed the earlier 2010 and 2018 versions of the good practice guidelines for teaching mindfulness devised by Bangor University. As my work progressed I then subsequently followed a further updated version (MBI:TAC, 2021).

However, I believe that ethics also applies not only to the appropriate way I carried out and conducted my research but also as an insider-practitioner, insider-

researcher towards my own recognised commitment and further obligation to implement as fully as I feasibly could the aims of my work. It would seem unethical, in my view, to raise peoples' hopes for change that cannot be delivered. Being an agent of change I noted that my vision may not be the same as that of others, who also have a vested interest in this area so my interactions with others needed to bear this in mind. I felt it also necessary to be careful that I did not describe incorrectly what I felt was developing and what could be mistakenly interpreted to mean something different. Of course, there are inherent ambiguities and uncertainties in change, but as far as I could I needed to try to communicate unambiguously and as clearly as possible as to my intentions and avoid miscommunications.

Finally, the issue of intellectual property or ownership rights is an important issue that should not be ignored. This has been reinforced by many discussions with others who have strong views on this. A summary of these conversations is that, since 'I' (or other colleagues in the same situation) as the Practitioner, was not funded by the university via WAM teaching hours to teach Mindfulness as an intervention is it 'right' for the university to own my written classes, that I personally developed for students? The programme that I subsequently wrote for outside businesses was allocated WAM hours so this most likely provides a different case. Perhaps the latter might be regarded the same as writing lecture materials? However, with the mindfulness teacher training, I did this voluntarily, in my holiday leave (and paid for the course myself) as other colleagues have also done. Maybe this is perfectly acceptable, but it needs to be recognised that the UoW does stand to gain from the profits of my and colleagues' personally funded training taken during holidays and then offering to give 'free' classes. Mindfulness here is a useful intervention for the University, it is often a team approach and also a way of being for those of us who are practitioners. These interchangeable facets make it difficult for practitioners to unpack these components. There are also safety issues, and whose responsibility it would be if unpleasant side-effects were to be reported by anyone attending our sessions. I do not have definitive answers to this discussion, but these are questions that people ask, that colleagues discuss, and some feel very strongly that UoW should take more responsibility and not hold the intellectual property rights to their work.

CHAPTER FIVE – “On Stage: The Actors Act Out their Stories as the Living Journey Unfolds” – Research Activity, Findings and Discussion

“You can’t stop the tide, but you can learn to surf” Jon Kabat-Zinn

5.0 Introduction to Research Activity and Findings

Before recounting the research activity and findings of the six stories, to set the scene the initial Living Theory questions that led to the research objectives will be set out again. Additionally, in Appendix ii there is a more detailed overview table of the empirical materials collected.

5.0.1 What actions I took about my concerns

To recap the context at my starting point regarded the effects of some of the University internal drivers that had (an observed) negative influence on some staff at the University. I initially asked myself Living Theory appropriate questions:

‘What were my concerns’?

‘Why was I concerned’?

‘What experiences could I draw on to show my concerns’?

‘What could I do about my concerns’?

‘How could I improve my practice and the practices of others’?

The first three questions have been answered in previous chapters, and here I move on to the recounting of the action stages. What could I do about my concerns? From my studies from mindfulness teacher training, delivery of mindfulness to participants, my own personal practice, general reading and a review of the literature I could clearly see the potential power of mindfulness and compassion which could help with my concerns in a general way by alleviating some of the suffering. At the least it would not do any harm if taught in an appropriate way. How can I improve my practice and the practices of others? The application of mindfulness into specific teaching and related work practices could help improve the personal practices of UoW staff (including myself) and students, enhancing the general student

experience. Again, this could do no harm if approached and taught appropriately, which includes screening out those that might not be suitable, and potentially offer many benefits. The answers to the above Living Theory questions then led to the following question:

‘How could I embed mindfulness?’

Mindfulness is said by (Neff, 2018) to comprise one of the components, of self-compassion. If one is self-compassionate it would likely be that those feelings expand outward to embrace general compassion, or as viewed from Buddhism there is no difference between the two (Neff, 2003). Therefore, it was also anticipated that by embedding ripples of mindfulness this would naturally also help lead to a more compassionate University. To develop mindfulness and to help with a related compassionate UoW six objectives were conceived as if comprising an itinerary on a road map. As I recount my six parallel stories the next section explores ‘how’ I utilised my methods of choice to help put in place mindfulness opportunities for staff and students.

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5.1. Story One (Objective 1) - How other Institutions/organisations have brought in mindfulness

My first objective was to systematically look at ways other universities/institutions/organisations had embedded mindfulness into their ways of being and working. Throughout I focused on collecting empirical materials and information whilst reflecting on the Living Theory focused question:

How could I embed mindfulness at the UoW’?

An answer to this question would enable further reflection and consideration as to whether there were any lessons to be learned from the empirical materials and information collected at the various conferences, workshops and events that I participated in at the outset of this research. I reflected on what might be replicable and appropriate with an emphasis especially on what might be applicable and adaptable to my University. In sum my reported notes here are my ‘data’ and my

‘analyses’ are my reflections from each event leading to TA emergent themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006, 2020) from the integration of events, please see table 8.

5.1.i Mindfulness in Society Conference

I began by attending the Mindfulness in Society Conference held in March 2013 in Chester and hosted by Bangor University. Keynote speakers included: Jon Kabat-Zinn, Mark Williams, Michael Chaskalson and other well-known people in the mindfulness world. I was grateful to be funded by HR at the UoW to attend this conference, especially since I felt that this act demonstrated that the idea of embedding mindfulness was being taken seriously by some of the key stakeholders. This conference proved very useful for initial sharing of ideas and certainly demonstrated the strength of the passion like-minded people have for the introduction of mindfulness practices. Of particular interest, and a high priority for attendance, was a workshop session on mindfulness in HE, led by Ariana Ferris, Kate Malleson, Chris Cullen and others. The workshop was held as a series of short talks with world café discussions taking place at the end. With my main question in mind, ‘how could I embed mindfulness at the UoW?’ I actively made notes during the presentations and later engaged with the word café discussions. The following is a summarised table of my documented key points followed by my reflective thoughts.

Table 3 - Mindfulness in Society Conference

Mindfulness in Society	Hosted by Bangor University	Chester
Questions	Suggested Ways Forward	My Reflections/Interpretation
Where to embed mindfulness?	Personal tutoring system.	Using action research, I will try first within the personal tutoring system and reflect on changes for further cycles.
How to obtain /buy-in’?	More likely to sign up if personal difficulties had	There will a necessity to word the invite to students very carefully to explain this has the potential to enhance personal experiences, so to help optimise their personal best.

	<p>been experienced.</p> <p>Ask for more as likely to get less from students.</p>	<p>Even if difficulties as such had not been experienced this would still be useful as mindfulness can have many benefits, as is well documented. The need to be careful to screen out applicants if not suitable is important too and to signpost to other support.</p>
How much of the MBSR to teach?	<p>Likely that 40-minute sessions were sufficient.</p>	<p>Will need to be a cut-down version from the original. I will try first with 40-minute sessions.</p>
An awareness of students spending much time online, so how to embed mindfulness into that space?	<p>No answers forthcoming from the sessions.</p>	<p>I will need to consult the literature.</p>
Student website (Mindfulness for Students, 2013) where the academics presenting at this conference offered free mindfulness resources for students, based on the MBSR type of mindfulness. Recordings for daily formal practice sessions were made freely available to all students from all universities.	<p>No answers forthcoming from the sessions.</p>	<p>As of 2013 our students could access this site but it would be unlikely they would know of it, so I would need to recommend to them.</p> <p>I could set up my own site.</p> <p>Update - as of 2022 this site is no longer available. There is an alternative website offered by Oxford for students - but it is a paid version.</p>

The consensus from university speakers during plenaries were that it was probably preferable to embed mindfulness within soft skills training within the student experience and likely to be within the personal tutoring system. This would seem to fit with how I had first contemplated my offerings and I knew I had good contacts within the personal tutoring system at the UoW, having been a personal tutor for many years. I expected if I were to make a request to include mindfulness within the personal tutoring system this would likely be accepted. Further notes I made from this workshop were about student 'buy-in' whereby it was said that it was probably more likely for students to sign-up for mindfulness classes if they had already experienced some sort of anxiety or even panic in their lives. One of the speakers

was teaching the 'full' MBSR. Others felt a cut-down version would be preferable as 40 mins of mindfulness practice every day was too much to ask students to carry out along with two-hour mindfulness classes each week, as per the 'classic' full version. It was further emphasised to look for the crux points when getting students to sign-up. Another speaker reported that, Jon Kabat-Zinn, always asks for a lot from his students, as he knows he will always get less. So, the key point here was to consider cutting down the MBSR to a manageable size for students as the mindfulness homework and weekly classes would be too time consuming for them.

Again, this aligned with how I had envisioned the sessions for students at the UoW, as I had already had the same thought myself, that students would be unlikely to commit to such lengthy sessions as in the full version of the MBSR. This reinforced my thinking and I decided I would continue with the plan for a cut-down version. Other interesting points noted were, even in 2013, given that students receive information online and they engage with a lot of their materials via electronic sources, how to embed mindfulness into that? There were no specific answers to this discussion at the time, but it is surely a question that re-emerges from March 2020 and onwards. This is especially important due to the nature of changed teaching during the pandemic where all our lectures, workshops and seminars moved online. Students are now used to receiving their sessions and 'meeting' their lecturers online. Therefore, online mindfulness taught sessions could be advantageous for students, as it could help them to engage in a different more meaningful way to their classes, through this form of technology.

There are numerous mindfulness courses available online for the general public. Different types of mindfulness are usually offered either in a synchronous or asynchronous style, with free or payment options. My initial reflections were that I could offer students a list of my recommended sites. I could also work on a site myself, noting that this would require more reflection and work to bring this to fruition. The literature overall seems to relate positive results from online mindfulness classes so this could certainly be a direction to choose for our students at some point but I would prefer to initiate with face-to-face first if that is possible. Findings from a study on Canadian medical students (Danilewitz et al, 2018) found that even though recorded hours of meditation were deemed low on each of the seven asynchronous

mindfulness modules offered and attended online, self-compassion particularly stood out and increased from the students' baseline. However, no changes were noted for burnout, nor for empathy. Another study of online mindfulness (Heckenberg et al, 2019) which utilised a wait list control group found positive results in improved affect, over commitment, optimism and mucosal immunity. My thoughts in 2013 were that if improvements to baselines might follow with our students, then this could certainly be one possible way to implement mindfulness practices for students in the future. Of course, that future in 2020 has been forced upon us, and this is discussed more fully under objective 4 (mindfulness for students).

Schultchen et al (2020) in a study protocol will consider the effectiveness of an online asynchronous (downloadable audio) guided mindfulness intervention consisting of seven taught sessions with two follow-up summary sessions. The students will be from applied sciences and the study will incorporate a randomised wait list control group consisting of an information leaflet offering free access to other university services, such as counselling. The findings will include psycho-biological variable markers such as hair cortisol levels as a longitudinal marker for levels of stress. Also, various self-report measures, one being the Freiburg mindfulness Inventory (FMI), will be included in the final analysis. As of July 2022, there are no updates yet to this research. This comprehensive work will include both self-report and psychobiological parameters and so seems to be quite unique in the mindfulness research published studies to date. In a pilot study they found positive results, but the full results are eagerly anticipated.

Further observations from the Mindfulness in Society Conference I noted were that although some advice was given, unsurprisingly perhaps, many more questions than suggested answers were raised. Influenced by the information gathered at the conference my specific Living Theory based questions that I later reflected on were:

What would my exact vision of mindfulness practice at UoW look like?

What other offerings already in place might mindfulness feed into?

What challenges could likely surface?

Then a final question, albeit from a personal perspective, but still important for me to

focus on.

How can I improve my own practice?

My own practice here initially relates to my own personal practice of mindfulness. Of course, this in turn relates to my teaching of mindfulness to others which has continued to grow as years have gone by. During my time at the conference, I had the fortunate opportunity to improve my own mindful practice by taking part in a full eight hour one-day workshop with Jon Kabat-Zinn. He led mindfulness practices, talked, and hosted discussions throughout the whole of the second day of the conference, with only a few short breaks for a mindful silent lunch and for mindfulness walking. Kabat-Zinn's conversational style of delivery furthered my ever-growing knowledge at that early stage of this research, whereby he discussed theories, evidence and possible future directions for the implementation of mindfulness in education and in society. I also felt the mindfulness practices were a unique opportunity to truly experience this with the person who is generally accepted as being accredited for having brought the form of the MBSR mindfulness to the West. I felt this enhanced my own practice and this will always continue to develop.

5.1.ii Mindfulness in Schools Project

A few days later, I attended the Mindfulness in Schools Project Annual one-day conference at Friends Meeting House in London in March 2013. Most of the main keynote speakers from the Chester conference presented, or attended here also, including Kabat-Zinn who was still in the UK. Although the emphasis here was school education and not HE, I felt there were likely still some valuable information and experiences that might be able to be gained. It also gave a quite rare opportunity to see Kabat-Zinn speak again, even after such a short period of time I felt was not to be missed. I sat with my previous questions in mind:

How could I embed mindfulness at the UoW?

How could I further improve my own practice?

A table of the key points from the Mindfulness in Schools Project are firstly

summarised, followed by a more detailed discussion.

Table 4 - Mindfulness in Schools

Mindfulness in Schools Project	Friends Meeting House	London
Main Points	Suggested Ways Forward	My Reflections/Interpretation
Should you ask for permission to teach mindfulness?	Don't ask because you risk permission not being granted.	I do not feel this is ethically right and believe I would not use such tactics.
Academics wanting theoretical backgrounds to the practices	It was said academics are harder to reach so there is a need to think of strategies to suit them.	I feel the need for some flexibility could be appropriate here. Perhaps more emphasis on theory than is usual, if called for, would be acceptable.
The necessity to make the teachings interesting	Teach mindfulness as if for the first time.	I definitely agree and this ensures that those teaching are as engaged as those attending the sessions. No doubt this will be noticed by the participants.
Consideration of communication that mindfulness is secular	Especially important in schools as many are from different faiths, so extra consideration needed how to approach this.	I agree and would consider carefully how to word all communications.

Kabat-Zinn's advice was not to ask permission to teach mindfulness, and to just do it. He then recounted the story of someone he knew who successfully taught mindfulness in a school with 90% Mormons, not only to the children but eventually to the parents as well. The teacher had not asked for permission, and if she had, Kabat-Zinn said she would most likely not have been granted it because parents may have been biased with the view that mindfulness might be in conflict with their beliefs. The results were able to speak for themselves, because if the children had not shown positive results, then the parents would not have also wanted to embrace the mindfulness teaching. This is an interesting point, but I felt that this would not be

appropriate to answer my question, how can I embed mindfulness at the UoW? This is because I will keep to strict research ethics, and it would not be appropriate to proceed without permission. Additionally, as a Chartered Psychologist I am bound by the ethical code of conduct of the BPS and again it would not be fitting to just go ahead without seeking permission to teach mindfulness.

A further point was made about obtaining people to sign-up to mindfulness sessions, whereby Kabat-Zinn has found that 'intellectuals' (sic) are the hardest to reach, and they want to know all the benefits first. This could be a useful point to acknowledge, as the teacher training in mindfulness that I attended (University of Bangor) states that we should not go into too much theory on mindfulness and the teachings should be very focused on the practices and inquiry parts. Considering this, mindfulness for staff at the UoW could need some amending I felt, to the classic way it is taught. This also resonated for me relating to my own practice as well, and I probably fit into Kabat-Zinn's category here as often I too have felt the need to go deeper into the theories behind some of the practices that we do.

My other question, how can I improve my practice? This is now viewed from the perspective of teaching mindfulness, and I am relating here to Kabat-Zinn's advice that there is no subject that cannot be made interesting and to teach it as if for the first time. This, of course, feeds directly into one of the basic premises of mindfulness to approach things as if for the first time and to use 'beginner's mind'. An example was given of someone teaching geometry for 30 years with 30-year-old notes, when even the teacher would be bored. I have always felt that every group of students I teach and every PG research dissertation that I supervise is unique. However, this served to remind me, that every situation is special, there is always something new and current to teach and to see things from new angles with different students aligned to their different world views. For me, this also applied to actually seeing and practicing mindfulness with Kabat-Zin in person. It might be thought that since he is quite prolific on social media and has written many texts on mindfulness that there would not be so much more information to be gained. Taking a mindful perspective, I felt it was a completely different experience to see Kabat-Zinn speak live rather than read his books. For me words can have a different affect depending on the delivery and this helped me to tap into a reflective mode more than a text

would be able to provide. This led me to feel even more inspired and motivated to fulfil my research aims. In addition, Kabat-Zinn's books are directed for the person who wants to learn how to practice mindfulness, whereas the conferences were directed at those who already have their own practice and want to disseminate to others.

Photograph 3 - Mindfulness in Education

Friends Meeting House London March 2013



Since no one is identifiable in this photograph permission has not been sought

In this photograph, taken at lunchtime so people were free to wander around, I can see and still feel the energy and excitement in the room that day. The audience was vast, with fully filled extra rows higher than the photo shows. After lunch, school children then presented who had trained in mindfulness in the classroom using the .b curriculum (please see chapter three: literature review for more details). It was incredibly inspiring to see young school children who were confident and who spoke how mindfulness had changed their school and many of their lives. Towards the end of the one-day conference event a party of delegates, with Jon Kabat-Zinn leading, left to go to Downing Street to meet with the government to discuss policies for embedding mindfulness for the nation. The mindful nation is now known as a movement which officially began in 2014 and the full report is available online (MAPPG, 2015). It sets out to review mindfulness research evidence, most current

best practices, range and success of implementation and new potential developments applying mindfulness to a range of policies and to make recommendations based on the findings. Please also see Chapter three, literature review for more details.

5.1.iii Oxford Symposium

In September 2013 I attended the Oxford Mindfulness Centre one-day symposium on mindfulness in HE with the focus on how other universities have developed mindfulness. Clearly this was high priority to attend with the allure of specific Oxford University case studies being offered. The Oxford Mindfulness Centre sits within the Department of Psychiatry, University of Oxford and has been researching mindfulness and mindfulness training since 2008.

As in the previous section above, first a table of the main points will be summarised followed by a more detailed discussion.

Table 5 - Mindfulness in HE

Mindfulness in HE	Oxford University Symposium	Oxford
Main Points	‘Suggested’ Ways Forward	My Reflections/Interpretation
Reminder that this was an ‘exploratory’ workshop not a definitive ‘how to’	Engage with others as much as possible and share ideas.	For me at this initial stage it was mainly about collecting and sharing ideas for future reflections working towards implementation of mindfulness. I was not seeking a ‘how to’.
Similarly, to above, suggestions on where to place mindfulness for students	Within study skills. Not as a medical model but some focus could be on performance anxiety.	I agreed with this and would likely seek to implement in a similar way using AR cycles.
Are there a one size fits all approach?	Various views on this.	I would probably start with a tailor-made approach for different cohorts and if possible, streamline to a one size fits all.

Funding: which budget should the money come from?	Range of views from counselling to personal tutoring budget.	From my personal contacts at that time, I felt it was probably best to seek funding from where I had the most contacts, so the then Dean of WBS.
Should students pay for the classes?	Mindfulness classes at Oxford were charged at a rate of £40 per the whole course.	I would prefer to offer free classes to students.
Similarly, to above do not ask students just bring in light practices	Light practices might be deemed as 'mindful walking' or 'eating a mindful raisin'.	My inclination is to ask, as per my mindfulness teaching training, but perhaps a few very simple practices such as the examples here could be trialled in some teaching sessions.
Lead by example	Let those practising 'advertise' the classes.	This is a key part of the teacher training to embody mindfulness ourselves, so of course I agree with this.
Not to try to teach mindfulness to a whole university all at once	Concentrate on specific areas first before expanding.	My intention was to begin with WBS anyway, so this had a good fit with a logical way forward I wished to pursue.

The day was split into various sessions and the following are the main discussions I noted that I felt were of key significance on lessons or ideas to bear in mind for exploring how I could embed mindfulness at the UoW. Something that I noticed almost immediately (after introductions) was that most attendees seemed to be there with the same aim as me, ie they had not yet embedded mindfulness into their universities and were looking for ways to do this. I realised this would be very much an exploratory workshop, especially as we were to share ideas. It was also very apparent that I was not alone in what I was trying to achieve, at least in the part of developing mindfulness for students, albeit at varying degrees. From my discussions with others, it seemed that no one else was going to be using the research methodology and methods of Living Theory though. Comments were made and opinions noted that acknowledged how much the teaching of mindfulness is needed. The view was voiced by some participants in the symposium that mindfulness teaching should be a basic requirement and by one attendee, even a statutory requirement. I did not feel I could agree with the latter statement though as I refer back to the point that mindfulness practice should not be forced upon anyone and it has to be a personal choice. Further elaboration from some participants was noted on the view that it should be included in all courses on the premise that because

those in need do not often come forward. This is an interesting point but still does not sway my views on not forcing and using instead good communication and to let the students who do have a mindfulness practice do the advertising. The discussion then moved on to where the teaching of mindfulness should be best placed.

Following this initial exchange of participants ideas and questions, and presentations, a panel discussion then followed. The next part of the symposium was led by speakers from various institutions who had already embedded mindfulness into their respective universities. The first speaker asserted that the teaching should be placed within study skills and certainly not as a medical model. She went on to say that there was a need to include a focus on performance anxiety as students have exams, and generally universities do not equip students well for dealing with these. I felt this latter point was partly because of this speaker's own particular experiences that she related through a personal anecdote but nonetheless some students do experience exam stress. My initial thoughts remained that mindfulness would fit well, and I would be comfortable with trialling mindfulness within the personal tutoring system, at WBS. Action Research cycles would be used to diagnose, plan, take action and to evaluate how best to accomplish this.

Further debates ensued during the panel discussions on the different opinions on different models for different students versus a one-size fits all approach. My initial reflections were to use a flexible but tailor-made approach, which seemed a necessary starting point in order to gain knowledge of how these classes might work at ones' own university before the possibility of a one-size fits all. Presenters' discussions on where the money should come from and out of which budget led to some interesting insights. Some said counselling, others disagreed and said out of personal tutoring budgets. I reflected on how I could use this information to answer my question, how could I embed mindfulness at the UoW? My initial reflections were to first explore the avenue of seeking funding from the Dean of WBS from the school budget, as that was where I felt I had the most influence at that time in 2013. If this was not forthcoming, I reflected that I could explore other sources.

The debate then turned to whether students should have to pay for the classes themselves. Mindfulness classes held at Oxford University for students asked for

£40 from each student for the whole course (an external mindfulness course usually costs in the region of between £250-£300 in 2013). They said the reason for the monetary contribution was to increase commitment. Students were offered ongoing practice after the course by way of drop-ins at a cost of £4 per session. They also encouraged peer-led sessions too, whereby they play a reading from the Mark Williams book and then take part in a discussion. I felt this was an interesting idea and possibly could be something to consider once the mindfulness sessions for students were more well-established. However, I felt that the taught sessions should be offered free to students so as not to disadvantage anyone who might not be able to afford to pay.

In the two photographs that follow I can still see and remember the enthusiasm in the room where delegates were absorbed in the exchanging of ideas through voicing their deeply held passion for the development of mindfulness in HE. In the first photograph I can see and remember how engaged I was with the discussions as I sat cross-legged on the floor whilst brainstorming various ideas to share with the wider group. To note some sat in chairs and sitting on the floor was optional. Those who attended signed a media release form and these photographs were uploaded and made available on the mindfulness for students' website in 2013 shortly after the event. However, as of 2022 the website no longer exists.

Photograph 4 – Mindfulness in HE Symposium, Oxford
Oxford Conference September 2013



Photograph was freely available

Photograph 5 - Conference Mindfulness in HE
Oxford Conference September 2013



Photograph was freely available

In the afternoon the world café event went on to explore further challenges and opportunities. Highlighted points I noted were to ‘just do it’ similarly as Kabat-Zinn had said at the previous conference in London. ‘Light practices’ such as mindful walking or eating a raisin mindfully were recommended (two well-known mindfulness formal beginner practices) as activities to carry out without permission. Other important points noted were to lead by example and let those who practice mindfulness do the advertising. I agreed and these had already been my thoughts. This is also part of the mindfulness teacher training so no one could disagree with that. Finally, discussion centred on the preference to try not to reach the whole of a university at once and to concentrate by starting with one area at a time. Taking inspiration from this idea I was later able to align to the ripples of a mindfulness practice model, please see Figure 2,- Model of a ‘Mindful UoW’, whereby the visualised small ripples become larger and transform into small waves and then bigger waves of synergistic influence.

5.1.iv Value and Virtue Conference York St John

I attended the 5th International Conference on Value and Virtue in Practice-Based Research held at York St John University, York, on 9th and 10th June 2015. The examples of empirical materials gathered and presented here are slightly different to the other opportunities above. This is because delegates at the Value and Virtue conference came together because of similar values and understanding in research methods used to develop practice-based work changes, rather than in developing mindfulness per se. Presenters were carrying out research using either Living Theory or action research or both. I have chosen to include this conference here because Living Theory is part of my chosen methodology and methods and was related to objective 1 in the sense of organisational change. The theme of the conference was on developing various kinds of changes in the workplace (using Living Theory and/or action research) albeit not mindfulness as such but held the possibility of transferable lessons. In sum, I expected this to also be a valuable experience to discover new ways that Living Theory was being used outside of its original form of educational research. The table below represents the main summary followed by a more detailed discussion.

Table 6 - Value and Virtue Conference

Value and Virtue in Practice-Based Research		
Hosted by York St John University York		
Questions	Suggested Ways Forward	My Reflections/Interpretation
Expanding LT to use outside of teaching research	<p>Many examples of diverse research initiatives utilising LT.</p> <p>The suggested way forward was to stay with your values and research using LT in topics outside of education. To be creative.</p>	<p>This confirmed for me that I was comfortable with using LT outside of specific educational research. Noting though that in part my research does still come under 'educational' as it is about mindfulness development in HE and I am also exploring my own practice.</p>

At this conference I was able to engage with some interesting and novel ideas with wide-ranging examples of how Living Theory and action research had informed work-based research from a diverse range of disciplines. Some of these examples were: creating pedagogies of vocational training for young people not in work, researching the researchers influence and impact on the lives of former offenders, the significance of practice-based research from personal understanding to shared knowledge, creating inclusive learning environments through to dialogue outlining the use of autistic students' critical autobiographical narratives in informing academic practice, and many more. From this wide range of examples it was apparent that Living Theory had grown in its use and was being utilised outside of its original development..

The main contribution of this conference towards my own work was to see how demonstrations of Living Theory and action research really can inform almost any kind of research if the researcher has the passion to work in this way. At times, when I first began my research, I did experience some doubts with my chosen

methodology and methods as at the time, back in 2012 when I formulated my thesis proposal, most of the research using Living Theory seemed mostly in educational settings for educators to help improve their practice regarding teaching. Back then I recognised that this had a partial fit as I was also aiming to improve my own practice as a researcher, as a practitioner of mindfulness and as a teacher of mindfulness. I was concerned at the time though how well Living Theory would translate and allow me to also enact my main aim of a 'mindful UoW'. In sum the conference presentations, networking with like-minded people, the discussions, especially examples of how Living Theory methodology and methods had been utilised in very wide-ranging settings, was unique and informative.

5.1.v Mind and Matter Developing Mindfulness in the Workplace Conference

In December 2015 I attended the two-day Mind and Matter Mindfulness Conference, in London, on developing mindfulness in the workplace. This conference was extremely useful as it contained evidence-based case studies, practical workshops, roundtables, and networking opportunities. Below is a summary table of the main points taken from the conference followed by a more detailed discussion.

Table 7 - Mind and Matter Conference

Mind and Matter Developing Mindfulness in the Workplace Conference London		
Main Points	Suggested Ways Forward	My Reflections/Interpretation
Do not call the sessions mindfulness	Change the title but not the training.	I would need to reflect on this further as it does not sit well with my views on honesty and openness.
Use a cut down secular version of the MBSR	Be flexible on different programmes between different organisations.	I would also likely need a shortened version with a view to offering the full version of the MBSR in the future to those interested.
Strictly non secular	Must be reinforced.	I agree it is important to keep this non secular.
Communication strategies for obtaining buy-in from key stakeholders	Will need to work on how to approach key stakeholders.	I felt some form of positive form of evidence not only on the benefits of mindfulness but also from other high profile successful organisations that

		have successfully embedded mindfulness might help be persuasive.
Embed mindfulness within other health programmes	Flexible consideration of where to embed.	Embedding within other programmes could potentially be a more difficult approach as would necessitate leadership top-down rather than a more bottom-up approach which my research entailed. This was a possibility later on in the research cycles perhaps?

Presentations by various organisations that had well-established mindfulness programmes in their workplaces were notably: Accenture, GE, Royal Mail and Jaguar Land Rover. Accenture stated that they were training all new graduates in mindfulness but pointed out that these initiatives did not call the training mindfulness or meditation practices. It seemed that the view was to uniquely link mindfulness to titles relating to health and/or resilience. This was so as not to discourage the sceptical from attending it was said. This was indeed an interesting point which I have followed up in 5.4.

Further agreement transpired from the companies present was that they had used adapted forms of the MBSR. They were also strongly non-secular. Obtaining buy-in from influential stakeholders and from leaders alike was said to be necessary by all coupled with attention to the strategies of how that would be communicated. The value of mindfulness needed to be demonstrated to key stakeholders as all time-conscious organisations will want to see positive results affecting the bottom line. This might be demonstrated by reduced absenteeism, or increased productivity and/or less need for resources from company health benefits. It was also noted that overall, there seemed agreement that mindfulness was not a 'magic pill' as such but required effort and might in some cases, need to be linked with other health inputs to help build resilience in the individual which in turn could help grow organisational resilience.

5.1.vi Event Themes

Reflecting on the opportunities from participating in these events I considered the range of materials collected and there seemed to be some recurring themes, from

the first to the last conference. To help with how I could embed mindfulness at the UoW I then used TA to identify common themes from the ideas, topics and patterns from the various conference presentations. The following table gives the results of the main themes. The themes are then discussed in more detail.

Table 8 - Embedding Mindfulness at Work Themes

Main Themes	My Decisions Going Forward
Do not call the sessions mindfulness	I decided to call the sessions what they are: mindfulness.
Use a cut down secular version of the MBSR	Going forward I will start with a cut-down version but if/when the opportunity arises will expand to the full version.
Strictly non secular	This will definitely be the way forward.
Communication strategies for obtaining buy-in from key stakeholders	I will book appointments with key stakeholders and explain my research and the potential benefits.
Embed mindfulness within personal tutoring or health programmes	To begin under the remit of personal tutoring sessions seemed the most appropriate place to start (optional attendance of course). I can then look to expand.
Do not ask for permission	I will always ask for permission to teach mindfulness.

I reflected further on the emergent themes integrated from the various conferences and related events attended and then followed the themes up with decisions on how I would proceed to help embed mindfulness at the UoW. The following were my main decisions going forward, or 'action points' in a little more detail.

Embedding the mindfulness sessions within the personal tutoring system (subject to agreement) seemed the most feasible way forward. If this were not to be possible then I could explore other options. I would also make sure the communications that go out would make it very clear that the type of mindfulness being taught was secular. During these communications I would also give a clear and honest approach to what mindfulness is about and what participants could really expect. I would also make sure to warn anyone who may be suffering from extreme anxiety or depression that it would not be right for them to take up the practice of mindfulness at that time.

This is fully explored in 5.4 (mindfulness for staff and students, including noting the ethics of not leaving someone who wanted to join without any support).

I would proceed with no cost to students. Although I understood the rationale it just did not seem 'right' somehow to charge students and in any case, it would also add a complication that the university systems and processes were unlikely to be able to recognise. Mostly though my decision here was because I just felt strongly that mindfulness classes should be offered free of charge. I decided I would tailor make a cut down version of the MBSR and ask my volunteer tutors (of which I felt pretty confident I would have offers) to also follow my shortened version of the MBSR. This would give consistency across groups and to ensure we were all teaching the MBSR. I would consider carefully how to approach and how to communicate with key stake holders, not only for permission but also for potential funding. The best way forward I felt was to arrange meetings so I could explain my aims and the potential benefits.

In sum I felt that by attending the above events I had been able to answer my initial Living Theory questions enabling me to move onto the next action stage. One of my first Living Theory questions was what would my exact vision of mindfulness practice in HE look like and how could I embed mindfulness at the UoW? I took on board the advice and recommendations from the events attended above and tailor-made an initial plan for a best-fit for my own circumstance, beliefs and University. This was then going to be subject to action learning cycles in order to improve delivery for further rounds. I also considered what other offerings already in place might mindfulness feed into? I was aware that there were some other offerings from time to time of mindfulness and later on of yoga (during the pandemic) and hoped that my events could enhance and bring practitioners together. I also thought it possible that compassion might increase by both students and staff as the connected ripples of mindfulness advanced. Another Living Theory question I asked at the initial stages was how can I improve my own practice? I felt that not only did I have the potential to improve my own practice of mindfulness, as I would be continuing with my own personal practice, but also with my practice as an educator of mindfulness, as I would have ample opportunity to teach. Finally, at this stage I asked what challenges could likely surface? My potential answers here ranged from possibly not having the

support from management, perhaps students/staff might not be interested and/or students/staff feeling they were too busy to partake.

5.2 Story Two (Objective 2) – The discovery of ‘pockets’ of Mindfulness Practice currently being carried out at the UoW

As well as discerning externally what was happening, it was also crucial to observe internally at the UoW to discover what might be occurring. This was because my research approach clearly needed to be professional and ‘joined-up’, working with rather than working against what might already be in place. In addition, if there were specifically other mindfulness initiatives, or something similar, currently available then it would be appropriate to make contact with such colleagues with a view to being aware of what they were offering and even perhaps some collaboration in some form.

To carry out what I began to think of in terms of an ‘audit’ within my own University I began by ‘brainstorming’ in October 2013. Firstly, I captured what I already knew was happening, then I searched the University website at various points to see what was occurring. I first looked at the work of colleagues I had previously connected and worked with in the past, who I thought might be involved with similar offerings. A summary table of the main findings of contributions can be seen below followed by a discussion of a selection of the most influential events.

Table 9 - Summary 'Audit' of Mindfulness/Related Offerings at the UoW

Date	Type of Event	Delivered by
Apr 2013	Mindfulness for students around pressure and deadlines.	Interfaith advisor. Repeated sessions.
Jan 2014	Mindfulness classes in the Thai Buddhist tradition.	Externally delivered by The Samatha Trust. (A member of staff of the UoW who belonged to the Samatha Trust through his connections was able to advertise this). Repeated sessions.
June 2014	TEDx Talk	Interfaith Advisor.
March 2015	Inaugural mindfulness network launch (external event but delivered at the UoW)	“Grow Mindfulness” network.

May 2015	Change Academy 5 retreat.	HR Health Safety and Wellbeing team, of which I was an invited member. Aim of our team: to bring the communication of wellbeing offerings at UoW under one web page.
Feb 2016	Meditation sessions for staff.	Interfaith Advisor.
Feb 2016	Shortened version of the MBSR for staff.	Tessa Watt, mindfulness teacher, externally recruited by HR to run this training. Some repeated sessions became available.
Feb 2016	Mindfulness for staff CPD workshop.	Run by myself (my objective 4a) and a member of the Education Team.
April 2016	Mindfulness for students during exam period.	Interfaith Advisor.
Apr 2017	Meditation sessions for staff and students.	Assistant Interfaith Advisor. Repeated sessions.

My initial observations were that as these results span more than several years at first sight it may not appear that much activity was occurring. However, considering 'we' (the colleagues mentioned above) were largely working alone this seemed promising in terms of discovering connections for possible future collaborations.

I decided to sample the Mindfulness Meditation Classes – by The Samatha Trust initially running from January to March 2016 advertised as 'free weekly mindfulness classes in the Thai Buddhist tradition'. I went along to the second week of the class (I was unable to attend the first one, but they were run as a drop-in anyway so that did not seem to matter much). I had not met before the person who ran these classes but was hopeful that this might lead to potentially building my collaborative network further. However, it then became apparent that the classes were run externally with just a contact person at the UoW (Cavendish Campus) so internal collaboration was not feasible. The classes were run very strictly under the Buddhist tradition of Samatha which I found out is very different to the MBSR. The teacher explained to me that there were two rooms they were using: one for complete beginners and one

for people who had an established practice. Naturally I assumed I would go into the established practice room, but they told me I was a beginner as they did not recognise my type of mindfulness nor anything I had previously studied. This seemed a little strange to me. I was then asked where my cushion was? I was told to bring a cushion if I wanted to attend the following week as they wanted me to sit on the floor. Whilst I do not physically have a problem in sitting on the floor this does go against the very nature of mindfulness being offered to all. What if I had had a disability? The non-secular Jon Kabat-Zinn's type of mindfulness of the MBSR or Mark Williams' MBCT classes are fully inclusive appealing to a wide-ranging audience and thereby able to reap mindfulness benefits without the necessity of having to sit according to Eastern traditions. I do not feel it is appropriate for people to be required to sit on the floor with a cushion that they need to bring with them on their commute at some point, even if they then could potentially leave them in the office. Meditation cushions are usually quite large, heavy, and bulky to transport.

I reflected a great deal about these classes, and my main concern at that point was that they could put people off from the kind of mindfulness I had intended. If staff/students were to perhaps hear about them from colleagues, or even having attended one themselves they might think mindfulness is not for them if they are obliged to have to sit cross-legged on the floor. For focus I needed to return to my initial living theory questions:

How can I improve my practice?

How can I embed mindfulness into the UoW?

5.2 Reflexive Comment

By going back to these Living Theory questions, and through reflexive thoughts, I was able to come to the following 'answers' and hence the way forward. In sum, my first concern here was whilst acknowledging that there are differing types of mindfulness meditation at the UoW being practiced that clearly do not fit together, my unease was with how could this work for potential attendees? I reflected on the possibility of only having one Westernised type of meditation available and I decided it probably was not likely ever to happen. I reflected more deeply, and especially as I cannot control this, I have to let it be and accept this. This has, at least shown me

that I need to emphasise at every point along the journey the Westernised theme of the MBSR where offerings to students and/or staff are concerned. I also felt that I had to acknowledge the style of the other Eastern classes that might be available whilst being careful also not to criticise. I hope I have not been harshly critical here as my intention was to be anecdotal and reflexive. I drew on my mindfulness practices of accepting and of compassion; I cannot state that I am right, and another style is wrong.

Another deep concern here was around using the same name, mindfulness meditation, although this is not unusual to do this, and the name of mindfulness seems to be the contemporary way to describe meditation for many differing traditions. I felt these classes in the Buddhist Thai tradition could potentially cause the mindfulness meditation MBSR that I proposed to offer, to be misunderstood, and to be viewed as being the same. I was concerned that colleagues might view the MBSR as being 'too Eastern' or 'too weird' and not suitable for a Western audience. Of course, there are many different types of meditation that exist, and this can be very confusing for the novice, as potential attendees might come across a type that does not suit them and they then could quite easily be mistake into thinking all mindfulness is the same and therefore think it is not for them and consequentially lose all the potential benefits that could have been afforded to them. I have directly witnessed this happen many times with yoga classes; when new participants do not realise that all yoga classes vary considerably not only on the type of yoga but also very much so from the personal style of the teacher. I was already aware of this potentially happening in general offerings in the wider world, with the seemingly expanding use of the term mindfulness being used by many meditation schools. I found this interesting, if not a little disconcerting to discover this also occurring within the UoW.

It became apparent the difficulties of developing mindfulness in a university that has actors with different beliefs and intentions, but at least this allowed me to look very carefully at my objectives as I re-visited each of them acknowledging that I could not (nor should I) try to control what others want to offer. I would continue as I had before with my belief from research as to the benefits of the MBSR and that what I was intending would be helpful to many people. So to answer my initial Living Theory

question of how I could embed mindfulness into the UoW I would do this partly by acknowledging freedom of choice and accepting different types of meditation whilst emphasising of course that people are free to follow any of the different styles that exist, including who they choose to follow.

A set of related entries from the 'audit' above worth noting in a little more detail is the events offered by The Interfaith Advisor. As can be seen from the table, there have been various classes and talks on mindfulness. Again, as in the previous example, I also attended some of these offerings. I discovered this was much more in line with the MBSR, even if not 100% the same, but at least it did not feel in conflict. We had some productive meetings where we discussed collaborating together, and since those early days have worked together on various other related projects.

Finally, of prominence to mention here was an important offering by HR under staff development, training in mindfulness. This was a much-shortened version of the MBSR and run by an external person to the University. This was significant though, not only for the opportunity for staff but also that HR was beginning to see the meaning of such training. I attended the four offered sessions and this gave me the opportunity to meet some new colleagues interested in mindfulness which in turn helped to grow my mindfulness network. Of course, the four sessions offered were more of a taster session and anyone wanting to take up a serious practice would need to book themselves on additional courses, but it was a significant start.

In sum, all these offerings I felt were paving the way for a wider introduction to the concept of mindfulness and to a 'Mindful UoW'.

5.3 Story Three (Objective 3) - The influence of specific key stakeholders, groups and individuals in the university required to support successful initiatives

5.3.i Personal Meetings with Deans, Pro Vice Chancellor and Vice Chancellor

As already noted I was not seeking a top-down approach to my insider-researcher insider-practitioner work although I acknowledged that certain key people in the University were required to give my work its needed authorisation and to enhance its validation. The following is my account of key figures I met with. Insider-practitioner

research is difficult in terms of anonymity and here I have chosen to include the roles but not the names of the people I met with. Meetings had the following aims: firstly, the necessary authorisation to proceed; the possibility of recommendations by way of introductions to meet other key stake holders; and to receive support in terms of recognition of work to be carried out beyond the academic contract (possibly through hours on the WAM contract).

I met with the Dean of WBS during the beginning of my research many times and I acknowledge that I was fortunate that we had many opportunities to converse. The Dean informed me that my work developing mindfulness would be supported and offered to fund a half away-day to collect empirical materials on what staff preferences might be regarding mindfulness opportunities. In March 2014 I also spent one week travelling with the Dean and another colleague fulfilling a planned trip to China to meet with prospective Chinese partners for the BA Business International (of which I was then the Course Leader). This was Third Space working (Whitchurch, 2008a) and thus helped me to build on my professional skills. There was a wide range of scheduled activities that took place in Beijing and surrounding areas. Business meetings with potential new partnerships, over Chinese meals, were a central theme of the week interspersed with student interviewing for places on the course and other social activities. There were many opportunities to speak during this week and discuss my work

In 2016 despite the harmonious relationship, I had nurtured with the Dean unfortunately unexpected retirement was announced. I continued my approach with the newly appointed Acting Dean where we had ongoing meetings and correspondence over an allocation of hours for the mindfulness sessions that my team and I were delivering. I felt it was important for the Acting Dean to acknowledge the importance of what we were doing, but with hindsight I realise that this was not the 'right' person to be trying to persuade and receive support from. Although the Acting Dean was strongly for the student experience it was only about areas that were understood to this person. I do not wish to sound overly harsh, and I recognise we have varying priorities, and we all see the world through our own world views. However, I felt somewhat let down because I was asked to put in writing the costings for delivering the mindfulness sessions, which I did, but I did not receive a reply,

even though I politely, sent gentle reminders, on more than one occasion. Part of the importance for funding, not only for the recognition of the importance of this work, was also because my team at the time were made up of part-time visiting lecturers (PTVLs) and so it was even more important that every hour they worked was recognised and rewarded.

The Acting Dean was also due to retire and continued to tightly control and to be influential with budgets until the end. I decided to not pursue any further the request for funding for the mindfulness sessions my team and I were delivering as it seemed to be time not well spent. It felt necessary to accept this for the time being, besides it would not be long before the role would be filled again. When the new subsequent Dean took over at WBS I had a one-to-one meeting to talk about my work, mindfulness and my Professional Doctorate research aims and objectives. It was a successful meeting with support being offered to develop the aims of my research. The next month I attended the Graduate School Research evening and was able to speak with the Deputy Vice Chancellor (well known to have a personal mindfulness practice) for an hour where we discussed aspects of mindfulness. Although no direct support was sought by me on this occasion it was very uplifting to converse with a senior figure about the growing importance of mindfulness in the workplace, to discuss different types of mindfulness and how the world was experiencing a positive shift in people's consciousness.

Following on from the success of the two meetings above, some years later, in early 2020, I was fortunate enough to be granted a meeting with the new Vice Chancellor. We had spoken a few weeks earlier at a networking event where he had expressed an interest in my work. We arranged a one-to-one meeting where I was given time to explain in detail the aims of my research. This was a very positive meeting, and he asked what he could do to support my work. After discussion we agreed on a mindfulness room at the Marylebone Campus with my choice of décor for the walls and cushions if I wanted them. This felt like a very positive offer and signalled support. This was especially so when I am very aware of the limited rooms and space we have at Marylebone. A week or so after our meeting, the COVID-19 pandemic became apparent just how serious it was going to become and consequently all staff were required to work from home. Therefore, all attendance at

University was put on hold and likewise any changes to rooms and buildings. As we return to some semblance of life before the pandemic the mindfulness room is back on the agenda and will likely be a much-needed space for staff to sit and reflect and to take some 'time out' especially with what we have all gone through.

5.3.i Reflexive Comment

It was certainly very positive to have been given such firm support for my values and my work from key senior figures. However, there was a time around the middle of my research when University changes that took place during a time of turbulence meant that many of the original key figures that supported my work left the university. Many had been my biggest allies, but some left, some were made redundant and some retired. Despite my best efforts and my hard work networking and being known, it felt half-way through this research that I almost needed to start again with new key senior management figures. I wondered if perhaps it is always like this, and it cannot ever really be a once only task in becoming known. I possibly over dramatised my reactions, about my feelings of needing to start again, but that was how it felt to me at the time. The key groundwork had already been prepared and by gradually continuing to build on what I already had, albeit with new contacts, I was able to re-establish supportive connections again. Even an interest in the history of my work has been expressed by current senior management contacts. The agreement for the mindfulness room was a momentous step forward and I felt excited and motivated by this and will continue to build on my successes.

5.3.ii Presentations to Senior Management

As first mentioned in 1.1. the University wide Learning Futures strategy ran from 2012/13 – 2016 (The UoW, 2014) with a vision for a student staff partnership with the remit to enhance the student experience. In line with this, early in 2015 new University wide elective modules were announced as part of the Learning Futures strategy. Invitations to apply were communicated on the University webpages, and my team from the previous Change Academy project on developing a resilience module and I applied. This would mean we could develop our work further under this new remit. It had the added consequence though that we would have to wait to run the module an extra year, but as this opportunity offered us a ready-made system with which to fit our module into, this was a sacrifice we felt worth taking. I was asked

to be the team leader again.

As part of the sifting of the application process an invitation in March 2015 was received to present the preliminary work, to senior management. As noted, part of our module had already been developed from the CA4 project so we were not starting from scratch here which certainly helped with fitting this in with a full teaching WAM timetable. I led the presentation with a co-presenter from my team on the brand-new module we had devised up to that point which we had called 'Resilience for Professional Life'. Decisions would be made after the presentations as to which ideas would be chosen to go forward and to attend the three-day residential in July that year for an intense work period to finalise the modules. Please see 5.4.2.i (objective 4) for more detailed information on the residential electives event as this relates to mindfulness for students. The outcome was that we were fortunately once again chosen to take part in the residential to develop our (now) elective resilience module further.

5.3.ii Reflexive Comment

Being interdisciplinary and by presenting this work to senior management and other staff helped to make the work on resilience, which, for us, strongly featured mindfulness, more widely known throughout the whole university. This provided the much-needed ripples to keep moving outwards towards becoming waves helping to create a 'Mindful UoW' (please see figure 2). This presentation involved not only demonstrating the development of the foundation of the ideas underpinning the module and the practical materials to others but also becoming more widely known whilst promoting work in this area. There was a dilemma though for me. One of the themes from the conferences I had attended was not to call mindfulness by its name and to call it something else. As already noted initially I had not agreed with this sentiment. Although I could see the reasons for calling the elective module 'resilience' or something similar, I would have still preferred to have called it something along the lines of 'mindfulness for professional life'. Agreeing to pressure from the team and weighing up the pros and cons, the name 'resilience for professional life' remained the title of the module. I will continue this part of the story and add further to these comments in 5.4.2.i as the added commentary fits more appropriately under the heading of mindfulness for students.

Returning back now to the CA4 team, and as team leader I subsequently led a second presentation in May 2015 to another audience of senior management on the dissemination of our work. This took place at the 'Leadership and Management' Forum with the university HR Director and other senior management present. The theme of this presentation was on the journey of the CA4 team. The focus of this presentation was on 'what we got out of being part of the team we were in'. Senior management wanted to understand this, no doubt because amongst other reasons, such as being able to offer support (or not) but residential events are also expensive events to run. For me this presentation gave the opportunity to continue building on those connections previously made and to make new ones especially as other senior management also attended this event. This event was promoted as an opportunity to gain feedback, opinions and seek out where to find different kinds of support such as who were the right staff to help and which systems to engage with. The UoW is vast and most of us do not personally know all the different teams that make up the University.

There was informal networking after the presentation over coffee which helped with promoting the ripples of mindfulness. I made a point of re-connecting with the HR Director again following up on our discussions that we had initiated at the residential away days where we discussed my ideas of a 'Mindful UoW'. By re-connecting with the HR Director, my aim was to keep my work with the focus on mindfulness so it was not forgotten and could be seen as a viable way to help assist with potential employee stress and potentially help with negative feelings towards work life balance. I feel that if I had not made those connections with senior management by promoting my work, when I did, then I would not have had the support, especially from HR, in terms of funding for conferences and what I was doing could have faded away without recognition nor support. As already noted this part of objective 3, key stakeholders, also overlaps with part of objective 4, mindfulness for students, consequently, as above, I also follow up from a different perspective on this part as well under 5.4.2.i .

5.3.iii Meetings with HR and 'Expert Advice'

The following year a new CA5 in 2015 was announced, and I was fortunate to, once again, be selected to be part of this annual University event. In this new team I would be working again with a diverse team from across the University, but mainly from HR with the team leader from HR Safety Health and Wellbeing. The overall remit was how to improve the HR wellbeing strategy for the UoW by bringing all aspects of this together in one online portal. As a subsidiary task we also wanted to consider if there was anything else we might be able to offer to staff in terms of wellbeing. I very much appreciated this excellent opportunity to work directly with members of the UoW professional HR team which gave me the opportunity to become known further for my own work in this area. As one of our first tasks we looked at other universities' websites. I felt this was not unlike my previous attendance at conferences for external offerings of mindfulness at work and then my internal 'audit' I had carried out at the UoW to discover pockets of mindfulness. Clearly some examples we saw were more advanced than others, but we selected the better ones with an aim to construct something similar. We aimed to bring all aspects of wellbeing together in one portal rather than have them on numerous diverse webpages, as they were at the time. Staff could then easily find what was available without having to search, with often spurious results. I realised that my mindfulness various offerings would be able to be posted here too.

After the return to London from the CA5 and from my work with the subsequent new HR connections I made, I was contacted by HR to ask for my 'expert' advice in June 2015. This was whether the UoW should go for a particular recognition of a body that claimed to promote mindfulness. Although the remit of the organisation was towards a worthy cause after further scrutiny, I discovered it was actually promoting mental health rather than mindfulness per se, but it was communicated and promoted as a mindfulness badge. Although I agreed it would be advantageous to have recognition of the university being 'mindful' I did not feel the name and the description of this award was made clear. If the name had been about mental health, and if that was what HR were seeking, then I would have advised applying for the accreditation. However, as it was about mindfulness that HR was seeking then I advised against applying. My advice was taken.

Again, in January 2016 I was asked to make recommendations for HR on how other organisations have gone about bringing in wellbeing programmes, mindfulness and resilience. I met individually with a member of the professional HR team from Health, Safety and Wellbeing. I was able to make recommendations from the themes I had worked through from my attendance at external events whilst I collected empirical materials for my own insider-practitioner insider-researcher work on this topic. Please see Table 8 Themes for Embedding Mindfulness at Work. By working through my research objectives and by networking, my name has become known for mindfulness and wellbeing to an ever-growing community.

5.4 Story Four (Objective 4) - Building educational opportunities and resources on mindfulness for staff and for students

5.4.0 Introduction to offerings of Mindfulness and Related Activities

This section now moves on to give the developments that I was involved in for mindfulness for staff and for students. This includes: a discussion of what occurred during the pre-phases of my research, initial, middle and later phases of the duration of this part of my work and then follows with my reflexive comments. It is necessary here not to continue the timeline from the preceding section (the influence of key stakeholders), but to revert back in time and return to the first CA attended (under this heading of mindfulness for staff and students).

The start of the metaphorical ‘acting tour’ officially began in September 2012. Prior to that, I spent time observing and noting the overall climate at the University which became a productive period to prepare some early groundwork. During this initial pre-phase I reflected on how I might be able to help improve with the unfolding situation of what I was observing: that some staff were looking ‘stressed’ and personal conversations that took place confirmed that. Waddington (2018) contends that when we pay close attention to gossip, organisational communication and knowledge can help us to find alternative ways to see our organisation. She goes on to say that gossip at work can be powerful and is not merely trivial. Having conversations, or gossip, allowed me to become more aware of what was occurring. I feel if I had not had conversations with colleagues about how they were reacting to

workplace challenges I may have continued working on my own, siloed and disconnected, without realising the full extent of what was happening.

As noted in preceding chapters I witnessed continued emerging difficulties within the further development of the 'do more with less' culture evolving around us and its subsequent inherent consequences. Through networking and conversing or gossiping I met a number of like-minded colleagues from across the University. We shared values of wanting to help. These aided personal feelings of connectedness rather than to feel a totally lone practitioner at all times. I already knew, of course, that I needed to take some action to help as I have explained. Although I felt somewhat empowered from the start, likely because of my length of time working at the university especially with the strength of the contacts I had naturally built up, I also recognised a certain amount of collaboration would be necessary to help shape the way forward. After all a work of this scope would be very difficult to influence alone, in every aspect, so some of the objectives naturally led to some collaboration with others.

So, my starting point was wanting to help and is articulated through my Living Theory question of:

How can I improve the practice of others?

Whilst I was reflecting on this initial question, and through my contacts, I was given the opportunity to apply to attend my first CA. I was then subsequently introduced to others who had similar ideas about wanting to help. We formed a team and applied to take part in the 2nd cohort of the CA with the initial remit to investigate ways to take forward the idea of teaching mindfulness at the UoW. Our ideas were quite vague back then but we each knew that some form of teaching mindfulness would have something to offer. After a few initial meetings in late 2011, with staff from across Faculties of the Westminster Business School (WBS) and what was then known as the Faculty of Science and Technology, and included psychology, (FST) we put in a bid to have our team develop our ideas at the CA2 for spring 2012. We were successfully chosen to take part in the three-day residential.

There were two joint team leaders initially, both members of staff from FST. Later on, one of them was made redundant, so the other one took over as team leader. Through the development of our ideas over the three days of the CA2 we honed down our thoughts and formulated our plan: to combine offerings of mindfulness teaching for students (at all levels of study) and we wanted staff to be able to attend as well. Students would receive 15 credits (as a standard module weighting at that time) we would assess and expect more from students if they were, for example, a year three student as compared to a year two student. Staff would be able to add this as staff training, continued professional development and could be included in their annual development review. This, we felt, was a compassionate way forward with a genuine sharing and working together without regard for seniority or position and more by way of an acknowledgement of human beings being connected, by way of wanting to improve quality of life.

Throughout the second part of the CA2 through feedback and Senior Management discussion it did not appear that our ideas were being widely accepted. Through further discussion and arguing our case, what we had proposed was not rejected outright but was negotiated down and reduced to a single module for students, at only one level of study. We were told that our ideas were not feasible to assess students of all levels together and logistically this could not fit with any of the technological systems in place. Our plan to teach the mindfulness module also to staff was rejected. It seems that this was not thought to be appropriate and staff training should remain separate.

5.4.0 Reflexive Comment

At this point I could not help but notice that some members of our team were very deflated and very quiet, particularly noticeable after the lively discussions we had been having. For me, although it was disappointing, it just made me more determined and resistant to carry on with my own previously held plans (which I had before joining this team) so that I could still find a way to help. I knew though I would need to discover another method and way in to achieve this. I took valuable lessons from this experience and, as I found it helpful to think of it as a kind of pilot study, allowing me not to see this as a failure but a necessary steppingstone to future

success. In some ways perhaps, our ideas were too ahead of their time during that period so the ideas not being accepted outright was probably inevitable added to the top-down approach also needed for the change academy projects to be approved to be successful; even if the CA ideas are a bottom-up process to begin with.

It transpired then that most of the senior management team that were not in favour of our proposal at that time subsequently left the university. I reflected on whether this would be helpful or whether it would make little difference. I wondered specifically as to whether the resistance we met was the particular people with their set ideas, or if it was the ingrained values of the University emerging and being adhered to, and/or if our project aims were not sufficiently well formulated. This led the way for continued reflection on how I could work with the systems in place and grow my individual work. From this originally negative experience, I strategically devised my research design. I planned to develop a more ambitious aim ie not just teaching one mindfulness module with a 15-credit rating, but to embed the flavour of mindfulness with ripples spreading out, so as to work towards the UoW becoming a 'Mindful University'. Having taken learning from this initial experience of feedback it subsequently aided me to be able to write and adapt to the culture as I perceived it and to achieve clearer objectives on how to achieve my aims. This also answered my Living Theory question from the outset of this section on how I could help to improve the practice of others by utilising prior feedback and thereby being cautious when necessary in choosing terms and how this would be advertised. Building on this pre-phase, this part of the story now breaks into two sub-parts: firstly, the adventures along the way with the implementation for staff and then likewise for students. Both journeys were exciting, both did not turn out in a linear pattern, and had bumps in the road. However, both were a source of overall satisfaction as to fulfilment on this important part of my overall aims and objectives. I was also able to continually improve my own practice and observe in a mindful way the unfolding of events.

As to the outcome of the CA2 team, through further work when we returned to London over the next year or so, the emphasis shifted and moved away from a teaching module and towards the now well-known, both internally and externally, UoW Centre for Resilience with its own page (Centre for Resilience, no date). The

Centre has been very successful and for example they have carried out consultancy work for the NHS and others. I would like to note here that those of us who were not from FST did not continue with the ensuing workload to turn the initial ideas into the Centre so cannot claim credit for this.

5.4.1 Mindfulness for Staff

How could I embed mindfulness at the UoW?

To aid answering my above Living Theory question detailed below is my sketched reflective planning figure using action research cycles (Lewin, 1946). I preferred to draw this sketch by hand as I found I felt more absorbed with the process rather than drawing via a computer-based diagram. Living theory also encourages sketches and drawings, so I felt this had a closer fit with my chosen methodology and methods as well. The figure depicts the cyclical process of my upward spirals representing my planning of change, acting on the change, then observing what happens after tweaks and changes, reflection and planning for a further cycle of change. I chose this style of depiction for my reflections as I felt the upward spirals, unlike the direction of some other AR models, fitted well with the life-affirming energy of Living Theory.

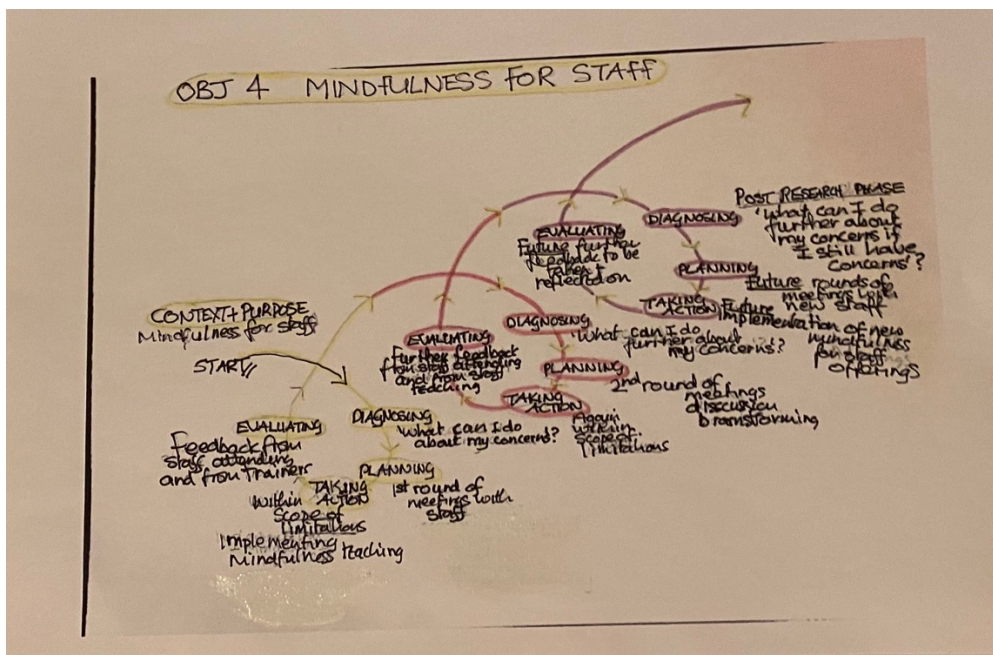


Figure 3 – Action Research Cycles of Mindfulness for Staff

5.4.1.i UoW Annual Wellbeing Day

I assisted running the mindfulness for staff information desk at the UoW Wellbeing Day 2014. The annual wellbeing day is an HR initiative that runs for one day each year and is based at one of the UoW campus reception areas. Staff are offered (from various stalls that are set out) free taster aspects of health, for example: blood pressure monitoring, BMI monitoring, hearing tests, information on gym membership etc. In 2014 this also included a one-off taster session of mindfulness practice run by Tessa Watt from Being Mindful (Being Mindful, 2021). Although I was not running the taster session, I still felt that I had helped to make a valuable contribution by spreading the idea of using mindfulness to aid with staff wellbeing. In any case it was not necessary for me as the insider-practitioner of this research to deliver all the mindful offerings myself. By helping to assist in running the information desk I found it quite valuable especially at the start of this research. Not only could I explain what mindfulness is to staff who showed an interest and then direct them to the session, but I was able to also gauge the interest out there, reflect on the possible potential of mindfulness offerings and then further reflect on the discussions that had taken place. This was more information that could help guide my future plans. One point I noted at the time was how important communication was because many staff who attended had not been aware the event was taking place and just happened to be there that day by chance. This is a difficult area though because the event was advertised on the University main homepage, and also by staff email. I was left with the question, how else is it possible to communicate with staff?

5.4.1.ii Staff Mindfulness Workshops

I ran a Mindfulness and Contemplative Pedagogy workshop with another member of staff from the Education Department. This department no longer exists and was eventually replaced with the Centre for Teaching and Innovation (CETI). Our delivery of this workshop was located within the professional HRM staff development training programme available to all UoW staff, and counted towards staff CPD.

My colleague and I began planning in 2015 and held various meetings where we mapped out our aims, objectives and how we could go about achieving these. We initially spent a long time on reflexive discussions for example as to whether mindfulness came from contemplative pedagogy or does contemplative pedagogy come from the state of being mindful. Our views differed on this, but it was important we felt, to ascertain where we stood on this, because we were both bigger picture thinkers and this would help clarify our communication to the participants how we felt we needed to see where everything fits before going into finer detail. However, we were not 100% able to satisfy ourselves that we had indeed solved the answer to that question. We instead made a decision to throw the question open to our participants to discuss further. This was appropriate since neither of us wanted to promote ourselves as 'experts' as this would not be in keeping with this field of study and thinking and in any case felt alien to us to do so. Instead, we sought collaborative discussion with like-minded people. Of course, this did not hinder us from compiling an afternoon of activities that we felt would generate own self-reflection in our attendees but also group activities, whereby staff could potentially learn new techniques, to be used both in their teaching and also on their own self-development.

During our planning meetings I found that we both worked in quite different ways, and overall, this was helpful as I felt it contributed towards our creativity. Although creativity is the plus side of this, on the negative side it usually takes longer to complete projects when diverse members of teams work together (Brett, Behfar and Kern, 2006). We were not a team, as such, but I felt the same principles applied. I was aware of time on task and availability of limited resources of time, since there was, as usual, no allowance for this and this was extra work in a 'volunteer' mode.

We chose to keep this workshop small for our first offering in 2016 and we had eight participants attend, which was an appropriate number for new initiatives we felt. Also, worth noting that academics are not given extra time to attend training events. It is likely often, if not always the case that staff, although interested, are too busy to attend. Nonetheless, this was an acceptable starting point and was in some ways partly a pilot to improve for next time in 2017. The running of the workshop was very interesting. All but one of the participants seemed to be very involved and take it

seriously. One member of the group however, continued throughout to ask what really seemed rather naïve questions, and just didn't appear to understand what it was all about with a comment that she didn't like this kind of thing. I (and I do think others in the room) wondered why she had signed up for it. She left early. There are often 'outliers' in research and this seemed to typify such an example.

Other than that, the day went according to plan as we followed our scheduled programme. The following are some examples of what we covered in our 2016 version: mindfulness practices, contemplative pedagogy tools (listening), mindfulness creative exercise, contemplative pedagogy tools (free writing), mindful walking (walking the labyrinth) discussion on how we can add value to our own practice. Our overall feedback received later via HR was positive, and we were invited to repeat the workshop the following year. The main request participants asked for in our feedback was that they would have liked to have had more exercises that they could use with their own students on contemplative pedagogies. We aimed to include more of this in future versions.

5.4.1.iii Labyrinth Walking

Mindful walking is well known as one of the practices of mindfulness. A seemingly simple practice, whereby one just notices the movement of the body, the foot as it lands on the ground, then the other foot as it lands on the ground and so on. Usually slowly, and certainly without rushing, the intentions can be to either notice different surroundings, to focus the attention more internally or to contemplate on certain thoughts either offered by others to contemplate on or decided by the self. Although walking is such a simple act, it can be used to lift mood and really can be quite a 'transformative power' (Williams and Penman, 2011, p109).

Labyrinth walking 'as a form of walking meditation', (Thomsit-Ireland, 2016, p52) is another form of mindful walking that can often be a moving experience. During my mindfulness teacher training retreat with the University of Bangor I was fortunate that there was a very large open-air labyrinth, and the participants were able to practice mindful walking there. It was also close to a lake, so the setting was a very natural one with wildlife all around with many sounds of nature to attune to. Worldwide there

are (as of 2021) 6,130 labyrinths across 85 countries according to the World-Wide Labyrinth Locator (Labyrinth and Veriditas Society, 2021). To enhance my own personal practice, I always seek out labyrinths when I am away from home, and the above tool can be quite useful. My experience of mindfully walking the labyrinth run by the Bangor teaching training retreat was immersed in nature, so naturally quite idyllic, and added an extra layer of experience. However, not all labyrinth walking needs to be outside and indoor labyrinths can be utilised in many settings indoors.

As part of my objective for creating mindfulness experiences for staff I came together with a new team to promote labyrinth walking. To achieve this, we first looked at the options of purchasing a portable labyrinth, but high costs were prohibitive. We decided to make one ourselves. Through the necessity of needing to book large rooms (at the UoW) to construct the labyrinth we chose the Harrow campus for this purpose, being outside London there is more space available there. In the fashion design department, there was also the design room ironing facilities that we needed and that were made available to us. We met often over the course of a couple of weeks. First, we pre-prepared our cloth as the lengths of the fabric needed to be sewn together; we planned it out; traced it out; chalked it out; pva glued onto the chalks; then ironed it out. Our small team of four paid for varying aspects of the construction, such as: fabric, paints, glue, socks etc. It felt quite an achievement. We also then had to find somewhere to store it. Historically it has moved between a few different offices, currently residing in mine. Below are our milestone photographs (with permission from the team to include here) of our progress whilst constructing the labyrinth.

Photograph 6 - Measuring out the Labyrinth



Photograph 7 - Pressing out the Labyrinth



Photograph 8 - Marking out the Labyrinth



These photos really demonstrate for me what we achieved. Starting with nothing other than some fabric, some chalk and glue it is quite fascinating to see the different steps along the way. I can also see our sense of motivation and enjoyment. Then with our portable labyrinth ready we applied for the UoW Learning and Teaching Symposium in 2015 to offer participants the opportunity to engage with mindful walking. The Learning and Teaching Symposiums are an annual event and began in 2002. They are intended to give staff and partner universities the chance to 'share innovations; contribute to debates, and build networks and collaborations' (CETI, 2018).

We were given time in the programme even though we discovered there was a difficulty in being allocated a room large enough to fit the labyrinth. Precise measurements of both the room and the labyrinth were required and although it was tight, we just managed to squeeze in. In this first run we had the labyrinth available all day with at least one of us present to guide the daylong session which took a lot of cover from us, consequently missing most of the Learning and Teaching Symposium day ourselves.

During the next cycle in 2016 we were again selected to be part of the programme, but we booked this time for specific sessions, around break times including an extended afternoon session. This seemed to work better in terms of being able to attend the symposium ourselves, which was important for our own practice. It also meant that rather than a handful of staff drifting in all day managing numbers during the break times/afternoon session largely meant that full capacity numbers entered the room at the same time, enhancing the shared experience for all. We ran labyrinth walking one more time in 2017, albeit with a diminished team down to two due to recent redundancies and retirement. Although we held sessions in the same way as 2016, with only two of us, it was not possible for us to look after the labyrinth all day. Luckily nothing untoward happened to it though.

During all three offerings of labyrinth mindful walking at the Learning and Teaching Symposiums we also had available information in the room about labyrinths, we

displayed finger labyrinths, books to peruse and posters with suggested meditation learning and teaching themes to reflect on whilst walking, if wished, as prompts to internal thinking. We also left a guest book for comments and whilst not everyone wrote something we still collected some insightful experiences. The opportunity of the quiet moment being found in the midst of a busy conference style day seemed to recur in the comments. In 2015 we were approached by the authors of a new book being published on labyrinth walking to ask if we would allow our permission to have the below photograph included in the then forthcoming book: 'Learning with the labyrinth: creating reflective space in Higher Education' (Sellers and Moss, 2016). We agreed and I am the copyright holder of that photograph on page 105 of the above book. The photograph is displayed below. It was originally selected by one of the authors of the book because of the ethnic diversity in the photograph.

Photograph 9 - L & T Symposium Walking the Labyrinth



I am the copyright holder of this photograph

When I look at this photograph, I can recall the feeling of peacefulness of quiet walking, without shoes, on a very hot day in London, but the room felt cool and calm. The feeling of achievement also springs to mind when I see people walking the labyrinth at that moment and recall those that had done so previously and later that day.

We did not offer the labyrinth for the Learning and Teaching Symposium in 2018 nor 2019 because we wanted to expand its use into different settings and offerings. After several meetings the decision was made to offer the labyrinth out on loan to other members of the UoW staff if they wanted to use it for workshops or mindfulness type activities. Indeed, the Labyrinth was used in the Mindfulness and Contemplative Pedagogy workshop for staff on both occasions (please refer to section 5.4.1.i). It was also used as a teaching activity within an undergraduate level 6 coaching module. It has been out on loan a few times and always been returned in still reasonable condition. Of course, this is not a permanent version of a labyrinth, as it is difficult to clean; but we have so far managed to brush it down after each use, have always insisted that no bare feet are allowed and have provided free socks. The Learning and Teaching symposium was online in 2020 and was again in 2021. As noted above the labyrinth is still currently neatly packed away in my office along with some new spare socks waiting for the next opportunity to open up for a group mindful labyrinth walking session.

5.4.1.iv Mindfulness for Leaders

In addition to the above I also ran two mindfulness for leaders' workshops open to all staff at the UoW with a leadership position or aspiring leadership. My rationale was to offer these sessions specifically to a specified cohort so that they could also serve as a pilot for my proposed objective 5: to run mindfulness workshops for external businesses for WBS. Two sessions were offered which, although one built upon the other, they could also serve as two stand-alone sessions. These were run in June 2017 and were two weeks apart. Although it would have been helpful to have had some assistance in running these, this was not practical, so I ran them alone. They were advertised through Eventbrite, please see Appendix vi for the advertisement.

After introductions the summary content for workshop one included: exploring what mindfulness is and is not; mindfully eating a raisin; body scan; looking at the stress response; mindfulness of the breath and body; discussion on personal reactions to stress through the lens of leaders, what might be especially stressful in their roles; reading of the Guest House poem by the 13th Century Persian poet, Rumi (Mindfulness Association, 2022); mindfulness of thoughts; how best to take care of

yourself exercise; three-step breathing space; final readings and final questions and answers. I also gave out handouts of my recommended reading list and a link to my MP3 of my personally narrated mindfulness practices. The summary content for workshop two built upon the above with a similar but more advanced content and included more ways to be mindful at work.

Feedback indicated that practices that would be taken away and continued to be practiced from the workshops were: mindful walking; mindfulness of thoughts; body scan. Things that could be improved: red text colour on a few of the slides; include more mindfulness movement; more theoretical content, invite students as well as most of the content would have been suitable for them as well.

This was extremely interesting and valuable. I have now recognised that certain coloured fonts should not be used as we once did in the past, due to disabilities, especially for those that may be visibly impaired. I like colour coding but recognise this is no longer appropriate. I felt the point of including more mindful movement would enhance the workshop as many of the practices are sitting down as are the discussions. Regarding more theoretical content, I felt that this was because those attending were academics, and I fully understand their point. However, since mindfulness teaching (MBSR) is meant not to have a heavy focus on theory the level I had utilised was probably about right. I recalled the comment by Kabat-Zinn when he said that academics always want the theory side of mindfulness, and this was certainly my experience too. In any case, this workshop was designed for the workplace so needed to be appropriate for business who probably would not appreciate a heavy theoretical content. Theory was included for evidence of the effectiveness of mindfulness and so I did not plan to make my in-depth changes here.

5.4.1.v Blackboard Site for Mindfulness

Another achievement worth noting here is that I was able to be granted a Blackboard site. These are not normally given out easily unless it for a module, personal tutoring or a course. Therefore I count this as one of the successful achievements from this work. With the Blackboard site I have been able to draw together all my resources

including my own professionally recorded MP3s of mindfulness practices, I can enrol any students or staff who are interested onto the site and this also acts as a kind of mindfulness community.

5.4.2 Mindfulness for Students

This chapter now turns to the development of mindfulness for students that I organised, mainly alone, but also with a small team of volunteers for one of the initiatives and a larger team of volunteers for another. The outputs were: an elective module entitled, 'Resilience for Professional Life' (also mentioned in 5.3, the influence of key stakeholders – but a different perspective of the story); mindfulness taught sessions; teaching mindfulness as a guest speaker on various modules; and mindfulness summer school for prospective new students.

5.4.2.i Elective Module

From my experiences thus far, I have found that it is crucial to work within university processes and systems. Without the Change Academy opportunities, or other timely changes happening, or invitations to write new modules during revalidations, it is difficult to move initiatives forward. I learned that ideas that emanate from outside 'the system' are not viable as they cannot be recognised and placed into university structures.

As has been mentioned above in 5.3.ii a cohort of us applied to be part of the three-day residential at the 4th cohort of the CA in 2014. Further details of CAs can be found in 5.3.ii and in 3.7 above. The original team leader was a member of staff from FST, however, when this person later was made redundant after decades at the university, I was asked to take over. I agreed, and it was decided unanimously by the team that I would become the new team leader. Drawing on mindfulness our aim was to help the UoW to embed resilience for staff and students. It was especially called for at this delicate time with redundancies already beginning, to which we didn't miss the irony of what had happened to our original team. We wanted to accomplish this by mainly utilising mindfulness as our main tool but with severe lessons learnt from the previous related attempt (please see 5.4) we decided early on to 'play the game' and not to have mindfulness in our title. This was also advised

by the information I gathered on how other institutions/organisations had brought in mindfulness (section 5.1) above. When I considered 'presencing' from Theory U Scharmer (2013, 2016) combined with mindful awareness this helped a deeper sense of non-judging on my part. This was in regard to changing the title from mindfulness to resilience and this helped with that decision for me. I was able to accept it.

During the three days we worked on many varied creativity exercises, held world café events and networked in the evenings across meals with other teams as was usual during CAs. Our work, building on our previous attempts, culminated in the still novel idea of a shared offering for both staff and students. It would be a credit bearing module for students and to count as CPD for staff. We intended this original concept as being for 'all students, all levels, all staff and all comers'. Much of the Change Academy was filmed and the following was entitled 'Rich Pictures' Video 1: Clip1. Creatively showing to other teams/viewers our ideas acted out; Clip 2.b One of our team members giving her passionate reasons and values for being involved; Clip 2.c Our elevator pitch to the 'Vice Chancellor'. Previously this video was freely available but unfortunately, as of 2021, this is now a rights protected video so the next best alternative is to offer a screenshot of one of the memorable scenes whilst making the video. When I look at this screenshot I can still recall the enjoyment we had in making this, mainly because we were able to act out our values in the workplace. I also recall the degree of creativity we used with fondness and especially tapping into my value of freedom.



Video 1 – Screenshot of Rich Pictures: Compilation of Clips

Overall, our ideas and plans were certainly better received than the experience we had before during CA2. Our ideas this time were received with interest and advice given as to how we could take it forward. Critique consisted of the doubtfulness of also including staff, of assessing at all three UG levels at the same time, although the idea as a whole was seen as viable. It seemed very promising that opinions seemed to be changing. New senior management had been appointed, and being later in the timeline of recent redundancies, perhaps the time at that precise point was also just 'right', unlike previously.

After leaving the CA and returning to London it was at this point that I took over as team leader. The first crucial decision was that we needed to ascertain how we could find a vehicle that could drive our work to fit university systems. It seemed finding a fit with existing validations of courses being the most likely. However, this would need to be 'owned' by a faculty (with the restructure now named Schools) and since our creation was university wide this was not going to be an easy solution to find a place for this module to fit. In any case we decided it would be WBS. This was because that was where I was based and at the time WBS seemed the most conducive to novel ideas. I was also elected by the team to also become the module leader on our idea for an elective module 'Resilience for Professional Life'.

As first mentioned in 5.3 University processes then worked in our favour as bids for new University wide Westminster electives were announced. We could not have foreseen that this was going to occur and it was perfect timing and meant we had somewhere for the module to fit into. These new electives were to be part of the university strategy then in place, 'Learning Futures' (UoW, 2014). There was a remit for 15 cross-disciplinary new modules. They were to start at Level 5 initially with the plan to roll out to other levels in later years. There would be a web page dedicated to the electives where students would be able to watch video podcasts, read the proformas and the chance to attend information sessions at Harrow, Marylebone and Cavendish campuses where they could meet the various teams who would be delivering the modules.

I called a team meeting and we met and discussed how a ready-made package on how to work with the university process rather than, as it almost felt, fighting them was perfect for our resilience module. Unanimously we decided to apply. We were selected to attend the three-day residential in July 2015 so I (as team leader), and two others attended (three per team permitted). It was not guaranteed that all modules selected to go to the residential would go through to the final stages. It was an intense three days whereby we were able to concentrate fully on being creative, feedback from selected students and then writing our module without distractions whilst away.

Once back in London we waited for confirmation and heard that our module had been successful and would go through to validation. Please see appendix iv for the validated proforma of the elective module. I then (as team leader) made a video podcast to advertise the module. stating the benefits of selecting and signing up for this module. I tried not to over emphasise the word mindfulness as noted from previous experience this does not always go down well. I wanted to appeal to a wide audience. I did have feelings of being a little fake when I spoke though, and I would have preferred to have taken a more assertive direct approach but understood that taking a pragmatic stance would be beneficial. Nevertheless, I expected that my personal values of equity, freedom and compassion would emerge through from the information I needed to disseminate. This is in accordance with LT and the views of

Whitehead (eg 2009) who states that video capture can demonstrate one's values in action. The video was made by the technology team whereby I speak about what students can expect on the new elective module. Unfortunately, as of 2021 this video is now rights protected so I have offered a screenshot instead. However, I still recall my belief that I was able to still demonstrate my values in action whilst speaking about the new elective module.



Video 2 – Screenshot of elective module advertising video for students

The three of us who had been at the residential then attended the open information sessions for students with each of us representing the campus we normally work from, or had connections in, so for me that was Marylebone. Following on from the information sessions and making the video podcast we were invited to present our work at the Leadership and Management Forum meeting in May 2015. Please also see 5.3.ii above where I write about this event also under story three (objective 3) gaining access to key influential figures that could help promote my work. As noted above the Leadership and Management Forum meetings are attended by senior management staff of the university. I led on this presentation and had a co presenter from the university OD team who presented one slide for me. We were a close-knit team, and this support, rather than presenting totally on my own was much

appreciated. As previously noted, this presentation was on the theme of team dynamics: 'what we felt we got out of being part of a change academy team'.

Below is a screenshot from the video of the presentation. Unfortunately, the video link is no longer available. The larger image is of one of the slides I presented as I told our story, and the smaller image was of the actual live presentation at the time of that slide. When I looked back at the video, before the link disappeared, I had previously written that the video reminded me of the appreciation of being able to express my values in the workplace. This was communicated during this presentation. I was genuinely grateful for that expression. I also recall even from the screenshot taken from the video how I demonstrated my feelings of loss of the original team here, due to redundancies, with my chosen image of cutting and having to edit out the past.



Video 3 – Screenshot of Presentation to the Leadership & Management Forum

5.4.2.i. Reflexive Comment

These university wide elective modules were thought to be novel and exciting by the management teams who were leading on these at the time. However, when new Deans and other new senior management teams arrived subsequently the 'flavour' changed and the popularity of promoting University-wide electives waned. After all

the hours of work (which would have been awarded in WAM hours if the module had fully run), awareness of the amount of money spent on the residential and the meetings it was nothing short of disappointment. Out of the fifteen modules chosen to go ahead only two successfully recruited students, and ours was not one of the two. I feel this was partly because the elective modules were communicated quite late to students who had to make the choice to commit. Also, University politics of wanting to keep modules in-house to not affect their own School budgets featured (so students were not encouraged to choose these modules). I believe there never was a resolution on how the cross budgets were going to function, although we were constantly told that a solution was being worked on. I recognise that barriers to change feature here, senior management at that time had just gone through a large restructure, they could have been feeling that enough change had already taken place and that they needed to keep their budgets tight. In addition, it is possible the idea was flawed from the outset and perhaps most students just did not want to leave their core subject area. Perhaps the majority of the new electives were just not appealing as subjects to our students.

There were some successes, in some ways here, as the module was selected to go ahead whilst others were not. There were also signs that perhaps the university was ready to go ahead with the themes of wellbeing, resilience, and mindfulness. However, the difficulty that was becoming apparent to me now was the constant changing of management. Sometimes this had worked in my favour and sometimes against. The newer management teams certainly seemed more appreciative and understanding of more modern trends in the workplace, but their constantly changing roles, redundancies and new strategies made for a very unstable period. Personally, I began to feel it was becoming increasingly difficult to get initiatives started because of this, especially with the demise of the CAs (which had been an ideal vehicle).

For me this was not enough to be a deterrent though and I felt that all learning is an experience not to be wasted, so I would take with me what I could and develop new ways to promote my objectives. I recognised that the turbulent times we had been going through probably would not last and indeed since 2018 we have been in a more stable period after another restructure.

Although the CAs had gone, we still had the Learning and Teaching Symposiums, please see section 5.4.1.ii for information on Learning and Teaching Symposiums. At least I could continue to disseminate my work to the University as a whole through the Learning and Teaching Symposiums so the ripples could continue to spread out in different directions, with a definite bottom-up approach.

5.4.2.ii Mindfulness Taught Sessions

Mindfulness sessions for WBS students initially began with action research cycle one (please see figure 4 Action Research Cycles for Mindfulness for Students) re-focusing on my Living Theory reflections of:

What could I do about my concerns?

What could I do to help?

To recap part of these concerns were that students must stretch themselves so much more in the 21st century, partly due to finances, which seems to add an extra layer of perceived stress as less time is available for studies. This can then impact on all areas of their lives and university work. Most students must commit to a long-term government loan for university fees, high-cost accommodation (especially felt in London), travel fares, basic living costs etc. Although pay-back of degree fees are delayed until students earn above a certain threshold, this does not detract from the fact that most students seem to struggle financially. This seems to be the typical profile of an UG student, certainly at WBS. Most of our students work part-time, and even a few, full-time, whilst juggling a full-time degree course. It is rare for a student to report that they are not stressed, noted from a personal tutoring role for well over a decade. This is especially observed around exam time and coursework submissions when students have many deadlines on different modules.

Returning to my questions, what could I do about my concerns? How could I help support students? I explored answers to these questions. Offering mindfulness classes to students seemed to be the appropriate way forward but the 'how to' needed planning. So, my reflective cycles then captured practical ways forward on

how to run these sessions. Questions such as: Which members of staff could be involved with me? Where best to embed this in the timetabling/curriculum? The gathering of additional empirical materials to explore if students had derived the expected benefits from the taught mindfulness sessions, possibly to use for additional evidence to help with (objective 3) groups and individuals in the university who have influence and would most probably want data to support the case for mindfulness offerings and to understand the process better in order to improve with future cohorts. How many mindfulness sessions could we (with my prospective team) feasibly run, given our tight academic WAM schedules? What would happen if we had too many, or too few students turning up? I also wondered if our students would even be interested? By plotting these questions into action research cycles this helped clarify thoughts, questions and answers which then led to the formulation of some concrete planning for the sessions. Please see figure 5 below. Again, I have preferred to create the cycles by hand to feel more connected with the process, as is usual with Living Theory .

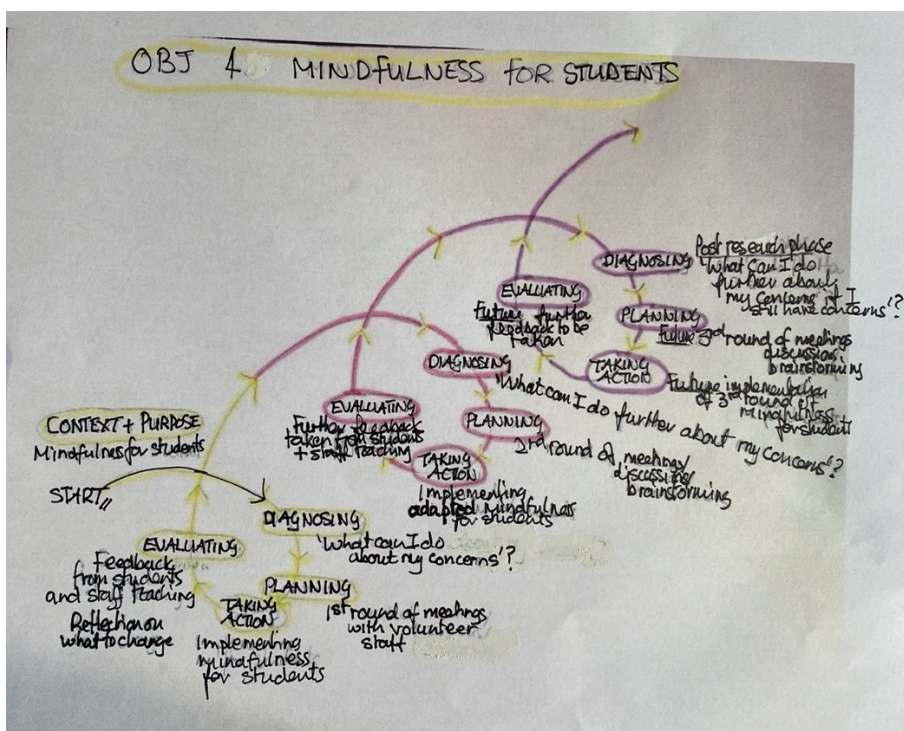


Figure 4 – Action Research Cycles for Mindfulness for Students

From my university wide network of colleagues, I selected two whom I knew had their own personal mindfulness practice and had trained in the MBSR form of mindfulness; and one had also, in 2015, attended my own mindfulness MBSR classes that I taught locally. I approached them with the proposition of running these mindfulness sessions for students with me, on the understanding that this was on a voluntary basis. They both agreed, adding they were very pleased to have been asked. They indicated that they too were very passionate about helping students and they wanted to give more than 'just teaching' so fed into their own values of wanting to offer support.

It was important that they both were going to be teaching in the same tradition as the MBSR as we needed to have a coherent whole to offer to the students. The type of mindfulness that has been written about thus far was the type we were going to teach. Again, I would like to reiterate here, that I am trying not to communicate a biased view, nor to convey that other forms of mindfulness meditation do 'not work', it is just that as I see it, the recent popularity of the mindfulness movement is notably the strongest in the MBSR system, it is the one that began these changes and indeed since that is the one I have followed and trained in it would not make much sense to include or teach other traditions here. These would not be within my remit, nor within that of my team. At the same time though I accept there are other styles of mindfulness being taught in the university as different people come from different backgrounds and travel through their own journeys from various cultures and histories.

5.4.2.iii Mindfulness for Students 2016

So, with the aim of teaching the MBSR, and in the planning stage of action research cycle one I arranged two meetings with my new team where we explored joint understandings and best practice intentions to take this forward. We worked with the divergent and the convergent cycles of the continuous toolkit (Bailey, 2011) as this helped to expand our thinking and to then at appropriate points contract and narrow down our thinking in a succinct way. We finalised what was considered the best way forward to recruit students. I set up a Doodle sign-up page for students and within approximately one hour 40 students had signed up to attend. One of the issues that

had been explored during our meetings (based on my questions above) were student numbers and how it was not possible to predict this, so rather than have drop-in sessions I chose to have booked sessions to try to exert some control over attendance. Within 24 hours 100 students had signed up to attend the sessions. This seemed a rather high number, but I would need to wait and see if they all turned up.

Room bookings, and availability is connected of course to the timetabling of lectures and seminars. It is a known problem at WBS that is very difficult to book rooms as they are always full. There is finite space not helped by a Central London location with approximately 4000 students alone at WBS, alongside Architecture and Design whom we share the building with. Partly because of this, it was decided to embed these sessions within the Personal Tutoring system, because we knew rooms had already been allocated and not all the tutoring sessions had been filled with content at that point. This decision was also because of the findings from objective 1 'How other institutions/organisations have brought in mindfulness' where themes indicated that most universities were embedding within the personal tutoring system. Then, in discussion with the colleague leading on running the personal tutoring it was agreed that spare tutoring sessions could be utilised for mindfulness for students. The four sessions available fitted precisely with the decisions made to offer a realistic shorter schedule and in line with one of the delivery modes of the MBSR. The MBSR is usually taught over eight sessions, but some teachers double these sessions up and deliver four instead. We offered 12 sessions of mindfulness in total ie three members of staff teaching three sessions a week between us, multiplied by four weeks and offered to all UG students at WBS in semester two.

As briefly mentioned above, from findings from other universities (attendance at mindfulness teaching symposiums, conferences in HE and associated websites) since this was also how the majority of other universities align their mindfulness classes ie within the personal tutoring system, it seemed the best fit to commence with on action research cycle one. I wrote the content for the four sessions and sent the information to the two colleagues who had agreed to be involved. We wanted consistency in our classes, but of course we could not guarantee this fully between the groups, as we are of course all individuals with our own styles and preferences and every group is different again. At one of the pre-meetings, I held there was a

discussion on whether consistency even really mattered, and perhaps we only thought in those terms because as academics we know we have to strive for consistency, as much as that is possible, between parallel running seminar groups on the same modules. The overall important point I felt here was that it was the MBSR that we were all agreeing to teach.

Before the mindfulness for students' sessions commenced, I also obtained additional ethics to confirm collection of empirical materials from the sessions. To note here it was not the main focus of this research to seek evidence per se of the benefits of the results of a mindfulness intervention, (which is also now widely available in the literature). My focus has been more on the insider-practitioner insider-researcher element of this work whilst adopting a reflexive practitioner style of the general unfolding story of developing mindfulness whilst working towards a 'Mindful UoW'.

In 2016 (along with participant information sheet and participant consent) in the taking action stage of action research cycle one I asked students to fill in a pre and post adapted version of the Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory (Walach et al, 2006). It was also important to screen out any potential attendees that might have been diagnosed with a clinical mental illness or who might have judged that their stress levels were extremely high. Students falling into this category were compassionately (as one of my values) informed that as mindfulness meditation has as its aim to make someone more aware, then during periods of high anxiety or stress then it is widely accepted that this would not be an appropriate time to commence such training. It was further expressed to them that mindfulness practice might still be possible though, albeit at a later date, depending on lessening of their symptoms. In addition, it is also important to note that students who are unable to be selected in for the sessions can be offered helpful advice for support by other means.

The sessions then commenced and were ran according to the meeting plans and schedules. However, the expected number of students attending was somewhat disappointing with only around five attending in each of the three individually run parallel sessions, making 15 students in total each week. This maintained across the four weeks.

5.4.2.iii Reflexive Comment

The reason lower numbers attending might have occurred, I felt could have been due to a number of factors. There was little control over the systems and university processes, so announcements each week to remind students about the classes were not always timely. They were also not sent to all levels of students as previously planned. Of course, this still does mean that students who signed up initially had then failed to pursue this. It could have been that they simply failed to make an entry in their calendars for each week and by not suitably capturing it just forgot. Perhaps some just simply changed their minds. Voluntary attendance is, of course, completely the students' prerogative whether to do so or not, as mindfulness must never be forced upon anyone. They did make the initial decision to sign up though. But if they were not keen, then why sign up in the first place? Related to this is student attrition for example as noted by Lynch et al (2018) who found that in the mindfulness sessions they ran student attrition was high with certain friendship groups leaving all together at the same time. When they informally questioned the students, they found that those who had left were curious about trying mindfulness but thought it was not for them.

An interesting observation I have noticed generally for some time is that, although both students and staff declare that mindfulness, and related subject areas, are very interesting to the extent that they would like to attend training, when sessions are run, the attendance is often quite low. My reflections on this cannot answer the question definitively as to why this often occurs, but it could be that the idea is appreciated in principle, and sign-up is quick and easy to do with the explicit intention of attending. However, on the day, the reality of the moment and one's own personal situation comes into being, most probably an overwhelming lack of time and more urgent matters to deal with in the short term. This then compounds the situation and when new classes are offered an immediate sign-up is followed with all the best of intentions because the sessions are much needed, but then just seemingly impossible to fit into one's life.

This is an area perhaps for future research that could be investigated as to the underlying meanings that could underpin this. By understanding the difference

between what people say they need and want, but then not committing to attending, is not only interesting to understand per se, but could also have implications for future offerings of mindfulness and other types of training. To avoid non-attendance professional HR at the UoW in the past penalised Heads of Schools £50 from their budgets if a member of staff who has signed up for a training event did not attend. HR does not appear to be continuing with this practice in 2022. Could it be that it is acceptable for people not to turn up? Has the culture changed? In any case, clearly a fine would not be applicable as the way forward for the offering of mindfulness for colleagues and students. It is though, an interesting acknowledgement that colleagues sign up and then do not attend and so a system was put in place to attempt to negate this at one point.

In the evaluating stage of action research cycle one to help improve attendance by those who have previously signed up, communicating timely reminders in case they had forgotten or may still need to prioritise their presence at the classes, was the first point I took forward ready for the next cycle. In that message I decided I would also communicate to attendees the importance of not using short-term thinking, when deciding not to attend a mindfulness session because someone is extremely busy, but to consider long-term thinking along the lines of the importance of accumulated practice and the benefits this will subsequently bring. An often-told story about the Dalai Lama could be helpful here too, when he was questioned how long he meditates for on an extra busy day he is reported to have replied twice as long as a non-busy day (Smith, 2019).

Point two to take forward to the next cycle of action research was to improve the time required for teaching these sessions. Rather than running three parallel sessions each week, at the planning stage it could be acknowledged that not all those who sign-up will attend so some sessions could be merged together. This would depend on looking at past numbers attending rather than solely considering sign-up numbers. We had originally wanted to give students a choice of three alternative times/days to attend during each of the weeks, but this would likely not be possible to continue, and one or two days offered instead.

The sessions were to run as originally planned over the four weeks. The summary content of these sessions covered: mindfulness explained and specifically, what it is and what it is not. Mindfulness exercises were built on week by week: body scan, mindfulness of the breath and of the body, mindfulness of sounds, mindfulness of thoughts. Associated poems were also read out such as 'The Guest House' by Rumi (13th Century), a Persian poet and whose poems often are used as part of the teaching of mindfulness. Mindfulness eating and mindfulness walking was also covered. Homework was set to note positive/negative emotions and positive/negative communications.

Along with attendance issues mentioned above, although numbers remained constant throughout, different students appeared to turn up in different weeks, notwithstanding some regular attendees. This led to point three on the evaluating part of the action research cycle one, as this made direct pre and post comparison of the adapted Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory (Walach et al, 20006) not feasible. To recap using the Inventory was for purposes of analysis, firstly to help with an exploration to see if there were perhaps any areas that we needed to rethink in our teaching, specifically this would have been if we were not noting the expected improvement in mindful awareness from students. It would also have been to help understand any benefits or improvements experienced by students, allowing us to then potentially use this for possible persuasive evidence of WAM funding. It was also feasible that the results might have been useable for publications. Under the circumstances of different students tending to appear each week I consequently took a different approach in capturing any changes these sessions might have had for students by inviting them to a focus group instead. In the first focus group of action research cycle one, only three attended, so the empirical materials remained somewhat light. Wilkinson, (2008) states that obtaining attendees for focus groups is not as easy it may seem, and some will fail to turn up. Indeed, one accepted attendee did not show up as she simply 'forgot'. For point four of the evaluation stage of the action research cycle I considered the lightness of the empirical materials collected and decided to merge these with the forthcoming planned next action research cycle two iteration. So, the next year, 2017, would give me two focus groups to merge. As I would also be considering how to improve attendance, if this

were to improve, this would also capture a larger quantity of useable empirical materials next time around.

5.4.2.iv Mindfulness for Students 2017

With the focus of my intention still strong to act on what I could do about my living theory concerns and to help students to reach more of their potential, the 2017 mindfulness sessions, action research cycle two, was devised. From the evaluating stage of the first cycle, I made various changes to the way this second cycle would be run. Firstly, I personally made the initial announcement; I was also able to take stricter control myself of the remainder of the announcements which I sent out at the beginning of each week rather than leaving it to university systems and processes which had been slower and arrived later. This time these sessions were not offered through the personal tutoring system, nor timetabled through it, but were booked to run immediately before or after the main teaching blocks of mega modules (as they were then known) on two days of the week. I was fortunate to have managed to book rooms, I thought this might not be possible.

As already noted, although most other universities seem to embed mindfulness within the personal tutoring system, we had not attracted a high number of students in this way during our first offering and so I wanted to try something different.

5.4.2.iv Reflexive Comment

On further consideration on the low attendance on the first iteration of mindfulness for students, as attached to the personal tutoring system, could possibly have been because there seemed, at the time, a student culture of not attending personal tutoring sessions. These sessions do not carry any assessment weightings and more strategic students and possibly those short of time can probably find out the information from a search of the university website, or they can request a personal meeting with their personal tutor. This last point, of course, is very time consuming for the personal tutor. The personal tutoring sessions are much more than an information session of course but sometimes students miss this key point, and do not realise that a sense of belonging is a key component (eg Pokorny, Holley, and Kae,

2016;) as is getting to know their own personal tutor through regular small group meetings.

Unfortunately, I lost one member of my team, who became too busy to continue to volunteer, but between myself and my one other colleague we were still able to offer more sessions between us compared to the previous year, so having only two of us still worked well. Again, these sessions were offered to students in semester two. They comprised: two members of academic staff x eight sessions each across eight weeks = sixteen sessions offered.

The second cycle of sessions were then run. We used a similar format of my personally written teaching materials, as in the previous action research cycle. A positive at the planning stage was that this time we had eight sessions, so we were able to follow more closely the 8-week MBSR. Another positive at the planning stage in this cohort was that I was going to be able to offer my own MP3s of personal recordings I had made at a professional recording studio of various mindfulness meditations. This was to enable the students to practice between sessions and to continue to practice after the sessions had finished. Action was then taken from cycle two and the sessions were all delivered.

In evaluating the attendance from action research cycle two I found that it had improved in one of the timetabled slots but not the other. The sessions that I ran were timetabled for 5pm on a Monday and had on average about ten participants each week, which was acceptable and probably about an optimum number to work with; but my colleague's session timetabled for a Thursday morning at 9am had very few and averaged about two each week. From informal questioning I discovered that students found the 9am start too early. My group of students told me that they liked the 5pm slot 'at the end of the day' and it was 'just right time-wise'.

To seek further clarification regarding attendance I also questioned random students from unrelated classes to check to see if emails had been received by the whole student body. I also took the opportunity to gauge their possible interest, or not, in mindfulness. I feel strongly that personal discussions can be more powerful than receiving blanket emails from someone unknown to the recipient so more importance

could be attached to a conversation rather than an email communication, perhaps during teaching or in personal tutoring sessions. Some students said they had not received my messages but said they would have liked to attend if they had known, but then confessed they do not read their emails. Again, along with students often saying they would like mindfulness and related classes offered to them (but then not attending) the culture (of some) of not looking at emails is a known problem with some of our students but is a difficult one to address. This is despite, myself and most of my colleagues explaining the importance of doing so to students whenever possible. During my Course Leaderships, I always made sure to emphasise to students to read their emails during all appropriate opportunities such as during induction week when they were learning about the university and throughout the academic year via my Blackboard channels that I had access to. For me this relates back to 'how I can improve my own practice', both as an educator and in more third space type work. In any case I had kept to my plan of timely communication and through investigation I found that weekly reminders did reach students

In this second action research cycle, as decided at the evaluation stage of cycle one and the planning stage at cycle two I did not ask students to fill in pre-and post-adapted questionnaires of the Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory (Walach et al, 2006). This was since regular same student attendance could not be guaranteed and this would likely lead again to non-feasibility in looking for differences of pre and post answers. As also noted from the first cycle of our mindfulness offerings form filling took up a lot of time during the first and last sessions. By commencing with form filling, it also did not seem to start the sessions in a very mindful way. It seemed a little cold and intrusive rather than starting with a more friendly talk about the understanding of what mindfulness is, and what it is not, and beginning with a simple practice. Instead of using the Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory (Walach et al, 2006) in this second cycle it was planned to collect comments week by week at the end of each session and to hold one focus group at the end of the sixteen taught sessions. This felt a more mindful way to run the groups.

In this second cycle I was also aware of the transitions between the points on the action research cycle (CIPD Toolkit, 2010) and in between the various cycles. I felt that when I looked at these 'in between points' in terms of transitions I felt a lot was

still potentially happening. For example, my personal reflections were still occurring of what I could improve, some of our regular attendees would still be practising and would likely attend following sessions with an ever-growing deeper understanding of mindfulness and perhaps even new University systems could even be in place necessitating changes to the way sessions might be organised or communicated. The Toolkit helped me to see that there was still potential movement on the cycle in between transitions and that there were not necessarily completely static periods.

5.4.2.v Focus group findings and Discussion

Five students attended the second focus group in 2017, most of whom had been regular attendees. Again, as in 2016, it was not the sole intention to use any analysis of what transpired as evidence for the beneficial effects of mindfulness per se. Instead, the main aims were to: receive feedback, so we could delve deeper into gaining an understanding of our own students to help support them further; to make sure our teaching of mindfulness methods were in line with our aims and we were not, at least, doing any harm; the possibility of a publication and with the idea to demonstrate our work to senior management, if required, and if appropriate.

Ultimately TA (Braun and Clarke, 2006, 2020) was used to analyse the focus groups. TA and also IPA is evidenced in various published papers that relate 'stories' or 'vignettes' and often use a combination of analyses, eg Barley and Southcott (2019) and relates well to my work. Ultimately I selected to use TA in a combination with reflexivity and Living Theory.

The role of the researcher is key and is connected to the interpretative or hermeneutic tradition. Just as the participant is trying to make sense of their world so the researcher is trying to make sense of the participant making sense on the personal and social world they live in (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). As an insider-practitioner this was a good fit as I was already immersed in this research, and I am a part of it. Although interviews are more commonly used in IPA analysis for example it is also possible to use focus groups providing, they do not inhibit participants from offering personal experiences (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Whilst focus groups are commonly used in TA analysis.

I considered if a participant rate for the combined focus groups of eight plus the week-by-week comments would be sufficient. Bearing in mind that 'more is not always more' (Hefferon and Gil-Rodriguez (2011, p767); and that fewer participants analysed in greater depth are preferable to larger numbers with less analysis (Reid Flowers and Larkin, 2005). I therefore initially proceeded on the understanding that the number of participants for analysis was acceptable. Therefore, to interpret the findings by way of analysis the two focus groups and the week-by-week comments were analysed together using TA (Braun and Clarke, 2006, 2020)). According to Lamb and Cogan (2016) if the same conditions are met for collection of the empirical materials, then they see no reason why different groups cannot be combined for analysis.

The transcripts from the two focus groups did not contain 'prosodic' (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, (2009, p74) utterances of participants as according to O'Connell and Kowal (1995) there is no need to transcribe unnecessary information. If this had been, for example, discourse analysis then each pause and utterance would have needed to have been transcribed using accepted protocols for doing so. However, significant pauses, hesitations or laughter have been noted in the transcript.

Working with the completed transcription analysis I listened to the audio and read the text together several times, with the aim of allowing all my subsequent readings of the text to hear the Ps voices as advised by (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). I then made exploratory comments beside the text; and I then noted the emergent themes in the right-hand margin. Emergent themes were then reordered into clusters of related themes, please see table 10 below 'Themes'. In total there were five TA themes that emerged. These are now discussed each in turn in more detail.

Table 10 – Themes

Themes from Focus Groups	Themes from Weekly Comments	Overall Themes
Calm Slowing down Improved sleep	More relaxed Slowing down Concerns disappear	1. More relaxed
Looking at nature Being in the moment	Physical awareness Focus on my feelings	2. Increased awareness
Concentration Reading/revising fast	Focused	3. Improved focus
Less judgemental Safety “Me” time	Accept the current moment A sense of knowing	4. Acceptance and self-knowledge
Return to writing		5. Creativity

1. More Relaxed

Becoming more relaxed is one of the often-reported benefits of mindfulness although it is not the objective as such but relaxation, peace and contentment are often the by-products of mindfulness meditation, but it is not the aim itself (Kabat-Zinn, 1994). Feeling calm, with a sense of slowing down and improved quality of sleep all led to a sense of being more relaxed for these students. This was just as Kabat-Zinn explains. It was interesting to note though that this seemed to be the first prominent change that the group wanted to talk about from the outset. This seemed to indicate to me that this was of great significance to these students. It meant a lot to them I could see. They were also quite animated but somehow calm when they spoke, again giving me the impression that this meant that was very meaningful for them. I felt I could understand this from their perspective with most working part-time and with university coursework deadlines this can easily lead to a sense of never being able to fully relax. Of course their deadlines and work does not change but I could

sense a change in them. They appeared somehow, as they said, more relaxed about their responsibilities but were at the same time somehow able to take things more slowly and not to have a detrimental effect on their time keeping. Below are two quotes that represent these comments.

“I feel more calm and makes me feel more confident”

“...and now I kind of take my time, but I still get there on time”

2. Increased awareness

An increase in awareness is also perhaps not surprising to emerge as a theme. The taught mindfulness sessions most likely led to this increase due to looking intently at the breath, the body and thoughts for example. Being aware is central to the practice and of course is documented in all accounts of the MBSR (eg, Kabat-Zinn, 1990, 1994, 2011). Comments on noticing passing trees on the way to work, birds and nature were all well reported. It seems that this was quite a change for many since they had not tended to notice such things before. I noticed that once the students had mentioned about being more relaxed, they seemed to become calmer in front of me. I really noticed a change in these students. I could easily imagine a walk to a tube station and these students spending time to look at trees and seeing things in life that perhaps they had never really paid much attention to. I'm sure this was very significant for them.

“it's made me look at.... like trees and nature”

“I really felt calm, it's like a weird sensation, but I actually feel the moment”

3. Improved focus

Some reported that they could now focus in silence whereas they could not do so before and had needed some background noises. The ability to be able to concentrate more fully is also well documented (eg, Chaskalson, 2011). Others explained how they could now work in very crowded areas of the university, unlike before. Concentration was said to improve and even to be able to leave social media

alone whilst working. This is such an important study skill, to have had this effect was very satisfying to hear. I felt they must be also feeling quite empowered by this new ability. We all laughed at the irrational thoughts of a phone blowing up, but something that many of us could understand.

"I can now realise that while I was doing this assignment for two hours how is it possible my phone did not blow up, it was weird"

"I literally went through the marketing textbook in like one hour and I got up all the theory I needed for my assignment. Before I would probably spend longer before I knew what I needed"

4. Acceptance and self-knowledge

Some said that they felt a new sense of acceptance and kind of self-discovery. This is a life skill that I was very happy to learn they had acquired. I knew this would take them far beyond the doors of the University and I felt literally happy to hear this. The comment about the reset button really resonated with me, and something I feel I also need at times. I probably did not think about it in such terminology before, but I have begun to see it from those terms now too.

"These sessions were really effective; they were like a reset button on the computer when it is running slow, and you reset it"

"I could see my problems and how to deal with emotions"

Still others tapped into the acceptance side of things by recognising that only we ourselves can make change happen. Again, this was very reassuring to hear and thoughts of these students not having so many difficulties with self-compassion would likely ensue from this.

"it's only me that can change it"

"I do things for myself"

"I focus on myself, and it kind of gives me a sense of safety"

Some students also reported being less judgemental to others. While others explained how the mindfulness sessions had helped create a sense of safety and wellbeing. This is crucial in the workplace and as a university if we can send out the next generation into the business world who feel that they have a sense of safety then they are well placed to meet the challenges and demands of the next few decades. Although these comments were made in 2017 this also relates to psychological safety online, important in 2020 when students had to work online and attend their lectures, workshops and seminars in this way. Unfortunately, as was discussed across School meetings, the majority of students did not feel safe and they took very few interpersonal risks. All of the students even refused to turn on their video cameras. In discussions many would not join in seemingly afraid to give their opinions. A discussion on how to create psychological safety in teams (Lechner and Tobias Mortlock, 2021) will be useful to note for future online offerings. Particularly prominent for our students will be to try to connect as human beings. ‘Seeing the human being behind the screen’ (p3) and particularly the point of creating ‘new experiences together’ can be weaved into the teaching process.

5.Creativity

An interesting theme to emerge and quite strongly articulated was that of creativity. There are sometimes varying reports on the benefits of mindfulness on creativity but the literature is mainly positive (eg, Chaskalson, 2011). Many participants reported their overall increased abilities in this area. Students again seemed quite animated when they spoke of this. Two participants explained how they had managed to write again after blocks and suspended periods of not writing. I could imagine them sitting somewhere quiet with ideas just emerging and to think all of this because of eight mindfulness practice sessions. Of course, although mindfulness looks so simple, it is not really, and these students were finding this out.

“I am writing poems in Russian and I had like a long period of not writing...and yes last week I wrote for the first time in six months”

“I was experiencing... a creative blog for over a year...I’ve been having so many ideas and coming up with projects

Drawing together the two focus groups and the week-by-week comments, they give a sense of overall increased wellbeing of the students who took part. Particularly interesting areas that relate to health and necessary student skills are: being more relaxed, increased focus and increased creativity. These findings concur with the general literature and with that presented in the literature review of this thesis, for example, Collard, Avny and Boniwell (2008) who found that participation in their programme had a mindfulness mediating affect with the essential role of generating positive outcomes. The findings of the above focus groups also agree with that of Lynch et al (2018) who used a wait-list control group on effects of wellbeing and found those that participated had positive results with better coping of university life and less anxiety.

Despite the extra workload, after a long day, running the mindfulness sessions, the comments received from the focus groups and from the week-by-week comments as to the positive benefits and changes these students experienced deepened my passion to want to continue teaching mindfulness to students. I felt intrinsically motivated but despite this, I realised that the costings of these sessions needed to be considered at some point and added to timetables if this was to be viable for a length of time.

5.4.2.vi Mindfulness for Students 2018 – 2022

Building on a third action cycle in 2018 I decided to explore teaching mindfulness for students and for staff together. This reasons for this were to build on the current culture of student/staff partnerships and pragmatically to save time. Having learned from the first action research cycle of not having timely announcements and not being in control of the communication, the sessions were communicated well ahead of time and personally sent out. A timeslot was chosen on a Wednesday when students are known not to have timetabled teaching. This of course in turn frees staff from teaching as well. However, although some regular students attended from previous years, the hoped-for staff attendance did not materialise in significant numbers. It was interesting that a lone contract worker on a very short-term temporary contract from Cavendish Campus attended a session. He received the

communication, came across to Marylebone for his lunchbreak and tried out his first session ever of mindfulness.

To note: later sessions of mindfulness also included the acknowledgement that for those students who had wanted to join but could not due to either mental health issues or extreme high levels of stress at the time needed some kind of referral rather than being left without anything. Recommendations were made with links provided to counselling services and extra help that began to be provided during the pandemic.

5.4.2.vi Reflexive Comment One

Although initially Wednesday afternoons seemed an appropriate timeslot, it actually worked against attendance. I believe this was because, students, without any formal teaching during that weekly timeslot instead either attend the sports facilities, other activities or simply go home to have a break. In addition, it has become a recent culture to hold staff meetings on a Wednesday afternoon. Therefore, what seemed a suitable timeslot at the beginning of the planning stage did not work out well. The idea of teaching staff and students together, of course, was not a new idea as this had been explored during the elective module with my team (please see 5.4.2.i). Somehow, for a second time this had not worked out. On this occasion it was not entirely clear if it was because students and staff do not like the idea of attending a class together, or if it was not a good fit with timetables for students who might prefer sports that they may already have committed to, or student union events, or a combination. In any case I decided to shelve the idea of teaching students and staff together for the time being but might return to it at some point in the future. Further investigation is at least warranted I feel.

In 2019 although I ran some limited mindfulness sessions for students, I had some personal circumstances that made it difficult to run the full eight sessions and needed to spend as much time as possible, outside of my teaching, working from home. By now, as well, I was on my own carrying out the mindfulness teaching as my other volunteer teacher was also experiencing some difficulties and had to step down. This clearly has implications for sustainability and the need for a larger team

as it makes it difficult to continue at times when everything relies on one person. In 2020, just as the mindfulness classes were about to begin the directive to stay at home and to work from home if that was possible was announced by the government due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The UoW, like most universities, moved to online teaching. None of us were used to teaching and being online in this way. However, by way of another action research cycle I experimented with running a few short sessions of mindfulness online directly after the seminar/workshop/lecture teaching. These were modules I was timetabled to teach on. I invited students to stay on if they chose to. This seemed to work well, with those who stayed appreciative and although I did not seek formal feedback positive comments were received during the inquiry process of mindfulness teaching and a short informal discussion afterwards. In 2021 we were, like most other universities who taught subjects such as social sciences (ie not lab based), in the same situation teaching online again without an opportunity to teach face-to-face for the whole academic year. As the previous cycle of teaching mindfulness online had been successful (from feedback and attendance) I repeated this cycle again. This was run in the same way, at the end of a class I had been teaching, for those that wanted to stay.

5.4.2.vi Reflexive Comment Two

From the adversity of the pandemic, we were forced to work in different ways unsurprisingly. I discovered that teaching mindfulness online worked quite well as related to me by my students. The students seemed to appreciate the ad-hoc flavour to it with little prior commitment from them if to attend or not. They were online anyway, so why not stay a little longer? So, rather than choosing a separate timeslot it seems the preference to have mindfulness as an add-on to timetabled classes worked well. With a return to campus, the plan is to have blended learning teaching, some online, some face-to-face and some hybrid teaching with a combination of the two at the same time. From all the different cycles with different timeslots, attached to personal tutoring, or a gap in the timetable close to core modules, from all the different iterations the online version seemed popular with students, at least during this interim phase. As noted I suspect mainly this was for ease of attendance. As well it also made the teaching of mindfulness quite convenient. The time commitment seems lower for all attendees, as it is just a slightly longer class and can be

expanded to be used at the end of various classes across the semester by one lecturer. In addition this mode can also be increased to be taught by other competent members of staff. It will be interesting going forward to see if further iterations delivered online see the same popularity as seen previously.

5.4.2.iii Mindfulness as an Internal Guest Speaker

As the ripples of mindfulness grew, turning to waves, my name was carried forward as someone who had become known for the research that I was carrying out and the practical mindfulness classes that I ran. Through these ripples turning into waves I was invited to run a mindfulness session at a School away day and to run mindful practice workshop sessions on two Level 6 (final year) modules.

5.4.2.iv Mindfulness 'Summer School'.

Up until the pandemic, for five years, I was part of the team that helped to run the 'summer school' which consisted of UG taster sessions for potential new students. Unfortunately, these were then suspended for two years due to COVID-19. When running, these events consisted of a welcome address by the Dean, Heads of School and then parallel one-hour sessions across various business topics. My session comes from a different perspective, but I found that these sixth form students appreciated the hour-long one-off mindfulness session. Some of the potential new students were pleased to hear that they could access mindfulness sessions at university as they had already taken part at school, (please see literature review .b curriculum) and therefore could continue with guided sessions to further develop their practice.

5.4.2.iv Reflexive Comment

I felt it had been a privilege to introduce some students to mindfulness. I saw first-hand the awe that some of them expressed in how it had positively impacted their lives. An important anecdotal event occurred, which happened at the annual graduation ceremony at the Royal Festival Hall. One of my students (who had taken part in the mindfulness classes in 2017 and also in the second focus group) related to me how he felt that if he had not joined my mindfulness classes his degree may have had a different ending. He went on to say that it had totally changed his life. He

thanked me so much. In those moments that is when, if I ever had any doubts, then that is when all the actors' stories I had travelled through during this research all come to fruition and I felt fully justified in my actions.

5.5 Story Five – Liaising with Emerging Collaborative Networks

Of the varying stories or objectives some are naturally longer and more involved than others. Liaising with emerging collaborative networks is one of the shorter stories, not because it is less important but because much of this has already been written about within different chapters. I have aimed to demonstrate how ripples of mindfulness have drawn together interested colleagues together for many endeavours with varying remits during the scope of this research. The CAs are a very good example of this. From these emerging collaborative networks further activities continue to naturally materialise. One such planned link will be between the Resilience Centre, sought both from colleagues from within WBS to extend our networks further and also from those within the Centre who wish to widen its capacity and scope. Collaborations are a slightly intangible process; they can come together for a short while but then staff leave or move onto different projects. As staff leave, new staff arrive, with new remits, new ideas and new challenges to pursue. The collaborative networks change constantly and that can be seen as a positive, as new ideas can be borne out of new teams. I see this very much as a constant ongoing process.

5.6 Story Six – Working as a Business Consultant for WBS

5.6.0 Introduction

Again, this objective, is another one of the shorter stories. Again, not because it is not important. It is because working with the University processes and systems I was constrained to fit with current policies and practices that were changed drastically and unrecognisably throughout the duration of my research.

5.6.1 Proposal to teach Mindfulness for external business

In April 2014 I put in a successful proposal to WBS to run mindfulness courses to outside businesses. Working with the Business Development Manager (at the time) on a one-to-one basis, and through 'academic enterprise' meetings I finalised my

programme ready to teach. I also spent time with advertising assistants whose remit it was to look at the competition and help with the communication for the external advertising. This all looked very promising. But after over a year of such meetings and planning, managers running these initiatives were made redundant and the whole system in place for 'academic enterprise' was put on hold. The redundancies are becoming a repeating story here. Regular announcements were received during the next few years stating that the academic enterprise would soon be resurrected.

It was not until late Spring in 2021 that this has come full circle and finally come to fruition again, albeit now under the guise of knowledge exchange. Staff have been appointed to posts again to enable this initiative to re-commence. I put in an application of my proposal to run mindfulness for outside business in June 2021. Once again there seems to be a delay but we are informed that this will be up and running very soon.

5.6.2 How do I show any Conclusions that I came to are Relatively Fair and Accurate?

The stories of the six objectives now move onto evaluation. I will not only reflect myself on how fair and accurate I feel my work has been but I will also use selected validation criteria for qualitative work. There is a wide choice of models and frameworks to choose from and I detail my decisions in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX – “From Fringe to West End and Broadway” - The Beginnings of Some Endings: Evaluation and Validation of my Work

*“The goal is not to be better than the other man,
but your previous self” Dalai Lama*

6.0 Introduction

Denzin and Lincoln note (2018, pxi) in qualitative research ‘we have multiple criteria for evaluating our work’, and Tracy (2010, p837) elaborates that the ‘literature is brimming with criteria for qualitative goodness’. However, Fitzpatrick (2018 p, 211) points out that qualitative research has a ‘contentious history’ with many researchers not agreeing on how best to evaluate their research from the vast range of different approaches,

I originally selected to use Jack Whitehead’s often cited evaluation of work against the criteria set by Habermas’ (1987) criteria of social validity: Is the account comprehensible? Is the account truthful? Is the account sincere? Is the account appropriate? If I had remained with that initial decision I would also have written on validity and legitimacy; and ethical validity, the criteria and standards of judgment for transforming social criteria into moral standards of judgement (Whitehead, 2009). These standards of judgment have an acknowledged fit with Living Theory. However, as my work has progressed through the years with the integration of other approaches, methods and tools ie TA, change management tools, and a reflexive methodology it became ever clearer that Habermas and Whitehead certainly were not the only criteria with which to evaluate work stemming from Living Theory.

From Whitehead I then moved to the idea of using Tracy’s (2010) and Tracy and Hinrichs’, (2017) eight ‘Big Tent’ criteria of assessing qualitative work. The criteria are: worthy topic, rich rigour, sincerity, credibility, resonance, significant contribution, ethical and meaningful coherence. Initially I felt they were a more suitable criteria to evaluate my work. I thought this would give me a more flexible way forward than Whitehead allowed, as underpinning these eight criteria is the understanding that the qualitative landscape is complex, creative, and understands the need for a ‘parsimonious pedagogical tool’ (Tracy, 2010, p839); and promotes ‘respect from

power keepers' (p839) who may have more of an affinity with the positivistic paradigm. I was considering senior management from WBS here. Furthermore, feeling that my work had a need for evaluation through the lens of more inventive work to fit my bricolage approach rather than the more often used norm by pure Living Theory research, was why I chose initially to utilise all of the 'Big-Tent' criteria.

However, I discovered that the 'Big Tent' criteria did not subsequently have such the close overall fit with my research as I had initially expected, that is, at least not when using all of the categories (please see section 4.6 where this is discussed in more detail). For my work, when all the categories were used together, (albeit not from my initial reading but in practice) they almost developed into a kind of checklist type of criteria, seemingly overly cumbersome and detailed for an appropriate evaluation and fit with my research. I felt I was being drawn into circular arguments. I also noted that not all qualitative PhDs/DProfs include sections on evaluation. However, in Living Theory research it is usual to include some form of evaluation and so in line with this as my work is a Living Theory influenced approach I have kept to this standard. I ultimately chose to continue the bricolage approach by choosing two of Tracy's (2010) criteria and part of the range of suggestions for evaluation of qualitative work by Morse (2018). This afforded a mixed yet connected approach to my particular qualitative research.

Whitehead (2018) reminds us that a distinguishing feature of Living Theory is that the researcher gives an explanation of one's own educational influences and through the learning of others. Both will influence practice. By detailing the above reflections and decisions on evaluation of my work I have explained how my learning influenced my practice. Whitehead (2018) also states that there is no existing perfect research methodology that already exists and so the need for inventiveness for the uniqueness of each study is required. In addition and importantly here, he also states that the research methodology can emerge during the course of the work being carried out rather than all chosen from the start.

Morse (2018) believes that there is not a defined number of validation strategies to use within a qualitative project and it will depend on its size and its complexity. A range of strategies she suggests can include: audit trails, saturation, methodological

cohesion and theoretical cohesion. Morse does not suggest it is necessary to use the full range. In keeping with this I selected audit trails, saturation and methodological cohesion in combination with Tracy's worthy topic and sincerity.

6.1 Evaluation

The following is an interpretation on evaluating my work according to parts of the suggestions put forward by Tracy (2010) and Morse (2018) continuing the bricolage theme of this research.

6.1.i Audit Trail

Throughout I have kept an audit trail. This is represented not least, for example, in my personal online reflective diary, in my detailing of the six stories that made up my objectives and in the empirical materials collected (please see Appendix ii for empirical materials collected). The writing up of the research is also an audit trail in itself (Morse, 2018). In addition, she also states that through the writing the researcher is able to see how they have grown and developed throughout. From my earlier writings and in my reflexive comments I feel I can understand (and I hope I have communicated to any readers of this work) how I have advanced my thoughts and grown as the research has grown throughout.

6.1.ii Saturation of Data

Saturation of 'data' helps towards leaving no unanswered questions by readers from the interpretation of findings from the empirical materials. Throughout I have collected a vast array of empirical materials, much of this being multiple materials for the same or similar events, thereby collecting materials from more than one source. Please see Appendix ii – Empirical Materials Collected which I systematically logged, described and analysed throughout.

A first example offered here from my findings, is from the range of experiences by attendees of the mindfulness sessions. Not only were the recordings from the focus groups fully transcribed and analysed but another form of empirical materials were also collected and analysed in the form of week-by-week comments. These were at

different events and different time points. A combination approach here helped to delve further into attendees' experiences.

A second example is from the first objective which looked at how other universities/institutions/organisations have brought in the practices of mindfulness. Here I attended multiple events in order to collect materials from different types of organisations etc and at different time points rather than just attending for example one event. These empirical materials were then analysed together.

6.1.iii Methodological Cohesion

Through the lens of my bricolage approach the intent throughout has been to demonstrate methodological (and theoretical) coherence so that there is consistency, rationality and soundness running through the thesis. With many different strands to draw together this was not necessarily easy to do. I have received written feedback from various drafts throughout the duration of my research from different supervisors. I have received oral feedback during supervisions. I have received peer reviewed feedback from my submissions of a book chapter and journal articles and most importantly I have received feedback from my external examiners. I have utilised that feedback to improve, strengthen and further integrate and draw together my writing in a cohesive style.

6.1.iv Worthy Topic

One category of Tracy's Big Tent that I felt connected with my work is a 'worthy topic'. She further states that qualitative research needs to be 'relevant, timely, significant, interesting, or evocative' and that often valuable topics will emerge from 'timely societal or personal events' (2010, p840). The topic of this research has addressed a **relevant and timely issue**: I feel deeply and hope I have established that there is a strong need for help with increasing changes, and the time for that is now, not waiting for some time in the future within the next published academic strategies or forthcoming visions. This research addresses how staff from the University have experienced many challenging years through all the restructures, redundancies, cutbacks, and enhanced workload creating a need for help towards a shared way of thinking, being, and feeling safer. For students, this is relevant and

timely too, as the literature notes increases in student mental ill health, combined with increased university fees leading often to the necessity to endure long working hours during studies. Students too need shared ways of being to help. I also recognise that my work is likely even more significant now since the pandemic. Although of course I could not have foreseen this, I did have an awareness that if things became worse for whatever reason, then my research could become even more meaningful. The pandemic certainly adds an extra layer of need, both when working from home restrictions are in place and for the return to face-to-face on campus safe spaces, both physically and mentally. My research has emerged from the needs of both 'timely societal' and 'personal events' and I believe that this work has been **significant** in the outcome of helping others and hopefully anticipate that it has been **interesting** with its use of multi-media, a play metaphor and combination of methodology and methods. It has certainly been interesting, stimulating and fascinating to research.

6.1.v Sincerity

An additional criterion of Tracy (2010) is 'sincerity'. She states that the research needs to demonstrate honesty and transparency towards any researcher biases, goals and weaknesses and to display authenticity and genuineness. Throughout I feel I have been honest, transparent, and even shown my vulnerabilities at times. I have shown **authenticity and genuineness** with my participants and with colleagues through being sincere about what I could hope to achieve. **Transparency** has been maintained throughout and an example of that is by being honest about any biases I might hold for example wanting the ripples of the MBSR type of mindfulness practice to progress rather than a different school of mindfulness; whilst at the same time accepting that ultimately all types (unless causing some harm) are embraced. I feel I was honest about my **vulnerabilities** for example when I wrote about the first knock back, as part of a change academy team, when we experienced a negative response to such ideas as mindfulness in the workplace.

Tracey (2010) writes that self-reflexivity is one of the 'most celebrated practices of qualitative research'. In evaluating a thesis or paper useful questions are: "How did the author come to write this text?" and "Is there adequate self-awareness and self-exposure for the reader to make judgments about the point of view?" (Richardson,

2000, p254). By utilising Living Theory from the outset, I have aimed to demonstrate 'self-awareness' and 'self-exposure'. It is not in my nature to generally share my thoughts with people I do not know (and this can be represented here by any of the future readers of this thesis) but when I am passionate about something, such as the spreading of ripples of mindfulness to help others, then I am fully open to this.

In sum reading back my work I have made the judgement in the form of self-validation (McNiff and Whitehead, 2010) that I have also met this criterion as I hear my own voice from the pages. In addition, as is common practice in Living Theory, I also asked for feedback from a 'critical friend' (who holds a Professional Doctorate in Occupational and Organisational Psychology), feedback from supervisors and they have fed back to me that they could hear my voice throughout the writing. A further form of validation will be social validation when I put this work out for public scrutiny (McNiff and Whitehead, 2010).

6.2 Achievements and Outcomes of Meeting my Objectives

As well as the eight criteria above, I also feel it useful to scrutinise my original objectives. This forms my own living judgement (Whitehead, 2009). I will specifically go through each one and make a personal considered judgement (by weighing up what I achieved) to evaluate if they were met.

1. **Review how other institutions/organisations have brought in Mindfulness practices.** I attended conferences, symposiums, and workshops, for example the Oxford one day Symposium, to gather notes and examples on how other universities, institutions and organisations had introduced mindfulness (please see table 4). Attendance to gather information was my necessary starting point. This led to emerging themes to map directions and so acted as an informed guideline.

I consider this objective met.

2. **Explore 'pockets' of Mindfulness Practice currently being carried out at the UoW.** This was also an exploratory initial stage necessary to carry out before developing mindfulness further. The current scene at that time needed to be set to understand what might or might not be already happening. I carried out scrutiny of

the UoW webpages and I used my personal contacts to discover what events were occurring. I also attended some of those selected events. In summary I found there was a gap, a need for more offerings, a wide space existed to add to what was already there.

I consider this objective met.

3. **Consider the influence of specific groups and individuals.** Through my international course leadership, CA teams and other roles I was fortunate to have had access to key influential stakeholders. Through these contacts I was offered varying support throughout the duration of my research which have been covered in some detail throughout. Here I will summarise and selectively choose a few examples to help evaluate if this objective has been met from my meetings with Deans, senior management, HR, and the Vice Chancellor. Positive outcomes have been:

- The offer to have a mindfulness room at Marylebone Campus with choice of decor (please see 5.3.i for more detail).
- Support from current senior management for my work
- I have been given my own Blackboard site for mindfulness. I felt this was a considerable achievement since these sites are not freely given out. I have asked in the past for other research or projects I have been working on and this has been refused.
- HR covered my expenses to attend conferences connected to mindfulness
- I have advised HR on whether to apply for an accreditation badge. This denotes to me that working with those who have influence to support research of this kind is a two-way process. I was able to 'give-back' and this felt satisfying.
- I have advised HR how other organisations have brought in mindfulness
- I was in talks with HR on offering WAM hours to members of academic staff who volunteer to offer classes via the Health Juice Platform. After negotiations it was agreed that staff can use their academic scholarship hours.

I consider this objective met.

- 4 **Design, deliver, evaluate and consider the resource implication of a range of educational opportunities and resources on mindfulness for staff and for students.** This has been the core of my work as I have developed mindfulness opportunities for both staff and students. The pandemic naturally halted face-to-face sessions. However, I adapted and used online mindfulness sessions with students. I have presented to staff at numerous events, well detailed in this thesis.

I consider this objective met.

- 5 **Build on existing and emerging collaborative networks within the university involved in mindfulness initiatives to scope the need for, interest and resource implications, for a mindfulness research community of practice.** A verbal agreement between myself and other colleagues who are interested in mindfulness and the Resilience Centre has taken place. The objective was to scope the interest which has been achieved. Resource implications can be funded by WAM hours for research and if successful from funding bids.

I consider this objective has been met.

- 6 **Build a business case/plan, including resource implications, for the design, delivery and evaluation of delivering (as a Business Consultant for WBS) a version of Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) course for external businesses.** I was successful in my bid in the original iteration of 'academic enterprise' which was accepted, but due to the demise of the staff and systems running it I naturally had to put this on hold. Since 2021, the processes have been partially resurrected and I continue to work with the systems of the university to further this objective, but clearly this is not in my full control.

I consider this objective was met, albeit perhaps partially, as I successfully got through all the initial selection rounds for my idea to go forward. Although this is not yet complete, as I am constrained by the University systems and processes to be able to finalise this. I continue to work within the bounds of what is currently viable.

CHAPTER SEVEN – “Finale of Last Scenes” – Significance of my Work and Conclusions

“Give yourself permission to allow this moment to be exactly as it is, and allow yourself to be exactly as you are” Jon Kabat-Zinn

7.0 Introduction

In this final chapter I draw a close to the stories and look towards the future.

7.1 Significance of my Work

Following on from the evaluation of this research I note the above quote from Jon Kabat-Zinn and I take a pause to reflect for a moment on what I have achieved and the importance of this work. Although this is a self-evaluation nonetheless I can appreciate all the opportunities I was given to attend so many varying events, to teach mindfulness and to collaborate with like-minded people. All of this has contributed to and make up the large body of work in its entirety possible. I feel my work is significant as from the collected empirical materials I am aware of some of its helpfulness to others. There are also likely many more positives that have emanated from this work but have not been related back to me directly. Even if one person had been helped then I would feel it has been worthwhile.

7.2 Original Contribution to Knowledge

By choosing to use a methodology and methods of Living Theory in an exploration of helping to support a ‘Mindful UoW’ this already denotes something unique as this has not been done before (at least as far as I am aware). In addition, most offerings of mindfulness in universities are usually a set of limited events that do not attempt to influence as wide as I have in this research.

7.3 Reflections on disseminating my work

Throughout the duration of this research, which mainly necessitated working very much alone, although a few times in collaboration, I have felt it was important to disseminate progress along the way, even if that path was still in a developmental

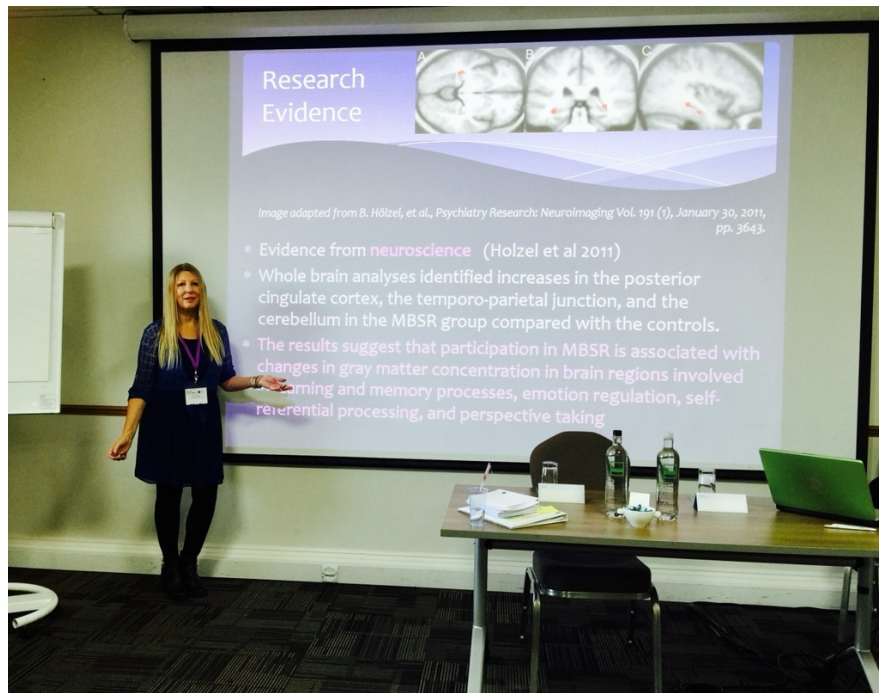
stage during those periods. Below I reflect on selected presentations (for the full list of dissemination of my work please refer to the front matter page x).

7.3.i BPS Occupational and Organisational Psychology Conference

In January 2016 at the East Midlands Conference Centre, I presented my work 'developing mindfulness in the workplace' with the theme on 'resilience in a challenging world'. Mine was not completed work, but there was still a story to tell. On the day of the presentation, upon seeing the room I had been allocated, I felt that the BPS had maybe not quite realised the popularity of the topic of mindfulness as they had assigned me a small room. Of course there were parallel sessions taking place and the event venue only had finite space and I was not one of the more well-known speakers either, so this was understandable. The room began to fill quite quickly even before the start time, all seats were full so that all that remained was standing room only at the back and sides of the room and then people even began to sit cross legged on the floor in front of the front row of chairs. I felt this reinforced my feelings, through feedback from numbers in the room, that mindfulness was very topical. I felt the excitement that there was a real opportunity for it to be developed and applied in the workplace and the timing was right.

In the photograph below, taken by a colleague during my presentation, I can see the enthusiasm in my face as I eagerly relay the story of the detail of the progression of my work, at a midpoint in the play. I would have liked to have presented a photograph here of audience members sitting on the floor to display the energy in the room, but photographic permission would not be possible, so the photograph focuses on me instead as I speak to those interested in the development of mindfulness in the workplace. At this precise moment I am giving evidence for mindfulness from neuroscience.

Photograph 10 - BPS Conference Presentation




As well as seeing the eagerness in my face to tell my story I also note when looking at this photograph the formatting of the slides I am using. A few years after the date of this presentation I stopped using these colours in my slides so that I can adapt my PowerPoints for people who may be visually impaired. I felt that the slide template and colours that I had previously adapted fitted well with my topic but the importance of being inclusive far outweighs my preferences, as I continually adapt my practice so I can invite all in.

7.3.ii BPS London and Home Counties guest speaker

In December 2014 I also presented my research as an invited guest speaker at the BPS London and Home Counties branch. Below is the flyer that was sent out with *The Psychologist* advertising my talk.

Photograph 11 – BPS Flyer for Embedding Mindfulness at UoW



The British Psychological Society
London & Home Counties Branch

Developing a 'Mindful Institution'

Jenni Nowlan, CPsych, AFBPSs, Academic MCIPD, FHEA, MABP
Tuesday 2 December 2014, 6.15pm
University of Westminster, 35 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5LS
(Nearest tube: Baker Street)

Jenni will be discussing her ongoing work on developing mindfulness in an organisation. As part of her Doctoral work Jenni has been exploring ways to embed mindfulness practices into organisational life at the University of Westminster, with the intention of enabling it to become a 'mindful institution'. The discussion will consist of the journey so far and will include an acknowledgement of change management and a living theory approach to explore her own reflections and ultimately improve practice. The evening will also include an opportunity to explore and take part in some mindfulness practices. If you are looking to introduce or further the acceptance of mindfulness into your own organisations, or just want to find out more about mindfulness, this session could help advance your own ideas and practices.

Jenni is a Chartered psychologist and has an MSc in Occupational and Organisational Psychology. She has been an academic and full-time Senior Lecturer at the University of Westminster for the last fourteen years, where she is an international course leader and module leader, and teaches work psychology, the psychology of coaching and mentoring, and business research competencies. She is a mindfulness teacher, trained with the University of Bangor. She is also a coach, influenced by rational emotive behaviour therapy, positive psychology and mindfulness. Other roles include leading on a work-based resilience project, being a higher education external examiner, and being a yoga teacher.

Free event for members only. Prior booking is required.

Places are limited, so book early.

Any queries, please e-mail MemberNetworkServices@bps.org.uk with 'BPS LHC Mindful Institution Dec 2014' in the subject line.

For more information or to book go to:
www.bps.org.uk/mindfulinstitution

In 2014 this flyer represented to me that my work was beginning to be recognised and afforded the opportunity to have an impact. The bookings list was for over 100+ delegates and approximately 110 attended. They were mainly from other universities, healthcare, or had their own practice. Again, I was fortunate enough to present to a full room. I presented my findings up to that point and also led mindfulness practices. As an experienced lecturer I know that students' attention will wane after about 20 minutes, so I was careful to break up the presentation into different chunks of information giving, practice, readings, time for discussions, questions and answers. As I was the only person presenting for over one and a half hours I decided to invite my sister (who has also trained in mindfulness) to carry out the poetry readings, to give the audience a change of voice and to give my sister the opportunity too, to present to a large audience.

Photograph 12 - BPS London and Home Counties Presentation



Photograph permission granted.

When I look at this photograph, I feel the decision to involve my sister was appropriate, not only for the reasons mentioned above, but also as this was one of my first major presentations of my research (outside of lecturing to WBS students) and it helped to have a guaranteed friendly face next to me. I did feel in the room though there was so much support for the development of mindfulness, the whole experience was very positive, uplifting and rewarding.

7.4 Ways Forward

Whilst focusing on developing mindfulness ripples of influence at the UoW this research from the outset did not have the explicit intentions to make recommendations that would become generalisable as a formulaic recipe to follow. Instead the focus was on relatability (Whitehead, 2019). However, some ways forward and/or steps to build on, have evolved worth noting in these stories that do warrant communicating and will be relevant in future iterations of this research.

- The first way forward to note is to recognise that staff cannot continue to give their time freely without being suitably rewarded in terms of work hours. Although some hours have been negotiated to come through academic

scholarship these hours are already full with other duties. This could be re-negotiated.

- A second way forward is to note that teaching mindfulness may help with the **reputation** of UoW. Therefore, it is important not to let the effort go unnoticed and can be communicated to perspective students.
- A third way forward is to not miss the opportunity as a researcher to carry out **research** on the potential changes from the ripple effects of mindfulness and compassion.
- A fourth way forward is linked to a sense of timing and to make the judgement to act when the **climate is most conducive** to allow more change in the workplace.
- A fifth way forward may be that this work can help inform CETI with future ideas for academic practices for staff teaching students.

7.5 Final Reflections

Whilst enabling my aim my reflection on the overall experience of this research was that I often felt as if, as well as acting in a play, I had also travelled on a 'journey' and although the expression of 'a journey' is rather clichéd in writing, this research has certainly felt like a long journey at times. A journey that has picked up travel gifts, additional luggage, and some lost luggage along the way. There were times that I almost considered ending the journey and returning home, to deal with situations that arose in my personal life. Perseverance and passion for my topic won that struggle however and focusing on the guidebook which suggests that rewards of pastures new usually far outweigh the discomfort of long and tiring travel. This was despite at times my attention being drawn back home. Like many extended travels the itinerary changed, the map even changed and a straight travel path through certainly did not exist. From beginning to end the very nature of insider-practitioner

insider-research, this road has seen many holdups, road repairs and delays, but with a final arrival at the destination.

Although this 'journey' certainly also helped capture my individual overall experiences, emotions and thoughts through a wide angled lens whilst carrying out this research I acknowledge a stronger telescopic lens that viewed the unfolding of the play. In this scenario I was the scriptwriter, the set maker, the director, the producer and also the lead actor in the play. In some scenes I acted alone and at other times in scenes of collaboration with others, as I, or we, searched for shared meanings and improvements to our practices whilst acting out the changing and adapting script. The genre of the play has been a documentary, a comedy, a drama and even at low times approaching a tragedy. So, for these reasons I ultimately feel it was appropriate to have chosen to communicate these stories to an audience who have a ticket to enter the theatre in the way I chose to. The writing of this research through a play metaphor rather than a journey metaphor, enabled the capturing of the different objectives through their individual stories which acts out my/our emotions and feelings throughout my/our work of the actors taking part.

Of course organisations continue to evolve which are reflected in changes for us all in the workplace, as clearly demonstrated in this research. In the sense of action research and Living Theory, I suggest this whole research is in one way one large set of cycles, of which in years to come, with further changes in the workplace and possible further cuts to funding I predict there will be a natural need to evolve further, and to build on what this research has initiated.

7.6 Limitations of my Work

As this research was qualitative work carried out at the UoW during a certain period in time it cannot be anticipated that the findings would be precisely replicated elsewhere or even at other parts of the University. However, it is hoped that some of the stories might be useful to others who may wish to pursue something similar, in the sense of offering creative ideas rather than guidance. Work of this sort has relied on passionate individuals to move it forward and to put it into the spotlight. There is also a need for sustainability. The informal network of colleagues who are interested

in helping through mindfulness, compassion, and tools and techniques to increase resilience is growing, but this needs to sustain itself to continue into the future. It is necessary to think about growing the network to obtain a critical mass in case any of us leave the University.

7.7 Future Directions

If the UoW might be regarded as a 'Mindful UoW 1.0', future directions could see a 'Mindful UoW 2.0' come to be realised. Proposed objectives for 2.0 are:

- The term 'mindfulness' to be incorporated for the first time in the University strategy and vision for 2028. (The term compassion is likely to be included in the 2023 version).
- HR to allocate funding to train mindfulness champions at all University sites.
- Mindfulness 8-week MBSR classes freely offered to all staff and all students across the academic year, including an online offering.
- Mindfulness drop-in sessions for group practice, led by mindfulness champions.
- All campuses have a 'mindful' tranquil entrance, suggestions are a water feature, representative mindful structures/carvings (constructed by our architect students), suitable paintings.
- Labyrinth or other paintings in lifts, with soft colours.
- All campuses to have a silent outside 'garden', even a roof terrace or some other small piece of reclaimed space, with tall plants and screens.
- Mindfulness quiet rooms being accommodated at all sites (not just Marylebone).

7.8 Final Words

Although this play ends here, there will be further plays in the future, of which I plan to have a major part. Overall, this research has been the most demanding, tiring and challenging work of my career, but also the most rewarding, developmental and inspiring that I have achieved so far. I would certainly encourage others to pursue their passions, to work with their values and to seek out making a difference.

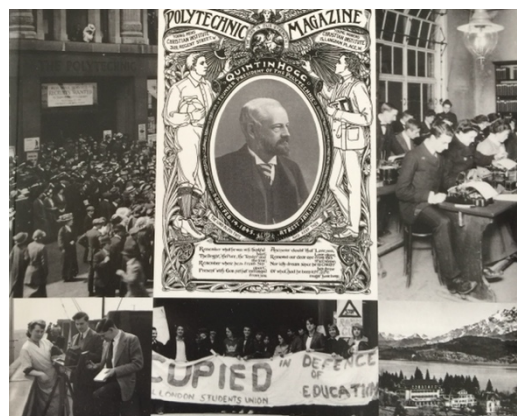
Appendices

Appendix i – A Summary History of the University of Westminster

UoW was originally established in 1838 at 309 Regent St, London, under the Chairmanship of the distinguished scientist, Sir George Cayley, famous for his role in aeronautics. This was the first polytechnic in the UK and was initially known as the Polytechnic Institution. It later changed its name in 1941 to the Royal Polytechnic Institution and Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert, became Patron. The Institution had a significant role in the popularisation of science. In 1882 Sir Quintin Hogg purchased the site and introduced technical and commercial subjects and evening courses to support the expanding London economy. Sir Quintin Hogg was well known as a philanthropist and gave education to poor boys in London prior to the acquisition of the Regent Street site. The Institution became known as the Polytechnic. In 1891 the Polytechnic became publicly funded and changed its name again to Regent Street Polytechnic.

Major rebuilding works took place in 1910-1912 changing the façade of the building and much that lay behind it. Holborn College of Law, Languages and Commerce then merged with the Institution, and it became known as the Polytechnic of Central London (PCL). Later new subjects were again introduced such as journalism, planning, and management. In the 1960s the Polytechnic became a multi-site Institution by adding Marylebone for architecture and Cavendish for engineering and science. In 1990 Harrow College of Higher Education merged with PCL. In 1992 PCL gained university status and became known as The University of Westminster.

Photograph 13 - Compilation of historic photos from beginning of UoW
Body Mind and Spirit (2013)



Appendix ii – Empirical Materials Collected

Main Objectives	Date	Empirical Materials
<p>1. Review how other institutions/organisations have brought in Mindfulness practices for information purposes.</p>	23 -25 March 2013	Attended the Mindfulness in Society Conference held in Chester and hosted by Bangor University. Speakers included: Jon Kabat-Zinn; Michael Chaskalson, Mark Williams. Discussions and workshops on how to bring in mindfulness to the workplaces.
	27 March 2013	Friends Meeting House – mindfulness in education. Speakers as above.
	3 September 2013	Attended Oxford University one day conference on mindfulness in HE. Through workshop exercises collected empirical materials on how other universities are bringing in/have brought in mindfulness
	9-10 June 2015	5 th International Conference on Value and Virtue in Practice-Based Research at York St John University, York
	3 – 4 December 2015	Mind and Matter conference – developing mindfulness in the workplace
<p>AUDIT 2. Explore ‘pockets’ of Mindfulness Practice currently being carried out at the UoW and to build on any existing and potential</p>	March 2013	Heartmath - talk organised by the Resilience Centre
	July 2013	How resilient is the NHS? – talk organized by the Resilience Centre
	3 April 2014	Spot audit of mindfulness practices currently going on at UoW

<p>emerging collaborative networks within the University involved in mindfulness initiatives</p>	<p>July 2014</p> <p>May 2015</p> <p>April – June 2016</p> <p>June 2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Staff benefits (health and wellbeing initiatives) -Green growing space -Sustainability (Earth Day) - 'Mindfulness' (Thai Buddhist School Samatha Trust) - Mindfulness (Interfaith advisor) <p>Mindfulness Talk (TEDx by Interfaith advisor)</p> <p>Audit as part of activities at Change Academy 5 Retreat working with HR Health, Safety and Wellbeing team</p> <p>Mindfulness drop-ins, Interfaith advisor</p> <p>Student skills including mindfulness</p>
<p>3. Consider the influence of specific groups and individuals in the University required to support successful initiatives to promote the concept, practices and skills of mindfulness</p>	<p>Oct 2013 – July 2016</p> <p>14 March 2014 – 22 March 2014</p> <p>16 February 2015</p>	<p>Met with Dean of WBS at various opportunities and she informed me that she is very supportive of mindfulness and even offered to fund a half away-day to collect empirical materials on what staff preferences for mindfulness opportunities might be</p> <p>Had opportunity to specifically network with the Dean as spent one week in China with her visiting prospective Chinese partners for the BA Business International (of which I am Course Leader). Good opportunity to network with her and discuss developing mindfulness at WBS/UoW</p> <p>Ongoing - meetings, correspondence with Associate Dean (DH) over hours discussion (also in costing for mindfulness for students)</p>

27 March 2015	Delivered presentation with a team member of our LFs Resilience Elective Module to HoDs, Learning Future's team and influential others
19 May 2015	As Team Leader I presented the journey of the Change Academy (CA4) project (main theme – 'what we got out of it'), on 'resilience for professional life' at the 'Leadership and Management' Forum to the HR Director (JW) and other key people, giving opportunity to become known and to network
24 June 2015	Meeting with Change Academy team (CA5) most from HR Health, Safety and Well-being team. From these new HR connections, I have already been contacted by one of them asking for my 'expert' advice as to whether UoW should go for a particular recognition of a body that seemingly promotes mindfulness.
14 January 2016	Meeting with TG from Health, Safety and Well-being from UoW Corporate HR to report on my recommendations to HR on how other organisations have gone about bringing in well-being programmes, mindfulness and resilience.
Various - summer 2016	Acting Dean – retiring Oct 2016 but is influential with budgets. Approached him officially but as he has a reputation for being 'spreadsheet man' unless hard evidence of figures can be demonstrated unlikely to be successful in asking for funding
2 November 2016	Had meeting with the new Dean. All sounded quite positive and he certainly seems in favour of mindfulness
6 December 2016	Attended the UoW Graduate School Research evening and was able to network for over one hour with the Deputy Vice Chancellor with sole conversation on mindfulness

<p>4. Design, deliver and evaluate a range of mindful opportunities and resources for staff (4.a) and for students (4.b) at WBS and more widely at the UoW</p>	<p>4.a STAFF</p>	
	12 February 2014	Assisted running the mindfulness for staff information desk at the annual UoW Wellbeing Day . This was to explain what mindfulness is and to direct interested staff to the one-off mindfulness sessions that were being run that day by Tessa Watt as a taster session. I took notes on reflections of the day
	7 October 2014	Made professional recordings of mindfulness techniques to give to participants on mindfulness sessions (both staff and students)
	11 June 2015	Ran session on mindfulness at WBS Learning & Teaching Day on mindfulness as a staff workshop; and to gain information on how staff might prefer mindfulness opportunities to be offered to them.
	24 June 2015	Ran session with three colleagues at the UoW Annual Learning & Teaching Symposium on mindful walking: mindfully walking the labyrinth
	15 December 2015	Meeting with colleague from the Education Department to discuss Mindfulness and Contemplative Pedagogies , a staff CPD workshop that we will run, offered through the HR platform
	16 May 2016	Skype meeting with above colleague to discuss further plans for Mindfulness and Contemplative Pedagogies , a staff CPD workshop offered through the platform of HR, that we will run
	18 May 2016	Delivery of first Mindfulness and Contemplatives Pedagogies Workshop open to all staff
19 May 2016	Meeting with mindfulness for staff team	

30 June 2016	Ran session with three colleagues at the UoW Annual Learning & Teaching Symposium (in Harrow this year) on mindful walking: mindfully walking the labyrinth
4 August 2016	Westminster mindfulness group meeting
19 October 2016	Meeting with mindfulness for staff team
4 April 2017	Meeting with Westminster Labyrinth group
2 May 2017	Granted a Blackboard site for the dissemination (both staff and students) of mindfulness entitled 'Westminster Mindfulness'
31 May 2017	Delivery of second Mindfulness and Contemplatives Pedagogies Workshop open to all staff
22 June 2017	Ran session with two colleagues at the UoW Annual Learning & Teaching Symposium (Marylebone Campus) on mindful walking: mindfully walking the labyrinth
22 June 2017	Presented at the UoW Annual Learning and Teaching Symposium (Marylebone campus this year) for staff with a colleague from my team on our experiences of running mindfulness for students over the last two years
<u>4.b STUDENTS</u>	
24 February 2014 – 26 February 2014	Attended a three-day residential of the 4 th cohort of the Change Academy. I was part of the team working on "Resilience for Professional Life" aimed at students

	4 March 2014	Was asked to be a guest lecturer and delivered a three-hour session on mindfulness for students at WBS on a level 6 Psychoanalytic module.
	1 May 2014	Meeting with Change Academy 4 team with the aim to bring forward the date for our elective university wide resilience module we are proposing
	11 September 2014	Was made leader of the 'Resilience for students' Change Academy 4 Project
	3 October 2014	Attended workshop in conceptualising, writing and delivering cross university wide elective modules
	7 October 2014	As noted above - Made professional recording of mindfulness techniques to give to participants (staff and students)
	17 February 2015	Cycle 1 - Reflections on answers to LT questions on how to embed mindfulness for students at WBS
	3 March 2015	First meeting with School Senior Tutor to embed mindfulness for students within the personal tutoring system with a 2015-2016 start.
	10 March 2015	Delivered a 30-minute one-off mindfulness for session for students on a L6 coaching module

	2 June 2015	<p>Second meeting with School Senior Tutor – we will begin with L4 students and offer mindfulness sessions in S1 week 8 (introduction) and S2 weeks 2,4,6,8 (actual sessions). These weeks have not in the past been timetabled for students for personal tutoring, but rooms will be booked and will be available. These sessions, though, will remain optional but will fit into students' timetables without clashes.</p>
	1-3 July 2015	<p>Electives residential. Opportunity to develop the new Elective modules for cross faculty and interdisciplinary subject areas. Resilience for Professional Life (where I am the team leader) was chosen to go ahead and to be developed over the three days of the residential. Mindfulness is included in the topics under this new module.</p>
	15 December 2015	<p>Continuing Cycle 1 - Third meeting with School Senior Tutor discussion on revised planning for mindfulness for students for Semester 2 of academic year 2015-2016</p>
	21 December 2015	<p>Continuing Cycle 1 - Meeting with team to discuss structure, content and research potential for mindfulness for students</p>
	21 December 2015	<p>Continuing Cycle 1 – Fourth meeting with School Senior Tutor to confirm the team for mindfulness for students, and to confirm which weeks again and how many sessions.</p>
	6-8 January 2016	<p>Presented developing mindfulness in HE at the BPS DOP conference in Nottingham</p>

22 January 2016	Continuing Cycle 1 - In week 1 of teaching announcement sent out to students University systems via BB to personal tutees to sign up and begins in week 2 on Mon and Tues.
26 January 2016, 27 January 2016 & 28 January.2016	Mindfulness for students 3 of 12 delivered
9 February 2016, 10 February 2016 & 11 February 2016	Mindfulness for students 6 of 12 delivered
12 February 2016	I was filmed for the marketing video for the elective's module
16 February 2016	Went to see the Acting Dean to ask for funding
19 February 2016	The proposal for funding for running mindfulness for students was put in writing and sent to Acting Dean, as he had requested
29 February 2016	Still no reply. I reminded the Acting Dean to please reply to the requested document
8 March 2016, 9 March 2016 & 10 March 2016	Mindfulness for students 9 of 12 delivered
11 March 2016	Attended Electives Fair at Fyvie Hall Regent Street to 'sell' the module to students

22 March 2016, 23 March 2016 & 24 March 2016	Mindfulness for students 12 of 12 delivered and focus group
14 March 2016	Still no reply from Acting Dean. I wrote to him for the third time to remind him of my request that he had asked me to put in writing
29 March 2016	First meeting since delivery of mindfulness for student sessions have finished, to discuss what we learned from cycle 1 and how we might improve/planning for cycle 2 next year reflecting on our feedback, notes and all empirical materials collected
28 June 2016	Delivered Mindfulness for prospective new students to WBS – 'summer school' cycle 1
21 December 2016	Second meeting with team to discuss mindfulness for students for following year for cycle 2
21 December 2016	Meeting with School Senior Tutor to discuss weeks and slots available for mindfulness for students. Changed strategy from the personal tutoring system to outside of this and to align to students timetables on large modules.
6 February 2017	Final meeting with team to discuss mindfulness for students for 2017 cycle 2
20 February 2017 & 23 February 2017	Mindfulness for students 2 of 16 delivered

27 February 2017 & 3 March 2017	Mindfulness for students 4 of 16 delivered
6 March 2017 & 9 March 2017	Mindfulness for students 6 of 16 delivered
13 March 2017 & 16 March 2017	Mindfulness for students 8 of 16 delivered
20 March 2017 & 23 March 2017	Mindfulness for students 10 of 16 delivered
27 March 2017 & 30 March 2017	Mindfulness for students 12 of 16 delivered
3 April 2017 & 6 April 2017	Mindfulness for students 14 of 16 delivered
4 April 2016	Meeting with Westminster Labyrinth group
10 April 2017 & 13 April 2017	Mindfulness for students 16 of 16 delivered and focus group
20 April 2017	Meeting with team to discuss what we learned from delivery of mindfulness for students cycle 2 and how we might improve/planning for next year 2018 cycle 3 reflecting on our feedback, notes and all empirical materials collected
26 June 2017	Cycle 2 – Delivered second Mindfulness for prospective students – ‘summer school’

<p>5. Build on existing and emerging collaborative networks within the UoW involved in mindfulness and related initiatives to discover interest for a mindfulness research community of practice</p>	<p>1 May 2014</p> <p>Spring/summer 2016 – spring/summer 2017</p> <p>8 March 2016</p> <p>10 April 2017</p>	<p>During the Change Academy 4 meeting members were present from the Resilience Centre and I put forward the idea of researching into mindfulness connected to the Resilience Centre. The response was positive and to take forward when we have something.</p> <p>Various meetings with WBS colleagues to discuss a community of practice for mindfulness research</p> <p>Focus group with student participants who took part in mindfulness for students in 2016 to initiate a mindfulness community of practice</p> <p>Focus group with student participants who took part in mindfulness for students in 2017 for a mindfulness community of practice</p>
<p>6. Build a business case/plan for the design and delivery of workshops, as a Business Consultant for WBS, of a work-based version of the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) for external businesses</p>	<p>28 April 2014</p> <p>16 October 2014</p> <p>29 January 2016</p> <p>26 February 2016</p>	<p>Written proposal for short training courses in mindfulness for stress reduction sent to Business Development Manager, Commercial Development and Business Support Department at Marylebone Road.</p> <p>Group meeting with Business Development Manager to discuss ideas going forward for short training courses etc for business</p> <p>Initial meeting with Business Development Manager. Discussed the necessity of cutting down the MBSR and re-packaging it for business.</p> <p>Second meeting with Business Development Manager I informed her that I have been able to update the way I will be able to run the mindfulness for business short course</p>

	21 October 2016	Attended the academic enterprise initiative workshop from design to delivery
	21 June 2016	Made application to the new scheme for academic enterprise with allocated hours awarded
	4 April 2017	First one-to-one meeting with colleague leading on the new academic enterprise scheme, on further discussions on how to take forward, with unique approach for mindfulness for business
	2 May 2017	Second one-to-meeting with colleague leading on the new academic enterprise scheme
	2 June 2017	First mindfulness for business leaders' workshops delivered. At the request of the business manager this was delivered in-house and offered to UoW staff leaders with the understanding that delivery externally would be 2017-2018.
	16 June 2017	Second mindfulness for business leaders' workshops delivered.

Appendix iii – Proforma from Elective Module, Resilience for Professional Life

MODULE PROFORMA		
Full module title: Resilience for Professional Life		
Short module title: Resilience for Professional Life		
Module code:	Credit level: 5	Length: One semester: Runs in Semester Two
UK credit value: 20	ECTS value: 10	
School and Department: Westminster Elective		
Module Leader: Jenni Nowlan		
Extension: 66564	Email: nowlanj@westminster.ac.uk	
Host course: Westminster Elective		
Status: Westminster Elective		
Subject Board: HRM/L&PD		
Pre-requisites: None	Co-requisites: None	
Study abroad: None		
Special features: None		
Access restrictions: None		
<p>Summary of module content (approximately 400 characters): - This module focuses on developing personal awareness and resilience for academic purposes and for professional life. From research it is known that Individual resilience is strongly associated with physical and psychological markers of stability, which helps to deal with adversity and stress during challenging life situations. Through the knowledge, strength and experience gained, from theory to practice, students will grow in understanding and capacity, not only of their own resilience and wellbeing, but also of others in the community. This in turn helps to develop working in diverse communities and to help create future ethical leaders.</p>		

Module aims

Critique and understand the theoretical background to resilience and wellbeing
Apply effective resilience tools to self
Demonstrate self-development in areas of resilience and wellbeing
Communicate understanding of resilience in others and in the wider community

Learning outcomes

At the end of the module the student, with a reasonable degree of autonomy, should be able to:

Knowledge and Understanding:

LO1 Critique global models and background theories of stress and wellbeing in society (GA4)

Professional and Personal Practice:

LO2 Evaluate resilience in self (GA5)

LO3 Communicate own sense of wellbeing and that of others within the community (GA2)

LO4 Apply a range of diverse resilience tools whilst embracing change rather than fearing it (GA3)

Key Transferable Skills:

LO5 Synthesise resilience and wellbeing from theory to practice (GA1)

Graduate Attributes these learning outcomes contribute to:

GA1 Critical and creative thinkers

GA2 Literate and effective communicator

GA3 Entrepreneurial

GA4 Global in outlook and engaged in communities

GA5 Social, ethically and environmentally aware

Indicative syllabus content

Introduction:

Multidisciplinary nature of module

Overview of module

Aims of module

Introduction to assessments

Background:

How our brains and bodies function

Evolution and emotions

Emotion regulations systems

Autonomic nervous system

The prefrontal cortex

The mammalian brain
The reptilian brain
Emotional memories
Heart-brain connection

Learning to boost resilience:
Positive emotion
Parasympathetic tone
Mindful embodiment
Skilful use of the breath
Returning to baseline
Thinking and perception; feelings and emotions
Understanding messages from the body
Heart rate variability (HRV)
Empathy and mirror neurons
Compassion for others and self
Sleep hygiene
Strengthening left prefrontal cortex
Reducing activity in right prefrontal cortex

Practise sessions:
Resilience assessments
Boosting vagal tone
Mindfulness meditations
Compassion
Exploring link between own thinking and perception; own feelings and emotions

Support for assessments:
Expectations
Specific study skills sessions
Exploration of application of resilience tools and models to professional practice and professional life

Teaching and learning methods

Through a mix of workshops, seminars, lectures, experiential field trips, online discussion forums, group work and self-study students will gain vital background knowledge to this multidiscipline area; learn the required practical skills that will enhance their resilience for professional lives; and learn how to synthesise theory to practice.

Sessions will take place on campus and at various chosen outside venues.

All learning, teaching and assessments on this module reflect the Westminster Graduate Attributes.

Time frame

Activity type	Category	Student learning and teaching hours*
Lecture	Scheduled	12
Class	Scheduled	24
Workshops	Scheduled	12
Total Scheduled		48
Structured independent study	Independent	50
Module and Course based general study	Independent	30
Working on and taking assignments	Independent	72
Total independent study hours		152
Total student learning and teaching hours		200

*the hours per activity type are indicative and subject to change.

Assessment rationale

The rationale behind the assessment approach for this module is that students will have a good grasp of theoretical foundations whilst also affording them an opportunity to experience practice whilst reflecting on and developing a personal theoretical framework for future professional life. Both assessments are individually focused since resilience, its development and interpretation is unique to the individual student.

Assessment One: In-module

Essay on choice of chosen theoretical concepts underpinning resilience. Students are required to focus on two of the concepts of resilience highlighted in the module syllabus and to explore these in depth.

Assessment Two: End-of-module

Developmental reflective narrative. This can either be written as a portfolio, performed, or an artistic piece. This must be clearly related to the student's experience of using resilience strategies academically and for professional life, both within themselves and expanded out into the community.

Assessment Criteria

Essay

Range of sources accessed
 Quality of sources accessed
 Evidence of multi-disciplinary approach
 Critique of chosen areas of resilience

Developmental Reflective Narrative

Critical reflection of learning gained

Critical reflection of individual development
 Demonstration of multi-discipline approach
 Resilience strategies clearly articulated for academic life, for professional life, for self, and within communities

Assessment methods and weightings

Assessment name	Weighting %	Qualifying mark %	Qualifying set	Assessment type (e.g. essay, presentation, open exam or closed exam)
Coursework 1 (LO1)	40%			Written coursework 1500 words
Coursework 2 (LO's 2,3,4.5)	60%			Written, performed, or an artistic piece Written: 2000 words or Performance: 15 minutes Artistic piece: 15 minute explanation and critique

Sources Essential reading list

Snyder, C.R., Lopez, S.J. & Pedrotti, J.T., 2010, *Positive psychology: The scientific and practical explorations of human strengths*, Sage Publications,.

Further reading

Chaskalson, M. (2011). *The Mindful Workplace: Developing Resilient Individuals and Resonant Organizations with MBSR*. West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell

Grossman, Niemann, Schmidt & Walach (2003). Mindfulness Based stress reduction and health benefits : A Meta-analysis

Kabat-Zin, J. (1994). *Wherever you go there you are: Mindfulness Meditation in everyday life*. Hyperion: New York

Online resources

Higgs, M., & Dulewicz, V. (2014) Antecedents of well-being: a study to examine the extent to which personality and emotional intelligence contribute to well-being, *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 25:5, 718-735, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2013.815253>

Date of initial validation: 2015
Dates of approved modifications:
Date of re-validation/review:

Appendix vi- Eventbrite Mindfulness for Leaders Workshop

Mindfulness for Leaders

Friday 2nd & Friday 16th June 14.00 – 17.00

Free event

People who practice mindfulness credit it with creating positive change – both within and outside of work. The latest neuroscientific studies back up this anecdotal evidence: suggesting that using mindfulness techniques regularly for just eight weeks produces structural changes in the brain.

But don't take my word for it, why not come along and experience it for yourself? You can attend both (ideally) or just one of the two workshops.

These sessions will provide you with the understanding, experience and techniques enabling you to develop – or deepen – a regular mindfulness practice. And they will help you destress for the weekend.

Who is this for?

These sessions are aimed at leaders and aspiring leaders from across the University of Westminster. Course leaders, module leaders, Heads of Department, corporate staff and Senior Managers. You are all welcome.

What will you get out of it?

The benefits of mindfulness practice are personal to each individual. However, in addition to the tools, techniques and exercises you will learn, many people find that they

- discover improved capacity to focus attention
- experience raised levels of wellbeing
- find positive effects are also experienced by those they work with

For further details and to sign up:

https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/mindfulness-for-leaders-tickets-33617268154?utm_campaign=new_event_email&utm_medium=email&utm_source=eb_email&utm_term=viewmyevent_button

Facilitator

Jenni Nowlan is a Chartered Psychologist and an Associate Fellow with the *British Psychological Society (BPS)* and an Academic Member of the *Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)*. She is also a Fellow of the *Higher Education Academy*. and is working on her Doctoral thesis on the theme of Mindfulness in Higher Education. Jenni has been practicing mindfulness techniques for over twenty years.

Email J.Nowlan@westminster.ac.uk for more information

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- Alvesson, M and Sköldbberg, K. (2018). *Reflexive methodology: new vistas for qualitative research*, 3rd ed. London: Sage.
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