

Running head: UNDERGRADUATE MINDFUL LEADER DEVELOPMENT

Mindful Leader Development of Undergraduate Students

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May 2019

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy in Educational Studies, Leadership and Policy

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### **Dedication**

To my children, may the world be an inspiring, kind and fully conscious place for you to awaken your human potential while you explore renewal and develop grand, noble solutions. To my dear loved ones, especially my husband, may your heart be filled with the love that you have given me in such grandeur. You inspire me! To the beautiful women who have shown me to never give up and that anything is possible - my dearest Omi, and mother. May you carry with you the love we found in silence and stillness as we watched the magical world of nature unfold in awesome wonder before our eyes.

To my students, fellow faculty and family, may you always nurture the opportunity to take time to reflect on your actions with loving-kindness, and grow from all the lessons you experience to become the best version of yourself that is possible.

To all the great teachers, you know who you are – you have a passion for what you do, and you care about the well-being, wholehearted and holistic growth, and achievement of your students! Great teachers always strive to improve their craft – may you always find hope and growth to fill yourself with the inspiration and energy you need to continue giving your gift of wisdom to others, and find gratitude with every lesson you teach.

### **Acknowledgements**

First, I would like to acknowledge my participants, and Dr. Melissa Schaffer-O'Connell. Without your interest, time and involvement, I would have not been able to gain a greater understanding of mindfulness. For this I am most grateful.

This would not be possible without my family! I have my incredible family to thank - Lorenzo, Mateo and Gabriel - you mean the world to me. As I progressed, my motivation and heart were focused on you. Without the support of my closest family members, I would not have the space, or time to focus and complete my research or teaching responsibilities. My husband has been amazing, taking on so much to give me this opportunity! I am also incredibly grateful to my mother and in-laws (Gail Biocchi-Rebek, Lorenzo and Anna DiCerbo) who have provided ongoing support in being the most loving, generous caregivers. My father Peter Rebek, grandmother Annie Rebek and my dear aunts and uncles (Irma and David Bull, Art and Terri Rebek, Ingrid Schlote, Marcy and Frank Borelli) who cared for my family, some of whom provided me with solid advice and guidance. I want to thank all my siblings (including siblings in-law's) and their families for all the fun, laughter and support you shared along the way. My cousins, Drew Rebek, Melanie Bull, and Warren Schlote also found an interest in my research, which I am grateful for. I could go on and on! I just can't thank all of my family enough. My family is very special, for they have surrounded me with the love, support, intelligence, and guidance that energized my inspiration towards successful completion.

Dr. Paul Berger, Dr. Paula Sameshima, Dr. Susan Drake and my supervisor Dr. Seth Agbo have all been instrumental in offering me inspiration, resources and support. Dr. Juanita Epp and Dr. Vera Woloshyn have shown an interest in the topic of mindfulness and have taken time to share resources, celebration, and advice with me as my dissertation committee members.

I could not have done this without these two fabulous academics! Dr. Fred Luthans, Dr. Srikumar Rao, Dr. William Brendel, Dr. Catherine Cook-Cottone, and Dr. John Dugan thank you for taking the time to offer me relevant guidance, resources, and direction. A special thank you to my examiners, Dr. David Greenwood and Dr. Ashwani Kumar for their interest, affirmations and feedback. This group of academics has strengthened me.

In addition, the Library Staff at Lakehead (Gisella Scalese), Algoma University (Helen Pereira, and Liz Gagnon), and Lake Superior State University (Marc Boucher, Theresa Pledger and Alexandra Van Doren). Mrs. Van Doren edited the entire dissertation for me, for which I am thankful. I also appreciate the support of my colleagues, Dr. Kimberly Muller, Professor Mindy McCready, Dr. David Finley, Dr. Ralf Wilhelms, Dr. Aaron Gordon, Professor Cathy Denomme, and Dr. Laurie Bloomfield for their support. Especially Professor Marta Diaz for her feedback and laughter. Mrs. Janine Murray for all that you have done every day to support my efforts to both teach and learn. Ms. Chelsea Ross, and Ms. Anna Finley thank you for the editing support, referencing help, and friendship.

I want to acknowledge non-participating students that contributed their insight and have offered astute observation, intelligence, flexibility, authenticity and continued efforts to encourage mindfulness research and learning. To Ms. Carly Banchiu, Mr. James (Christopher) Benzing, and Ms. Karly VanderMolen for their help and dedication to learning.

My dearest friends, Dr. Daneen Denomme (who convinced me to do this), Dr. Ashley Moerke, Dr. Paula Antunes, Ms. Dionne Elgie, Mrs. Minna Koskela-Wild, and Mrs. Anne-Marie Caicco. Your friendships have been a key support network for me to continue to pursue my PhD, and I could not have done it without you cheering me on, so regularly.

To the Divine, you fill me with life and inspire awe in all that I have done and will do.

### Abstract

This case study examined a six-week mindfulness intervention in a higher education leadership course. Higher education has a critical role to play in preparing students to navigate this worldwide terrain with success by nurturing self-awareness (foundational for leader development) that past clinical research has shown can help students deal more effectively with challenges, and achieve academic and career success. Since the impact of contemplative approaches on undergraduate students was sparse, this intrinsic single-case study aimed to understand the mindfulness experiences of thirteen undergraduate students enrolled in a higher education leadership course, along with two faculty members. Intrinsic case studies arise from the investigator's inherent curiosity in a classroom-level practical inquiry that integrated a new pedagogy (i.e. mindfulness) into teaching methods to learn, develop and refine this contemplative practice. Mindfulness is a competency required for effective leader development that was used as a five-minute opening, using the *Headspace* guided meditation, every class for a period of six-weeks. The Social Change Model (SCM) guided this case study using qualitative methods (focus group, semi-structured interviews, post-survey, personal journals, observation/field notes, course artifacts, audio-visual recordings, meditation records via the *Insight Timer*) to evaluate the impact of mindfulness on undergraduate intrapersonal development. SCM focuses on intrapersonal development within the cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions of the individual domain, and was used to evaluate the impact of mindfulness. Seventy-five percent of participants reported greater self-awareness, and also expressed the following themes: deep honesty, self-understanding, focus, open-mind (clarity and optimism), relaxed and calm, problem-solving internal conflict, empathy, genuine congruence, confidence, creativity, accountability, and self-improvement. Some participants perceived that mindfulness and leadership were integral and intertwined, and motivated them to become better leaders. The findings suggest that this intertwining was helpful and strengthened the intrapersonal development of undergraduate students.

KEYWORDS:

Self-awareness, mindfulness, undergraduate, leader development, contemplative education, leadership education, scholarship of teaching and learning, Social Change Model

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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

I will provide the background of my research study, the research problem, research purpose, research questions, definition of terms and the structure of the dissertation within this chapter.

### **Background of the Study**

This study is an examination of the impact of mindfulness practice on intrapersonal development within an undergraduate leadership course. Research suggested that higher education has a critical role to play in developing student leadership (Astin & Astin, 2004; Avolio, 2016; Dugan & Komives, 2010; Schmitt, 2015). Yet, intrapersonal development was often left underexposed in leadership education (Allen & Middlebrooks, 2013; Berends, Glunk, & Wüster, 2008; Gonzalez, 2015). Mindfulness practice contributed to intrapersonal development and supported the self-awareness that many researchers claimed to be foundational for effective leadership (Anderson & Sun, 2017; Black, Soto, & Spurlin, 2016; Nesbit, 2012; Singh, Manser & Dali, 2013; Shek & Law, 2014). Many models of leadership referred to self-awareness as an essential aspect of leadership development (e.g., Avolio & Luthans, 2008; Day, 2000; Goleman, 2013; Kouzes & Posner, 2014). For example, self-awareness or mindfulness was inherent within the “Consciousness of Self” domain in the Social Change Model of leadership (Komives & Wagner, 2017), authentic leadership (Luthans & Avolio, 2003; Zubair & Kamal, 2015), and leader development readiness (Reichard, Walker, Putter, Middleton, & Johnson, 2017), to name a few. Self-awareness was required to develop reflective and ethical leaders (Rothausen, 2016). Stanford and Cornell University claimed that self-awareness was the

most important attribute for leader development (Daft, 2016; Lipman, 2013). Mindfulness will be the term used throughout this dissertation, since mindfulness practice restores and nurtures self-awareness.

Presently, a social movement towards mindfulness is growing, perhaps due to the proven benefits from neuroscientific, psychological and health research. Research has shown that mindfulness changes the neuroplasticity of the practitioners' brains and has led to positive personal and professional changes, such as reducing stress and burnout (Ninivaggi, 2019). *Time Magazine* and *National Geographic* (July 2019) have recently published entire magazine issues on mindfulness, the practice and the benefits. "General Mills created a Mindful Leadership Program with proven results—89% increased skills in listening and 88% gained greater clarity in making decisions; and other organizations that have integrated mindfulness education and practices include Target, Aetna International, eBay, Twitter, Ford Motor Company, Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, Apple, and Plantronics" (Lucas, 2015, p. 67). Shadguru's "Inner Engineering" and Google's "Search Inside Yourself" are development opportunities that both utilized mindfulness practices and principles to spread vitality to individuals and organizations (Bock, 2015).

This growing *Human Potential Movement* (influenced by Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers) promoted the integration of contemplative practices in higher education (Kumar & Downey, 2018). The *Calming Technology Lab* and the *Designing Calm* graduate course at Stanford University were two examples that promoted mindfulness and presented a more balanced approach to human development and learning in higher education (Goleman, 2013). The value of connecting learners with themselves to cultivate awareness of their choices was considered integral to learning and had been described as meditative inquiry (Kumar & Downey,

2018; Kumar, 2013), “contemplative inquiry (Barbezat & Bush, 2014; Palmer & Zajonc, 2010), integrative education (Palmer, Zajonc, & Scribner, 2010), emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1994) and mindfulness” (Evard & Bresciani, 2016, p. 85). Mindfulness instilled personal transformation as a conduit to transformational learning through critical reflexivity and dialogue - examining how one thinks, feels and acts (Kumar, 2013; Petriglieri & Petriglieri Insead, 2015). “Personal transformation occurs from within, and mindfulness creates the path to learning and growth” (Collins, 2016; Brendel, 2013, p. 13). Due to the demand for such knowledge, Professor Laurie Santos had to accommodate, in a stadium, approximately one quarter of the undergraduate student population at Yale who registered for her course titled, the *Science of Well-Being* that incorporated mindfulness (Tremonti, 2018). Associations also exist to support this vibrant movement within higher education to acknowledge a holistic approach within higher education courses, including the *Society of Teaching and Learning*, the *Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education*, the *Calm Classroom*, *Inner Resilience Program*, *Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Teachers* (CARE) at the Garrison Institute, and *SMART* - Stress Management and Relaxation Techniques in education.

Mindfulness has been proven to enhance self-awareness, contributing to one’s insight and inner wisdom, needed to envision creative solutions (Karssiens, van der Linden, Wilderom, & Furtmueller, 2014; Garavan, McGuire, & Lee, 2015; Page, Grisoni, & Turner, 2014; Rae, 2015; Reams, 2016; Ruderman & Clerkin, 2015). Self-awareness enables leaders to make a meaningful difference in the world, as true leadership starts from within oneself (Adler, 2010; Rothausen, 2017). “Self-transformation is required for any substantial social transformation” (Kumar, 2013, p. 35). Research has shown that self-awareness was a critical component to leader development and that scholars needed to explore ways to cultivate self-awareness in

higher education by providing space for mindfulness practices (Brendel & Bennett, 2016; Brendel, Hankerson, Byun, & Cunningham, 2016; Nesbit, 2012; Reeds, 2015).

### **Research Problem**

Our contemporary culture has been driven by anxiety and uncertainty, and drifts individuals farther away from their values, causing many to feel “lost, overwhelmed, and exhausted” (Wheatley, 2013, p. 46). Worldwide, technology promoted ineffective habits and reduced self-reflection on the meaning of personal actions; as such information increases have led to an attention deficit and burnout (Goleman, 2013). Lack of direction and feelings of despair may have contributed to the leadership scandals, financial collapse, and burnout that has diminished ethical leadership practices in our contemporary culture (Avolio, 2016; Canwell, Geller, & Stockton, 2015; Ninivaggi, 2019). Higher education has been called on to develop more wholehearted leaders (Brown, 2015). Leadership directly impacts the present global issues we currently face (e.g., climate change, terrorism, poverty, etc.), and facilitates the development of creative solutions worthy of our humanity (see Adler’s 2010 Keynote Address at the Academy of Management’s Annual Meeting).

Technology and globalization have also led to identity challenges, mental health issues and rates of depression and anxiety, especially for undergraduate students (Avolio, 2016; Brown & Ryan, 2015; Brooks & Anumudu, 2016; Canwell, Geller, & Stockton, 2015; Regehr, Glancy, & Pitts, 2013). Young people struggle with handling this complexity and daily stressors in a healthy, safe manner because they have not acquired the necessary skills (Hornich-Lisciandro, 2013; as cited in Rae, 2015). Higher education has a critical role in preparing students to navigate this worldwide terrain with success by nurturing consciousness or self-awareness



(Dugan & Komives, 2010; Laloux, 2014; Nonaka, 2014; Petriglieri & Petriglieri Insead, 2015; Shotter & Tsoukas, 2014; Weick, 2006).

Students who developed self-awareness established healthy internal and social intelligence, gained longitudinal effects that often persisted into adulthood, and a higher percentage were successful in their communities (Avolio, 2016; Barnes, 2016; Dugan & Komives, 2010; Houwer, 2013; Lewis et al., 2016; Nathan & Sendjaya, 2013). Based on clinical research, practicing mindfulness could help students achieve academic and career success, and deal more effectively with the less predictable and rational sides of life (Laloux, 2014; Luthans et al., 2014). In addition, mindfulness has been shown to decrease anxiety, depression and burnout (Cullen, 2011; Ninivaggi, 2019; Seigel, 2012; Young, 2016). Mindfulness “offers hope for transforming conflict, developing more generative organizational and societal cultures, and addressing serious world challenges” (Ippolito, 2015; as cited in Adler & Ippolito, 2016, p. 46).

Positive changes to our modern culture are needed, and the only thing that can make great change would be to transform individual consciousness, which comes from self-awareness and opening the mind to wisdom and creativity (Kumar, 2013). Albert Einstein reaffirmed that problems cannot be solved at the same level of consciousness that created them (Adler, 2010). Students, our future leaders, who develop self-awareness and a conscious approach, can demonstrate the authentic and ethical behaviours needed to face complex issues innovatively and create positive change (e.g., environmentally, socially, politically and economically). Mindfulness awakens authenticity by exploring deeper personal insights, releasing old patterns and replacing them with renewed vitality, energy and freedom (Baptiste, 2013). Ellen Langer, a renowned Harvard University psychologist, suggested that mindfulness connects ethics and

leadership and provided undergraduates with clarity and purpose as they navigated through challenging situations (Carroll, 2007; Gonzalez, 2012; Kashdan & Biswas-Diener, 2014).

Mindfulness or self-awareness practices are being integrated into Higher Education leadership learning as a key practice for developing relationships and enhancing leadership capabilities (Haber-Curran, Allen, & Shankman 2015; Van Velsor, Moxley & Bunker, 2004). Higher education holds an empowering position to train future leaders to be authentic and ethical through contemplative practices, to give undergraduates the internal and social intelligence required to craft positive changes for a better world (Barnes, 2016). The *Social Change Model* for leadership can teach students to become authentic as SCM empowers students to become conscious, to act congruently towards their commitments, and to create social change (HERI, 1996; Haber & Komives, 2009).

Even though mindfulness was gaining popularity in contemporary and scholarly applications, there was limited knowledge regarding this innovative application and it was unclear how mindfulness could be integrated within leadership learning (Brown & Ryan, 2015; Edwards, Elliott, Iszatt-White, & Schedlitzki, 2015; Ruderman & Clerkin, 2015). This dissertation research examined mindfulness as a wellness pedagogy within undergraduate leader development (i.e., within the framework of the *SCM*), to potentially strengthen wellbeing and leadership and contribute qualitative research to enrich the study of mindfulness in scholarly literature.

Rae (2015) stated, a gap exists for undergraduates who are future leaders, as undergraduates required more support with tools that encouraged self-awareness of choices in social, environmental, and ethical contexts. Students who participated in leadership learning that integrated personal development left with a strong sense of their values and a deeper

understanding of their abilities. As a result, students gained the courage-building skills required of leaders including self-awareness, self-efficacy, creativity, ethics, and employability (Barnes & Larcus, 2015; Brown, 2015; Cinque, 2016; Garavan et al., 2015; Gentile, 2015; Lewis et al., 2016; Nathan & Sendjaya, 2013; Zubair & Kamal, 2015).

The gap in the research was not around the justification for mindfulness education but in the methods by which students learned and developed as mindful leaders. The need was in the examination of innovative approaches and frameworks that might lead to self-development within leadership learning in higher education (Avolio, 2016; Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm, & McKee, 2014; Barbezat & Bush, 2014; McNae, 2011; Owen-Smith, 2018; Reams, 2016; Rothausen, 2017; Wilensky, 2016). In spite of growing evidence that mindfulness was important for leadership development, mindfulness education was typically absent from most leadership development interventions (Black, Soto & Spurlin, 2016; Brendel & Bennett, 2016; Lucas & Goodman, 2015; Reeds, 2015; Roche, Haar, & Luthans, 2014). An examination of mindfulness education for young people in practice and research was sparse, especially in higher leadership education (Ager, Albrecht, & Cohen, 2015; Brown & Ryan, 2015; Coholic, 2011; Miller, di Pierdomenico, & Kadziolka, 2017; Stewart Lawlor, 2016). Also, many research studies that examined mindful leadership development were quantitative (Rae, 2015; Brendel, Hankerson, Byun, & Cunningham, 2016).

Researchers who examined the directional links between the “conditions that support the unfolding and expression of mindfulness,” processes, and the outcomes of interventions, deepened our understanding of optimal human functioning (Brown, Kasser, Ryan, Linley & Orzeck, 2009, p. 228). McCloskey (2015) asserted that further research into “the practical application of mindfulness programs on college campuses and the subsequent effect of these

programs on student functioning” is needed (p. 225). Other researchers suggested that more research was required to investigate practices that engaged individuals in self-awareness, to determine if it was a predictor of intrinsic motivation or if it motivated performance and authentic leadership (Nesbit, 2012; Baron & Cayer, 2011; Reb, Narayanan, & Chaturvedi, 2014).

Wilensky (2016) provided areas where mindfulness had not yet been validated or explored. She suggested that mindfulness could promote personal transformation and could cultivate the self-awareness that allowed individuals to monitor progress and enhance success toward their personal growth. This examination could only be done by qualitative research that investigated undergraduate self-awareness through mindful leader development to validate student views (DeRue & Myers, 2014; Goldman-Schuyler, Skjei, Sanzgiri, & Koskela, 2017).

Research had shown that students who participated in mindfulness practice gained a significant increase in wellbeing, positive psychological benefits, and effective leadership skills including: self-awareness, creativity, promotional regulatory focus and a significant reduction in anxiety and stress (Brendel, Hankerson, Byun, & Cunningham, 2016; Greeson, Toohey, & Pearce, 2015; Ramsburg and Youmans, 2014; Ritzer, Fagan, Kilmon, & Rath, 2015; Schwind, McCay, Beanlands, Schindel Martin, Martin, & Binder, 2017). It is anticipated that the findings of the current study would provide insights into the leader development process while strengthening the self-awareness of participants (Dugan & Komives, 2010). Due to the methodological limits of this study, future research would need to include other methodologies to further examine this emerging topic.

### **Research Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to understand the experiences that a six-week mindfulness practice had on undergraduate students’ intrapersonal development within a leadership course.

This classroom-level practical inquiry investigated the integration of a new pedagogy (i.e., mindfulness) into teaching methods, with the aim to discover, learn, develop and refine the contemplative practice of mindfulness (Franzese & Felten, 2017). Self-awareness was nurtured through mindfulness, since the practice of mindfulness instills concentration, clarity, and equanimity that awaken one's consciousness to the present moment (Young, 2016).

A case study inquiry examined mindful leader development and the impact that mindfulness had on student self-awareness, primarily in the classroom setting. This research assumed a unique single-case study approach that was *intrinsic*. Intrinsic case study was a suitable method for me, since as a teacher, I was curious and had a genuine interest about the student experience of employing mindfulness in a program evaluation (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

The use of a case study approach also aligned with the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning or SoTL methodology used within the study (McLeod, 2010; Yin, 2014). SoTL research was an avenue that promoted mindful learning and teaching, an understanding of deeper meanings, and provided a curious and open perspective of classroom behaviour (Franzese & Felten, 2017). The SoTL heuristic offered “a framework that is well-suited for the aims of faculty (and others) inquiring into contemplative pedagogies and with a commitment to the theory and practice of transformative learning” (Franzese & Felten, 2017, p. 4). This dissertation research provided a case study to present a clearer picture from multiple sources of information regarding the student, the teacher, context, process and outcomes to contribute knowledge to the leadership field and the SoTL outcomes for both teaching and learning, and for students.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions served to guide and focus this case study:

1. How do undergraduate students and the instructor experience a leadership course that integrates mindful awareness practices?
2. What are undergraduate and instructor experiences in practicing mindfulness (i.e., cognitive, affective, and behavioural)?
3. How do undergraduates perceive that mindfulness impacted them and influenced their intrapersonal leader development (i.e., consciousness, congruence and commitment)?

Proponents of case study research are divided on the use of propositions as part of the presentation of research questions. Yin (2014) recommended that propositions be used.

“Propositions may not be present in intrinsic case studies due to the fact that the researcher does not have enough experience, knowledge, or information from the literature upon which to base propositions” (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 552). In this case, a possible proposition could be that this dissertation research would provide recommendations or lessons learned for integrating mindfulness into higher education or leadership learning for other educators.

### **Assumptions and Bias Controls**

The three assumptions listed below stem from values that form the basis for my paradigm worldview, theoretical lens and methodologies.

1. An ontological assumption is that there are multiple realities. Within a constructivist lens, different perspectives can be explored, illustrated and combined to frame a collective experience. As human beings, we are complex and intricate with differing experiences, perspectives and human designs (i.e., personality, genes, etc.). The participants’ subjective experiences, as documented by the researcher, provide a means to define the combined reality of the mindful leader development experience.
2. An axiological foundation lies in the value-laden nature of research. This research was

conducted with the assumption that epistemology is transformative (Creswell, 2013). I therefore, recognized the influence of my values as they related to the research and acknowledged my expectation that research will influence change.

3. A background in mindfulness practice. As a mindfulness practitioner and life-long learner, I have benefitted from mindfulness practices and developed a healthy psychological mindset from which I hope the students would benefit (Seigel, 2012). As with any teacher research, the goal was improvement of student learning through the development of practical theory, strong relations with students, self-knowledge, and an action plan for improved learning and practice (Putman & Rock, 2017).

### **Definition of Terms**

This definition of terms stemmed from the literature review that centred on intrapersonal leader or leadership development. When used in this research the following terms are defined as stated here.

**Insight** – The power or act of becoming aware of one’s inner nature, an intuitive understanding of things, or an inner wisdom that is gained through ongoing mindfulness practice.

**Self-Awareness** – An awareness of one’s own personality or individuality and present experience, through an attunement to one’s conscious/unconscious thoughts, emotions or actions.

**Consciousness** – Perception with a degree of controlled observation and self-awareness.

**Mindfulness** – The practices of maintaining a peaceful state of heightened or complete awareness (consciousness), where one observes thoughts, emotions and experiences in the present moment, with nonjudgmental clarity. Mindfulness nurtures self-awareness, consciousness and insight.

**Mindful Awareness Practice (MAP)** – Activities that an individual partakes in to foster mindfulness, and when done on a consistent basis, evolves into clearer states and increased consciousness of self (e.g., artistic expressions of dancing, painting, colouring, walking quietly in nature, meditation, yoga, Tai Chi: Young, 2016).

**Leader** – A leader is “an advocate for change” for new approaches/solutions (Nelson & Quick, 2016, p. 187). Everyone has the potential to lead by differing degrees (Bennis & Thomas, 2007; e.g., lead a small vs. small group), and effectiveness (i.e., a person can illustrate bad, good or great leadership). Leadership can be learned based on personal motivation, knowledge, ability and identity (Day & Harrison, 2007; Ashford & DeRue, 2012; DeRue and Myers, 2014).

**Leadership** – The actual process or action taken (Day, 2000) to lead yourself or others. Anyone can become a leader, and leadership involves having a strong character for what is right and best for the greater community, and creating positive community change and collective action (Mortensen, Lichty, Foster-Fishman, Harfst, Hockin, Warsinske, & Abdullah, 2014).

**Leader development** – Opportunities that develop the intrapersonal capacity of an individual through curriculum, programs, or activities (i.e., within an individual’s self, or human capital; Day, 2000; Day et al., 2014; Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007). Can be referred to as self- or personal or intrapersonal development.

**Leadership development** – Opportunities that strengthen interpersonal factors of an individual through curriculum, programs, or activities (i.e., external factors and relations, or social capital; Day, 2000; Day et al., 2014) related to the process of leading (DeRue & Myers, 2014).



**Leader Development Readiness (LDR)** – Individuals demonstrate abilities, willingness, courage and the motivation necessary to learn and develop as a leader (Hannah & Avolio, 2010). Self-awareness of self-concept, and metacognition are key components of LDR, along with learning goal orientation, development efficacy, and leader complexity (Avolio & Hannah, 2008), and self-discovery of personal passion and purpose (Reichard et al., 2017).

**Metacognitive Ability (MCA)** – MCA accelerates leader development by allowing for self-awareness of personal strengths, weaknesses, abilities, and how to adapt one's learning (Avolio & Hannah, 2008; Black, Soto & Spurlin, 2016).

**Intrapersonal Competencies** – Competencies are the Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSA's) that form an understanding and accurate model of oneself, along with access and adjustment to improve one's internal knowledge dimensions. KSA's is what an individual requires to understand and demonstrate one's authenticity, which leads one to internalize lifelong learning towards self-actualization or one's full potential (Maslow, 2013; 1968).

### **Structure of the Dissertation**

This introduction presents the research problem and the academic context for this research, along with the main research questions and sub-questions. In Chapter two (2), a comprehensive literature review explores the research questions through significant influences and themes, including (a) meaningful leader or intrapersonal development (Black, Soto, Spurlin, 2016; Cameron, 2012; Dutton & Spreitzer, 2014; Eggers, 2014; Frizzell et al., 2016; Fry, 2003; Garavan et al., 2015; Gentile, 2015; Karp, 2013; Kouzes & Posner, 2014; Lewis et al., 2016; Luthans & Avolio, 2003; McKenna, Rooney & Boal, 2009; Neck, 2015; Nesbit, 2012; Redmond & Dolan, 2014; Reichard & Walker, 2016; Schwartz, 2015; Shek & Law, 2014; Whitney, Trosten-Bloom, & Rader, 2010; Singh, Manser & Dali, 2013; Wright & Goodstein, 2007;

Wright, 2015), including self-awareness as a foundation for leadership (Avolio & Luthans, 2008; Black, Soto, & Spurlin, 2016; Bratianu, 2015; Day, 2000; Day & Dragoni, 2015; Ghoshal, 2005; Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2013; Holland & Andre, 1994; Houwer, 2013; Marques, 2012; Murphy & Johnson, 2011; Nesbit, 2012; Roche, 2010; Wilensky, 2016; Wright, 2015) and the individual domain of the Social Change Model of leadership (Higher Education Research Institute [HERI], 1996; Haber & Komives, 2009; Iachini, Cross, & Freedman, 2015), (b) intrapersonal learning and development (Erikson & Erikson, 1998; Garavan et al., 2015; Mintzberg; 2004; Page et al., 2014; Shankman, Allen, & Haber-Curran, 2015; Van Velsor, Moxley & Bunker, 2004; Watkins, 2013), and (c) mindful learning or contemplative education (Barbezat & Bush, 2014; Brendel & Bennett, 2016; Brown, Kasser, Ryan, Linley & Orzeck, 2009; Goldman Schyler, 2010; McCloskey, 2015; Miller, di Pierdomenico, & Kadziolka, 2017; Oman, Shapiro, Thoresen, Plante, & Flinders, 2008; Reeds, 2015; Stewart Lawlor, 2016). The literature review culminates in a conceptual model for mindful leader development research that frames the goal for this research.

In Chapter three (3) research methods for case study inquiry are outlined, described and explained, along with the methods for data analysis. Chapter four (4) presents the case study, including my position as a researcher, and outlines the findings to provide the details and key themes that arose from participant input. Chapter five (5) provides a discussion of the findings, particularly the responses to the research questions. The discussion indicates the relevance of this research in the context of higher education, its pedagogical implications and contributions, significance, limitations and recommendations for future research. The conclusion and summary in Chapter six (6), re-connects the research to the literature to provide practical heuristics for

students and faculty interested in mindfulness practice to promote well-being in teaching or learning leadership.

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

This literature review accesses literature from across several fields, including neuroscience, health, business, psychology, management, and leadership. Components of the literature review included a background and rationale, leadership or self-development, leading and teaching intrapersonal competencies, such as self-awareness and metacognition, and described the mindfulness practice, and its' role in contemplative education. A review of past research that used mindful interventions within higher education was also examined. The concepts associated with intrapersonal development, particularly self-awareness, were connected to an ideal outcome of mindfulness education to frame the conceptual model used in this study. The conceptual model concludes this literature review and provides the framework for this case study's findings and discussion.

### Literature Review: Background & Rationale

We must solve problems at a different level of consciousness than what was used to create them – Einstein (Adler, 2010).

“Mindful reflection on our life choices is a most important endeavour” (Brown & Ryan, 2015, p. 152), particularly in a milieu in which worldwide technology and globalization have led to identity challenges, concerning rates of depression and anxiety, and mental health issues (Brooks & Anumudu, 2016; Regehr, Glancy, & Pitts, 2013). Many managers report that they enjoy work, but feel empty, “lost, overwhelmed, and exhausted” (Karssiens, van der Linden, Wilderom, & Furtmueller, 2014; Wheatley, 2013, p. 46). As Donahue (2003) asserts, we live in times that are driven with anxiety and uncertainty (Adler, 2011). Constant distraction or the endless stream of activity within one's mind has “quieted” the soul and results in a lack of

personal purpose (Laloux, 2014; Wright, 2015). Ineffective habits diminish the time, value and importance individuals place on the self-reflection required to clarify one's personal purpose (Goleman, 2013).

Some scholars suggested that a lack of personal purpose perpetuates constant exhaustion and misdirection, and results in poor decisions and leadership (Wheatley, 2013). Poor leadership is associated with scandals, financial collapse, and a lack of ethics (Avolio, 2016; Canwell, Geller, & Stockton, 2015). Leadership directly impacts many present global issues (i.e., climate change, terrorism, etc). Approximately 86% of two thousand experts at the World Economic Forum (2014) agreed that leadership is a pressing global issue, calling for higher education to instill the capability for benevolent leadership (Petriglieri & Petriglieri Insead, 2015).

Benevolent leadership development (i.e., towards compassion and kindness) is needed to realign business with societal interests, and build a creative economy (i.e., extreme creativity connected with large market potential) that presents solutions worthy of our humanity (Adler, 2010). One possible avenue for this renewal would be mindfulness approaches that “offer hope for transforming conflict, developing more generative organizational and societal cultures, and addressing serious world challenges” (Ippolito, 2015; as cited in Adler & Ippolito, 2016, p. 46). These benevolent approaches can be applied within leader development.

Self-development is foundational to leadership development (Mintzberg; 2004; Shankman, Allen, & Haber-Curran, 2015). Human competencies such as metacognition and self-awareness have been identified as foundational to leadership development (Black, Soto, & Spurlin, 2016; Goleman, 2013; Houwer, 2013; Nesbit, 2012; Wright, 2015). Leader development is self-development (Waite et al., 2014; Karp, 2013). The competencies gained in

formal leadership programs are meaningless unless they focus on the essential intrapersonal aspects of leaders such as: mindful self-awareness (inner states), self-concept or identity, and intrinsic motivation (Gonzalez, 2015).

McDermott's (1994) 'leadership from within' paradigm was a progressive shift from traditional teaching methods to a learner-centred approach, where leadership is a process of becoming, and learning is a way of being (Antonacopoulou & Bento, 2004; Cook-Cottone, 2015). Over the years, leadership teaching has shifted to a more learner-centred approach, integrating concepts such as emotional intelligence and personal mastery (Goleman, 2013; Rao, 2008; Senge, 2006). A focus on personal growth as a form of leadership development has been described as critical leadership studies (Collinson & Tourish, 2015). Critical leadership is an emergent field that is using critical and reflective thinking to revitalize and rethink leadership education and research. Self-awareness of competency strengths and deficits are a primary focus in leader development (Nesbit, 2012). Yet many programs are still based on a one-size-fits-all model rather than incorporating transformational learning, a required element for personal development and growth (Torrez & Rocco, 2015).

Literature on the development of intrapersonal competencies within leader development is relatively sparse. Researchers have argued that more research is needed to further develop conceptual frameworks regarding self-development (Ashford & DeRue, 2012; Day et al., 2012; Karp, 2013; Nesbit, 2012; Roeser & Eccles, 2015; Solansky, 2015). Many have pointed to an ethical obligation for the development of self-awareness to reclaim the social value of this lifelong learning journey toward inner wisdom and knowing (Ghoshal, 2005; Nonaka, 2014; Shotter & Tsoukas, 2014; Weick, 2006). The development of mindfulness is required to engage individuals in conscious thoughts, feelings and actions (Nesbit, 2012; Baron & Cayer, 2011).

Although there are many ways in which mindfulness can be taught, one possible venue for this focus is contemplative education.

Leader development requires cognitive flexibility and creativity, and mindfulness is one venue for cultivating these intrapersonal capabilities (Brendel & Bennett, 2016; Horan, 2009; Zubair & Kamal, 2015). The ‘power stress’ that leaders face today can be managed effectively through mindfulness, a holistic process that builds the capacity to become self-aware of the body, mind, heart and spirit (Coleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2013; Lewis et al., 2016). With mindfulness, individuals align emotions with personal values and goals to motivate, to keep composure, focus, and provide an effective self-coping mechanism (Goleman et al., 2013). Participants in intrapersonal leadership learning gain a strong sense of their values and a deeper understanding of their abilities (Nathan & Sendjaya, 2013). As a result, students challenge and explore problematic dynamics, and incorporate more effective, relational, inclusive, ethical ways of leading and exercising power, which inspires benevolent leadership outcomes (Collinson & Tourish, 2015; Gentile, 2015).

It has been argued that intrapersonal competencies, such as mindfulness, contribute to the soft-skills or courage-building skills required of leaders (Brown, 2013). These include: creativity (Garavan et al., 2015), employability (Cinque, 2016), elevated trust, learning and performance (Koohang, Paliszkievicz, & Goluchowski, 2017), and academic achievement and career success (Roche, Haar & Luthans, 2014). When participants feel positive, they act positively and perform better (Watkins, 2013). The self-awareness gained through strength-based leader development (i.e., rather than deficit-based perspectives) allows them to move with more efficacy and ethics (Barnes & Larcus, 2015).

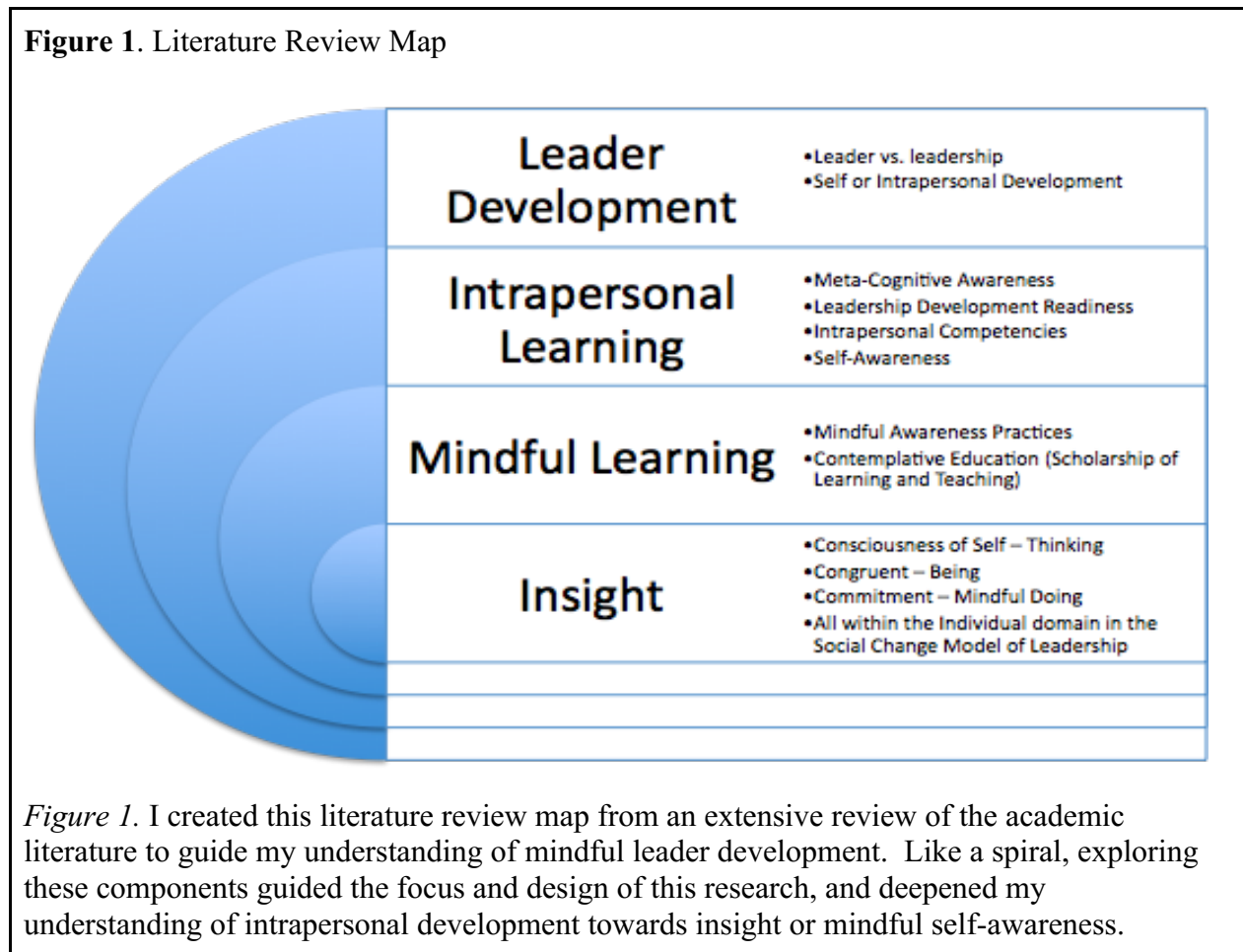
**Mapping the literature.**

An interdisciplinary perspective was used to craft this literature review, bridging the fields of: management, psychology, adult education, neuroscience, business, and the humanities. The literature review has a specific focus on strength-based approaches to human development. The four goals of the review evolved into four layers (see Figure 1):

1. To explore meaningful approaches to leader or intrapersonal development.
2. To investigate aspects of intrapersonal learning such as developing metacognitive awareness (MCA), intrapersonal competency development and self-awareness, a universal competency for effective leadership.
3. To better understand mindful or contemplative learning and investigate the use of mindful awareness practices within higher education.
4. To present a conceptual model, along with evidence and a research design for conducting a case study of mindful awareness practices, as they relate to the intrapersonal domain.



**Figure 1.** Literature Review Map



**Leader Development and Learning - An Intrapersonal Perspective**

The field of leadership studies is dynamic (Hanson, 2013; Marques, 2012) and constantly expanding (Hyvärinen, Uusiautti, & Määttä, 2014). It contains a plethora of approaches, evolving theories, subjective definitions, development techniques, and disciplinary lenses in which it is researched (Houwer, 2013; Lucas, 2015). Ricketts and Rudd (2002) concluded that leadership is vague, and as Stodgill (1974) observed, there are as many definitions of leadership as there are people who define it (as cited in Houwer, 2013). All humans are lifelong students of leadership since all of us have the potential to lead by differing degrees (Bennis & Thomas, 2007). This literature review focuses on the evolution of becoming a leader, rather than “being”

a leader as the understanding of leadership is constantly evolving (Edwards, Elliott, Iszatt-White, & Schedlitzki, 2015). Leadership is not necessarily defined by a role an individual is given. Anyone who has the competencies (even if developed by their own life experiences) to influence change in others, has the capacity to lead (Shankman et al., 2015).

### **Leader versus leadership.**

Leader and leadership are words that are often erroneously used with little clarification (Dugan & Komives, 2010). Often scholars use the language of the behaviour (leadership) and the individual (leader) interchangeably (Hall, 2015). To clarify:

1. Leader (abilities within an individual) - Identity, character, individual-based or intrapersonal competencies, which is gained via individual growth or development;
2. Leadership (influential process of individuals) - Relationships, interpersonal competencies and actions where leadership development is viewed as a collective process (Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm, & McKee, 2014; Hanson, 2013).

For a person to lead authentically he or she must have intrapersonal (internal) and interpersonal (external) processes to influence, direct, and build teams and organizations effectively (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Hanson, 2013). This literature review focuses on the intrapersonal aspect of leader development.

### **Self or intrapersonal development = leader development.**

The study of leader development “is more complex in comparison to the general field of leadership” (Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Strum, & McKee, 2013, p. 63). Leader development is a lifelong process that is dynamic, longitudinal and a complex integration of a person’s identity that strengthens over time, deepening an understanding of one’s personal values, sense of self, and self-actualization (Day et al., 2014; Garavan et al, 2015).

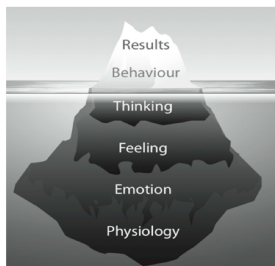
All people have the potential to cultivate authentic character, and become a leader (McCauley, Kanaga, & Lafferty, 2010; Bennis, 2009). In evaluating and clarifying the evolution of human or adult development, several authors suggest integrating theories of self-development to strengthen a holistic view of leader development, and stress the importance of personal development within leader development (Eggers, 2014; Garavan et al., 2015; Karp, 2013; Neck, 2015; Nesbit, 2012; Frizzell et al., 2016). Self-development includes: (a) self-renewal (Cameron, 2012; Dutton & Spreitzer, 2014; Fry, 2003; Whitney, Trosten-Bloom, & Rader, 2010), (b) self-awareness (Avolio & Luthans, 2008; Bratianu, 2015; Day, 2000; Ghoshal, 2005; Holland & Andre, 1994; Marques, 2012; Mintzberg, 2004; Murphy & Johnson, 2011; Roche, 2010), (c) self-knowledge (Lewis et al., 2016; McKenna, Rooney & Boal, 2009), and (d) ethics (Burton, Ward, & Ramsden, 2015; Gentile, 2015; Schwartz, 2015).

Self-development is leader development, since to lead others; leaders require resourcefulness to be effective instruments of influence (Karp, 2013). Therefore, to lead other people effectively, leaders must know themselves well and commit to intrapersonal growth (Kouzes & Posner, 2014; Redmond & Dolan, 2014; Wright & Goodstein, 2007; Wright, 2015). Self-awareness is an essential intrapersonal competency for many leadership models and is foundational for Leader Development Readiness (Black, Soto, Spurlin, 2016; Luthans & Avolio, 2003; Nesbit, 2012; Singh, Manser & Dali, 2013; Reichard & Walker, 2016). Self-awareness can be nurtured and enhanced through mindfulness (Garavan et al., 2015; Page et al., 2014).

Essential components for engaging students in learning leadership and fostering greater self-awareness are reflective or contemplative approaches inherent within self-discovery and intrapersonal development (Eich, 2008; Ligon & Hunter, 2010). Baumeister and Bushman (2013) noted that the self has its roots in the human capacity to turn attention back toward its

source, a self-psychology that offers insight into how identity is maintained, which plays an integral part in human motivation. However, anxiety and self-doubt, associated with self-sabotaging actions, may occur, which may deter authentic engagement in growth-oriented experiences (Avolio & Hannah, 2008). Conscious effort and attention are needed to expand an individual's perceptual awareness through mindfulness practices (Watkins, 2013).

Mindfulness is not a new concept. Young's (2012) LOFT model (i.e., listening, observing, feeling and thinking), a process that engages an individual in a spiral of inner knowledge or wisdom that led them to greater wakefulness and consciousness, which was reminiscent of mindfulness practices throughout the ages (Bratianu, 2015). Many scholars and ancient wisdom traditions recognize inner wisdom as central to personal or leader development (Appendix A). The LOFT model is based on Erikson's psychosocial stages of personal development, in which one must move up each 'rung' of the ladder with personal will, purpose, competence, love and wisdom (Erikson & Erikson, 1998). Similarly, Watkins (2013) uses an iceberg metaphor to illustrate this holistic process of moving towards inner wisdom. The larger part of the iceberg that is below the water's surface and unseen represents the unconscious self. The focus and awareness of these elements through mindfulness impacted the smaller part of the iceberg that represented an individual's visible results, actions and behavior (see Figure 3).

**Figure 2.** Iceberg Metaphor for Intrapersonal Development

*Figure 3.* The iceberg illustrated underlying aspects of intrapersonal skills that an individual could develop, leading to behaviours and results demonstrated through their human experience. From “Coherence - The Brilliant Future for Leaders,” by A. Watkins, November 15, 2013, HRZONE. Retrieved from <http://www.hrzone.com/perform/people/coherence-the-brilliant-future-for-leaders>

Mindfulness enables an individual to go within to become self-aware. The intrapersonal awareness gained through mindfulness focused a person to consciously engage in positive relationships with self and others (Watkins, 2013). By practicing mindfulness, an individual's thoughts could align with their actions (i.e., behaviours and results) as they demonstrated leadership through an authentic and simultaneous integration of their cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions (Cook-Greuter, 1999; Wilber, 2000; as cited in Baron & Cayer, 2011). In this way, leaders ensured that what they said, was what they would do as they act with mindfulness, self-awareness or congruence. Brendel and Bennett (2016) defined congruence between a person’s thoughts, feelings and actions as embodied leader development, and incorporated mindfulness in their teaching.

Embodied learning and mind training are grounded in similar perceptions about the importance of attention and awareness for developing effective, powerful action in the world. Fundamental to both methods is developing the capacity to act with awareness: to be fully present to what is taking place, rather than being distracted by expectations, habits, or fears about either oneself or others. Experience with coaching leaders suggests

that such awareness is essential for leadership integrity, which requires a leader to act with wholeness from deep values in ways that can be sustained over time. (Goldman Schuyler, 2010, p. 21)

Whole person learning in contemplative education and an embodied mind instilled an experience of mindful awareness that brought both body and mind together (Barbezat & Bush, 2014; Rae, 2015).

### **Intrapersonal Learning**

Business and education systems need to be designed with learning as the basis with self at the centre (Adler, 2010; Brendel & Bennett, 2016; Ghoshal, 2005; Gonzalez, 2015; Steiner & Foote, 2017). The best learning experiences teach individuals about things (explicit knowledge), and how to skillfully apply knowledge learned while strengthening self-knowledge (tacit knowledge), leading to transformational learning (Gonzalez, 2015). Polanyi asserts that all knowledge was tacit and was a holistic process of knowing, and the most foundational aspect of knowledge was human consciousness (Bennet & Bennet, 2015). Mindfulness provides deep reflection on one's human body, internal senses, and breathing in slow movement exercises, and provides the sensory and experiential knowledge required for new cognitive insights (Karssiens, van der Linden, Wilderom, & Furtmueller, 2014). Faculty members that created educational strategies to foster mindfulness could enhance leadership learning for students (Priest & Middleton, 2016). By consciously following a recursive cycle of experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting, students could increase their learning power and metacognition (Kolb & Kolb, 2008). With a focus on metacognition, faculty engaged students with strategies that they could apply to different learning tasks or environments (Steiner & Foote, 2017).

**Metacognitive Ability (MCA).**

Individuals who learn about how they learn open their metacognitive ability or MCA (MCA; Garner, 1988; as cited in Tanner, 2012). MCA is extremely important since learning is not seen by many individuals as the life-changing force that it is (Weimer, 2012). Metacognition is defined as an awareness of one's learning or thinking processes (Merriam-Webster, 2017). MCA has been used across many fields of study over the last decade. Metacognition is credited to developmental psychologist John Flavell (1979), and was later developed by Brown (1987), Schraw (1998), and others in cognitive and educational psychology (as cited in Steiner & Foote, 2017).

MCA has two components, self-awareness and self-regulation, of one's own cognitive processes (Sternberg & Wagner, 1986). MCA is referred to as "catching oneself in the act of learning, a critical element of self-awareness" (as cited in Van Velsor, Moxley, & Bunker, 2004, p. 215). Self-awareness triggered metacognitive reflection and opened the path to learning, strengthening self-esteem, which promoted learning and the cycle continues again (Van Velsor, Moxley & Bunker, 2004). MCA could strengthen learning and personal transformation, since self-awareness or the wise observer offered candor, questions, astute observations, and insight, as one chose to engage or not engage in their learning and growth (Van Velsor, Moxley, & Bunker, 2004).

MCA improved beliefs by allowing individuals to consider inconsistencies in reality, making adjustments and thus increasing self-concept clarity and awareness (Black, Soto & Spurlin, 2016). Self-concept expanded by incorporating new information into current beliefs or attitudes, enabling a greater complexity in understanding. Gadamer's (1976) discussed the problem of self-understanding and consciousness stating that MCA was necessary for evaluative

self-awareness (Barbezat & Bush, 2014). Development of positive metacognitive practices intentionally at a young age was important for human development, since it was an unconscious process that required practice (Black et al., 2016). MCA also had a direct influence on intrinsic motivation (Rabinowitz, 2017).

### **Leadership Development Readiness (LDR).**

Motivation was fueled by personal abilities, interests, goals and learning agility in the Leadership Development Readiness (LDR) framework (De Meuse et al., 2012). LDR ties directly to self-awareness and metacognition. LDR referred to the ability and willingness individuals required for developing leadership skills and abilities. LDR was a relatively new concept that examined how individuals varied in their readiness for leader development (Avolio, 2004; Avolio & Hannah, 2008; Reichard & Walker 2016). Passion and purpose contributed to leadership development readiness and authentic leadership. Purpose and passion was a result of self-awareness or self-concept clarity development within an individual (Gardner et al., 2011; Reichard & Walker, 2016). Development of personal passion and purpose was particularly important and beneficial to emerging young adults or students (Bronk & Walker, 2016). *Passion* occurred through the process of selection, valuation, and eventually internalization within the self-concept; while *purpose* arose from personal values and beliefs, goal creation and the pursuit towards meaningful goals (i.e., a greater cause than oneself; Bronk & Walker, 2016).

### **Intrapersonal competencies.**

Self-knowledge or intrapersonal intelligence served as a key foundation for leadership capabilities that could enhance leader development experiences (Shankman, Allen, & Haber-Curran, 2015; Van Velsor, Moxley & Bunker, 2004). Howard Gardner (1999) defined nine multiple intelligences (MI) with which individuals may be gifted. The theory of MI arose from



learning observations in the classroom rather than the psychometric context, and has led to “innovation both at a theoretical level and at intelligence assessment” (Almeida, Prieto, Ferreira, Bermejo, Ferrando, & Ferrándiz, 2010, p. 225). MI provides useful information for teaching, and much research had found that incorporating MI into student profiles provides significant learning improvements (Pearson, 2016). MI illustrates that intrapersonal intelligence and was one of these nine such modes of knowing (Barbezat & Bush, 2014).

Intrapersonal intelligence refers to an individual's' ability to understand personal perspectives, and to manage needs, wants, hopes, fears and abilities (Shek & Law, 2014). Similarly, MCA and LDR provided an individual with the ability to form and apply an accurate self-concept to operate effectively in daily life (Gardner, 1993; as cited in Van Velsor, Moxley & Bunker, 2004). In *Leadership Competencies for the Council of Academic Standards* (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 2013), the Higher Education Student Leadership Program Standards included: foundations for leadership, and intrapersonal, interpersonal, and group/organizational development. Intrapersonal competencies included: an awareness and understanding of various leadership styles and approaches; an exploration of a personal leadership philosophy (personal values, leader identity and reflective practice); a connection of leadership to social identities and all dimensions of human development; and leadership skill development, including ethical reasoning and decision making, motivation, and creativity. The competencies for well-being that Lucas and Goodman (2015) and Rae (2015) shared were synonymous with intrapersonal skills and required for developing: personal purpose, self-efficacy, mindful awareness habits, strength-based approaches, and caring social networks.

The competency framework derived from McClelland (1973), when properly designed, leveraged the insight of leadership and provided an effective educational resource for individuals

to grow in their knowledge, skills and abilities (Frizzell et al., 2016; Hollenbeck, McCall, & Silzer, 2006). “Competencies are intrinsic and individuals have various natural endowments. Like many other skills these can be learned and developed throughout life” (Sen, 2010, p. 103). KSA’s for self-awareness enabled a person to engage, manage, and adapt to the continuous lifelong learning journey and were critical to leadership (Nesbit, 2012). Self-awareness is the cornerstone for emotional intelligence; yet, “rarely shows up in those lists of competencies that organizations come up with by analyzing the strengths of their star performers” (Cary Cherniss, Rutgers Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence; Goleman, 2013, p. 235). Fiedler (1967) and Vroom (2000) established competency models, but a more integrated model that encompassed the behaviours, situations, and outcomes for effective leadership was needed (Hollenbeck, McCall, & Silzer, 2006). Intrapersonal competency development was an emerging field in leadership research and a priority for academics and practitioners in terms of theory and practice (Avolio & Luthans, 2008; Solansky, 2015).

### **Self-awareness.**

An important component and a universal competency for effective leadership and leader development, as found across several leadership theories, was self-awareness. Karrah (2015) conducted research comparing several theories of leadership and in reviewing their findings, self-awareness, self-understanding or self-concept occurred the most often across all theories. Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2013), and Day and Dragoni (2015), both highlighted self-awareness as an important component for leadership and leader development (other components include: self- and relationship management, and social awareness; and self-efficacy, leader identity, and leadership competencies, respectively). Self-awareness occurred across much literature researched, including: The Social Change Model, Authentic, Transformational and

Servant leadership theories, New Alpha Leadership, the Centre for Creative Leadership, and Brilliant Leadership (Appendix B).

Self-awareness was found to be a component of self, personal or intrapersonal development, and emotional intelligence (Dorcas, 2014; Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2013; HERI, 1996). “This autobiographical self—the idea of who we are, the image we build up of ourselves and where we fit socially—is built up over years of experience and constantly being remodeled, a product of continuous learning” (Bennet & Bennet, 2015, p. 95). *The Developing Mind* (Seigel, 2012), an essential scientific guide that promotes health and well-being, illustrated that although early care giving experiences mattered, lifelong relational opportunities shaped and reshaped these critical neural networks. Self-awareness included the ability to recognize one’s emotions, strengths and limitations (Stewart Lawlor, 2016). Self-awareness was comprised of the conscious and unconscious mind or brain and body, and built on theories developed by Dewey (1938), Piaget (1968), Kolb (1984) and Zull (2002; as cited in Bennet & Bennet, 2015).

First, [self-awareness] implies an awareness and an acknowledgement of those relatively stable aspects of the self that go to make up what we call ‘personality’: talents, interests, aspirations, values, concerns, self-concept, limitations, and dreams. Second, self-awareness implies ‘mindfulness,’ the ability and a propensity to be an accurate observer of your current actions and state of mind. In other words, a person with a highly developed capacity for consciousness of self not only has a reasonably accurate ‘self-concept,’ but is also a good observer of his or her own behaviour and state of mind at any given time. (HERI, 1996, p. 31)

Clearly, mindfulness, self-awareness or self-concept was closely intertwined. Self-awareness acknowledged consistent aspects that make up one ‘self’ and required mindfulness, the ability to

be an accurate observer of one's mind (HERI, 1996). "Awareness, which is at the core of mindfulness, is the requisite first step or a building block to becoming CEOs of our minds and bodies" (Powietrzynska, Tobin & Konstantinos, 2015, p. 71). Self-awareness was foundational for a person to evolve in a healthy way (Seigel, 2012).

Research has shown that mindfulness enhanced self-awareness and feelings of self-satisfaction (Coholic, 2011). Mindfulness was considered a practice towards human flourishing that deepened self-knowledge or inner wisdom (Brown & Ryan, 2015; Lucas, 2015; Seligman, 2011). Self-awareness through mindfulness brought clarity and strengthened an individual's self-concept, since mindfulness nurtured full, present-moment awareness (Kabat-Zinn, Lipworth, & Burney, 1985). Self-concept also connected with congruence, an individual's alignment between their personal values and beliefs, and their demonstrated actions (HERI, 1996; Haber & Komives, 2009; Komives & Wagner, 2017). Self-concept clarified personal values, and provided students with the courage to live by them, even in stressful situations. Universities that included mindfulness helped students to "identify morally courageous actions and positively attribute them to their developing self-concept" (Sweeney, Imboden, & Hannah, 2015, p. 20).

### **Mindful Learning**

"Leaders have a significant role in creating the state of mind that is the society" (Gardner, 1969; as cited in Bennis, 2009, p. 1).

Mindfulness has been an ancient wisdom practice that promoted contemplative learning (focused on wholeness, synthesis and *self-knowledge*), and nurtured transformative learning (Barbazat & Bush, 2014; Franzese & Felten, 2017). Mindfulness has roots in Theravada Buddhism as an insight meditation (Nyanaponika, 1962; as cited in Kabat-Zinn et al., 1985). Mindfulness has become a highly developed, multimodal and systematic concentration of

attention, with the intention to cultivate insight. “This is a moment-to-moment effort to perceive a phenomenon and to allow it to register with full awareness” (Kabat-Zinn, Lipworth, & Burney, 1985, p. 165).

Mindfulness nurtures the state of mind within an individual, but mindfulness has been difficult to define or operationalize since it is stated to be a complex construct in a fairly new field (Grossman, 2008). Mindfulness was experientially embodied by practitioners and has been described as a psychological practice, cognitive style and mental skill (Hick, 2009; Kostanski, & Hassed, 2008). Since mindfulness was difficult to define, I have adopted Young’s (2016) definition of Mindful Awareness Practices (MAP) that incorporated three degrees of a present-centre, non-judgmental attentiveness that is referred to as CCE:

- Concentration power - a person’s ability to intentionally focus on a single aspect of their human experience (i.e., mind, emotion, physicality, etc.) that is “intrinsically free of memory, planning or fantasy content” (p. 31),
- Sensory Clarity - a person’s ability to distinguish between qualitative, quantitative and spatial differences with sensitivity to detect subtle shifts in sensory signals, and
- Equanimity - a person’s ability to develop a ‘hands-off’ relationship, and avoid pushing, holding or grasping the content of their sensory experience. The Latin term for equanimity is “inner balance” (p. 32).

Mindfulness could be integrated into therapy practices, but has been a form of meditation labeled as a consciousness or concentration practice (Kabat-Zinn, Lipworth, & Burney, 1985).

Mindfulness meditation accesses the deep structure or "core" of one's being and can potentiate the experience of what has become known in contemporary psychological circles as "transpersonal" levels of consciousness (see Walsh & Vaughan, 1980).

Potential benefit may thus be derived from training in this form of meditation on a multiplicity of levels, ranging from relaxation and anxiety reduction to profound personal transformation (Wilber, 1979). (Kabat-Zinn et al., 1985, p. 164)

Mindfulness with practice instilled concentration, clarity and equanimity into an individuals present moment experience (Young, 2016).

### **Mindfulness practice.**

Mindfulness varied in practice from Buddhist religious roots to Mindfulness-based Interventions (MBI), Mindfulness-Based Practice (MBT), and Mindful Awareness Practices (MAP), that included psychological practice, behavioural therapy, psychotherapy, cognitive style, and mental skill (Cullen, 2011; Ninivaggi, 2019; Young, 2016). Some examples included Acceptance and Cognitive Therapy (ACT; see <https://www.actmindfully.com.au/mindfulness>), Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (Kabat-Zinn et al., 1985), and Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (Seigel, 2012) programs. Cognitive and behaviour therapy techniques involved self-reflective journaling, guided imagery, behavioural experiments, and thought records that helped individuals become aware of cognitive patterns, past or present, and to establish corrective actions (Boyes, 2015). Due to the fact that neuroscience research regarding the physical location and make-up of “mind” has been ambiguous and the fact that mindfulness was an embodied practice involving body, mind, emotions and spirit, several forms of mindfulness exist (Brendel & Bennett, 2016; Blackmore, 2013). For example, Joan Halifax (2014), leader in the field of hospice developed GRACE (G - Gathering your attention, R - Recall your intention, A - Attune to yourself, your body, heart and mind, before you attune to those around you, C - Consider what will serve your student or colleagues, E - Enacting and ending (Jennings, 2015, p. 129). Other practices referred to within “pop psychology” also exist

such as, mindful eating, mindful walking, relaxation response or self-help practice, and a way of being, to name a few (Schawbel, 2018). Studies that include such practices of mindfulness (i.e., meditation, sitting in quiet stillness, or using breathing techniques) in higher education settings will be the focus of this literature review.

### **Mindfulness studies in higher education.**

There are studies that integrated mindfulness in higher education, many are in the health field and are quantitative. Mindfulness had also been introduced as a practice in higher education classrooms, as contemplative practices provided a strong aid in supporting transformative learning (Gonzalez, 2015; Hart, 2004; Torosyan, 2010). Most faculties in higher education research presented mindfulness as a meditative practice (ranging from five to 45 minutes) in classroom settings as an introduction, closing and sometimes within experiential or contemplative learning (Brendel et al., 2016; Coholic, 2011). Meditation does not require any additional equipment or resources, just a comfortable environment and time. In this section, I describe a series of research studies that integrated mindfulness in higher education learning.

Regehr et al (2013) conducted a meta-analysis and found that mindfulness meditation reduced the negative effects of stress on university students, lowering levels of depression, anxiety and cortisol response. Such favourable outcomes benefitted students by providing an enhanced learning experience, a healthy coping mechanism, and a reduced health-related service costs that results from student mental health issues (Miller, di Pierdomenico, & Kadziolka, 2017; Regehr et al., 2013). “Scientific research shows meditation increases concentration/attention, mental health and psychological well-being, generosity and loving kindness, deepened understanding of experience/content, creativity and insight” (Barbezat & Bush, 2014, p. 22).

Preliminary results of research involving mindfulness interventions are shown to have relatively successful outcomes (Kostanski & Hassed, 2008).

Rizer, Fagan, Kilmon, and Rath (2016) shared a number of research studies that postulated the effectiveness of mindfulness practice in reducing stress and the likelihood of chronic physical or mental health conditions in higher education students. More specifically, the authors share that out of 441 college women, mindfulness training improved sleep habits, healthier eating, and with continued practice mindfulness improved concentration, memory, and retention to enhance overall health (Miller, di Pierdomenico, & Kadziolka, 2017; Rizer et al., 2016). Rizer et al (2016) determined that developing interventions that encourage students to explore beneficial practices such as mindfulness might encourage them to develop habits that improve lifelong health.

Ramsburg and Youmans (2014) study also found that “meditation improved students’ retention of information conveyed during lectures” (p. 431). This experimental study involved students enrolled in an *Introduction to Psychology* course at a California state university (Ramsburg & Youmans, 2014). There were three different semesters of participants. One was a lecture (n=35), another was focused on individuals who had an interest in the topic of mindfulness (n=55), and another group participated in a video lecture (n=93). In each course, students within lectures received a packet containing different instructions and meditation activities (i.e., guided meditation instructions versus silent sitting). These results indicated that the students who practiced six-minute meditation training prior to a lecture performed better on a post-lecture quiz than the group that did not meditate (Ramsburg & Youmans, 2014).

Napora (2013) conducted a quasi-experimental study to investigate the impact classroom-based meditation had on undergraduate students’ mindfulness, cognitive engagement and



academic performance. Participants (n=189) were senior and junior students (80% Caucasian, 73% percent female, and 27% male), and were randomly assigned to a control and an experimental group. Nine professors participated and played a six-minute mindfulness meditation recording at the beginning of each class throughout the entire 15-week semester. A pencil and paper survey pre-test and post-test were administered (collecting the *Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire* [Baer et al., 2006], *Miller's Cognitive Engagement Scale* [Miller et al., 1996]), and a demographic profile for each participant). Academic performance data was retrieved from professors. Findings revealed a strong correlation between mindfulness and self-regulation (regulation of thought – acting with awareness; and regulation of emotion – non-reactivity), a process of learning where mindfulness plays an important role (Napora, 2013). Mindfulness was a significant predictor of GPA on two facets of mindfulness. “Cognitive engagement was found to be a significant predictor of academic performance” (p. 152). Changes in cognitive engagement were greater for participants who did not have meditative experience (control group), and greater for those who did have prior meditation experience (experimental group). Gender and race accounted for variance in GPA. Metacognition and self-awareness, foundational to self-regulation, were cultivated using mindfulness as a pedagogical tool (Napora, 2013).

Blackburn (2015) conducted a similar study using a randomized control/treatment trial with a non-probabilistic sample. This experimental design was conducted with first-year Masters in Business Administration (MBA) students at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (n=158). The treatment and control groups were statistically equivalent on gender, age, race and citizenship. There was one difference - the treatment classroom listened to a five-minute recorded meditation at the start of 10 class sessions (Blackburn, 2015). A pre/post-test

was administered by three instructors at MIT and included the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS; Brown & Ryan, 2003). Interestingly, the MAAS decreased significantly from the pretest to the posttest, though less so in the treatment group. This was perhaps due to the timing, or the personality type of MBA students, or fact that the intervention was not robust enough, or the socialization of students at MIT to prioritize hard skills over soft skills (Blackburn, 2015). However, no data was collected on student attitudes towards mindfulness that would have been useful in generating a deeper understanding of these results.

Some qualitative studies with medical students were also identified. Greeson, Toohey, and Pearce (2015) conducted a mixed methods study investigating a mindfulness intervention, titled a *Mind-body medicine: A skill-building & self-care workshop* for medical students. The study found that the outcomes of the 44 medical students, who participated in this four-week stress management workshop, decreased stress and increased self-care. *Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale—Revised (CAMS- R)* and the *Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)* were used to measure mindfulness and stress in student participants (n=44). The workshop took place during 2007, 2009 and 2011 with 6, 15 and 23 registrants, respectively. The study did not include a control group, and contained a relatively small sample size, yet provided some evidence of the intervention's positive effects, both on increasing student mindfulness (by 16%) and decreasing their stress levels (by 32%). Changes in stress and mindfulness were strongly correlated. These results aligned with a study that found nursing students who participated in a brief mindfulness activity reported an increased sense of calm and decreased anxiety (Schwind, McCay, Beanlands, Schindel Martin, Marting, and Binder, 2017).

Schwind et al (2017) conducted an exploratory qualitative study that incorporated a brief (five-minute) instructor-guided mindfulness practice (i.e., loving-kindness meditations), at the

commencement and conclusion of higher education nursing classes over eight weeks. Student participants were also encouraged to practice mindful breathing independently for five to 15 minutes, four to five times per week, along with recording their practice in a log or journal. Individual and group feedback (n=13) was provided and six out of seven instructors participated. Results showed that students increased their sense of calm, decreased feelings of anxiety and perceived mindfulness as a positive way to close the class. Instructors observed that mindfulness helped students become more grounded and focused before engaging in the course content. Challenges encountered focused on the need to provide more in-depth information about mindfulness, as it relates to higher education teaching-learning contexts, for both students and participating instructors. In addition, Romano (2014) conducted research involving six participants and focused on attention to breath, personal observations of themselves and others, suspending judgments, and a practice ‘opening’ for a 10 to 12-week period (Brendel, 2016). Romano included weekly coaching sessions, and reported similar results to Schwind et al (2017) in terms of stillness, movement and relational practices.

Rakoff (2010) researched self-awareness practices that he considered intrinsic to leadership: Attention: the ability to concentrate/focus, Connection: establish and maintain authentic relationships, and Tension: minimize personal stress (as cited in Goldman-Schuyler et al., 2017). Based on Tohei’s aikido-based system, Rakoff trained five participants in seven practices for developing internal life force energy (i.e., ‘ki’) over a 12-week period. The results showed improvement in 360-degree ratings and personal self-assessments in these individuals’ ability to lead (Rakoff, 2010). Rakoff also found that few practices of leader development ensured habitual tendencies of these self-awareness practices, strengthening the need for this dissertation research (Brendel, 2016).

Brendel, Hankerson, Byun, and Cunningham (2016) claimed to be the inaugural study on mindfulness in leadership development. However, there is evidence that higher education leadership development programs had integrated personal development aspects such as mindful awareness (e.g., Glunk & Smits, 2010; Gurr, 2015; Sucher et al., 2013). In Brendel et al (2016), researchers examined the impact of regular mindfulness meditation practice on five personal qualities deemed critical for successful leadership (creativity, tolerance for ambiguity, resilience, stress regulation and anxiety reduction). Participants attended a weekly 45-minute mindfulness session (n=20), compared to a control group (n=21) who focused on a traditional leadership theory and development (i.e., weekly three-hour graduate course). Results illustrated that students who attended the mindfulness session gained a significant reduction in trait anxiety, decreased perceived stress, and had a significant increase in promotional focus, or the propensity for turning creative ideas into reality.

One particular case study investigated self-awareness or consciousness development of secondary students, from normally estranged racial and social groups. Cotten's (2009) case study dissertation research focused on program evaluation "to gain insight into the phenomenon of how . . . consciousness develops and how curricula and teaching methods" contribute to development (Cotten, 2009, p. 116). Cotten's research aligned directly with mindfulness, as participants of the case study shared that the *Authentic Communication* workshop brought them to a 'higher state of being' that was synonymous with a state of mindfulness (Cotten, 2017). In addition, authentic communication was required for participants to be fully "present". Cotten's research primarily took place at a Community Building Institute (CBI) weekend workshop. His research utilized a "unique" case study method (Stake, 1995), and involved 14 present and past workshop participants (note: he attempted to balance, gender, ethnicity, and level of

development in his selection). Participant outcomes were evaluated based on Mustakova-Possardt's (2003) critical moral consciousness framework which included four fundamental human concerns or motivational dimensions: "1) Identity, 2) Authority, responsibility and agency, 3) Relationships, and 4) Meaning of life" (as cited in Cotten, 2009, p. 7). Results identified specific activities and outcomes on how participants changed in relation to this framework. This case study offered in-depth evidence of the positive change that can occur when students participate in conscious-raising activities, even if for short periods.

There were some challenges with conducting mindfulness research. The time frame for such research varied from a three-day weekend workshop to 16 weeks. Research providing a mindfulness program over a longer time frame (e.g., over 10 weeks) quantified research more accurately, and enhanced longitudinal benefits to participants (Brendel, 2016). Research showed that mindfulness training and the capacity to understand one's self did not appear important as a competency until students experienced it via coursework, and only then would they prioritize and value mindfulness practice (Frizzell, Hoon, & Banner, 2016). Blackmore (2013) also contended that only large-scale, sound research be used for mindfulness studies as there was many methodological deficiencies found in current mindfulness research. For instance, only 20 of the 64 studies in a meta-analysis used sound methodologies (Blackmore, 2013). Mindfulness was also hard to isolate from other relaxation activities since participants may engage in exercise, music, massages, yoga, etc. Blackmore highlighted the potential dangers inherent within mindfulness practice with beginners who may become overwhelmed with the deep confrontation faced with oneself through mindfulness. Mindfulness may make individuals that feel unhappy, unstable, or deeply fearful, feel worse (Delmonte, 1987; Epstein & Lieff, 1986; Engler, 2003; as cited in Blackmore, 2013). Therefore, future research should ensure that learners have a

minimum level of self-awareness before participating in interventions (Johnson, Garrison, Hernez-Broome, Fleenor, & Steed, 2012; Sitzmann, Ely, Brown, & Bauer, 2010).

These challenges were addressed within this research study. Firstly, participants were asked to share daily or weekly health or relaxation-related practices or activities as part of their journal. This information identified a more holistic picture of how mindfulness practices had an impact, in conjunction with other wellness activities. Secondly, students were invited to explore and learn about mindfulness for a few weeks prior to starting the mindfulness practice. Participants also engaged in a process of self-understanding and self-awareness prior to beginning the study via the content offered in the leadership course through several self-assessments and self-reflective activities provided (Northouse, 2017). Thirdly, participants were given access to a counselor that was on campus property, should students be confronted with personal issues as a result of the mindfulness activities. Fourthly, mindfulness activities followed an introduction to mindfulness for the beginner (i.e., following the *Headspace* Smartphone Application). To fit mindfulness within the course structure, a six-week program was provided to participants and they were asked to practice for forty minutes on their own (suggested in the mornings upon waking, and in the evenings prior to sleeping), in addition to engaging in classroom meditation. Lastly, the research was conducted in the context of positive psychology or strength-based frameworks to help create a non-judgmental and open atmosphere. An appreciative process in an intervention had the potential to change the inquirers (Ryan et al., 1999; Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003). The goal was to gain knowledge generated from the “unitary appreciative process to invoke the greatest and highest good, health, well-being, happiness, and satisfaction of the participant(s)—what Rogers’ (1992) might have meant by human betterment” (Cowling, 2017, p. 313).

**Mindfulness benefits.**

Research showed students who developed positive psychological resources such as mindfulness, dealt with negative events and barriers to learn more effectively, and focused efforts on personal and academic achievement (Roche, Haar, & Luthans, 2014). Mindful reflection offered hope for positive personal and relational transformations, and helped individuals design solutions to serious challenges most effectively (Adler & Ippolito, 2016; Brown & Ryan, 2015). Complex problems required intense concentration, attention and awareness of many perspectives and creative solutions as possible, and mindfulness nurtured these skills (Barbezat & Bush, 2014; Young, 2016). Students engaged in mindfulness practices challenged problematic dynamics, incorporated more effective, relational, inclusive and ethical ways of leading and exercising power, which inspired students toward benevolent leadership outcomes (Collinson & Tourish, 2015). Mindful awareness instilled personal transformation, well-being and transformational learning through critical reflexivity and dialogue (Collins, 2016; Kabat-Zinn, Lipworth, & Burney, 1985). Individuals who sustained mindful awareness practices adapted to issues with agility, focus and wisdom (Brendel, 2016; Goldman-Schuyler et al., 2017). Participants engaged in consistent mindfulness practice strengthened active listening and clarity in decision-making (Lucas, 2015).

Students that learned about intrapersonal leader development gained a strong sense of their values and a deeper understanding of their abilities, contributing to their employability and the soft-skills required of leaders (Cinque, 2016; Garavan et al., 2015; Nathan & Sendjaya, 2013). Koohang, Paliszkievicz, and Goluchowski (2017) conducted research on the impact of self-awareness in leaders, and found evidence of elevated trust, learning, performance and strong intrapersonal skills. Students achieved a sense of personal strength and became more open,

confident, calm, authentic and warm (Cuddy, Kohut, & Neffinger, 2013). Students who developed a conscious approach to well-being also enhanced their internal and social intelligence; important aspects of growth and development for young leaders (Barnes, 2016; Shankman, Allen, & Haber-Curran, 2015). Teachers, who gave students the opportunity to explore and practice mindfulness, provided those individuals with a chance to engage in personal development and well-being which strengthened their leadership potential. Mindfulness research illustrated an enhancement in the following positive personal outcomes:

- Intrinsic motivation (McCloskey, 2015);
- Self-efficacy, goal-setting and achievement (Brown et al., 2009; McCloskey, 2015);
- Strengthened self-concept and optimism (Brown et al., 2009; Oman, Shapiro, Thoresen, Plante, & Flinders, 2008);
- Self-regulation: optimizing well-being and human flourishing, as it enhanced mental and physical health (Goldman-Schuyler et al., 2017; Brown et al., 2009; Oman et al., 2008; Rae, 2015; Schwind et al., 2017; Stahl et al., 2015);
- Academic preparedness, performance and achievement (McCloskey, 2015; Oman et al., 2008);
- Productivity and effectiveness at work (Miller, di Pierdomenico, & Kadziolka, 2017; Reeds, 2015);
- Creativity (Brendel & Bennett, 2016; Oman et al., 2008; Reeds, 2015); and
- Empathy, self-compassion and a connection with others (Oman et al., 2008; Reeds, 2015).

Research indicated that mindfulness practitioners also experienced a decrease in negative psychological states such as depression, anxiety and stress (Brown et al., 2009; McCloskey,



2015; Oman et al., 2008; Regehr et al., 2013). Mindfulness practice heightened self-awareness and creative thinking, leading to positive self-transformation. Research also showed that mindfulness enhanced learning ability and collaboration with others (Goldman-Schuyler et al., 2017; Rae, 2015; Schwind et al., 2017; Stahl et al., 2015). Mindfulness was defined as a competency required for organizational efficiency, since it advanced the soft-skills required for effective leadership development (Adler, 2010; Garavan et al., 2015; Kolb & Kolb, 2008). Mindfulness was one application for wellbeing that provided these benefits, and could also be experienced with other physical practices such as yoga, tai chi, walking, etc.

### **Mindful or contemplative higher education.**

“Cogito Ergo Sum”, R. Descartes shared “I think, therefore I am” (BBC, Radio 4, 2015). Ragoonaden (2015) shared a concept used within higher education learning called *Mindfulness-Based Wellness Education*. Learning outcomes included: mindful teaching, teaching mindfulness, and creating pedagogy of well-being. The latter was defined as integrating mindfulness into one’s teaching philosophy and classroom practice, which connects to Dialogical *meditative inquiry* (DMI). DMI was another concept described as “an existential and holistic approach to teaching and learning” with the intent to deepen self-awareness through freedom, dialogue and creativity (Kumar & Downey, 2018, p. 54). Through listening holistically, asking fundamental questions, creating community for deep inquiry, engaging in authentic and open dialogue, and learning holistically from silence, self-awareness was strengthened (Kumar & Downey, 2018). “Listening holistically implies listening with your whole being—with your mind, body and emotions” and in silence students pay attention to their thinking, feeling and actions (p. 56). Many students appreciated DMI, but required a “real passion to understand and explore” in an authentic and genuine way for transformative learning to occur (p. 55).

Franzese and Felten (2017) shared important components of SoTL research that provided an effective framework for this contemplative education research:

1. The inquiry should be student focused: What, how, and why students learn was at the center of an inquiry into contemplative pedagogies.
2. SoTL inquiry should be rooted in a specific context, to seek insight into student learning in the particular course, and the campus where the study takes place.
3. Like contemplative pedagogies, SoTL is methodologically diverse, allowing faculty to bring their own scholarly training and personal wisdom to bear on questions of student learning (Huber & Morreale, 2002). Some disciplinary tools, such as positive psychology techniques are appropriate for evaluating curiosity or mindfulness. The intentional applications of many different research methods, including deeply introspective ones, are sound when connected to the heart of a particular inquiry (McKinney, 2013).
4. SoTL should be done with students, not to them. In practice, this involved developing collective inquiry and growth (Cook-Sather, Bovill, & Felten, 2014; Healey, Flint, & Harrington, 2014).
5. As contemplative pedagogies spread in higher education, practitioners and scholars – and students - would benefit if teaching were treated as “community property” (Shulman, 2004). By being public about practices used and the insights gained, teachers generously allow others to adapt and build on the learning from contemplative pedagogies. There was also skepticism expressed to contemplative approaches, including DMI, in higher education since they challenged the dominant paradigm within education (Kumar & Downey, 2018).

This leadership course was framed around these SoTL principles and the personal competencies within the leadership program standards (Council for the Advancement of

Standards in Higher Education [CAS], 2015). The leadership competencies include: foundations for leadership, personal development, interpersonal development, organizational, and group development. The intrapersonal competencies adapted from CAS (2015) included:

1. An awareness and understanding of leadership styles and approaches, and an exploration of a personal leadership philosophy through reflective practice,
2. Connection of leadership to social identities and holistic human development, and
3. Leadership skill development: accessing and critiquing sources of information, ethical reasoning and decision making, oral and written communication, critical thinking/problem solving/creativity, risk-taking, cultural competence, goal setting/visioning, and motivation.

By integrating SoTL research and intrapersonal development (i.e., self-awareness via mindfulness) in both structure and content, this research study aimed to create an effective environment and components that engaged students in an exploration of mindfulness through reflection and meditation. Mindfulness has gained much recognition in the fields of neuroscience and healthcare, and has continued to grow in business, leadership and education fields over the past decade. In light of the plethora of mindfulness research, minimal research has been conducted within higher education settings (Brendel & Bennett, 2016). The intent of this study was to advance scientific knowledge due to the need to understand the impact mindfulness had on cultivating self-awareness within higher education and leadership learning (Wilensky, 2016).

### **Conceptual Framework - Awaken Insight**

“Knowing yourself is the beginning of wisdom” - Aristotle

A theoretical proposition shaped this case study research: the research questions, which guided the literature review and data collection efforts, including the development of the interview, survey and focus group questions (Yin, 2014). This case study was grounded in the Social Change Model (SCM) of leadership's individual domain, which was comprised of *consciousness of self*, *congruence* and *commitment*. The conceptual model blended psychological and intrapersonal development with the SCM for use within contemplative education. I will explore SCM and illustrate SCM's alignment to the psychological and intrapersonal competencies of thinking, being and doing, within contemplative education, to form the conceptual model for this case study research.

SCM explicitly outlined self-awareness as a foundation to leader development, and is widely used for student leadership development in higher education (HERI, 1996; Haber & Komives, 2009). SCM has three domains – Individual, Group and Community, with the first domain including three critical values related to intrapersonal development (Dugan, Bohle, Woelker, & Cooney, 2014; Haber, 2011; HERI, 1996; Iachini, Cross, & Freedman, 2015; Komives et al., 2013):

1. *Consciousness of self* - Being conscious and self-aware of personal beliefs, values, attitudes and emotions that motivated individual behaviour. A cognitive process an individual encounters when they are mindful or present to their current personal emotions, behaviours, beliefs, and perceptions.
2. *Congruence* - Conducting oneself with self-awareness so that behaviours align with convictions, which fosters trust. Individual cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions align. Behaviors are consistent with beliefs and demonstrate transparent, authentic, honest and genuine interactions with others.

3. *Commitment* - Self-awareness of personal passion and investment, motivating an individual to serve or drive a collective effort with follow-through towards the activity and intended outcomes.

Fundamental to the SCM was the belief that all people are capable of growing and developing their leadership capacities. SCM offered a useful framework for students to assess, learn, and reflect on their capacity and growth as leaders (Iachini et al., 2015). Komives and Wagner (2017) asserted that a cyclical framework of knowing, being and doing work especially well with the SCM, and resulted in the knowledge, attitudes and skills required for leadership. Similarly, Gonzalez (2015) highlighted Cook-Greuter’s (1999) psychological system that demonstrated that self-consciousness arose from a synthesis of three interrelated dimensions:

1. Cognitive - ‘*thinking*’; concepts, knowledge, and interpretations of the world and oneself,
2. Affective - ‘*being*’ in the world; awareness and emotions that direct interactions, and
3. Behavioural - ‘*doing*’; actions needed, goals determined and purpose defined.

Mindful awareness was necessary for healthy integration of Cook-Greuter’s psychological system. The SCM of leadership aligned intrapersonal competencies through several different studies and theories to form: mindful self-awareness or consciousness of self (think); congruence or self-concept (being), and presence or commitment (doing; see Table 1).

Table 1

*Intrapersonal Competencies (Integration of Psychological System to SCM)*

Authors/Competencies	1. Self-Aware or <u>Think</u>	2. Feel or <u>Be</u>	3. Act or <u>Do</u>
Individual Domain, SCM (HERI, 1996)	Consciousness of Self	Congruence	Commitment
Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2013	Mindfulness (Purpose)	Compassion (Passion)	Hope (Positive Power)

Chan, Hannah, & Gardner, 2005, Lord & Emrich, 2005; as cited in O'Connell, 2014	Metacognition/ Self-Aware + Positive moral perspective (Authenticity)	Self-regulation	Self-Motivation/ Self-Concept
Kegan & Lahey, 2010; in O'Connell, 2014; and Cook-Greuter, 1999; in Gonzalez, 2015; and Rae, 2015	Cognitive	Emotional/ Affective	Interpersonal/ Behavioural
Adler, 2015; and Reichard & Walker, 2016	Purpose	Passion	Presence

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*Note.* This table illustrated the consistency between scholar’s findings regarding intrapersonal leadership development competencies aligned with the psychological system (i.e., think, be, and do). Authors are clustered based on these three categories based on the terms they used to define positive self-development or intrapersonal development.

Similarly, Rae (2015) discovered three overarching themes from studying the first-person experiences of mindfulness practitioners: cognitive and metacognitive, affective, and behavioral transformations. Participants reported that practicing mindfulness regularly developed:

- *cognitive* skills to suspend judgment, and *metacognitive* skills to creatively explore thinking about cognition;
- strengthened *affective* skills by becoming aware of thoughts, feelings and bodily sensations (mind/body connections) that contributed to the development of well-being and a greater sense of emotional stability; and
- heightened awareness of self that strengthened metacognition to optimize internal and external responses or *behaviours* towards positive self-transformation.

Essential leader development for students “connect content and experience, internal and external”, connecting the head, heart, and hands (Wright, 2015; Houwer, 2013, p. 43). Petriglieri and Petriglieri Insead (2015) called this personalization of leadership development a cycle of examining personal experiences and life stories (i.e., personal identities) that related to personal

habits and competencies - how they think, feel and act (Dominick, Squires, & Cervone, 2010; as cited Petriglieri & Petriglieri Insead, 2015). When individuals felt positive, they acted positive and performed better, and the self-awareness gained through strength-based leadership development practices (i.e., rather than deficit-based perspectives) allowed for greater self-efficacy (Barnes & Larcus, 2015; Watkins, 2013).

Mindfulness was a highly developed, multimodal and systematic concentration of attention that was found within contemplative learning. Contemplative mindfulness cultivated insight and wisdom by combining mindfulness and self-inquiry (Dahl and Davidson, 2019). Inner wisdom came when an individual registered a “moment-to-moment effort to perceive a phenomenon . . . with full awareness” (Kabat-Zinn, Lipworth, & Burney, 1985, p. 165). Mindfulness granted an individual access to information to learn from the inside out “by being intentionally curious” (Day et al., 2013; as cited in Ehrlich, 2015, p. 23). An individual needed to receive present-moment insights, critically reflect on those insights to fuel new behavior, to transform their way of being toward a more authentic alignment of personal needs, values, abilities and actions (Brendel & Bennett, 2016). Kumar and Downey (2018) referred to this self-inquiry as listening to personal thoughts, feelings and behaviours in silence. Nurturance of insight through mindfulness aligned an individual’s action with personal purpose, passion and presence, translating them into actions of wisdom, beauty and love (Adler, 2015). Self-awareness was self-inquiry - a holistic engagement that connected self to learning and increased knowledge, creativity and insight (Barbezat & Bush, 2014; Owen-Smith, 2018).

To act with awareness requires: the capacity to be fully present to what is taking place, rather than being distracted by expectations, habits, or fears about either oneself or others. Experience with coaching leaders suggests that such awareness is essential for leadership

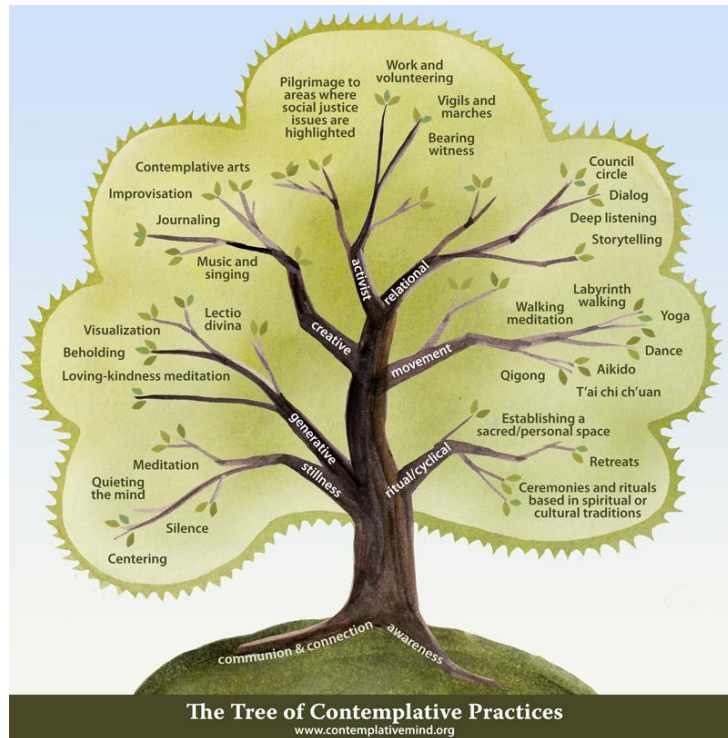
integrity, which requires a leader to act with wholeness from deep values in ways that can be sustained [and seen] over time. (Barbezat & Bush, 2014, p. 21)

Leadership capabilities are heightened with related skills: self-awareness, metacognition, self-regulation, self-motivation, and mindfulness (Chan et al., 2005; Kabat-Zinn, Lipworth, & Burney, 1985; Lord & Hall, 2005; O'Connell, 2014). Metacognition and self-awareness are enhanced through mindfulness training (Ruderman & Clerkin, 2015).

Mindfulness was a practice of stillness within contemplative education, a form of embodied learning and mind training, awakened awareness necessary for developing effective, powerful leadership/action in the world (Goldman Schyler, 2010; see Figure 1). Contemplative education incorporated intrapersonal aspects (e.g., compassion, open-mindedness, curiosity and humility), and promoted clarity and concentrated states of awareness (Stewart Lawlor, 2016). For leadership learning to occur, individual mastery of cognitive, emotional, and interpersonal or behavioural regulation was essential (Kegan & Lahey, 2010; as cited in O'Connell, 2014).



**Figure 3.** The Tree of Contemplative Practices



*Figure 3.* This illustrated techniques faculty used to promote contemplative learning (Owen-Smith, 2018, p. 25). Facilitators encouraged “communion, connection and awareness” as noted on the tree trunk. Although many contemplative practices exist, this mindfulness research integrated the practice of stillness (i.e., meditation). © The Centre for Contemplative Mind in Society, concept and design by Maia Duerr; illustration by Carrie Bergman.

This case study research was designed to examine mindfulness and drew upon the intrapersonal competencies inherent in the Social Change Model (SCM). The individual domain of SCM developed a healthy integration of thinking, being and doing. The research design reflected these intrapersonal competencies, as well as the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning’s heuristic model, to answer the research questions introduced. In addition, the leadership course design reflected the *Council of Academic Standards* (CAS, 2015) leadership competency standards for intrapersonal development: an awareness and understanding of

personal leadership styles, exploration of personal values and leadership identity, development of a personal leadership philosophy, and demonstration of leadership skills. Data collected explored each domain (i.e., consciousness of self, congruence, and commitment, or cognitive, emotional and behavioural) to understand the experience of mindfulness within undergraduate leadership learning (see Table 4 - *Research Framework*, in Chapter 3).

### **Conclusion**

This literature review shaped and guided the research questions and identified the major theories that informed this study: (a) leader or intrapersonal development; (b) intrapersonal learning (e.g., metacognitive awareness, self-awareness, and intrapersonal competencies); (c) mindful or contemplative learning in higher education, SoTL heuristic; and (d) psychological system (i.e., thinking, being, doing) that aligns with; (e) the *individual domain* of the *Social Change Model* of leadership to form the conceptual model. Findings in this study are positioned within a humanistic, holistic and social framework to demonstrate the importance of mindfulness within intrapersonal development or in higher education leadership learning (Barbezat & Bush, 2014; Brendel & Bennett, 2016; Brown et al., 2009; Goldman Schyler, 2010; McCloskey, 2015; Miller, di Pierdomenico, & Kadziolka, 2017; Oman et al., 2008; Reeds, 2015; Stewart Lawlor, 2016). Instilling mindfulness may arm students with the authentic and ethical leadership skills needed to face today's challenges and to create positive changes in the world (Adler, 2010; Avolio, 2016; Barnes, 2016; Dugan & Komives, 2010; Gonzalez, 2012; Houwer, 2013; Lewis et al., 2016; Nathan & Sendjaya, 2013).

### **Chapter Three: Methodology**

The intent of this study was to collect data in the context of a leadership course to understand the experiences that a six-week mindfulness practice had on undergraduate students' intrapersonal development. This chapter describes the methodological context for the present study. I begin with a personal contextual statement, explain the research design, describe the data collection procedures, relate the data collection process to the leadership course content, address issues of trustworthiness, and outline the data analysis used.

#### **Personal and Cultural Introduction**

My personal and professional journey in relation to mindfulness, leadership and learning, frames my position as a researcher in the leadership field. Ragoonaden (2015) defined mindfulness as a human capacity (e.g., instincts, skills and abilities) to participate, observe and accept holistically what life brings from a compassionate and loving perspective. Mindfulness, with practice, engages a person in an acute holistic awareness that provides them with the capability to acknowledge and accept life experiences and to process those experiences in a healthy way. Mindfulness practitioners report having a peaceful demeanour, and cope effectively with transformational change (Edwards, 2016).

My personal definition of mindfulness is: a practice, process and presence of nurturing insight in one's life. Insight derived from mindfulness as a compassionate attentiveness and awareness of one's present-moment human experience. From my experience, the practice of mindfulness is quiet, relaxed stillness that offers a balance between (and an acknowledgement, acceptance and alignment of) the head, heart and hands (Kabat-Zinn, 2003; Wright, 2015). I will outline how mindfulness practices have influenced my life, share my professional journey, and

make connections to the scholarly literature. I will also explain how these experiences have framed my current research interest.

“Understanding is a reciprocal activity, and the present may only be understood in terms of the past and the past in terms of the present” (Racher & Robinson, 2003, p. 473). Mindfulness was introduced to me in elementary school, where my struggles of being bullied pushed me into finding healthy coping mechanisms and positive perspectives. As described by De Meuse, Dai, Swisher, Eichinger and Lombardo (2012), this shift in mindset uplifted me to new heights emotionally, mentally, spiritually and physically, and strengthened my learning agility and leadership. These positive perspectives rooted in mindfulness emerged and were nurtured on the shores of Lake Superior while sitting in quiet reflection by the lakeside (often with my grandmother) watching the sunrise or nightfall, and being filled by life’s natural silence, stillness and peacefulness. I often found that being fully present in this natural world and experiencing the awe of peacefulness, was a way of witnessing ordinary life as an inspiring transformation into the extraordinary. This was one of the first places that I discovered the power of mindfulness. In the outdoors, mindfulness was nurtured when I consciously took a breath of fresh air filled with the quietness of the forest, or listened to the refreshing sound of waves. I became conscious of my place in the world around me. These early mindful experiences have shaped my research in leader development.

As a professor, teacher and facilitator, I have taught leadership in many organizations and educational institutions (e.g., Tenaris University, Sault College, Algoma Family Services, Algoma Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic, Ministry of Natural Resources, Great Lakes Forestry Center). I often practice at least twenty-minutes of mindfulness every morning and/or evening daily to ensure that I “walk the talk,” especially during my teaching and data collection for this

research. My personal practice includes meditation (either silent, with chimes or using the *Insight App* guided meditations), quiet reflection, gratitude and prayer, along with my personal intentions and affirmations. I have introduced the mindfulness practices of meditation and quiet reflection in teaching and in consulting clients (e.g., business, government, education, health industries), to help problem solve or work through emotional disharmony and conflict. I have often presented mindfulness to students in higher education at the onset of classes, by providing a five to ten-minute guided meditation.

My interest in conducting mindfulness research was inspired by the interactions and relationships I developed with undergraduate students. Many students lacked self-awareness and direction towards their life aspirations or wellbeing and seemed uncertain of how to take responsibility for their lives (Brooks & Anumudu, 2016; Dorcas, 2014; Regehr, Glancy & Pitts, 2013). This built upon my Master's research that investigated how young females developed aspirations and motivations to lead. I felt compelled and driven to do something.

Although, many individuals do not see their leadership potential or want to be leaders, we all have the capacity to lead, and the way we lead ourselves (i.e., self-leadership) influences our life outcomes (Neck & Manz, 2013). My career has always revolved around transformation, whether it is with students or organizations. I often engage in relations to develop a team culture for projects that engage and stretch individuals, myself included, towards positive change.

I am fascinated by mindfulness and the intrinsic motivation that can inspire exceptional performance from within individuals (towards their highest potential or self-actualization; Maslow, 2013; 1968). Mindfulness may also provide a foundation for Leadership Development Readiness (LDR; Hannah & Avolio, 2010). This foundation of LDR motivated me to take on leadership roles in secondary school and onward (Hannah & Avolio, 2010). By investigating

mindfulness practices as a competency for leader development and LDR, I intended to understand how mindfulness could positively impact the intrapersonal or self-development of students. I wanted to learn from the story or experience of mindfulness within leader development for students and myself. Mindfulness has provided me with this solid foundation and a wealth of knowledge to conduct mindfulness research in educational leadership and policy.

### **Research Design - Case Study**

I used an intrinsic single-case study design to investigate undergraduate students' and instructors' experiences in a leadership course that integrated mindfulness awareness practices (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Case study was a common research practice across many disciplines including business, psychology, social science, medicine, law and political science (Creswell, 2013; McLeod, 2010). The case was intrinsic, as I had a genuine interest and curiosity about students' reaction to mindfulness within the context of leader development (Baxter & Jack, 2008). There was considerable evidence that case study methodology played a significant role in practice (McLeod, 2010). A case study, an intensive study of a single unit observed over a delimited period of time, promoted the understanding of a broader class of similar units (Yin, 2014). By studying this particular, and complex single case, I aimed to understand both the mindfulness activity and the circumstances surrounding the outcomes (Stake, 1995).

Participants enriched this research with their personal experiences and engaged in self-reflection to consider questions such as, "How do students experience a leadership course that integrates mindful awareness practices?" This case study was infused with introspection and reflexivity, a process of self-inquiry and contemplative learning that is transformational since it established personal meaning of learning for students that is connected to their world (Barbezat & Bush, 2014; Kostanski & Hassed, 2008). Self-reflection promoted an understanding of

perspectives regarding mindfulness practice within higher education learning. Students thick descriptions of their shared lived experiences added depth and provided an interpretation to understand what was or was not happening (Creswell, 2008). The self-awareness gained through mindfulness had implications for teaching and promoting wellness (Powietrzynska, Tobin, & Konstantinos, 2015).

**Data Collection Procedures**

This case was bound by time and place, by definition and context, and by the mindfulness activity (Creswell, 2014; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Stake, 1995). The case took place in the Spring 2018 semester (data collected in May, 2018), within a three-credit interdisciplinary leadership course offered to undergraduate students enrolled in a degree program. Qualitative data collection helped to better understand student and instructor experiences (Table 2).

Table 2

*Overview of Data Collection Methods*

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Data collected	
1. Audio-visual recordings	5. Course artifacts
2. Journals: Personal Online Leadership Log	6. Semi-structured interviews
3. Observation and field notes	7. Concluding focus group
4. Meditation records ( <i>Insight Timer</i> )	8. Post-survey

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*Note.* This table provides an overview of the data collection methods used to craft this case study. All data collection except the interviews, *Insight Timer* records and focus group were embedded within classroom activities.

**Participant selection.**

This study received ethics clearance prior to the beginning of the course (Appendix C and D). Participants in this study are undergraduate students who enrolled in an interdisciplinary three-credit leader development course offered at a four-year, public university in the United

States. Students volunteered to register for the undergraduate leadership course (Creswell, 2013; Rae, 2015). Students enrolled in the course were invited to participate in the research study and informed consent was received for each research participant. Following procedures recommended by Garavan et al (2015), participants were not provided with information about the structure or content of the leadership course prior to its implementation to ensure that individual expectations, understanding and details relating to the purpose of the study were similar. I used convenience sampling, as the selection of participants was based on their interest and availability in the course (Hartras, 2010; as cited in Putman & Rock, 2017; Polonsky & Waller, 2015; Waite et al, 2014).

The study also involved a research associate and a research assistant (participant observers). Two student volunteers also introduced their mindfulness practice to participants (outside the course). I also participated by engaging in mindfulness practice and maintaining self-reflections during the entire research study. Observations were carried out throughout the course and students were invited to participate in interviews or a focus group. At the conclusion of the course, I invited students to submit artifacts and to complete the post-survey. Both the artifacts and post-survey were sealed and presented to the research assistant to put in a locked cabinet for safekeeping and for transcription (Appendix I - Post-Survey, and Appendix N - Artifacts).

Students enrolled in the course were invited to participate in this research study by the research assistant. The research assistant worked at the university as work-study and was a student participant who agreed to act as a liaison between the students, and the research associate. The research assistant was provided paper-based data in a sealed envelope for transcription, and also provided feedback on the themes and findings presented.



Two student volunteers who were current mindfulness practitioners outside of the class were invited to lead the class in a mindfulness activity to give participants the opportunity to engage in a variety of student-led mindfulness practices. Both students agreed to participate. One was a male collegiate athlete, yoga instructor, and junior student at the university. The other was a female junior student at the university who also shared one personal reflection regarding her personal practice. These student practitioners introduced their mindfulness practice to participants, and led students through a mindfulness activity to launch the intervention, on separate occasions (Week 10).

The research associate was a tenured professor at the university who agreed to assist with data collection and data analysis. As a qualitative researcher, she had an interest in SoTL, and in the topic of mindfulness. The research associate received informed consent for each research participant, and later on in the study she invited students to participate in an interview and focus group. Both the research associate and myself participated in mindfulness activities outside of the classroom, to model behaviour and explore class-related experiences.

I participated in mindfulness practice and maintained self-reflections during the entire research study. I also led a few mindfulness activities, and I carried out observations throughout the course. The research associate agreed to participate in personal mindfulness practice as well, and presented a journal about her experience (which was new to her). The research associate and I also met to evaluate progress, challenges and other observed possibilities in regards to mindfulness and teaching throughout the course. During the meetings the research associate acted as a critical friend and provided me with feedback on the mindfulness research and activities. We shared and documented information related to our own individual mindfulness experiences and our teaching practices and outcomes.

**Case study timeline.**

The course took place over a period of fifteen weeks, and the second half of the course incorporated mindfulness practices. A chronological overview of the timelines for the mindfulness intervention that started on week 9 and ended on week 16 of the course (March to May 2018), along with the course contents, activities and data collection have been provided (see Table 3; Putman & Rock, 2017). During the first week, the research assistant and I (separately) introduced and informed students about the mindfulness intervention to be initiated in Week 9, along with the intention for the professor to use data collected for dissertation research.

Table 3

*Timelines, Content and Mindful Leadership Course/Research*

Week	Topic	Intervention Activities	Data Collected
9	Embrace Diversity and Inclusion	Mindfulness introduction and discussion, <i>Insight Timer/Headspace</i>	Field Note, Faculty POLL
10	Listening to Out-Group Members	Mindfulness (2 min.; and 5 min.) Student-led practice and input into mindfulness intervention	Field Note, Faculty POLL
11	Manage Conflict	Mindfulness (5 min. x 2) practice/ <i>Headspace</i>	Field Note, Faculty POLL, critical friend reflection
12	Address Ethics	Mindfulness (5 min. x 2) practice/ <i>Headspace</i>	Field Note, Faculty POLL
13	Overcoming Obstacles	Mindfulness (5 min. x 2) practice/ <i>Headspace</i>	Field Note, Faculty POLL
14	Course Review and Closing	Mindfulness (5 min. x 2) practice/ <i>Headspace</i>	Field Note, Faculty POLL, critical friend reflection
15	Course Review	Mindfulness (5 min. x 2) practice/ <i>Instructor-led</i>	Field Note, Faculty POLL, critical friend
16	Exam Week	Mindfulness practice (5	Field Note, POLL, Post

	Informed Consent	min.)/ <i>Instructor-led</i>	interviews, focus group, <i>Insight Timer</i> , Post-Survey, artifacts
17-18	Grades Complete	All data collected and transcribed	

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*Note.* This table presented the leadership topics, mindfulness intervention and data collected from weeks 9 to 17 of the leadership course. On Week 24, data were provided to the faculty researcher. Students were invited to review the draft chapter of findings by the research associate, to provide any feedback.

Once the intervention began, participants were encouraged to practice mindfulness practice on their own, outside of class. The *Insight Timer* and *Headspace* Smartphone applications were shared as resources participants could use to engage in guided or musical mindfulness meditations, available for use on their own time. *Insight Timer* is a Smartphone application and online community for millions of mediators, which houses a database of meditations with varying times and themes for free. *Headspace* is a similar application that has a free ten-day trial, but then requires membership payment to continue the use of meditation services offered. Details about the course and mindfulness intervention are provided below.

All students completed POLL's and the post-survey in the classroom up to a certain point on the POLL form, so that no one in the class could differentiate between participants and those who elected not to participate. I was not present in the room during data collection, and I returned to the classroom after the envelopes had been sealed and collected. The research assistant provided the qualitative data collected to an external transcription service. The research associate invited participants to semi-structured interviews and to a focus group held on location.

In week 17, all data were collected and organized, and not provided to the faculty researcher until all grades were entered. In weeks 18 to 24, participants of the interviews, and

focus groups were invited to do member checks, by the research associate. In week 24, I began to organize all of data using *AtlasTi* and *Excel*, in preparation for data analysis.

### **Leadership Course Design**

The first half of the course I established the class culture, engaged students in personal development, and nurtured students to develop an understanding of leadership knowledge. A minimal foundation of self-awareness was required before the mindfulness intervention could begin. By providing a foundation to self-awareness to students, I could better protect beginners from becoming overwhelmed by their potential personal confrontation (Blackmore, 2013). I provided many opportunities for students to develop self-awareness, expressing support and direction as required, to help participants develop a minimum level of self-awareness before they engaged in mindfulness (Johnson, Garrison, Hernez-Broome, Fleenor, & Steed, 2012; Sitzmann, Ely, Brown, & Bauer, 2010). Earlier components of the course (weeks one to eight) included: trait, behavioural, skill, authentic, servant, and transformational leadership theories; the *StrengthsFinder 2.0* Assessment (Rath, 2007); understanding self as leader and defining personal values, vision, and an elevator pitch; and building culture.

The leadership course that provided the background for this study incorporated the Kolb and Kolb (2008) spiral experiential learning process and the Tribes learning community philosophy (Gibbs, 2006). The design and structure of the course varied somewhat (e.g., mindfulness), but followed a similar rhythm at the beginning of class to create an environment that was aesthetically pleasing to participants (Schwind et al., 2017). Specifically, I would begin each class with an overview, including the topics and experiential activities to be covered, and get students thinking about the content. I also aesthetically modified the classroom into workspaces for self-reflection and discussion by arranging chairs and tables in clusters. I invited

students at the conclusion of each class to complete a personal reflection or assessment about the leadership topic(s) covered. The course was maintained on the electronic learning management system (Moodle), where class assignments, resources, class presentations and reading materials were posted online.

The course took place every Tuesday and Thursday from 9 a.m. to 10:20 a.m. (approximately 3 hours per week). Major topics of the course included presentation and discussion about prominent leadership theories, and related individual assessments that students completed and discussed in class (*Leadership: Theory and practice* - Northouse, 2015). Individuals participated in personal reflection and experiential exercises to develop leadership skills that related to the theories or topics covered, such as case studies, role plays, and problem solving activities (Northouse, 2009). These opportunities for self-reflection and personal application helped students to gain the information required for their personal leadership philosophy essay that was due at the conclusion of the course. Invitations were often extended for students to present their personal perspectives at the beginning of class (e.g., elevator pitch, favourite leader profile). Students also engaged in groups to review academic literature on a leadership topic of interest and worked together to complete a poster and present a summary to students in the class. On a volunteer basis, students also presented their poster at the university's annual *Senior Research Symposium*. Some topics for their research and group poster presentation included the following titles: Heroes versus Villains - Ethical and Unethical Leadership, The Effectiveness of Servant Leadership, Self-Efficacy in Leadership, and Resolving Conflict in Leadership (Artifact, Spring 2018). The final exam included a brief presentation of their leadership philosophy, and there were four multiple-choice exams throughout the course.

In addition, “Ask Anne” was an opportunity students had to ask specific questions to me anonymously, regarding leadership, which I would answer in written form. Students asked questions about how to motivate and influence peers, establish strong team cultures, deal with awkward teams, facilitate accountability, and how to engage with closed-minded individuals (specifically with individuals who were closed and wouldn’t listen).

### **Mindfulness Intervention**

The methods I used to co-create the mindfulness intervention, and a description of the mindfulness practice that faculty and students participated in will be described.

#### **Co-creating the intervention.**

On Week 9 of the course, the mindfulness intervention was introduced with the intent to promote self-understanding through self-awareness, strengthen leadership, and to enhance the teaching and learning of leadership. I examined changes in student responses after the mindfulness intervention began. Students co-created the mindfulness timing and content. As a result, a guided mindfulness meditation started every class for a five-minute duration (two times a week) for the entirety of the six-weeks.

The timing and content of the intervention was based on student-interest and participation (Brendel et al., 2016; Schwind et al., 2017). Mindfulness was offered in a way that students could explore and co-create the mindfulness practices offered. When the mindfulness intervention was first explored, students worked in small groups to identify and define mindfulness (using internet sources to assist) and shared their findings with the class. Together the class formed an understanding of mindfulness as a concept. I provided a brief overview of

how the academic literature defined mindfulness, along with how the intervention could be organized in the class.

Two students from outside of the course volunteered their time to share their personal mindfulness practice with students in the course. One of the students provided his view of mindfulness and presented a two-minute guided meditation to students at the end of class. The other student practitioner spoke about mindfulness and introduced a five-minute *Headspace* meditation to students at the beginning of the next class. One of the students offered a testimonial about her practices and how they helped her to sleep, to encourage student participation in mindfulness activities and the use of Smartphone applications. This enabled students to gain an understanding, familiarity and comfort with the practice of mindfulness within the classroom context and from a student perspective.

Using this information as a backdrop, students worked collaboratively to design the timing and content of the intervention during class activities. Students reviewed various mindfulness practices and collaborated to design the intervention (to choose to have mindfulness at the beginning and/or end of class and decide on the content of the mindfulness practice - guided, silent, or music). There were a handful of students, approximately six students, in the course that wanted a longer period of mindfulness (10 minutes) at both the beginning and end of class, should time permit. However, the majority of all other students chose a 5-minute mindfulness practice at the beginning of each class using the *Headspace* application introduced by one of the student practitioners, which was what occurred for the most part. *Headspace* provided ten free-guided meditations for the participants to use, and after this point, students selected from either a professor-led meditation (in silence) or a short online guided meditation

found on *YouTube*. Students were introduced to a morning meditation, and were often provided with the opportunity to provide input on the guided meditation selected.

### **Mindfulness practice.**

To begin class, the instructor welcomed students and turned off the lights. The majority of students liked the natural light that came from the large vertical windows around the room. Those students, who were not participating, were invited to sit quietly during the meditation or could arrive following the practice. The professor either played the *Headspace* meditation via *Google Slides*, or she led them in a quiet meditation (Appendix J).

Weekly guided mindfulness meditation was often followed by a reflection and discussion of the leadership content for that week. Participants were requested to practice mindfulness independently for 60 minutes per week (i.e., suggested mornings and evenings), utilizing the *Insight Timer* application. *Insight Timer* is a Smartphone application that provides free guided meditation sessions and tracks an individual's mindfulness timing/activity, and is described further within the Data Collection section.

### **Data Collection Methods**

Data collection drew upon multiple sources of information, as suggested by Creswell (2013), including direct observation, researcher field notes, semi-structured interviews, instructor journals (critical friend observations and feedback), student journals, course artifacts, post-survey, class audiovisual recordings, *Insight Timer* records, and a focus group. All data collection processes except the interviews, journals, *Insight Timer* and focus group were embedded within classroom activities. Participants chose from many silent, musical or guided meditations within the *Insight Timer* application during and outside of class. The multiple forms



of data collected drew out the rich, lived experiences of mindfulness derived from participants' reflection "on the meaning of their mindfulness experiences and meditation practice" (Varela et al., 1997; as cited in Rae, 2015, p. 10). Course artifacts and data collected (transcripts, post-surveys, *Insight Timer* records, POLLS) were provided to me once the course concluded and marks were assigned. The multiple forms of data collected drew out the rich, lived experiences of mindfulness derived from participants' reflection "on the meaning of their mindfulness experiences and meditation practice" (Varela et al., 1997; as cited in Rae, 2015, p. 10). Data included pseudonyms to assist me in forming connections between and across data collected. Each data collection method will be explained in more detail.

### **1 . Swivl audio-visual recordings.**

Some classes were recorded using Swivl or audio technology and stored in password-protected files. *Swivl* is a cloud-based software that uses a robot to capture faculty lectures in the classroom (see <https://www.swivl.com/about>) and was used here to capture the professor's lecture and interactions only (no students or participants comments). Classroom audio/visual recordings were used to assist in understanding the qualitative data (e.g., journals, interviews), and highlighted important aspects of field notes, and captured the instructor's experiences.

### **2. Personal Online Leadership Log (POLL) - Personal journals.**

Qualitative journals (paper-based format) were collected following the intervention to gain an understanding of undergraduate experiences, how the intervention impacted them, along with any facilitators or barriers (McCleod, 2010). In the POLL, participants were invited to describe the quality of their mindfulness practice including the challenges, opportunities, and other elements that may have distracted or supported their mindfulness practice, immediately

following the mindfulness intervention. Participants were invited to describe changes or outcomes experienced in relation to emotions, thoughts, or behaviours such as compassion, optimism, creativity, self-efficacy/goal setting, intrinsic motivation, self-determination, well-being, health, academic change, focus, preparedness, anxiety, stress or depression as these factors have been identified as antecedents associated with mindfulness (Brendel & Bennett, 2016; Brown et al., 2009; Oman, Shapiro, Thoresen, Plante, & Flinders, 2008; McCloskey, 2015; Miller, di Pierdomenico, & Kadziolka, 2017; Reeds, 2015). I also participated in the POLL, and recorded faculty journal responses, in relation to my observations on teaching and mindfulness practice. I vetted the POLL with other student's prior to use (students in Fall 2017), to ensure that the POLL was effective, easy-to-use, and deepened an understanding of participant experiences (Appendix J).

### **3. Observation - Field notes.**

Instructor field notes were completed by the faculty-researcher to capture significant positive or negative changes in the environment or specific student behaviours in regards to course activities and practices (Putman & Rock, 2017). These field notes or observations included reflections on personal, course, or student responsiveness or outcomes regarding course activities. Field notes do not contain any specific information about particular students observed. I completed notes immediately following classes to accurately document my instructional experiences, observations and to capture the culture within the classroom.

### **4. Meditation record - *Insight Timer*.**

The research associate, assistant and myself engaged in using the *Insight Timer* to record the type, timing and number of their independent mindfulness practices (Greeson et al., 2015).

Student participants were also invited by the research associate to join a *Insight Timer* group specifically designated for this research, using their pseudonym. The *Insight Timer* provided guided or timed meditation applications when registrants sign-up to the Mindfulness Exploration Group (closed group, set up by the research associate). Participants choose from timed (using mindfulness bells, chimes, etc.) or guided (i.e., with music or a guided meditation) mindfulness activities. These records were accessed by the faculty-researcher once all the course grades were distributed, to determine the time frame, frequency and content of participants' individual mindfulness practice.

### **5. Course artifacts.**

Artifacts have the capacity to carry the momentum, emotion, and energy from the mindfulness intervention (Barone & Eisner, 2012). As a result, artifacts from the course, included: leadership journals, leadership journal artifact analysis, leadership research projects or presentations, personal leadership philosophy essays or presentations, *Authentic Leadership Self-Assessment Questionnaire* (Northouse, 2017), *StrengthsFinder* Survey, *Detailed Class List*, *Instructional Setting Evaluation Form*, *Course Attendance Report*, course grade report, course survey evaluation, and personal communications from lecture notes (and any other materials developed and deemed helpful, such as the confidence poster) were examined. These artifacts were all required components of the course. Students formed teams based on their own topics of interest to complete their group research project, and refined research question to provide a focus for their poster presentation. The group research project required students to search for academic articles in accordance to the topic of focus (six articles or more), analyze findings and then condense findings into a poster presentation. These materials were evaluated by the instructor-researcher once all grades were finalized and in consultation with the research associate.

When analyzing artifacts, students either self-identified or were recognizable to me. To remain judgment-free and work to eliminate any preconceived notions or make assertions about the participant experiences, I maintained a research journal throughout the data analysis. Through a process of reflexive bracketing I described these opinions and become more aware of my biases, working to ensure they were not impacting the results of the study (Creswell, 2007).

#### **6. Semi-structured interviews (Post intervention).**

The research associate invited participants to take part in semi-structured interviews at the conclusion of the course. In-depth individual interviews enable the researcher to comprehend the inner minds and subjective experiences of participants (Shek & Law, 2014). Interviews ranged from 40-60 minutes and were held on campus in a private location (informed consent). Interviews were completed by the research associate and followed the ethical standards required by a teacher, researcher, and student (AERA, 2011). The research associate sent a simple invitation by email to participants, and a verbal reminder was shared by the faculty-researcher during class. Even though I did not know who was in this research study, many participants had self-identified to me. I presented some names of students to the research associate to consider inviting to an interview. These are students that I thought could provide answers to the research questions (Pansiri, 2006, p. 230; as cited in Jogulu & Pansiri, 2011). The interviews provided the essence of participants lived experiences (Creswell, 2008). A list of the semi-structured interview questions (Appendix G) and a sample interview transcript (Appendix K) are included.

#### **7. Concluding focus group.**

The research associate held focus groups for participants following course completion, at a time when students stated it was most convenient for them. Focus groups hold the promise of providing rich data (Mansell, Bennett, Northway, Mead, & Moseley, 2004). The focus group

took place on campus, and I provided food and refreshments for the research associate to offer. I had a dual-relationship with students that required me to take special precautions to protect participant interests in conducting ethical research.

If research opportunities or circumstances require selection of research participants with whom education researchers have another such relationship [e.g., teacher], researchers take particular care to ensure that consent to participate is voluntary and free of coercion. Education researchers also take particular care that information used, gathered, or reported as part of the research is handled in such a manner to ensure that risk of harm to the research participants is minimized and does not exceed what otherwise would be anticipated for research participants in similar circumstances where there is no such dual relationship. (AERA Code of Ethics, 2011, p. 150)

The intent of the focus group was to establish key themes and recommendations for integrating mindfulness within leadership development curriculum. The focus group also took a strength-based approach and focused on what energized and promoted competence among participants throughout the course (MacKie, 2014). The focus group gauged experiences, provided a deeper understanding of meaningful components, and recommended improvements for leadership learning (Appendix H). An email invitation was sent by the research associate to encourage participation. The focus group lasted one hour and forty-five minutes, and information was digitally audio-recorded with three student participants. The research associate facilitated a clear framework for participants to equally contribute their perspectives and dove into issues that required further refining. Students were not able to withdraw from the study once the focus group occurred, as it would be too difficult to separate student voices from the data collected.

***Focus group proceedings.***

The first part of the focus group engaged participants in independent self-reflective thinking to consider key themes related to their experience. Participants were encouraged to identify and share outcomes, changes, significant learning, energizing factors, personal insights, impacts, benefits and goals that they developed or encountered as a result of the course.

During the second part of the focus group participants were invited to share their experiences, and suggested improvements for student leader development activities within higher education. The research associate facilitated an open dialogue about mindfulness experiences, and closed with a dialogue circle for participants to share (or pass) on any last thoughts or comments. The research associate invited students to reflect on and identify: their reasons for taking the course, specific activities or moments in the course they deemed as significant, and a specific time when the impact of mindfulness was particularly clear or vivid (McLeod, 2010). The research associate facilitated this conversation with students who felt comfortable sharing.

The research associate shared transcripts with focus group and interview participants to ensure the content was captured accurately, and gave them the opportunity to clarify meaning. I shared Chapter four (draft) with participants and invited them to share any input or suggested changes to the research associate.

**8. Post-survey.**

Participants' information regarding past experiences (intrapersonal, mindfulness or leader/personal development), and reasons for participating in leader development course via the post-survey, occurred at the conclusion of the course. Self-awareness was also assessed using the individual domain (twenty-two items) of the *Socially Responsible Leadership Scale (SRLS-R2)* originally developed by Tyree, 1988 (Dugan, 2015), that include questions relating to

consciousness of self, congruence, and commitment. A unique opportunity present within case study methodology is the ability for investigators to integrate quantitative data to facilitate a holistic understanding as data is weaved together, and to strengthen findings (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The *SRLS-R2* measures characteristics associated with the individual development aspects associated with the social change model (SCM) of leadership. SCM has a direct connection with self-awareness and was selected for use in this study since it is widely used, is a valid measure, and aligns with the research questions proposed. Dugan (2015) affirmed the structural validity of this 68-item scale stating that the *SRLS-R2* achieved reliabilities a ranging from 0.82 to 0.90. The *SRLS-R2* individual domain categories were also used to guide the coding of qualitative data (Appendix I).

The challenge with self-report measures is that researchers rely on individuals' truthfulness in a particular moment, when they are completing the post-survey (Ackerman, 2017). Individuals frequently answer survey questions towards the idea that is best, rather than the truth, and often switch their response to reflect this (Ackerman, 2017). The research associate distributed post-surveys (approximately 10 minutes to complete) via an email containing a confidential link and encouraged students to respond with their most truthful answers. Paper copies were also provided to students immediately following the mindfulness activity in class, to compensate for a low response rate. Participants were invited to choose a pseudonym for reporting confidentiality and to maintain anonymous contribution throughout all data collected. Post-survey data were provided in a sealed envelope to the research assistant for transcription.

In conclusion, all qualitative materials were audio recorded and digitally transcribed using pseudonyms. I created a *Trello* dashboard to organize the research, and data collected

were imported into *AtlasTi*, a data analysis software program, for data coding and thematic analysis.

### **Trustworthiness**

Creswell (2013) views credibility and trustworthiness in qualitative research as a source of validation. Validation occurred within this study through a process of reviewing and checking to ensure accuracy of the codes, themes, and results. A systematic code was conducted by the research associate and compared with my codes to ensure similar results were achieved, which promotes validity of qualitative findings. Baxter and Jack (2008) stated that involving other research team members in data analysis provided helpful feedback on data integration and analysis. Member checks on transcripts for interviews and the focus group were done to ensure findings and interpretations accurately reflected participant experiences. The draft findings chapter was also provided to participants. Newman and DeMarco (2003) stated that, “researchers strengthen validity (e.g., legitimacy, trustworthiness, applicability) when they can show the consistency among the research purposes, the questions, and the methods they use. Strong consistency grounds the credibility of the research findings and helps to ensure that audiences have confidence in the findings and the implications of research studies” (as cited in Creamer, 2018, p. 167). I compared themes developed from different data sources with the research associate through investigator triangulation, completed member checks on transcripts, and received feedback from several participants on the draft findings to validate the accuracy and trustworthiness of data.

### **Data Analysis**

A summary of data collected to answer the research questions posed was provided in Table 4. I collected observation and field notes in late Spring 2018 after classroom meditation.



Table 4

*Research Framework - Course Competencies, Research Methods and Research Questions*

SoTL	Research Questions	Intrapersonal Course Competencies (CAS, 2015)	<u>Conceptual Model</u> : SCM (HERI, 1996)	Data Collection Methods
Context	How do undergraduate students and the instructor experience a leadership course that integrates mindfulness practice?	1. Demonstrate awareness and understand of at least five leadership styles 2. Develop personal values and a leadership identity and philosophy (vision and goal setting)	<u>Consciousness of Self</u> (Self-Aware) - Think or Cognitive	Interview, post-survey, artifacts, focus group, Personal Online Leadership Log (POLL), observation/field notes, audio-visual recordings
Process	What are undergraduate and instructor experiences in practicing mindfulness?	3. Understand and personalize each of the human development constructs	<u>Congruence</u> (Self-Aware) - Be or Affective	Artifacts, audio-visuals, interview, focus group, observation/field notes, faculty journal, <i>Insight Timer</i> , POLL
Impact	How do undergraduates perceive that mindfulness impacts intrapersonal leader development?	4. Demonstrate leadership skills: risk taking, motivation, etc.	<u>Commitment</u> (Self-Aware) - Do or Behavioural	Academic outcomes and attendance, artifacts, interviews, focus group, observation/field notes, post-survey
Follow-Up	How do undergraduates or instructors feel mindfulness helped or hindered their leader development?	5. Capacity to communicate effectively using oral, written and creatively (Personal expression)	<u>All</u> - Cognitive, Affective and Behavioural (Think, Be, Do)	Observation/field notes, interview, focus group, artifacts, post-survey

Note: This table illustrated how the intrapersonal competency standards, SoTL heuristic and the Conceptual model aligned to help organize answers to the research questions and data collection methods for each.

Once the leadership course concluded and final marks were assigned to participants, qualitative data in the form of interviews, journals (POLL), post-surveys, artifacts, and focus group responses were analyzed using content analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The process

used to analyze data were as follows: first, data were sorted, scrubbed, organized and reflected upon; next thematic coding of qualitative data were done using investigator triangulation (Denzin, 1977); then through research comparison feedback and agreement was gained; lastly, thematic coding using methodological triangulation (along with creating student profiles) were completed to develop the shared lived experiences of participants (Denzin, 1977; Farmer, Robinson, Elliott, & Eyles, 2006). Participants were provided with the resulting analysis to provide feedback, as well. The analysis used in this research study can be found within the results in Chapter Four.

#### **A - Sort, organize, read and reflect.**

Initial analysis started with several reviews of the transcripts by the faculty researcher, member checks, and reflective notes to capture the researchers' subjectivity during this process. An initial read of qualitative data helped to confirm general categories, codes, and themes towards the development of pragmatic knowledge and general stories (McLeod, 2010). A set of predetermined codes derived from the scholarly literature was established for each aspect of the individual domain (consciousness, congruence and commitment) also using the *SRLS-R2*, and the SoTL heuristic (see Table 5). In addition, mindfulness and intrapersonal development outcomes as shared by past scholarly research was also included as codes within this guide. These predetermined codes served as a code guide to analyze and organize data, and any text that were not categorized were assigned a new code (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

#### **B - Initial thematic coding - Investigator triangulation.**

A thematic analysis completed independently by the research associate (interviews; n = 4), and myself (post-survey, n = 18; focus group, n = 1) was compared. Investigator triangulation was used to validate the common themes developed from the qualitative data using

the code guide developed (Denzin, 1977). Responses to each question were summarized into themes and codes, and for common themes, a frequency count of participants were included. *AtlasTi* and *Excel* were used to categorize data into the codes and themes.

### **C - Researcher comparison and consensus.**

I compared the resulting codes and themes derived from the research associate and myself, and shared the common and differentiating codes and themes with the research associate. I then collaborated with the research associate verbally to clarify our interpretations, to compare and contrast differences, and to determine the degree of agreement regarding the common codes and themes described (Farmer et al., 2006). The research associate and I also gained feedback from the research assistant. Once we reached agreement on the common themes and codes, I coded all qualitative data using these common themes, the code guide, and new codes were also documented.

### **D - Thematic coding - Methodological triangulation.**

I used methodological triangulation to describe the mindfulness experience of participants to gain knowledge about their learning experiences, and improvements to the pedagogies used (Denzin, 1977). Founded in constructivism, the goal of using methodological triangulation was to establish meaning, and as new or contrary observations were identified this meaning was revised to form new interpretations (Stake, 1995). Within each qualitative method, I reviewed the frequency counts for each code, and organized them to align with the research questions (see Table 5), to prepare the data for comparison. Qualitative data codes were compared and contrasted (e.g., interviews, focus groups, post-surveys, observation/field notes, artifact analysis and POLL's) to determine the continuum of the codes and themes established (Farmer et al., 2006). I compared these multiple data points with the aim to connect the

mindfulness experience to the cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions of self-awareness or intrapersonal leader development (Patton, 1999). I then tied the qualitative data to the type and frequency of *Insight Timer* meditations, and audio-visual recordings to add clarity and depth.

I also completed descriptive statistics of the *SRLS-R2* (contained within the post-survey) using *SPSS*. First, to determine the self-reported awareness levels of participants, and then to compare quantitative data to qualitative codes to establish complementary or contradictory findings (Brown et al., 2009; Holt & Walker, 2009). Within the individual category of the *SRLS-R2*, I organized each critical value quantitatively (*Consciousness of Self*, *Congruence* and *Commitment*), and aggregated the results for each participant. The *SRLS-R2* is calculated by summing the individual scores to a five-point Likert scale (note: two questions in consciousness had to be reverse-coded; Appendix L). *Consciousness* had nine questions with a total score of 45, *congruence* had seven questions with a total score of 35 and *commitment* had six questions with a total score of 30. I then used the Likert scores for each critical value and matched them to the qualitative data codes also organized by critical value to compare and contrast findings.

Student profiles were also created for each participant to gain a better understanding of the individual experience of mindfulness. By gathering data from across the qualitative data methods collected and as they were related to a particular participant, I crafted profile descriptions for those participants that practiced mindfulness regularly. Student profiles helped to establish caricatures of research participants who demonstrated varying degrees of mindfulness practice that were then synthesized to frame the case study (Merriam, 2009).

Lastly, I shared a draft of the findings with the research associate, the research assistant and the participants to gain feedback. Those participants who had a chance to review had

suggested minimal changes, and enhanced clarity of the findings that have been incorporated into Chapter four.

The conceptual framework continued to evolve as relationships between constructs emerged throughout the data analysis process, resulting in a final conceptual framework.

A final conceptual framework will include all the themes that emerged from data analysis. Yin suggests that returning to the propositions that initially formed the conceptual framework ensures that the analysis is reasonable in scope and that it also provides structure for the final report (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

All data were aligned with the research questions to identify common themes and report on the data. Personal experiences served as examples that promoted understanding, made sense of the experience from the participants' perspectives, and communicated the results in an academically meaningful way (Putman & Rock, 2017). The SoTL (i.e., context, process, impact and follow-up) was used to present these shared lived experiences, while introducing important themes developed in the next chapter. This analysis of what occurred during the mindfulness intervention produced a thicker descriptive account that was used to inform a new conceptual framework that can create new approaches to policy and practice (McLeod, 2010). Audio-visual recordings were used to confirm or adjust the descriptive accounts formed. A drawback with using the conceptual framework during analysis is that it uses an inductive approach. To safeguard from this, personal thoughts were captured in journals throughout the data analysis process, and discussions and decisions were made in consultation with other researchers to ensure thinking was not constrained by the conceptual framework (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

The findings presented in this study can assist researchers, educators and students understand how to introduce, develop, and assess mindfulness approaches with greater knowledge, awareness and perspective, thus enable transferability to other higher education contexts. This case-study research provided a means to improve institutional practice through a reflective and collaborative learning process (Corcoran, Walker & Wals, 2004, p. 19). Results present changes and insights into mindful leadership learning within undergraduate education. The data collected provides support for specific changes in higher education, as detailed in Chapter Four and explored further in Chapter Five.

### **Informed Consent and Ethics**

A research assistant invited students to participate in the research project, personally during the beginning of class and following an email invitation sent. The invitation outlined the purpose of the study, procedures, consent and Ethics Review Board information, along with contact information for the researcher, advisors, and Review Board Chairs (Appendix E). Participants were required to provide a signature indicating their consent to participate in the research project and the related procedures (Appendix F). This provided access to information that participants shared verbally, online, demonstrated through course artifacts, audio-visuals, and via the *Insight Timer* application. All students returned the informed consent form in a sealed envelope (i.e., whether they were signed or not to maintain confidentiality of those who were and were not participating in the study) to the research assistant, who then provided the sealed envelopes to the research associate to maintain in a locked cabinet. In this way, the course faculty-researcher did not know the students who were participants, unless they self-identified.

Ethics was completed both at the Internal Review Board at the university where the study was conducted and with Lakehead University Ethics Review Board (Appendix D). Member-checks occurred for all qualitative responses and interpretations. The data collected and used, were held confidentially and anonymously by: the research associate (post-survey, POLL's, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, *Insight Timer* records), and myself (observation/field notes, my faculty journal, course artifacts and audiovisual recordings), by collecting a corresponding pseudonym for each participant to ensure confidentiality. All personal information and data collected were held in a locked, password-protected internet file online or in a locked filing cabinet.

### **Summary**

The intrinsic single-case study design, along with the data collection procedures, leadership course overview, and mindfulness intervention were described. The eight data collection methods were used to gain an understanding of both student and faculty perspectives about mindfulness. The data analysis procedures, participant invitations and the validity or trustworthiness of this research were explained, along with the means for ensuring informed consent from participants. I was able to complete the data collection, analysis and reporting in an ethical manner, in a way that promoted safety amongst participants. The experiences that students and faculty reported as a result of the data collected will be shared in Chapter Four, starting with the case story.

### **Chapter Four: The Findings**

This chapter presents the results from the research semi-structured interviews, post-surveys, Personal Online Leadership Logs (POLL) including faculty journals, the focus group, observation and field notes, and course artifacts. The findings have been organized into the themes that evolved from the data analysis as it related to undergraduate and instructor experiences in mindful leader development, and participants' perceptions of the impact that mindfulness had on their intrapersonal and leader development. First, I will describe the case study. Then I will present the main themes in the following order: (I) Perceptions of the Process; (II) Cognitive impact; (III) Affective impact; (IV) Behavioural impact; and (V) Perceptions and suggestions. Participant responses are presented using pseudonyms.

The class being studied took place over 15 weeks. There were 30 students in the class: 13 participated throughout the study (Trish withdrew) and two of those students attended the class part-time (one class per week). There was also a research associate (participant observer), a research assistant (participant observer) and myself, the faculty-researcher (participant observer), along two student mindfulness practitioners (volunteers). Four participants had extensive involvement in the all data collection processes: Seb, Ali, Pat and Mat (note: Seb and Ali attended part-time). Other participants who committed to participate in this study included Emma, Mila, Gabe, Clara, Mary, Kim, Gail, Tam and Trish as they completed POLL's and the post-survey. Trish discontinued mindfulness during the study as she stated that she "could not get into meditation" (Post-Survey, Spring 2018). Twenty-two (22) students participated in the post-survey. Thirteen of the post-surveys provided were completed in full, while an additional nine had been received (of those, four post-surveys were incomplete). The final section of this



chapter includes a summary of the major findings and provides improvements students suggested would enhance undergraduate leader development.

### **Case Study Context - Classroom Environment**

This section will address the context of where this case study took place to identify the structures that guided and shaped the student and instructor experiences within this leadership program (Hubball & Clarke, 2010). The defining characteristics of the course setting and atmosphere, the student body, and students' initial perspectives of the context will be described.

#### **Setting**

A small public university in the United States with an enrolment of just over 2,000 students was the backdrop for this case study. Eighty-eight percent of students are from the state in which the university resides, and small percentages are non-residents. There are a variety of academic programs at this university, and approximately 74% of classes have fewer than 30 people, like this classroom did. The campus was peaceful and quiet and scattered with row houses, and other significant buildings across the campus - engineering laboratory, an arts centre, health centre, the hockey arena and student activity centre, to name a few. The most recent capital project was the newly renovated historic building where this class was held, which also had: an interactive commons, a cafe, conference rooms, and support centres for students. Faculty offices were located here, such as mine, and students found faculty to be friendly and approachable.

Most offices and classrooms in this renewed and contemporary historic building were painted tan with an accent wall of blue (my office) or light green colour (our classroom). The most noise you would hear in the classroom due to the loft-like design of the second floor, would have been from the cappuccino machine or blender that the cafe used on the main floor down

below. Closing the door could muffle any noise. Mindfulness on this quiet campus might have come more easily. Going for a walk you could have heard the odd hum of a car or the sound of a plane passing by. There were fewer distractions here, creating a picturesque, quiet campus and classroom.

The natural light in the classroom entered through the six large vertical windows, on the back and sidewalls that looked out onto the main road leading into campus. The semester began during winter, when there was not as much sunlight, but the amount of sunlight increased towards the end of the semester when the spring season was welcomed. All furniture was mobile (seats are cushioned), and could be reconfigured as needed, which this class did often. Those students arriving early worked to rearrange the tables and chairs into a team-based learning format with five chairs clustered in five or six groups. All chairs were around the tables in a semicircle, facing the front to capture lectures or professor instructions. Whiteboards were also used along the front and sidewalls of the classroom for discussions, as was the screen at the front of the class that slide out from the ceiling. The class was clean and organized, with students chatting quietly prior to class starting.

### **Creating a Safe Learning Space**

I had a comfortable relationship with many of the students and we worked together to create a safe environment. Some students had taken classes from me before which gave them some comfort. Many participants were “achievers” and were comfortable approaching me as I used a strength-based approach. Strengths-based teaching, stems from positive psychology, and promotes a focus on the positive aspects of development, rather than the deficits, creating an environment for students to flourish and maximize their strengths (Buck, Carr, & Robertson, 2008). I encouraged students to support their peers in a similar way through their group work. I

also used gratitude cards for students to share with their peers (through myself anonymously) to celebrate positive demonstrations of leadership that they witnessed in others. Many students, whether engaged or not, approached me to gain clarification on assignments or share personal issues, seeking advice (e.g., family relations, personal issues such as suicide, work-related conflicts, team-based problems or even problems with the type/content of instruction). Tears and laughter were shared on occasion with students in my office.

### ***Opening activities for a caring classroom***

Class often started with a PowerPoint presentation to alert students about the content and objectives for the class ahead. During the first week of class, the *classroom agreement* was co-created with all students, and all of us provided our written signature to commit and contribute to the intended culture as described. Students shared in reciting the *classroom agreement* at the beginning of the week, to set the tone for the class culture, and when the mindfulness intervention started, we would recite it following this practice. Participants in this class were encouraged to suspend judgment to create a safe space for students to share openly and comfortably the different opinions or views they may have (this was referred to as “mutual respect” in the *classroom agreement*; Gibbs, 1998).

Initially some participants were uncomfortable with the interpersonal and team-building activities offered at the beginning of the semester to create such an environment, but eventually many participants became comfortable to share openly during the leadership program activities. The professor set the context in this study, by “breaking the ice” and ensuring participants felt comfortable to form healthy intrapersonal relations and share openly. The layout of the classroom in groups of five enhanced team and social learning for many of these participants who were nearing their graduation and wanted to improve aspects of their leadership. Comfort

was established as a result of the context and classroom culture established and agreed upon by all, which required faculty leadership, along with a comfort and acceptance, non-judgmentally, of student interactions.

During the second half of the semester (the last 10 weeks), students were introduced to mindfulness and were engaged in the context and process used to practice mindfulness in the classroom. In week 9, I introduced mindfulness and pulled ideas from students regarding their thoughts on mindfulness.

Shortly after,

Students discussed the type of mindfulness practice and format we would use for the remainder of the semester. Most agreed to a mindfulness practice every morning for five-minutes. Some students would have preferred both before and after class, and some for a longer duration (e.g., 10 minutes). (Faculty Journal, Spring 2018)

Once we were set,

A practicing yoga instructor and student volunteer (involved in athletics) provided an introduction of mindfulness meditation the class. We turned down the lights and he sat in a chair in the middle of the front area. He invited all to close their eyes and focus on some deep breathing and the sensation of this life-giving force to one's body. To continue finding the breath during the meditation, while reminding students that: fear and anxiety are in the future, depression is in the past, but true peace and contentment lies in the present moment. Upon closing, he welcomed students to become aware of the room wiggling fingers and toes after this brief two-minute exercise. (Faculty Journal, Spring 2018)

Classroom rhythm followed an opening of mindfulness (5 minutes), the *classroom agreement*, classroom content (including a range of experiential learning, self-assessments and discussions), and then a closing/preparation for next class.

The professor sat by the door at the beginning of class and during mindfulness practice to guide students in, should students attend late.

Using *Headspace*, students would get into their personal space by getting comfortable, feet flat on the floor and with their eyes closed if that was pleasant. On many occasions, the professor observed students in silence, the odd shifting of the body as the practice took place, many if not all students with their eyes closed. The only sound heard other than small shifting by students in this classroom are the heater fans blowing, or the sound of the projector running which was normally quiet. (Field Note, Spring 2018)

Once the practice concluded, students continued on with the chapter reading and activities that the professor engaged them in for the remainder of class. Class would close with a brief summary, should time have been available (which sometimes was not) and preparation activities for the next class were reviewed.

### **Mindfulness Practice**

Getting individuals to fit in time to reflect on and report on their practice was difficult in this academic setting. The biggest issue for students was that it was “difficult to find time” for a consistent practice, which is why Pat completed mindfulness before she fell asleep (Interview, May 1, 2018, 26:16). The first online POLL demonstrated only had two respondents. As a result, students were provided a paper copy of the POLL, following the mindfulness practice in class to encourage greater participation. The ‘Mindfulness Exploration’ group formed on the

*Insight Timer* also had a small enrollment of five participants (three research team members and two students). Participants did not record any activity using the timer application (Appendix N). Some participants do mention use of the *Insight Timer* just not within this group. “When considering my own involvement in such a group initially, I was not entirely comfortable. However, it became comforting to practice with familiar faces using this tool” (Faculty Journal, Spring 2018). Sixty-four percent of my activities were guided/meditation (which spiked when the study started) and 36% were silent/breathing using the *Insight Timer* application, with an average of 33-minute sessions (*Insight Timer* record, Spring 2018). I only used the *Insight Timer* before falling asleep, not for my morning meditation. Sixty-two percent (62%) of the associate-researcher activities were yoga (she had a consistent yoga practice before the study) and 38% were meditation using the *Insight Timer* application, with an average of 14-minute sessions for meditation and 30-minute sessions for yoga (*Insight Timer* record, Spring 2018).

The faculty-researcher encouraged students to take part in mindfulness exercises outside of the classroom. Ninety percent of participants reported on the POLL (n = 10) that they engaged in mindfulness practices. This included meditation - unguided or guided (50%), and some used the *Headspace* Smartphone application (30%). Some participants found that walking, yoga, prayer, and stress colouring helped them to relax (10%) and become more mindful of themselves, others, and their environment (POLL, Spring 2018). Seb and other participants did report that it was difficult to fit in mindfulness due to their busy schedules and heavy workloads, and especially during stressful times such as the end of semester and exams (Interview, Spring 2018).

Many participants had not engaged in mindfulness prior to this study. Examples of activities that participants engaged in prior to this course, which are followed by the number of

respondents, included: self-reflection (5), leadership development (4), group projects or volunteering to lead (3), personality assessments (3), devotion or prayer (2), and journaling, yoga or meditation (2). Examples of self-reflection included: “mindfulness = taking a break closing eyes and centring”, “personal reflection is just when I think over everything I've done and have to do still and also over any decisions I have to make”, “reflect on things I do and say in both personal and professional areas (school and work)”, engaging with a psychologist to be more self-reflective and outgoing, and “to find quiet in the morning” (Post-survey, Spring 2018).

### **The Student Profile**

Approximately 30 students were enrolled in the course and thirteen participants (10 female and 3 male) committed to taking part. One female participant later withdrew. The majority was Caucasian, and came from small towns in the Northern United States. Seven participants fell in the 18 to 21 years age range, five participants in the 21 to 25, and one participant was aged 26 to 30. The female participant that withdrew was in the 21 to 25 year age range. Further to the thirteen participants who agreed to participate, an additional nine participants completed informed consent to complete the post-survey at the end of the course (note: five of the post-surveys were complete and another four were incomplete). Many students chose to craft a pseudonym to protect and anonymize their participation in this research (Stake, 1995). Interestingly, with the exception of few students, most students used numbers as their pseudonym. Initially, two participants used their own name, and many students self-identified to the faculty-researcher. Change in these matters are anticipated and negotiated throughout case study research and pseudonyms have been used for all participants in this dissertation (Stake, 1995).

The participants involved in this study had an effective mix of experience, ranged in age and gender, and shared the collective experience of participating in a mindfulness intervention in a leadership course held at this small postsecondary institution, nestled within a small community. In preparing icebreakers for the class, and identifying commonalities, many students expressed that they were from a small town and had an interest in the outdoors, family, sports, and travel (Faculty journal, Spring 2018). The class was an interesting mix of fisheries/conservation students, business students, political science students and recreation majors (Detailed Class List, Spring 2018). Student hoped to gain the following leadership program outcomes: learning personal strengths, confidence, inspiring motivation, leading large groups, having better influence, staying positive, conflict resolution and patience, assertiveness and quick decision-making (Faculty journal, Spring 2018). Half of the participants (50%) reported exercising and eating healthy, 80% stated that they had been getting seven hours of sleep or more, and 20% were practicing meditation or prayer (POLL, Spring 2018).

The *StrengthsFinder* (Rath, 2007) is a 122-item questionnaire that students completed individually, and based on their responses the results provided a description to students of their top five talents, which are further described in the book. Almost the entire class contributed (21 responses) their *StrengthsFinder* results, to form the top common strengths that existed amongst the student body, including the following (note: the number in brackets following the strength corresponds to the participant frequency):

- *Achiever* (10) - students with this strength demonstrate stamina and work hard. These individuals value productivity and being busy.



- *Responsibility* (8) - students with this strength ensure their commitments align with their personal values. These individuals are conscientious, wanting to do things right and focus on doing the right things.
- *Learner* (7) - students with this strength want to learn and continuously improve.
- Others included: *Consistency* (6), *Individualization* (4), *Belief* (4), *Restorative* (4), *Discipline* (3), *Harmony* (3), *Includer* (3), *Adaptability* (3), *Arranger* (2) and *Realtor* (2; *StrengthsFinder* Survey, Spring 2018).

Many students made reference to the *StrengthsFinder* and how it reaffirmed their talents. Pat stated, “taught you more about yourself that you didn't realize. I definitely think the *Strengthsfinder* was an awesome way to learn about yourself” (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:94).

Many students commented on the classroom environment. One of the participants stated, Seb stated, "The lights were always kind of dim ... it wasn't so bright in there so it was a lot more relaxed.” (Interview, April 30, 2018, 24:5) Ali shares, "It was nice that it had windows.” (Interview, April 30, 2018, 27:3) One student shared that they liked that the tables were in blocks. Ali shares, “Desks were pushed together, so like, two and two”, so that students sat in teams, rather than rows (Interview, April 30, 2018, 27:4). Ali also referenced how it was helpful that students sat in a "different place every day and get a different angle in the class.” (Interview, April 30, 2018, 27:5) Mat shares that we did a lot of “moving-the-desks-around type of stuff, but I don't think it had any effect on me.” (Interview, May 1, 2018, 25:7)

Many participants also highlighted positive professor and student relations. No-name stated ”great teacher, good environment” (Post-Survey, Spring 2018, 17:31). Seb referenced that the relationship with the Professor was helpful; "We've been able to talk and I'm not intimidated

by her." (Interview, April 30, 2018, 24:6) Pat reiterated that she was also comfortable talking to the Professor (Interview, May 1, 2018, 26:3). Pat also stated, that the Professor's approaches made things easier "because you get your feedback right away." (Interview, May 1, 2018, 26:5) Another participant shared, "every professor brings their experiences to the classroom and uses them as teaching opportunities. This allows for students to see how what they are learning in class applies to real life situations" (personal communication, December 9, 2018).

On the week of February 14, some of these students came to visit me to seek advice and connect with me about the leadership topics I was teaching at that time (e.g., task vs. maintenance behaviours). One student thanked me for covering concepts that he could see really apply to his everyday interactions with others, and another shared leadership is something she has never even thought about. (Faculty Journal, February 2018)

Many students highlighted the open and comfortable atmosphere they felt a part of, and contributed too. Seb shared that getting to know each other helped create a comfortable space. Pat shares that eventually you get to know everyone "a little bit better and you also got to see the kind of styles of leadership that are present in different types of people." (Interview, May 1, 2018, 23:126) Seb said the class was "a good place to come and share your ideas and how you felt." (Interview, April 30, 2018, 24:43) He also reaffirmed that a small class size made it "easier for us to speak our mind or how we felt about something, or share actual things about ourselves that maybe we wouldn't necessarily do in a larger class." (Interview, April 30, 2018, 24:5) Ali shared, "it was nice just doing things on our own" (27:8) and "it freed us" (27:57) to engage in self-learning. She continued, "it was really easy to interact and engage" (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:25). Ali shared that "when we were learning about leadership, it was really

open, we could give presentations however we wanted to. So with the openness it made it more easy to learn or even want to learn.” (Interview, April 30, 2018, 27:3) One faculty member who observed during instructor evaluation wrote, “It appeared, all but one student, were highly engaged” (*Instructional Setting Evaluation Form*, Document, March 20, 2018).

Some students communicated the importance of forming and reciting a *classroom agreement* to create a safe place and create a supportive learning environment. Ali shared: “I think that's really essential because it reminds people where they are and the atmosphere of the classroom. I think it sets boundaries.” (Interview, April 30, 2018, 25:54) Seb shared the classroom felt like a “safe place, if that makes any sense. A place where you can always go to and know that you're not judged. You know it's always open, you never have to worry no matter what you say . . . I mean, we put forth a *classroom agreement* and every time we walk into the classroom . . . I feel good there, it's like a home to me, you know, when you walk into the classroom.” (Interview, April 30, 2018, 24:38).

Context of the class was probably the biggest [factor] because . . . we're all here to learn leadership so we all have the same intent. We all have the same goals or at least similar end goals and we're all . . . helping each other on the same basis on the same plane of learning. So context is big. (Interview, April 30, 2018, May 1, 2018, 25:6)

Eighty percent of students attended class in the weeks prior to mindfulness, and 95% of students attended class on average during the weeks when the mindfulness intervention took place (Course Attendance Report, Spring 2018). Two students also did not complete the course. Students in the class achieved an average of 80% for the final grade (60% was lowest mark and 95% the highest; Course Grade Report, Spring 2018).

### **Program Components**

In terms of instructional design and delivery, final course evaluation scores for the study provided on a five-point Likert scale fell between a 4.6 and 4.9 (Course Survey Evaluation, Spring 2018). Eighty-five percent of participants, who completed the survey, acknowledged that the course “increased my capacity for analytic and critical thinking” and eighty-six percent stated that they “learned a lot from this course” (Course Survey Evaluation, Spring 2018). Many students commented specifically on leadership program elements, such as self-reflection and hands-on activities, including group work.

Many participants highlighted self-reflection as important. Five students stated that the journal reflections and assessments were helpful on the post-survey (e.g., Paul, Mila, Ashley, Ned and no-name). Ali shared that in this leadership program students had to “answer questions in the book” in regards to a specific type of leadership and complete “heavier journaling” in their leadership journals (Interview, April 30, 2018, 27:38). Clara stated that the assessments provided in the leadership program gave her an opportunity for self-reflection and understood her, “weaknesses and how to improve on them” (Post-Survey, Spring 2018, 22:38). Seb stated that the textbook (Northouse, 2017) learning leadership theories in relation to self-application and completing the workbook/journal strengthened his self-understanding (Interview, April 30, 2018, 24:7). Pat found self-reflection beneficial but difficult at first “because I don't know what I want to do. You had to actually think about what you might want to do” (Interview, May 1, 2018, 26:28). Ali reaffirmed that “journaling and the writing is very important” (Interview, April 30, 2018, 27:8) and the “reflective pieces were really helpful in [nurturing] self-awareness.” (Interview, April 30, 2018, 27:33) “Not just learning about ourselves, but writing it out and thinking on a piece of paper to solidify.” (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:95). Self-reflection

“comes natural when you are asked questions about yourself” stated Mike (Post-Survey, Spring 2018, 19:35).

Many participants commented that the experiential aspects of the course enhanced their leader development. Mat shared that he liked “going up to speak in front of class . . . we talked about what our goals were and verbally expressed [them] to the class” (Interview, May 1, 2018, 25:8). Ali mentioned the “persona thing or when we had to give our elevator pitch. That was awesome.” (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:21). Seb highlighted the “hands-on learning,” such as the “trust activity” where students had to trust a partner to lead them with their eyes covered, that helped each individual identify their comfort in leading and trust in leaders (Interview, April 30, 2018, 24:41). He stated,

I wasn't scared . . . and then my partner, she was absolutely terrified, so she wasn't that trusting and I think exercises like that help you see where you are as a leader. And also, helps you grow and you can see okay, maybe this is something I need to work on.

(Interview, April 30, 2018, 24:39)

Pat talked about “one activity where we took a task on relational topics and had to create an anagram, a way to study that or a way to present it or teach others or do a skit with it.” (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:37) It illustrated the material, how people work together and engaged students' creatively. Ali also suggested that hands-on group projects were effective for learning.

Many participants commented on working as a group and the class/group discussions and Kim shared that she “really liked all the discussions with classmates” (Post-Survey, Spring 2018, 12:32). Pat reiterated that the discussion about personal values through the different assignments was helpful, and “then you just go on reflecting.” (Interview, May 1, 2018, 26:27). Mat “really enjoyed trying to play that mentorship role.” (Interview, May 1, 2018, 25:19) Ali

stated, "Working with other people [on the hands-on group projects] is the most important that I found." (Interview, April 30, 2018, 27:28) "We had to work together and that was really helpful to learn about leadership and mindfulness" and is in a sense an effective role-play (Interview, April 30, 2018, 27:7). Seb stated the research paper and poster were enjoyable due to being able to pick a topic that interested him, and learning about it in a way that it can also be applied to his future aspirations. Pat agreed, "we actually got to practice some of the things" that you learn in class such as applying values, goals and continue reflecting as you engage as a group. Mat practiced what he learned within this project and also with the positions he held during the semester. He shared, it was important to find "out what works and what doesn't work." (Interview, May 1, 2018, 25:29) Some participants commented on how the investment in the poster research experience was something that they could add to their portfolio as well.

### **Mindfulness Defined**

Participants worked to form their definitions of mindfulness during class and these included, having a calm mind, self-acceptance, a sense of personal ethics, clarity or a renewed perspective, self-betterment/confidence, and a release of stress. Melody shared,

Meditation for me is something that I cherish. It is a part of my everyday life and one of my favourite parts of my day. I found meditation during one of the most stressful times in my life and it has changed who I am for the better. During that time I needed a healthy outlet to release my stress from school and reduce my anxiety, and meditation was the perfect fit for me. I now have a completely new perspective on the world and look through kinder eyes at everyone I see. (personal communication, March 30, 2018)

Andy stated that mindfulness helped to reduce stress, increased attention and confidence, helped overcome low self-esteem and enabled a person to break out of their comfort zone (Leadership Journal, Spring 2018). One student shared, “from the sports perspective, mindfulness helped to train the prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain that creates a calm and alter state of mind (Dr. Race)” (personal communication, Spring 2018). Several students rationalized that mindfulness helped people to decide ethical actions and develop as a person. Mat shared a metaphor their group created: “Mindfulness is like going from standing on sand, to standing on [solid] glass” (personal communication, Spring 2018). The faculty-professor also discovered a metaphor to help define mindfulness that derived from a conversation she had.

A friend shared with me today that he recently went to the very top of the Eiffel tower, a place that few people go. I discover that the Eiffel tower was built as an entrance for a world fair in the 1800's. It becomes my metaphor for mindfulness ... mindfulness is a gateway like the Eiffel tower (an entrance into something significant - the soul) and one that shares a grand view (of one's inner self and life direction). (Faculty Journal, Spring 2018)

### **Section I: Perceptions of the Process**

Participant and faculty perspectives on their experiences throughout the mindfulness process will be described. First, participants and faculty perspectives regarding their introduction to the mindfulness experience will be explained, and then their perspectives during and following the process of the mindfulness practice will be described.

#### **Before - Awkward/Engaging**

In the beginning, most participants indicated that they felt awkward, some felt forced to relax, and some felt more engaged with mindfulness. Pat mentioned, “It's kind of awkward at first. You don't know if you're doing it right. I know for me I feel like people are watching me do it even though they're not.” (Interview, May 1, 2018, 26:7) Ali also felt that mindfulness was a private thing, and as a result the mindfulness practice in the classroom felt intrusive. Ali stated that she didn't really like to relax and lose focus in the classroom (which is interesting as mindfulness was meant to promote focus). She shared,

It just feels more forced. It doesn't feel as ... it's coming from within, it's coming from the outside and so it's harder for [me] . . . to relax. Could be . . . when I come to a classroom, I'm not used to zoning out. You're trying your whole life just to pay attention, pay attention . . . I find it uncomfortable to sort of relax in front of other people. (Interview, April 30, 2018, 27:16)

Mat also found mindfulness too forceful within the context of the class, and both Ali and Mat felt that mindfulness needed to be longer than five minutes, as it seemed rushed. Mat also added, that he “ wouldn't have taken the time to do [the mindfulness meditation]” if it wasn't presented within the classroom context (Interview, May 1, 2018, 25:3) Seb "really liked the



meditation at the beginning of class” and found mindfulness extremely helpful since it set a tone for him to be relaxed and calm throughout the rest of class (Interview, April 30, 2018, 24:40).

I observed that many students, almost all 30, were very willing to engage in mindfulness (apart from one or two students). The student mindfulness practitioner that volunteered to lead the class stated,

Being in first year she was so anxious and found *Headspace* guided meditations to be helpful. Afterwards the students chose to do a five-minute versus a three-minute mindfulness meditation with her. The room was silent and all students (it was a fully attended class) engaged in the activity with eyes closed. (Faculty Journal, Spring 2018)

“I am amazed at how into-it students are, just at the beginning - total silence and stillness. No fidgeting, noises...” (Field Notes, Spring 2018). On another occasion, I reported, “I focused on my breath - breathing in vitality and releasing tension. The fan today seems unusually loud and students have placed themselves in a row (different from our typical group based set-up). But there is a sense of stillness (i.e., not much movement from students). Just sitting still and quiet” (Field Notes, Spring 2018).

Some students approached me and shared how they had been practicing and found a benefit from mindfulness. They seemed genuinely appreciative for the mindfulness introduction.

One participant thanked me for introducing him to the *Insight Timer*. He has been using it and feels much more rested in the morning when he practices mindfulness prior to going to sleep (using a guided meditation). Another participant stopped by my office, and always has a yoga mat with her. She is very diligent and present when I interact with her. She has come by three times now to ask clarifying or reaffirming questions. (Faculty Journal, Spring 2018)

After a few weeks, many participants became accustomed to this new practice. Some benefitted from the opportunity for peace, and others challenged by their awareness of their inner world.

### **During - Opportunity for Peace**

The majority of participants appeared to welcome mindfulness, and soaked up the opportunity to be still. Sara referenced, “I need to take time for myself and this [mindfulness] helped” (POLL, Spring 2018, 13:34). Participants reported that they enjoyed that mindfulness (POLL, Spring 2018): “seems to come easy” (Emma, 35:9), “there is no real effort” required (Tam, 36:9), “you don’t need to focus on anything” (Pat, 30:9), mindfulness “only takes a little bit of time” (Seb, 28:9), to “just sit quietly and relax” (Mila, 32:9). Gail, Kim and Ned shared that the experience of mindfulness provides them with “a break” to calm down and reset. (POLL, 31:9). Mike stated, “there is no right or wrong, it’s all about how you feel” (POLL, Spring 2018, 34:9). “A student mentions to me that it is hard to change your daily routine, but with practice, it will just become normal to be mindful” (Faculty Journal, April 2018). Seb stated, “There isn’t anything I do not like [about mindfulness]” (POLL, Spring 2018, 28:13). Kim shared that she liked “forcing my body to stay still” but found “forcing my mind to stay still” difficult (POLL, Spring 2018, 37:10).

### **During - Challenges in an Unsettled Inner World**

A few participants elaborated on the difficulties, stating that mindfulness practice could be hard as was confirmed by much mindfulness literature. Students reported that it was difficult to sit still, as Ned stated to “come to a state of full relaxation” (POLL, Spring 2018, 31:10). Tam, and Kim shared that it was difficult to stay focused (POLL, Spring 2018), and Gail stated, “to allow thoughts to pass through” (POLL, Spring 2018, 29:10). Gail continued that “as a spiritual person, some aspects of mindfulness I don’t always agree with” (Post-Survey, Spring

2018, 29:13). I also observed some unsettled behaviours after a few weeks of engaging in mindfulness practice with some participants as well. I witnessed that a few students had their eyes open (Field Notes, April 2018). I had reported, “stressed students . . . It takes some time to get them speaking. I haven't shared the classroom agreement” (Field Notes, Spring 2018). “I noticed one student looking around, one moving something on her desk and another drinking from his water bottle . . . There is a 15 question quiz today. The room was dark and I could hear minor shuffling on occasion and the hum of the fan as I usually do” (Field Notes, Spring 2018). On another occasion I shared, “One student comes in late following the mindfulness activity, and there is some shuffling or coughing as we get farther into the practice” (Field Notes, Spring 2018). “I noticed on Thursday there was a bit more shuffling or movement. I was wondering if some students were uneasy but when I opened my eyes all students were participating - eyes closed” (Field Notes, Spring 2018). One particular class, students were given a choice regarding the mindfulness practice timing, and “a handful appeared uninvolved (i.e., didn't raise their hand for any choice)” (Faculty Journal, Spring 2018). “I wonder if any students think this is a waste of time” (Faculty Journal, Spring 2018). I was also aware that some students coming into this leadership program were “struggling with the concept of leadership (it is so different from their other courses), which other faculty members reaffirmed” (Field Note, February 2018).

Another professor shared at the end of the first week, that some of her students were unsure about the “touchy feely“ nature of the leadership program. They did not like being put in a circle to face one another for introductions. (Faculty Journal, Spring 2018)

Although, following the mindfulness intervention, “some students were surprised with their grades (once completing their quiz, at how high the grade was)” (Faculty Journal, Spring 2018).

### **Regular Mindfulness Practice**

The four students interviewed by the research associate provided evidence of regular mindfulness practice outside of class. This section explores participant perspectives of their mindfulness practice, and is followed by participants' mindfulness experience (i.e., thinking, being and doing).

Ali practiced more on her own time “to reflect more on whatever comes along, instead of just letting thoughts slide across the surface like *Headspace* always says to do in class.” (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:11) Ali stated that she preferred the unguided meditations to explore thinking and personal reflection.

Mat thought mindfulness was a relaxation technique and shared that he had, pretty low expectations.

It was something that I wouldn't have taken the time to do. I always thought it was wasted time . . . but the quiet and the mental focus on you that comes from being forced to do that, really made it prevalent. (Interview, May 1, 2018, 25:3)

Mat continued “the introduction to mindfulness as a self-development tool was, obviously, a big thing ... [something] that I had not originally done or been doing. So that's a big change.” (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:96) Outside of class was more effective for Mat. He practiced self-led meditation that included taking time to think about what made him happy, and allowing “whatever comes to mind and reflect on it.” (Interview, May 1, 2018, 25:11) He shared,

The class forced me to [practice mindfulness] and now I'll just be doing it because it brings me a little more self-confidence and helps me to kind of relax and know that I'm on the right path in some form. (Interview, May 1, 2018, 25:33)

Pat engaged in guided meditations “focusing on breathing and relaxation” in class (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:12). She referenced, “I am still in that learning process of it. I have the *Insight Timer* and I've been using that a little bit more . . . when I'm trying to sleep.” (Interview, May 1, 2018, 26:6) On her own, if she was uncomfortable with the guided meditation, she would “end it and find a different one.” (Interview, May 1, 2018, 26:8) She shared that she would practice “a little bit more. I tried to vary times. In the classroom it was just five, six minutes of a similar thing every time before we started the day.” (Interview, May 1, 2018, 26:9) Pat found a meditation that focused on confident affirmations, that she stated was helpful.

During the practice Seb tried “hard not to think of anything. I know it's hard to do, but for the most part I try to get everything out of my mind. Going into the mindfulness practice my mind's usually all over the place, like I have to get this done, have to get this done . . . But as soon as I hear [the *Headspace* narrator's] voice I . . . try to shut [my mind] off as fast as I can.” (Interview, April 30, 2018, 24:13). When quiet with eyes closed “something about that, I just felt the weight coming off my shoulders when I was sitting there and focusing on my breath.” (Interview, April 30, 24:12) He would choose a five- or ten- minute meditation, sitting on the edge of bed with all the lights and electronics off. Seb stated that mindfulness practice was a de-stressor, which was needed since it was a very stressful semester, and helped him go to sleep, and “forget everything” (Interview, April 30, 24:10). Seb noticed that towards the end of the semester, during this stressful time, he found it difficult to fit in mindfulness practice (Interview, April 30, 2018, 24:1).

I typically entered into mindfulness with stress, not breathing consciously (or very shallow breathing; before), melting into a time for renewed and peace (suspend brain activity and let thoughts float by - during), and awakening to a sense of clarity, focus and relaxed

embodiment (after). “During mindfulness I could feel the world around me dissipate as I focus on a calming and peaceful mindset of nothing but stillness and deep conscious breathing”

(Faculty Journal, April 2018). This connects to what the research associate experienced:

I used meditation to slow my heartbeat and calm my mind toward the middle of the day, but only irregularly and without focus on how it impacted my teaching. While assisting with Professor Rebek’s study, I worked to make my meditation longer and more consistent and to pay attention to the ways in which the yoga practice and meditation affected my teaching. (Faculty Journal, Spring 2018)

Table 5 illustrates details that participants reported in their thinking, being and doing which they segmented before, during and after the mindfulness practice. This aligns with the SCM individual domain of consciousness - think, congruence - be and commitment - do. Most students entered into mindfulness practice with thoughts of much work, feelings of stress/anxiety that was matched by tense, fidgety or jittery behaviour. Many experienced a “letting go” of thoughts and relaxation, reinforced by the breath for some. Many participants stated that they ended the practice with a clearer and more focused mind, sense of calm, and an enhanced sense of direction. Participants were able to refocus, become fully present with all parts of themselves (cognitive, affective, behavioural) that prepared them effectively for learning, and promoted learning readiness. The common themes in this process have been grouped within the table, followed by the participants who reported it.

Table 5

*Participants Responses Before, During and After Mindfulness Practice*

	Think/Cognitive	Be/Affective	Do/Behavioural
Before	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All the work that I need to do (Zac, Gabe, Lena) and grades (Jer)</li> <li>• “Figure out [my] mood” (Sara)</li> <li>• Kim states she is thinking about “a decision coming up about what to do after graduation”.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Apprehensive” or “stressed, anxious” (Mike, Zac, Lena, blank, Gabe, Pat, Gail, Jer, no name)</li> <li>• “nervous and uneasy about everything coming” (Emma)</li> <li>• Restless (Gail)</li> <li>• Tired (Seb, Ali)</li> <li>• Flustered (Kim)</li> <li>• Alert (Clara)</li> <li>• Excited (Seb, Mary)</li> <li>• Negative (Ali)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Tense” (no name) or “tight” (Mike)</li> <li>• “Fidgety” (Pat) “jittery” (Kim) and nervous (Mike)</li> <li>• Not focused (Ali)</li> <li>• Ready and prepared (Clara)</li> <li>• Tired - (Seb, Ali)</li> </ul>
During	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear or relax thoughts (Ned, Lena) “counting breath” (Pat, Mary, Emma) and “blankness during meditation” due to sleep-deprivation (Mila)</li> <li>• “warm and hopeful” (Seb)</li> <li>• “Anxious to let go” (Ali)</li> <li>• “Submitting” (Gail)</li> <li>• Distracted (no name)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relaxed (No name, Lena, Jer, blank, Mary, Emma, Ned)</li> <li>• “Feelings fade as relaxed and soon forgot about them” (Emma)</li> <li>• Peaceful and calm (Pat, Mila, Gail, blank)</li> <li>• Stress and anxiety (Mike, blank, Gabe)</li> <li>• Slow down (Kim, Ned)</li> <li>• Sleepy/distracted (Clara)</li> <li>• Happy (Seb)</li> <li>• All over the place (Ali)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staying still/relieving tension (Pat)</li> <li>• Relaxed breaths (Clara)</li> <li>• Yawning (Lena)</li> <li>• ? (Ali)</li> </ul>
After	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mind clearer (Clara, Zac, Kim) “had a decision by the end” (Kim) “mindfulness actually made me think through everything” (Zac)</li> <li>• More focused (Ali, blank, Emma) (and confident)</li> <li>• Thinking all of the work due (Lena and Mike)</li> <li>• Not as prepared (Clara)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peaceful (Pat, Mila, Mary, 155) and calm or calmer (Jer, Gail, Zac, Mila, Mike, Tam)</li> <li>• More relaxed (6 - Mike, no name) or Soothed (Ali, Clara) Not so nervous (Lena, Emma)</li> <li>• Sleepy (Clara)</li> <li>• Had a “feeling of happiness and sadness as I reflect back on the class this year” (Tam)</li> <li>• Inspired/excited (Seb, Mary)</li> <li>• Re-energized (Seb, Clara)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear direction and “ready to work” and start day (Pat, Ned, blank)</li> <li>• “Jittery” (no name)</li> <li>• “open eyes and readjusting sitting position” (Pat)</li> <li>• ? (Ali)</li> </ul>

*Note.* Separating the three aspects for participants appeared to be a challenge as feelings, thoughts and behaviours were intermixed in the other sections, which was reorganized to promote understanding.

Emma also documented her leadership journal using the cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions, or ‘Think, Be, Do’, which illustrated this process in more detail (Appendix N). The next section will explore the cognitive, affective and behavioural impacts participants perceived they gained based on their involvement in this mindfulness experience.

### **Introduction to Cognitive, Affective and Behavioural Impacts**

The themes that evolved from the data collected (e.g., interviews, focus group, POLL’s, post-survey, artifacts and field/observation notes) describe participant and faculty experiences of mindfulness (i.e., cognitive, affective, and behavioural). The mindfulness experience in this case study was examined by using an inductive approach to read and analyze the data collected in conjunction with the conceptual model presented (Chapter two), and along with discussion and feedback between the research associate, research assistant and myself. As a result, data was evaluated using the three critical values under the individual domain as they relate to the conceptual model to answer the research question (i.e., *consciousness* or cognitive; *congruent* or affective and *commitment* or behavioural; see Table 5). Investigator and methodological triangulation followed the data analysis process outlined in Chapter three, to validate the common themes developed from the data collected (Farmer et al., 2006). Analysis included searches of text across cases and different methodologies to determine thematic patterns of similarity and any outliers.

The research associate and myself analyzed codes and themes independently. Then, I compared the codes and themes showing approximately 90% agreement on common themes



(85% on sub-themes). The high agreement between researchers illustrates good coding dependability (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The common themes derived were:

- Cognitive or *Consciousness of self*: self-aware, self-reflective and self-understanding,
- Affective or *Congruent*: calm, relaxed, and self-confident, and
- Behavioural or *Commitment*: self-improvement and self-motivation.

The codes that differed between the research associate and myself were still included within the results, due to methodological triangulation that followed which confirmed their significance.

Qualitative themes developed in this study were also compared to the quantitative data collected in the post-survey (*SRLS-R2*). The post-survey instrument incorporated a collection of questions from the *SRLS-R2*, which measured the critical values of the SCM individual domain. Participants self-assessed these critical values following the leadership program in the post-survey. In addition to the thirteen participants who completed the post-survey, five were completed in full, and another four were incomplete and not used (twenty-two in total). A single Likert score for each domain was developed by summing up the individual scores for each question within that critical value. A single score for each critical value was developed for each participant (with exception of the four incomplete post-surveys) to explain his or her self-ratings of *Consciousness of self*, *Congruence* and *Commitment* (Table 6).

In Table 6 the participants in this study self-rated *Consciousness of self* lower than any other domain, and *Commitment* was self-rated as the highest compared to the other two domains. Perhaps evaluating one's behaviour was more apparent since they were more tangible/visible, as compared to evaluating one's ability to be conscious. The mean, variance, and standard deviation for each critical value were calculated for the thirteen participants who were involved throughout this study. The mean of each critical value for participants were as follows:

*Consciousness* 32.7 out of 45 (variance = 24.7, SD = 4.97); *Congruence* 30.5 out of 35 points (variance = 10.7, SD = 3.3.); and *Commitment* 27.9 out of 30 points (variance = 2.4, SD = 1.6).

A similar finding was found for students who only participated in the post-survey (nine in total but only five were complete). Mindfulness, based on these findings, may not have had a strong impact on participants, but the rest of the data analysis suggested otherwise. Ashley, Lisa, Jer, Sara, and Paul self-rated *Consciousness* on the post-survey as slightly higher (a 0.7 difference) than participants, with *Consciousness* at 33.6 out of 45 points (variance = 2.3, SD = 1.5). Both groups of students support qualitative findings as students self-rated within a moderate-to-high range of *Consciousness* or self-awareness.

Table 6

*SRLS-RS Results (Individual Domain Summary of the Thirteen Participants)*

Participant	Sex	Age	Mindfulness Comments Provided	Conscious. Score Range: 9 - 45	Congruence Score Range: 7 - 35	Commit. Score Range: 6 - 30
Mary	F	18-21	Headspace before bed. Quiet reflection (stress coloring). Walked to reduce stress.	36	29	28
Ali	F	18-21	Self-reflection, pondering and meditation, and yoga.	24	25	28
Gail	F	21-25	Mindfulness, self-reflection.	30	31	24
Emma	F	18-21	After practicing mindfulness in class, I began to see the benefits and practiced it on my own time as well.	30	28	28

Mila	F	21-25	Yoga class and we did meditation and breathing exercises weekly.	33	31	29
Clara	F	18-21	Quiet reflective activities - form of bible studies.	32	35	29
Trish	F	21-25	Withdrew from the study	24	21	29
Gabe	M	26-30	Completed some mindfulness activities when had trouble sleeping.	31	27	27
Kim	F	18-21	Reflect through writing, Headspace, laying down to think for 1/2 hour.	36	29	28
Pat	F	18-21	Mindfulness practice outside of class, guided meditation to fall asleep.	29	31	27
Tam	F	18-21	Participation in a leadership fellowship.	35	28	24
Seb	M	26-30	I used myheadspace.com, and prayed.	42	34	29
Mat	M	21-25	Self-led meditation, student leadership	35	35	30

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*Note.* The following table provides the results for thirteen participants (including one student who originally joined, but discontinued mindfulness practice). On the post-survey students provided a description of their mindfulness practice and completed the SRLS-R2 to provide self-ratings of their consciousness of self, congruence and commitment. The SRLS-R2 used a 5-point Likert scale for nine, seven and six questions or total sum of 45, 35 and 30, respectively for each area.

## **Section II: Cognitive Impact from Mindful Leader Development**

Participants and faculty themes relating to the mindfulness experience in terms of the cognitive or ‘consciousness of self’ were discussed. Seventy-five percent of participants reported greater self-awareness as a result of mindfulness (nine students stated that self-awareness was gained through mindfulness specifically via POLL, post-survey and interviews), which strengthened their self-understanding of their intrapersonal leader development. Students in the focus group came to a consensus that mindfulness was “cognitive self-development.” They stated that mindfulness trained their brains to be more reflective which enabled them to see themselves and their life more clearly on the continuum of their attitudes, thoughts, feelings and actions (congruence). In addition to self-awareness, the combination of mindfulness and self-reflection experienced resulted in a deeper level of honesty, insight on personal leadership potential, mindful focus, and an open mind for many participants.

### **Self-Awareness**

Many students shared that their level of self-awareness and self-understanding had improved with the combination of mindfulness practice and reflection. In total, nine of the twelve participants (75% total when the POLL, post-surveys and interviews) shared that engagement in mindfulness-based activities promoted self-awareness. For instance, Emma stated self-awareness was gained “through reflection and mindfulness practice” (Post-Survey, Spring 2018, 15:38). “After practicing mindfulness in class, I began to see the benefits and practiced it on my own time as well” (Post-Survey, Spring 2018, 15:43). Ali shared “I know the reasons that I function and lead the way that I do now”, and "I achieved more awareness in what I would like to pursue” (Post-Survey, Spring 2018, 21:44). After students completed mindfulness, they selected from a range of outcomes on the POLL that related to past

mindfulness literature. On the POLL, ten participants selected from a series of outcomes that they perceived they had gained following their mindfulness practice, which has been translated into a percentage for each: optimism/renewed - 80%; intrinsic motivation and focused/prepared each had 60%; self-aware - 50%; self-efficacy - 40%; congruent, commitment and anxiety/stress each had 20%; and creative - 10% of participants. Half of those participants who completed the POLL following their mindfulness practice reported being more self-aware afterwards, and two of those students agreed that they had become more aware, but did not specify how. Students reported that journal reflections (30%) and self-reflections (40%) were helpful for developing self-awareness (Post-Survey, Spring 2018).

Three of the four participants who regularly practiced mindfulness felt that mindfulness expedited self-awareness. Mat does not believe a person could become “perfectly self-aware” but with mindfulness and self-reflection, a person could gain some sense of self-awareness fairly quickly (Interview, May 1, 2018, 25:1). Mat reaffirmed that mindfulness expedited the process of gaining self-awareness. Mat stated, “Eventually over so many successes and failures and thinking about what works and what doesn't, I would [learn]. The mindfulness I think just kind of expedited the process.” (Interview, May 1, 2018, 25:23) He continued,

Forcing yourself to take the time and reflect on what makes you, you ... and forcing yourself to take the time to actually think about these things before you get into developing them. Especially at a stage in your life like this. At college, where you're trying to find out who you are and where you belong in the world... I think is also huge. (Interview, May 1, 2018, 25:24)

The process to reflect on thinking, being and doing was also helpful to a few participants. Pat and Ali also shared that the process of completing the POLL's was helpful, “and actually

having to break it down into before, during, after. I'd never thought about that. It just was all clumped as one before" (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:106). "We started doing them [i.e., the POLLS] in class and actually writing them down and reflecting on them." (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:105) Ali mentioned that the POLLS illuminated her thoughts, and she states, "Just sitting on the kitchen floor and it was pretty vivid. I was like, 'Whoa. This is who I am.'" (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:107)

Four students (i.e., Mat, Emma, Sara and Mila) completed the authentic assessment that was optional. The *Authentic Leadership Self-Assessment Questionnaire* (Northouse, Chapter 9) measured self-awareness on a five-point Likert scale comprised of four questions. Participant scores ranged from 12 (one individual) to 15 (out of the 20 points), which rated four aspects of self-awareness: self-knowledge of strengths, and weaknesses, if the individual seeks feedback from others, and can accept personal feelings. Sara stated, "My highest individual scores were self-awareness . . . I believe the assessment was correct because I am aware of what I do and how that affects others" (Leadership Journal, p. 4).

The study results showed that *consciousness* or self-awareness were nurtured for many participants through mindfulness. The SRLS-R2 provided a moderate-to-high range Likert score in the *Consciousness of Self* domain (32.7 out of 45 or 73%), which aligned with qualitative findings as 75% of participants stated they had gained greater self-awareness. The total score for this Likert scale is 45 and the mean for the *consciousness of self* is the farthest from the sum, as compared to the other domains (congruence and commitment). The SRLS-R2 quantitative elements also demonstrated on the post-survey that students rated their consciousness lower than the congruent and commitment critical values.

Participants commented that a particular mindset is required to engage and to accurately identify how mindfulness had an impact. Ali shared, “Practicing mindfulness has improved my awareness as an individual and as a leader. I think that mindfulness takes curiosity, and a sense of wonder” (Leadership Journal, Spring 2018). Mat reaffirmed that the “desire to learn and learn about yourself is important because . . . I don't think I would have gotten anything from mindfulness.” (Interview, May 1, 2018, 25:42) Perhaps this is why Mila suggested, “It can be a challenge to feel any effects [of mindfulness] sometimes” (POLL, Spring 2018, 32:13).

### **Deep Honesty**

Focus group participants stated that they engaged in a “deeper level” of reflection, and became more honest with themselves as a result of their ongoing mindfulness practice (inside and outside of the classroom). Ali shared that mindfulness provided a deeper understanding of herself, she discovered what she values, and that the “reflection was valuable” (Interview, April 30, 2018, 27:14). Mat referred to “thinking about [leadership] on a deeper level” (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:73). Seb alluded to this deeper level of thinking as well, and stated, “you have to know who you are to lead other people and in those times where when you're meditating, there may be some ‘aha’ moments or . . . realizations about yourself.” (Interview, April 30, 2018, 24:33) Ali used mindfulness to explore the “deeper things inside” herself (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:11). Pat stated,

With self-awareness, I feel like I'm in the middle because I know certain things that I have value and beliefs in but . . . this kind of goes back to the Johari Window and there's always part of you that you're not going to see. There's always part that other people are going to see but you might not recognize. I think it's important to discover new things

about yourself and to try new things to see if you might be good at things or bad at them.

Learn from your mistakes. (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:48)

Other participants also referred to the honesty that was nurtured as a result of mindfulness practice. Sara stated mindfulness "causes my brain to think about things I would normally block out or push aside" (Post-Survey, Spring 2018, 13:38). Mike shared, "The self-reflections are very helpful if you can be honest about yourself in answering the questions" (Post-Survey, Spring 2018, 19:33). Kim stated that reflections forced him to face reality, as "I tend to not be honest about myself" (Post-Survey, Spring 2018, 12:35). Six out of the eight artifacts that explored the *Values In Action Inventory of Strengths* had honesty as one of their top strengths, and one was a derivative - integrity (Leadership Journal Artifact Analysis, Spring 2018). Ned shared, "Peter Northouse (2016, p. 25) defines integrity as 'the quality of honesty and trustworthiness'" (Leadership Journal, Spring 2018).

During the final presentations of the course, I also witnessed honesty in the personal leadership philosophies that students' presented. "Some common themes students presented were genuine, integrity and honesty which ties to authentic leadership, and many identified moral or ethical leadership as important as well." (Faculty Journal, Spring 2018) Sara shared, "Leadership is inside all of us - get real, be honest, share vulnerability (skills), [and] be authentic" (Student Leadership Philosophy Presentation, Spring 2018). Zac shared, "I believe that honesty is a huge part in leadership and it will be a necessity in my life." (Leadership Philosophy Paper, Spring 2018). I tied definitions together during leadership philosophy presentations, "self-aware = conscious of one's character, strengths, weaknesses, etc.; conscious = awake and aware of the interactions with your existence inside and around you; and mindful =



quality or state of being conscious, promoting deep honesty” (Faculty Journal, Spring 2018). Many participants also expressed that the self-awareness experienced helped them to engage with more honest behaviours towards their leadership potential.

### **Insight on Self as Leader (Self-Understanding)**

The process of self-awareness through mindfulness in the self-reflective context of a leadership course, built a foundation of self-understanding in relation to leadership for participants. Participants shared how the leadership program helped to: "expand the understanding of myself” (Post-Survey, Spring 2018, 13:30); gain “a better understanding of myself and my view on leadership” (Post-Survey, Mila, Spring 2018, 9:43); and “properly identify leadership skills within myself” (Post-Survey, Spring 2018, 7:30). Ali reiterated, “The better I understand myself, the better I can help people.” (Interview, April 30, 2018, 27:46) Two other students stated, “Professionally I understand myself more” (Post-Survey, Spring 2018, 8:36), and I understand my “strengths and how they can be applied” (Post-Survey, Spring 2018, 10:30).

Participants expressed that as they recognized, accepted and gained self-awareness and self-understanding, they opened to new perspectives (that they wouldn’t have considered before) and gained confidence and clarity in their self-concept and leadership ability. Mat, Pat, Ashley, and Ali stated that with greater self-awareness they have greater confidence or clarity, which has affected their ability to lead. These participants reiterated how important self-understanding was in relation to leadership. Ali shared that being self-aware, she now understands the reasons why she behaves and leads the way that she does and has achieved more awareness in what she would like to pursue” (Post-Survey, Spring 2018, 21:44). She had gathered new perspectives as she “had never thought of” particular strengths within herself before (Interview, April 30, 2018,

27:28), and she knew that leader development comes with “more maturity and more understanding of the [leadership development] process as a whole” (Interview, April 30, 2018, 27:11). “Once I continue to solidify it [my leader development] and understand, then I think I will be more experimental” (Interview, April 30, 2018, 27:9). She communicated that with the foundation of a strengthened self-concept, she will branch out and try new approaches to leadership. Emma reiterated, “I learned that I have some leadership traits I would never have thought about.” (Post-Survey, Spring 2018, 15:31) Mat stated this leadership program “made me realize a lot about myself and my leadership style” (personal communication, May 2, 2018). Case 6, and Ashley strengthened their insight of who they were as leaders. The research associate stated that all the students she interacted with in the interviews and focus group felt that “self-understanding is helpful for leadership. Participants commented that a leader couldn’t be a good leader without understanding their own motivations and goals. The comments of the students were consistent [and] . . . this shows that the answers were not random, nor trivial.” (Faculty Journal, Spring 2018) “Self-awareness is an important foundation (many suggested in their personal philosophies) that knowing yourself and being authentic is an important quality. You must know yourself first” (Faculty Journal, Spring 2018). One participant used a baseball diamond to illustrate this, and he shared,

First base: find yourself, understand my strengths and weaknesses; second base: build relationships and invest in others, and third base: take action and lead by example . . . reflect on the journey and use that as motivation to keep going . . . First base is where you truly find yourself. ‘You cannot lead others until you first lead yourself’ (Erwin). This stage is the toughest stage for leaders as it usually is the longest stage. (Personal Leadership Philosophy, Spring 2018)

**Mindful Focus**

Many participants commented on the cognitive focus they experienced as a result of the mindfulness practice. Pat explained how mindfulness "push[es] everything out" enabling you to focus. She stated, "Focus[ing] on the guided meditation talking so ...teaches you to just focus on one or two things instead of everything else." (Interview, May 1, 2018, 26:23) She continued, "Instead of a scattered brain, just that focus I can get" (Interview, May 1, 2018, 26:32) and "instead of focusing on the day, you're focusing on your breathing or different tension you have in your body" and are more attentive as a result (Interview, May 1, 2018, 26:11). Pat mentioned, "I was able to focus more . . . I think it helped me that I'm focusing on leadership or I'm focusing on this class and not worrying about other stuff that's going on and just be more attentive to one thing at a time." (Interview, May 1, 2018, 26:25) She continued, that she feels "very determined . . . having an idea or a goal in mind and working towards that and not trying to give up and . . . get to where I want to be." (Interview, May 1, 2018, 26:39) Mat also mentioned focus (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:8), as does Ali who stated, "My focus improved because instead of focusing on a lot of things, I was taking the time to focus on just one or two things." (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:7) The research associate also shared a stronger focus.

I noticed little additional impact from my yoga during this time period, most likely because I had been practicing it consistently for so long before. The more consistent and focused meditation practice did result in changes in my teaching. I found myself to be more focused in the classroom, calmer going into the classroom, even when not thoroughly prepared for the lesson of the day, and much more empathetic for my students. I credit these changes, to a large extent, to the meditation because it allowed me

to still the whirlwind of thoughts in my head, be more focused on the present and focused on others. (Faculty Journal, Spring 2018)

The POLL also confirmed more focus following mindfulness practice. Sixty percent (60%) of the ten participants reported they were both “intrinsically motivated” and “focused/prepared” following their mindfulness practice (POLL, Spring 2018). Gail, Ned, and Tam (POLL, Spring 2018) also highlighted focus as a result of mindfulness practice, which may have led some students to become more open.

### **Open-mind: Clarity and Optimism**

In terms of the cognitive experience, many participants also indicated that mindfulness practice helped them to open their minds to new perspectives and approaches towards themselves and others. As a result of the clearer focus, participants reported a renewed optimism, and also referred to a popular concept in mindfulness literature: clarity. Mat shared how ongoing reflections answer questions such as, “Are you doing what you want to be doing? Are you going the route that you want to be going?” in conjunction with mindfulness practice has “provided clarity” about what he values, what he believes in and what he wants to pursue, and he was able to express that to others (Interview, May 1, 2018, 25:13). Pat shared that with mindfulness she feels she is working to “train my brain to relax” and that has helped her see more clearly (Interview, May 1, 2018, 26:21). She stated, “To see clearly the balance of what I need and what makes me happy, leading to self-awareness.” (Interview, May 1, 2018, 26:21) This brought clarity to personal “weaknesses and how to improve on them” shared Paul (Post-Survey, Spring 2018, 6:29). Mat shared that he believes leadership is,

Entirely mental. Leaders come under attack from all angles, and they have to constantly question and evaluate their beliefs, values, character, integrity, and mind ... ward not only against outside attacks, but also against the doubts that you harbour within yourself ... it is important to not lose sight of what makes you unique, and to stay true to these things. (Personal Leadership Philosophy, Spring 2018, p. 7)

Clarity of focus was reported by 20% of the ten respondents on the POLL and 80% reported feeling “optimistic/renewed” as a result of their mindfulness practice. Pat shared that mindfulness helped her to become more open minded, and made her look more objectively at others (Post-Survey, Spring 2018, 16:39). "I'm more optimistic" she exclaims, because she practices mindful meditation, she lets stuff go, does not worry and tries to focus on what she needs to do in that moment, “which is relax” (Interview, May 1, 2018, 26:27). She expanded her thinking to consider possibilities that she “might not be as comfortable with”, or had even considered prior (Interview, May 1, 2018, 26:34). Awareness of their future aspirations has widened Lisa’s view of possibilities, along with the ability to see personal flaws (Post-Survey, Spring 2018, 8:43). Ali also shared that she was “trying to be aware . . . just being really open and not too set on needing a plan.” (Interview, May 1, 2018, 27:48) Mat affirmed, “When you take a step back from your own life . . . you see something through a different perspective” (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:76). He referenced that when the class explored servant leadership,

I scoffed at it at first a little bit. Not thinking that it wasn't good but thinking that it doesn't apply [to me], I'll never be anything like that. But then, a mixture of that thinking and the mindfulness stuff has changed my perspective” (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:96).

He is now more “optimistic and open-minded about things” (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:54). Ali added, “positivity . . . enthusiasm, motivation, vigor for life . . . attitude makes a huge difference.” (Interview, April 30, 2018, 27:51) Paul shared that mindfulness was a “great way to relax and focus on the positives” (Post-Survey, Spring 2018, 6:39). Tam affirmed that “leaders cast a vision, leaders are servants, leaders exhibit integrity, leaders take a stand, and leaders have a positive attitude” (Personal Leadership Philosophy, Spring 2018).

The cognitive experience of mindfulness for the majority of participants increased self-awareness, focus and preparedness; enhanced a deep honesty about themselves (who they are, how they are feeling and what they are doing), nurtured insight on their strengths and leadership potential, and opened their minds to greater clarity and optimism. The next section will explore the affective experience that participants encountered with mindfulness practice.

### **Section III: Affective Impact from Mindful Leader Development**

First, I will describe the affective experience of relaxation and calm and the positive feelings that many participants experienced in mindfulness practice. All participants felt relaxed following mindfulness practice as reported in the POLL (Spring 2018). Some participants elaborated on the positive feelings that mindfulness instilled such as strengthening the mind-body connection, and fostering a better mood and personal wellness. I will also share how participants encountered and resolved internal conflicts. Participants shared the frustration inherent with being honest (with themselves), and the internal conflict they faced as they became more aware of how personal values and beliefs and conflicted with their actions (e.g., incongruent). I then explored the increase in empathy participants expressed, along with their desire to achieve genuine congruence (once participants worked through internal conflict).

**Relax and Calm**

During mindfulness practice participants reported, “calming, releasing, relaxing, de-stressing, and submitting” (POLL, Spring 2018). The majority of participants used the word “relaxing” to describe mindfulness practice (e.g., interviews with Mat, Pat, Ali, Seb, in addition to Mila, Ashley, Mary, and Emma on the post-survey), and some stated that mindfulness was peaceful, calm or soothing. Gail reported the process from start to finish as, “apprehensive, submitting and peaceful” (POLL, Spring 2018). This was reaffirmed via the POLL, where students reported mindfulness promoted calmness (10%) and relaxation (100%), which helped them to release stress (30%). Mat stated that the mindfulness awareness practices were “relaxing and something unique” and made him “feel calm” (Post-Survey, Spring 2018, 5:22). Seb shared mindfulness helps him know how he is feeling, and he described it as a “calming sensation coming over me. Definitely stress-free . . . I feel lifted.” (Interview, April 30, 2018, 24:14) Mary and Kim reaffirmed that they enjoyed this “calming breathing technique” to de-stress and relax (POLL, Spring 2018, 37:12). Emma stated that she felt mindfulness “calmed me down to get focused” (POLL, Spring 2018, 35:12). Pat shared the meditations were calming and relaxing (Interview, May 1, 2018, 26:11). She continued, “At first, I’m very anxious about it but as I’ve done it more I’m feeling more comfortable with it.” (26:15) Seb affirmed that mindfulness helped him to remain calm in talking to other people and Mike shared that it “practices self-discipline” and a “calm predictability” (Personal Leadership Journal, Spring 2018). Both faculty members report being calmer and “more at peace” (POLL, Spring 2018).

Many participants reported positive feelings after mindfulness practice as it put them in a better mood and improved their personal wellness. Seb stated, “I feel better about things.” (Interview, April 30, 2018, 24:23) “After the first week, I was like, wow, I feel like really, really

good, just really well rested and ready to tackle whatever school brought on that day.”

(Interview, April 30, 2018, 24:17) He attributed this preparedness to the meditation at night and in the morning before coming into class. Seb stated that he gained less stress, better sleep and better mood, possibly from time management (Interview, April 30, 2018, 24:17). Ali stated that mindfulness “feels refreshing [and] reflective.” (Interview, April 30, 2018, 27:17) Some participants felt sleepy and were tired following the practice (POLL, Spring 2018).

A few participants shared that the mind-body connection became illuminated through mindfulness, which made them more aware of tension or stress, and for some participants this helped them to release and engage in more positive emotions (e.g., patience). Lisa shared, that mindfulness “made me connect with my body on a different level” (8:39), and “made me more aware of stress that can be in life” (Post-Survey, Spring 2018, 8:43). Ali shared that she has also become more aware of the tension in her body (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:9). She continued, “Whatever like pressure that I put on myself is sort of like dissipated a little so it feels less like ... life feels less overbearing.” (Interview, April 1, 2018, 27:27) Clara shared that, “it prepared me for class and let me forget about the stress of the day for a while” (Post-Survey, Spring 2018, 22:39) Sara found that mindfulness “helps with my anxiety” (Post-Survey, Spring 2018, 13:39). For a few students mindfulness brought them more patience (Post-Survey, Spring 2018, 8:37), which three other participants reiterated (Leadership Journal Artifact Analysis, Spring 2018).

### **Problem-solving: Unsettled internal conflict**

Contrary to the positive emotions that arise from the mind-body connection, a few participants also reported that as they relaxed they became more self-aware of conflicts between their inner self and outer actions, which caused the rise of negative emotions (e.g., frustration).



A few participants reported that they faced conflicts between their self-consciousness and congruence (e.g., emotional dissonance), as a result of mindfulness. Mat stated, “The more self-aware I become the more frustrated I become because the less I actually know about myself. I used to think I had myself pretty figured out” (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:46). He made a shift from his original intent . . . to a focus on helping people and working to “make other people smile, make them happy, make their lives better” (23:52), and “that is frustrating me because now I’m not sure what to do with myself.” (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:47) I also confirmed this and found that “more and more students stopped in during office hours to discuss personal issues they encountered and to understand more, especially around conflict resolution” (Field Notes, Spring 2018). Some students “struggle with the kind of self-reflection offered in the leadership program, based on the stress [it can cause]” (Faculty Journal, Spring 2018).

I noticed apparent discomfort from one student when asking the class to self-reflect on leadership questions or assessments . . . I gave students time to do their self-assessment. At that moment, one student appeared frustrated . . . I tried to help him and walk him through the process” (Faculty Journal, Spring 2018).

During final presentations,

Some students shared how the reflection (there was much of it) could be difficult but pushed them to grow and see the truth of their past and/or present actions. Another student brought up how they viewed conflict and avoided it in the past, and how they have transformed to seeing it as an opportunity for healthy relationship growth (something they never witnessed before). (Field Notes, Spring 2018)

Ali reiterated that “there's growing from that [frustration] and I don't think that it's always bad” when you feel you don't have things figured out (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:48). Mat continued,

Frustration can come from changing your beliefs and trying to figure out what's going on, but there's also a lot of peace that comes from knowing that I'm doing what's right for me. A lot of confidence comes from that as well. It's a mixture of good and bad. (Interview, April 30, 2018, 25:15)

Many participants evolved their self-awareness as they relaxed in mindfulness and worked through the conflicts that arose within the affective experience of the mindfulness practice. Participants shared that as they learned more about who they were, and worked through the inner conflict, they improved their ability to build stronger relations with themselves and others (Focus Group, May 1, 2018).

### **Empathy**

Participants interviewed shared that they are more thoughtful in their actions and empathetic as they practiced mindfulness. For Mat, “what was really surprising was the empathetic part, the human part that comes with leadership. It's a human element. I always acted as though it was more of a system.” (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:31) As a result, he wanted to understand individuals' motivations and “look a lot deeper into anything that goes on”, making sure every individual felt valued (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:31). In terms of his involvement in a broader organization, he also considered the organizational values, members' values, and actions that promoted “the [common] good.” (Interview, May 1, 2018, 25:38) Pat also added, that she will be more thoughtful about leadership as a process. She states that she

wouldn't "worry about the end goal as much. How you're going to get there is important."

(Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:72) The research associate also stated feeling more empathetic towards students (Faculty Journal, Spring 2018. Seb and Ali shared that they are empathetic too (Interview, April 30, 2018). Ali stated that her "thinking is more thoughtful. All the time I would just do things without thinking about them, but mindfulness leads me to actively think about something before I just jump right in" (Interview, April 30, 2018, 27:23). She found that she would "think more easily and prioritize" and she looked more at the bigger picture (Interview, April 30, 2018, 27:24). Gail also reiterated the importance of focusing one's perspective on empathy and conscious effort. She explained, "Human connectedness requires reflection, staying true to yourself and belief (in others)" (Personal Leadership Philosophy, Spring 2018). Participants demonstrated empathy as they encountered conflict in the affective dimension of the mindfulness experience, and worked to resolve internal conflicts (perhaps using empathy as a tool) to engage in more genuine and congruent behaviours.

### **Genuine Congruence**

This ability to relax through mindfulness for many participants, promoted an awareness and aim for them to achieve genuine congruence. Ali shared that "with this class and with personal self-awareness, much easier to be congruent when I practice mindfulness." (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:56) She continued, "What I do is more aligned with what I want to do and what's going to be the most valuable and meaningful or even fun." (Interview, April 30, 2018, 27:24) Mat stated, "I suppose by discovering more of who I am and my values. It helps me to stay true. [One key]. . . to my sense of leadership is genuineness." (Interview, May 1, 2018, 25:34) Mat continued, "I'm following my personal codes, my morals . . . I'm more aware of what I believe in." (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:8) Mat has a better sense of self and where

he is going and what makes him happy (Interview, May 1, 2018). Focus group participants affirm:

Ali: Yeah. And when you understand your strengths, you can be more congruent and you can be happier, because you know you're following yourself.

Pat: So learning to be true to yourself and follow what you want to do ...

Ali: Yeah, yeah. So I would definitely say that, in the beginning of college, I was not congruent with who I was but I didn't even know who I was.

Pat: That's back to learning about yourself. You're always learning about yourself and finding new ways to do things.

Mat: Yeah. And trying new things just to figure out, "I might be really good at this" or... the mindfulness, I know for me, it's completely new to me. Obviously you hear about meditation and stuff, I never even thought about it being something I'd ever do and I've found it actually has some value through this class.

Ali: Well, that's changed my perspective, right? So I'd originally have people say mindfulness, I would say meditation, yoga, things like that that are meant to relax you. Now it's more of a self-discovery piece and less of a relaxation tool.  
(Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 53:58-59)

I observed leadership philosophy presentations and shared that,

Some students shared truly personal hardships and stories from the heart. Others stated authentically their weak areas and how they wanted to grow into the leaders they hoped to be. Several students talked about their journey of discovery and how they identified all the trouble they created in the past and wanted to share their true story to be a better more honest person and inspire leadership in others. ... The courage these students displayed by sharing in a very raw, authentic and genuine way who they are, what they strive to be and what they need to work on to get there was remarkable . . . I was inspired! (Faculty Journal, Spring 2018)

The research associate reiterated, “In fact, the earnestness of the students struck me every time I spoke with them” (Faculty Journal, Spring 2018). The *SRLS-R2* quantitative findings also affirmed the qualitative findings for *Congruence* as well. For example, “being genuine” scored on average 4.3 out of 5 points, and “my actions are congruent with my beliefs” scored on average 4.1 out of 5 points. The mean for congruence was 29.1 and 35 points was the mode (out of 35 total points), confirming that many participants felt congruent.

Snow falls like love on us when we meditate. Gentle, absorbent and becoming one with mind, body, spirit. Illuminating our luminescence. Like a crow caws from high above on a tree limb, life echoes in everything we do ... if we hear the call. If we take time to listen. The silent snowfall of mindfulness impacts the love and peacefulness that we take in, that is always there, flowing in, with and around the lives that live and the lives that don't. THE ENVIRONMENT I SEE, IS THE ENVIRONMENT IN ME (Faculty Journal, Spring 2018).

As a result of the affective experience found in mindfulness, participants relaxed, promoted personal wellness, and for some this led to an awareness of internal conflict. Participants became aware of the negative emotions associated with being incongruent, which motivated them to improve. Participants also suggested greater empathy, improved ability to recognize and work through internal conflict, and engage in genuine congruent behaviours, as a result of the mindfulness experience.

#### **Section IV: Behavioural Impact from Mindful Leader Development**

Many participants in the interviews and focus groups shared how the process of mindfulness strengthened their understanding of self, led them to experience greater self-trust and motivated them for self-betterment. Participants found their ability to focus on the present

moment and on their priorities (an aspect of commitment) were important aspects of mindfulness practice. Participants shared that they trusted themselves with their actions more (e.g., congruent), which may have led to the increase in the self-confidence many reported. This may have been due to the release of stress and renewed clarity that students gained as a result of the mindfulness practice. A few students also touched on feeling more creative, as mindfulness helped them to become more open and inclusive. This statement that Emma shared summarized the findings wonderfully, “Trust self, confident, creative - push out my comfort zone” (Leadership Journal, Spring 2018). A theme of self-improvement and to help others, through their actions of personal responsibility and accountability for many participants, was evident across all the data methods collected.

### **Confident (Self-Trust)**

Many students reported that mindfulness engaged them in self-trust, which gave them a more assurance to engage in confident actions. Ali explained, “I learned to trust myself more . . . trusting my beliefs and also my actions.” (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:11) Mat also reported that he felt he trusted himself more: “Knowing why you are doing things the way you are can give you more trust in yourself and more preparedness.” (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:20) Mat also stated “trusting . . . my beliefs and also my actions” (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:15). Ali shared that she had “more assurance in what I want to do, who I am and where I want to go and knowing who I am.” (Interview, April 30, 2018, 27:30) Seb also stated that he felt trusting (18:36). Pat highlighted the relationship section in the leadership program, in particular consideration behaviour that included building camaraderie, respect, trust and regard between leaders and followers. She wanted to “focus on trusting others and let go a little...”

(Leadership Journal, Spring 2018) I shared a similar sentiment, that “when I take the time to be still and let go, I can enter fully into my mindfulness practice” (Faculty Journal, Spring 2018). Students felt that mindfulness provided self-knowledge and self-awareness, which in turn made some students feel more confident. Confidence was a theme that occurred throughout much of the data collected (e.g., post-survey, interviews, POLL, artifacts and focus group). Participants summed up confidence in the following: “self-confidence from doing what's right” (23:120), “relaxation of personal focus” (23:121), and “self-awareness for self-confidence” (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:124). Being present to oneself promoted self-awareness (perhaps of the precious gift of life held within) and made participants more confident in who they intend to become.

As mindfulness strengthened self-knowledge and self-understanding, the renewed confidence participants experienced also impacted their ability to lead. Sara, Mila, Pat, Mat, Ali, and Ashley also shared that they have gained confidence in their leadership ability as a result of mindfulness (Post-Survey, Spring 2018). Ali stated that mindfulness made her “more sure of myself and my actions”. She continued that mindfulness has given her more “assurance . . . of what I want to do and where I want to go ... who I am.” (Interview, April 30, 2018, 27:30). She added, "It's easier to nurture and grow myself in that way now that I'm more sure" (27:20), and that “understanding myself . . . gave me more confidence.” (Interview, April 30, 2018, 27:35) She summarized that mindfulness nurtured more self-awareness, gave her greater self-understanding and improved her “confidence, which help[ed] with leadership” (27:18), and “gaining confidence was a boosting feeling.” (Interview, April 30, 2018, 27:25) Mat shared that self-awareness elicited greater learning. “I discovered that I have more leadership potential” and as a result was more confident (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:34). With self-awareness, he

added, “You realize you have a lot more abilities.” (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:75) Mat continued that confidence stemmed from the clarity he gained around his beliefs, and continued, “A lot of confidence comes from that [mindfulness].” (Interview, May 1, 2018, 25:16) Pat was more confident to take “opportunities to speak up in class” and was more comfortable sharing her opinions with others and “take charge” if needed. She stated that in a group activity she asked, ““Well, what do you think?” or, ‘I think this’ and just coming out with that instead of just sitting back like a lot of the other people were doing.” (Interview, May 1, 2018, 26:38) Pat continued that mindfulness strengthened who she was and where she stood on issues (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:19). “Practicing [mindfulness] and learning how to be . . . able to talk to people better and be more confident in what I'm saying and my opinions and telling other people things that I believe in.” (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:82). Ashley shared that mindfulness “helps me stay collected and confident” (Post-Survey, Spring 2018, 14:40), and Pat shared, “I have some confidence in my leadership abilities” (Post-Survey, Spring 2018, 16:46).

Other participants stated that they have gained confidence, but made no reference to mindfulness. Emma shared, “Confidence impacts our self-perception and how we carry ourselves” (Leadership Journal, Spring 2018, p. 6). She continued, “I feel more confident in myself. I don't get as nervous in interviews and speaking as I used to” (Post-Survey, Spring 2018, 15:45). Approximately ten students (10) on the post-survey gained “self-confidence”, “motivation”, “higher levels of self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, and discipline in self-reflection” and “more confidence in public speaking.” Three students also chose “confidence” as a focus for their leadership research project, which later evolved to self-efficacy (since the students struggled finding academic research on confidence). Two other artifacts included confidence: one was the *classroom agreement*, “work to be confident in self”, which was crafted



by the students during the first week of classes, and the other was the initial outcomes students hoped to attain in the leadership program, which included to become a “more confident leader” (Student Intentions of Course Deliverables, Spring 2018).

Many students demonstrated confidence and some did so in creative ways. For example, one participant created a confidence poster for an assignment that did not receive a grade. She chose to invest her time and creativity in developing a graphic that she shared with the other students in the program (Appendix N). The poster also shared “nurture your mind ... take time to mediate . . . or anything that relaxes you” (Confidence Poster, Spring 2018). This unique artifact illustrates creativity as well.

### **Creativity**

Participants and I observed enhanced creativity over the duration of the mindfulness practice. Creativity not always in the form of physical manifestations as presented in the example above, but also in the way a person thinks or behaves. Ali shared, "I think that [mindfulness] increased my creativity” (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:77). Ali had realized that she may be doing things due to obligation rather than enjoyment and “there is this whole other side of me ... I haven’t figured out yet.” (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:78) The participant was working to balance duty with creativity a little bit better to enhance her lifestyle. During final presentations, I also observed many students presenting creative and unique illustrations, and methods of sharing their personal leadership philosophies.

Many students were extremely creative with their metaphors: a guitar and how all the pieces together frame leadership; a baseball diamond and the bases one must achieve to lead; horseback riding - relating how the horse and rider must work in unison like leaders and followers. (Field Note, Spring 2018)

Below are others excerpts from participant works in the course that illustrated creativity.

**Figure 4.** Examples of Participant Creative Works

A. SOLDIER

- ★ Solid in beliefs and values
- ★ Optimistic about the future
- ★ Listen to others
- ★ Develop skills and knowledge
- ★ Inspired by others
- ★ Example for others
- ★ Respect others

B. Guardian Leadership

I am driven by the desire to protect or defend others, and through solid leadership I feel I can make big changes in the world that can help those who need it . . . guardian needs to be well equipped if they wish to provide protection to their followers. Therefore, the following equipment represents the five biggest values that drive my leadership:

1. *Axe of Authenticity* - be true and authentic to yourself and others,
2. *Helmet of Humanity* - care for others, show human empathy (transformational/servant),
3. *Gauntlet of Goals* - personal goals, inclusive goals and goals of action,
4. *Shield of Strength* - believe that you have the ability, and
5. *Breastplate of Belief* - believe in your heart.

If you wish to lead others, these five things are essential to successful change.

*Figure 4.* This demonstrates excerpts from participant Personal Leadership Philosophy artifacts. These examples of creativity demonstrate the participants' ability to craft unique concepts.

Participants engaged in mindfulness and demonstrated confidence when illustrating their creative ideas, concepts or works. I also witnessed a different quality of creativity in the variety of presentations that were given authentically, with personal passion, and genuine expressions of concepts that participants shared during their leadership philosophies on the final day of class.

**Accountability**

Many participants reported that becoming more self-aware through mindfulness and self-reflection helped them to articulate priorities, and promoted accountability (an important aspect of *commitment*). Ali stated that “if you're not holding accountability to yourself then there's really no consequences, I think, for your actions.” She further explained how individuals could behave in ways that were inconsistent with their values if they were not mindful. She shared that you may do “something that you're not totally into but you don't [even] know that it's against your values.” (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:56) She reiterated that the mindfulness process reinforced personal accountability, and “forcing yourself to keep going [to reach your personal goals].” (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:57) All three students in the focus group asserted the importance of not “swaying” from their goals, or spreading themselves “to thin”, and concentrated on focusing and prioritizing what was important to them. Pat shared, “Responsibility, I think that I have that in my own head automatically. I feel bad if I'd say something and don't do it. I just feel so guilty.” (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:63) Seven other students in the class also had *responsibility* as one of their top five strengths (Strengths Survey, Spring 2018). Participants, through their self-ratings, also endorsed this conclusion on the *commitment* aspect of the *SRLS-R2*. For example, participant’s self-rated items: “I follow through on my promises” and “I hold myself accountable” with a mean score of 4.4, and “I can be counted on to do my part” had a mean score of 4.5 on the five-point Likert scale. The critical value of *commitment* had a mean of 27.2, a median of 24 and mode of 30 (30 being the highest score). These higher scores illustrated that many participants self-rated their behaviours as demonstrating commitment by being accountable and working to achieve the intended outcomes expected of them. For these students, mindfulness promoted awareness of personal accountability and congruent actions.

### **Feedback for Self-Improvement**

Many participants found that mindfulness shifted their perspective and their behaviours in regards to seeking and receiving feedback (an essential part to enhancing self-awareness; Daft, 2016). Mindfulness nurtured a commitment to being a better person, and self-improve through feedback, since many participants became more engaged in their leader development. Ali shared that in the past, "I would hate criticism. I wouldn't even take it, so I was never learning", but now she reacts differently, stating, "This is helpful. I don't need to be defensive . . . that's helped me with self-awareness." (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:41) Pat supported this stating, "You learn how to take criticism and improve on that or learn how to change things to improve." (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:42) Both participants worked to gain feedback from others to strengthen their self-awareness (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:44). Ali commented that her perspective is more inquisitive now and that she engaged in different thought patterns/considerations when receiving feedback, "Where are you coming from? Why do you have that assumption? Not like, that person's wrong! They don't agree with who I think I am." (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:43) Ali shared an example of how she asked her supervisor for feedback about her leadership as a result of her mindfulness "assessor". She perceived his response to indicate her engagement in passive behaviours, which led her to work towards demonstrating more assertive behaviours (Interview, April 30, 2018, 27:52). Ali stated that, "feedback . . . helps with the learning process." (Interview, April 30, 2018, 27:7) Mat also reiterated the intention to self-improve. He stated,

I'm trying to focus more on different things that I can do and don't do. Trying to listen to other people's opinions about me . . .and actually ask people their opinions of me . . . .

learn how to take criticism and improve on that or learn how to change things to improve.

(Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:40)

Interestingly, Mat shared that he did not find all of his fellow students fully invested in the activities and process of learning in this course, in particular the feedback piece. For instance, when the professor asked to practice or gain feedback, he shared that some students would “go home and get feedback from their buddies.” (Interview, May 1, 2018, 25:49) This is part of the reason that he felt some students might not have gained from the mindfulness practice. He shared that mindfulness required the desire to learn about oneself to become self-aware, and to battle through some difficult challenges to get there. Mike supported this sentiment stating, “The only risk is my mindfulness. I think once I learn more about myself it will be less risky” (Leadership Journal, Spring 2018). Being mindful, individuals became more open to seeking feedback for self-improvement and were not as defensive with the responses gained. Self-efficacy stems from self-confidence and is an important component of initiating feedback, inherent within many leadership theories (Paglis, 2010; Leadership Research Essay, Spring 2018). Emotions associated with self-efficacy include the motivation and determination to move towards performing difficult tasks (Ramchunder & Martins, 2014; Leadership Research Essay, Spring 2018). Many participants demonstrated commitment to work hard to better themselves and their ability to lead.

### **Section V: Perceptions and Suggestions**

Many participants perceived that they have benefitted from participating in mindfulness practice, and a few students who only participated in classroom mindfulness found it was helpful to their intrapersonal or leader development as well. Many students left the class with a deeper

understanding of themselves, greater self-awareness, knowledge of leadership approaches and methods that they can use to enhance their leader development. Many participants perceived that mindfulness and leadership were intertwined, and felt that mindfulness had motivated them to be more inclusive leaders and better people.

### **Mindfulness and Leadership: Integral and Intertwined**

All focus group participants felt that mindfulness and leadership were intertwined. As they engaged in regular mindfulness practice, these participants felt that with every practice the more self-aware they became. With mindfulness, the context of learning leadership became a holistic approach (e.g., writing, discussing, reflecting about cognitive, affective and behavioural aspects). Participants perceived that their mindfulness practice nurtured personal insights about their leader development, which motivated them to engage in personal growth and leader development. The research associate affirmed that mindfulness had a cumulative effect: the more you practiced the more aware you became (Interview, Spring 2018, 27:22). Ali stated, “it’s not one experience of mindfulness. It’s like all of them coming together”, to establish greater clarity about the person you are and why you “function in this way . . . it’s easier to nurture and grow.” (Interview, April 30, 2018, 27:21) Ali described the experience as “mindfulness with like an assessor.” (Interview, April 30, 2018, 27:60) She used mindfulness to reflect and assess how she is leading (Interview, April 30, 2018, 27:47). Mindful leadership is “really integral. It was important. And when I talk about mindfulness, I mean not just meditation but writing and reading and activities for self-awareness along with meditating and pondering.” (Interview, April 30, 2018, 27:32) Pat, Mat and Ali agreed that mindfulness and leadership were intertwined. Mat shared,

The leadership training is a lot of what I think about when I'm practicing mindfulness on my own . . . it's hard to distinguish what comes from where and also what comes from my own leadership practices outside of the class. But all that self-reflection and kind of comparing classroom themes to my own leadership style and what I should and could possibly change and different things has helped me. (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:16)

Pat, added, "I definitely see the overlap between mindfulness and leadership and I think, as a leader, it's important to know where you stand on certain issues and so, I think mindfulness definitely strengthens that about yourself." (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:19) Seb stated that he could apply the leadership learning's presented both in his life and work (Interview, April 30, 2018). He highlighted meditation as a generalizable skill and shared, "That [meditation] helped me so much." (Interview, April 30, 2018, 24:30)

Many participants believed that mindfulness impacted their self-awareness and their intrapersonal development. Mindfulness with self-reflection helped many participants become more open-minded, more inclusive in their leadership and improve (Post-Survey, Spring 2018, 8). Half of the participants on the post-survey stated that mindfulness influenced their leader development specifically by making them more aware of "what I want in the world and what I want personally" (Mat), and "how to lead" (Ali). Mary shared, "It shed insight on my behaviours" and "to be a great leader, you must know who you truly are and what is important." (Post-Survey, Spring 2018, 20:35).

Participants also perceived that mindfulness shifted their perspective and approaches to be more inclusive leaders. Mat states, "The biggest thing is that [mindfulness] made me a more

inclusive leader.” (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:16) Pat reiterated inclusivity in her shift to focus on follower needs,

It’s almost more about the follower than it is about the leader because you have to do what’s best for your follower and you have to figure out a way to build a relationship with them instead of just focusing on what’s going to benefit you. You have to focus on what’s going to benefit your followers. (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:88)

Gail included a brief description in her journal, sharing that it is “easy for a group to get distracted but [as leaders, we need to] encourage the group to stay focused, explore different avenues of thought ... we have the potential to improve camaraderie” and gain innovative ideas (see Figure 4). She continued, ”asking open ended questions, encourage sharing through vulnerable personal examples, and show respect through active listening” (Leadership Journal, Spring 2018, p. 11). An excerpt from Gail’s journal included the following:

Building a positive climate - warm inviting sharing of ideas and being vulnerable to share; positive relations - icebreakers and team games help people get to know each other to destroy initial awkwardness; communicate - build trust with a sense of openness and facilitate group norms through weekly discussion of highs and lows, and establish positive meaning - answer questions ‘why are we doing this’- crucial to ensure personal values are aligned with the goal/purpose of project. (Personal Leadership Philosophy, Spring 2018, p. 7)

Some participants were silent regarding the impact mindfulness had on their leadership. Ten people from the post-survey choose not to respond to how mindfulness impacted their self-awareness (including four who were participants in the study: Gabe, Pat, Clara, Emma). A few participants suggested mindfulness had a minimal impact, stating “not very” (Kim and Tam);



“indifferent” (Gail); and “slightly - helps with my anxiety” (Sara). However, the majority of participants perceived that mindfulness and leadership were intertwined, motivating self-improvement and better leadership.

### **Leadership Learning (Self-improvement, Self-motivation)**

Many participants perceived that the course influenced their self-motivation and desire to self-improve as a leaders, since they engaged in learning and applying leadership methods, resources and approaches during the course. The topic of leadership also motivated many students to learn about themselves, with the aim to self-improve (Post-Survey, Spring 2018, 14:35). Mat was motivated to engage with other driven student leaders and so that pushed him “to get involved, get activated in the class, to see how people responded.” (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23: 27) “It is fun to learn about yourself”, and Emma shared “knowing how you'll handle certain situations . . . to understand myself motivated me” (Post-Survey, Spring 2018, 15:46). Clara stated, “planning for the future” was a big motivator (Post-Survey, Spring 2018, 22:34). Ned felt that he was a leader and wants to be successful, which motivated him to learn and grow (Post-Survey, Spring 2018). Emma reiterated, “knowing there is a lack of good leaders existing today urged me to learn to become a better one so I can be more employable” (Post-Survey, Spring 2018, 15:35).

In addition, many participants shared that the course influenced their desire to be authentic, continue learning about who they are, and to learn and practice leadership more. Gabe mentioned being intrigued “to find out if the success of teams starts from good relationship, or if it is just a skill, and if they are bad, how much of an effect does it really have?” (Leadership Journal, Spring 2018, p. 6) Tam shared the importance of being mindfully aware and states, “Pay attention, be aware of others, understand how other people operate and the implications of

that, situational awareness”. She continued, “Welcome everything in kindness, concentration, clarity, [and] balance” (Leadership Journal, Spring 2018). Ali added, “To be the best leader you can be, to be a good leader, you need to be able to . . . adapt to different things”, and “just be yourself.” (Focus Group, Spring 2018, 23:100) Understanding of herself, she now recognizes her strength in being more people-oriented which focuses more on the process than the task (Interview, April 30, 2018, 27:44). Mat leaned towards being more task-oriented (focus on outcomes). Both participants are working to balance both task and relationship more effectively, now that they are aware of where they can improve (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:35). Many students wanted to make a difference and “have a positive impact on others” and Ali expressed wanting to “serve the world better” (Post-Survey, Spring 2018, 21:35). Mary shared she wants to “become the best leader/manager I can possibly be . . . so that I can build excellent follower/leader relationships” (Post-Survey, Spring 2018, 20:43).

Several participants perceived that they learned methods that they can apply to improve their leadership. Gail stated that she appreciated exploring how leadership can be defined in many different ways (Post-Survey, Gail, Spring 2018, 2:29). Pat reaffirmed, "I never realized how much research had been done on leadership were mentioned . . . [There are] so many more leadership styles and leadership theories than I ever thought” (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:103). Seb also worked to apply the theories learned over the semester in his various roles, and described the importance of the situational approach (Interview, April 30, 2018). Emma stated, “[Leadership] is different for everybody and there isn't just one theory I have to conform to” (Post-Survey, Spring 2018, 15:30).

Many participants also recognized the various types of leadership styles and strengthened their interpersonal skills. Kim learned “how to handle people better” (Post-Survey, Spring 2018,

17:29). Emma suggested she will “share personal information [and opinions] to protect others, and also let them feel safe enough to share personal information about themselves” (Leadership Journal, Spring 2018). Pat stated being able to apply what was learned in the class definitely helped to strengthen those skills (Interview, May 1, 2018). Pat continued, “Situational leadership was really eye opening because there's different people that need different things. You have to learn how to balance that” (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:90). “Different situations and people require different actions and leadership [approaches] for you to be helpful” (Interview, May 1, 2018, 26:19). She was surprised about “how much leadership is about the leader as it is about the follower” (Focus Group, May 1, 2018, 23:87). Sara shared that she didn't realize how much influence an individual had on her personal development (Post-Survey, Spring 2018). Other students who only completed the post-survey shared that they “gained leadership experiences” and “many approaches to lead” and “how to change approaches based on the type of follower” they are interacting with. Ali wanted to be a “servant leader and strive to make it as transformational as possible” (Interview, April 30, 2018, 27:12). She also learned how bad laissez-faire leadership style is in the textbook and had her (and I believe others) realize that they were similarly disengaged in their own leadership process. Ali stated, “It's not just theoretical, it's actually witnessing what you do and you can't do . . . there's evidence of . . . where you need improvement” (Interview, April 30, 2018, 27:29). Participants perceived that the course engaged their learning of leadership in both their intrapersonal and leadership development.

### **Recommendations for Course Improvements**

Participants provided recommendations for future leadership programs including the use of mindfulness practices. Other suggestions incorporated leadership opportunities, including

taking on real-life leadership roles, role-playing, discussion-based reflections, and ensuring self-development is incorporated into the atmosphere and program format.

### **Meditations.**

Many participants suggested varying the type, time and context of mindfulness practice. One student preferred the professor led meditation in quiet stillness rather than the *Headspace* application. Kim reiterated that she liked the ability to “let my mind wander without fully guided meditation” (POLL, Spring 2018, 37:14). The POLL reported the following ideas: musical mediation, more time and varying the types and length of time, motivational speeches and having “fewer people around”, and having a “comfortable chair or laying down”.

“Mindfulness is a personal thing and perhaps vulnerable for some, and it may be difficult to engage in a classroom environment in the rows or clusters that are conducive to lecture. Perhaps a different layout could be used to give students the privacy they need to be in a mindful state” (Faculty Journal, Summer 2018).

### **Engage students in leadership through self-learning.**

Mat also recommended promoting leadership to students by engaging them in leadership practices that they can employ outside of class. He suggested encouraging them to take on a leadership role outside of class to put into practice what they are learning (Interview May 1, 2018, 25:45). He shared, “Push people out of their comfort zones to try, and do, leadership practices that are on a much larger scale than they would feel comfortable doing.” (25:46) “Try to join an organization where there's actual responsibility involved. Where there's actual consequences if you fail.” (25:47)

If you mess up, you have to rectify your mistake and I think that really also makes the leaders . . . It's negative experiences in life that really shape you. Positive experiences

definitely have an impact, but it's those negative times that I think really give you commitment and drive to make changes with yourself. It's very important for people to realize that with leadership as well. (Interview, May 1, 2018, 25:48)

A few participants suggested additional discussions and role-playing to enhance the experience. Mat recommended focusing on a “discussion-based class, concise lectures but mostly focus on the dialogue between students and the self-reflective activities. Forcing them to think about themselves as leaders and what they are doing already” (Interview, May 1, 2018, 25:51). Ali recommended incorporating more role-playing, “because I think it really pushed students to act out what we learn about in class” (Interview, Spring 2018, 27:56). She continued, “That was one of the most meaningful ... like it stuck in my head the most experiences for me when I was learning.” (Interview, April 30, 2018, 27:38)

Mat also stated that to engage successfully in a mindful leader development experience, required a particular mindset. Mat shared, “I think you have to want to learn about yourself in order to have it be successful. So you need to promote an environment of self-learning. Calm behaviours, supportive behaviours, but also encouragement is important too . . . you have to make people want to learn about themselves or they're not going to.” (Interview, May 1, 2018, 25:43) Mat continued that to develop leadership skills individuals would need to be willing to learn about themselves. If he hadn't, he shares, “I don't think I would have gotten anything from mindfulness.” (Interview, May 1, 2018, 25:43) These improvements strengthened the leader development process for these undergraduates and enhanced their knowledge and interpersonal skills due to their strengthened intrapersonal abilities - an important/contemporary application found in the scholarly literature and research.

### Summary of Research Findings

This case study explored how students and instructors experienced mindfulness within a leadership course. Firstly, the context set through the opening activities and classroom agreement was expressed by participants to be a big factor in their comfort, and as a result, learning. The development of the *classroom agreement* seemed to set the tone for creating a safe space where students felt valued, and heard in a nonjudgmental way. The large windows offered natural light in this new classroom space enabled team-based learning, class restructuring and experiential activities to take place. Engaging students in self-development activities initially formed faculty-student relations. Students were provided autonomy to explore mindfulness and design the intervention, which helped to establish buy-in and acceptance. Mindfulness via a five-minute meditation in the morning also promoted learning preparedness. This helped to set the tone and establish rapport which required me to be vulnerable, to communicate trust and also challenge educational paradigms. Many participants appeared to recognize and accept the insight gleaned from cognitive, affective and behavioural domains, which enhanced the intrapersonal development required for learning (Napora, 2013). Each of these findings will be explored individually.

First, mindfulness appeared to train the brain to be more self-reflective (think, be, do), and led many students towards honest self-understanding and self-awareness, and promoted focus. Many participants opened their minds, gained honesty and insight on their personal leadership identity, and for some, they became more optimistic. Approximately 75% of participants felt an increase in self-awareness. Some participants felt that mindfulness had a cumulative effect (mindfulness expedited self-awareness).

Next, participants entered a state of relaxation and calm (mind-body connection). Many participants communicated recognizing and becoming aware of the present (thoughts, emotions or body), and for some, any inner conflicts that arose from incongruence. Many participants reported feeling more empathetic towards self and others, and seemed to motivate them to achieve (or worked towards) genuine congruence - aligning their beliefs (honest realization) with their actions (congruence).

Lastly, many participants shared feeling more confident (self-trust) and self-assured. Many participants demonstrated creativity in their designs, perspectives and ability to try new behaviours. As a result, participants expressed the importance of holding themselves accountable of their thoughts, feelings and behaviours as they worked to self-improve. For instance, some participants communicated that they were more open and invited feedback so that they could adapt their approach, and others were being more inclusive in leading others. Mindfulness proved to be an effective method for many participants to engage in self-development, as it appeared to illuminate self-reflection of their leadership as they worked to enhance their leader capacity. Many participants perceived that this course provided them with the leadership knowledge and tools to use, motivating them to better themselves and to be better leaders.

A surprising finding for me was that students perceived mindfulness and leadership were intertwined, and that mindfulness became a tool for self-development. Mindfulness appeared to influence many participants development of: self-awareness, honesty, focus and openness (cognitive), relaxation, empathy and genuine congruence (affective), and a desire to demonstrate confident, inclusive and congruent leadership behaviours to their followers, in an effort towards

self-improvement and better leadership (behavioural). As a result, many students felt that mindfulness and leadership became intertwined.

Twelve major findings emerged from the data collected in this case study that relate specifically to the cognitive, affective and behavioural domains as they are provided within this chapter. These major educationally relevant findings resulted from the present study and can be used to enhance intrapersonal leadership courses in the future, within the appropriate safe setting (see Table 7):

- (a) Cognitive: mindfulness encouraged self-reflection and engaged intrapersonal development including, greater self-awareness, deep honesty, insight as self as leader, focus, and openness.
- (b) Affective: mindfulness instilled of sense of calm, including relaxation, resolving intrapersonal conflicts, empathy, and to act with genuine congruence.
- (c) Behavioural: mindfulness embodied confidence in personal leadership, including confidence and trust self, creativity, accountability and feedback for self-improvement.
- (d) Impact: Mindfulness and leadership were intertwined, had a cumulative effect, and supported leader development. Students were motivated to personally improve, and suggested improvements for future leadership programs, including: varying the type and time of meditations, encouraging risk-taking and self-learning through leadership opportunities, a discussion-based format and engaging students in role-play.

These findings provide evidence that mindfulness can make a difference in leadership and quality of life for current leaders (myself) and future leaders (students). The research associate shared, “It increases focus, self-awareness, and cultivates calmness, which are qualities that are important for every leader”. She continued, “All of the students felt that mindfulness



was beneficial to them and to their future careers as leaders. The aspects of mindfulness that they found most helpful were: the ability to better understand themselves and what drives them, the ability to calm themselves, increased focus, and better sleep” (Faculty Journal, Spring 2018). Even though, not all students in the course participated in the study, mindfulness could be a teacher resource that helps students come out of their shell, prepares them for learning and engages them in the knowledge creation and in-class application that many teachers hope to see.

Table 7

*Summary of Research Questions Related to Findings*

RQ	Case Components	Strengths	Challenges	Outcomes	Recommendations
1. Content	- Setting - Class Atmosphere - Student body - Faculty Support	- Open and comfortable enviro. (class agreement) - Cluster tables (no rows) - Strengths-based approach - Many achievers - Prof. approachable	- Initially, discomfort with interpersonal relations and some with the concept of leadership	Classroom culture enhanced students ability to share openly and engage in class content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More discussions, role plays, and personalization of leader theories, rather than lecture</li> </ul>
2. Process	- Mindfulness for self-development - Self-reflection - Hands-on activities ( <i>Strengthsfinder</i> ) for theoretical application - Discussions and mentorship	- Personal presentations, and experiential exercises - Assessments and leader journal - Learn from/with others through practice and feedback	- Mindfulness: awkward at first, and a few are uninvolved - perhaps due to vulnerability of the practice - A few felt classroom practice was “forced” even though rewarding	- Many engage in: “heavier journaling” and self-application of leadership concepts - Some students take real-life risks to improve - Mindfulness as a “self-development tool” or for “self-discovery”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professor and peers to encourage self-learning (curiosity) and risk-taking (i.e., apply practical and theoretical knowledge)</li> </ul>
2 a. Think	Impact Self-aware	Strength - Mindfulness trains	Challenge	Perception - Cumulative effect	Recommendation

	Deep honesty Self as leader Focus Open-minded	the brain to be more self-reflective - Self-reflection POLL (think, be, do) leads to honest self-understanding	-Mindfulness is a risk	(mindfulness expedites self-awareness) - Deepens honesty and insight as leader - More open and positive attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vary opportunities and types of mindful self-reflection (perhaps offer mindfulness before and after class as option)</li> <li>• Ensure self-reflective writing</li> <li>• Educate on impacts</li> <li>• Provide support and resources</li> <li>• Discussions on self-reflections about what students are doing already</li> </ul>
2 b. Be	Relaxed and calm Resolve Problems Empathetic Genuine Congruence	- Mind/body connection -Similar to themes	Resolve Inner conflict (e.g., emotional dissonance)	- More relaxed - Awareness and desire for congruence - More cognitive empathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities to practice leadership, be creative and gain feedback with self-reflection in a safe environment to build confidence</li> </ul>
3. Impact/Do	Confident (self-trust) Creativity Accountability Self-Improvement	- Many prepared and confident - Creative: try things – what works/doesn't	Life-long process	- Increased self-assurance - Seek feedback to improve and hold self accountable - Mindfulness and leadership intertwined - Many are willing to be more inclusive, adaptable in terms of follower needs, while staying true	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer a leadership alumni program to continue this life-long process (support, coaching, resources)</li> </ul>
4. Follow-up/ Influence	Intrapersonal leader development = better self Interpersonal =more inclusive	- Strengthen leader development and knowledge of different approaches to lead	Vulnerability and little impact for some participants		

*Note.* The following table outlines the results of the study as aligned to the research questions, providing an overview of the themes, strengths, challenges and outcomes. The final column presents a summary of the recommendations students provided, which are incorporated into Chapter Six.

### **Chapter Five: Discussion**

In this chapter, I will discuss the outcomes of my study, designed to illustrate the experiences of students and faculty with the use of mindfulness in a higher leadership education setting. For this study, I wanted to understand how participants experienced mindfulness and how it influenced leadership learning. The results of this study contributed to the academic discussion of the impact of mindfulness. The impact that mindfulness had on myself was what motivated me to include mindfulness in my higher teaching process. The first section of this chapter includes the importance of setting the context, and process. Also, I incorporate a discussion of the mindfulness process through the lens of the cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions. The next section includes interpretations of the study's results, the implications of mindfulness for undergraduate education, and the academic relevance in a leadership learning setting. In the last section of this chapter I incorporate the significance, limitations, and suggestions for future studies.

The findings of this study suggest that mindfulness helped many participants in-class. The outcomes of this study confirm other studies associated with the impact of mindfulness on learning. Many of the participants of this study gained greater self-awareness of their cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions. Also, the participants expressed their desire to achieve greater congruence, commitment, and self-improvement. In addition, it appears that those participants, who kept regular practice of mindfulness outside of class, experienced the greatest benefit from the process. The personal reflection and mindfulness process overlapped and influenced each other. The overlap of these themes opens room for future research.

**Context - Safe Space**

The setting and tone of this study helped establish the rapport and created a safe space for the students. O'Reilly confirmed that when students are comfortable, they learn best, participate in contemplative activities, and develop intrapersonal intelligence (as cited in Owen-Smith, 2018). Participants from the small class ( $n=30$ ) reported that the classroom agreement, which supplied the cognitive and emotional structures to focus learning, helped set up an open and comfortable space (Owen-Smith, 2018). In my experience, not all the students appreciated my efforts of creating a safe space in the classroom and equalizing the power in the teaching process. Part of the group of students that participated from this study were skeptical of the learning method, others did not see value in this new process, and some students were uncertain how such activities would fit into their learning course (Kumar & Downey, 2018). Schwind and colleagues (2017) found that participants and faculty require an in-depth exploration of mindfulness, which includes a clear communication of how mindfulness aligns with the higher education context.

Mindfulness infused my leadership (courage, positive attitudes, and intentions) by (1) allowing me to demonstrate personal in-depth analysis, (2) celebrating students' strengths, (3) communicating this unconventional teaching and learning approach, and (4) allowing a healthy relationship between students and teacher. These opportunities and benefits were unfolding, while I was "holding" a community space co-defined by the same players and dynamics (Buck, Carr, & Robertson, 2008; Kumar & Downey, 2018). Mindfulness enhanced my ability to engage in genuine relations, communicate feedback, and supply meaningful exploration of intrapersonal learning through experiential activities and reflection (Kumar & Downey, 2018).

I demonstrate active, nonjudgmental and engaged listening, congruent behaviour (that implies a teacher is without any false pretense and meets his or her students person to person, not status to person), empathy (the ability to understand and feel students' meanings rather than making evaluative judgments), and positive regard toward thoughts and feelings of students. (Kumar, 2013, p. 99)

With this attitude, I could effectively address management, the emotional challenges inherent to the class environment, and set a positive tone for learning and teaching (Rae, 2015). To develop a healthy student-teacher relationship, it is helpful for faculty to incorporate a thoughtful design for mindfulness implementation, while managing classroom context and work.

### **Process**

This study showed the outcomes of intrapersonal learning that included nurturing leadership program outcomes, the participants' openness, and the instructor's responsiveness to student needs (Hubball & Clarke, 2010). Participants explored mindfulness and designed the intervention, which promoted acceptance and involvement in the process (Gagne & Deci, 2005). Many participants designed their own practice to meditate and/or enter a mindful self-inquiry. Some participants used the following mindfulness practices, (1) self-reflection, (2) quiet observation, (3) guided meditations for sleep, (4) chimes, (5) yoga, (6) guided meditations with music, and (7) practice of mindfulness with partners. One participant practiced mindfulness with something like a personal "assessor," which refers to a key process in curriculum called *Meditative Inquiry* (Kumar, 2013). Communicating and exploring mindfulness helped others to prepare and feel supported (Blackmore, 2013). Past research had shown that a level of awareness or readiness before engaging in mindfulness practices was essential (Blackmore, 2013).

Participants said that as they entered mindfulness, they often processed and gained insights about themselves as leaders. Mindfulness or contemplative learning strengthened how participants perceived themselves as leaders (i.e., the inclusion of mindfulness within a process of self-reflection, assessments, experiential/hands-on activities, lecture/presentations, readings, discussions, and feedback from others). These findings are consistent with the literature that shows the benefits of meditation. The benefits of meditation include self-efficacy, confidence, or commitment related to (1) intrinsic motivation (McCloskey, 2015), (2) self-regulation and (3) optimism (Brown et al., 2009; Oman, Shapiro, Thoresen, Plante, & Flinders, 2008), (4) academic preparedness (McCloskey, 2015; Oman et al., 2008), (5) creativity (Brendel & Bennett, 2016; Oman et al., 2008; Reeds, 2015), and (6) empathy (Oman et al., 2008; Reeds, 2015). Other scholars found that a few minutes of silent sitting before class starts does not count as contemplative pedagogy, unless it is connected to course activities or discussions (Kumar, 2013; Owen-Smith, 2018). For this study, mindfulness was a contemplative practice that offered a choice in mental processing “thus creating the space for learning to occur in the developing mind” (Rae, 2015, p. 127). Participants illustrated the risk of vulnerability, inherent in mindfulness, and the process of self-discovery needed to achieve the intrapersonal competencies required to demonstrate conscious and authentic leadership.

### **Vulnerability**

For many participants, the practice of mindfulness was new. The following are a list of first reactions towards mindfulness that participants expressed, (1) feelings of anxiety, (2) experiencing a release of thoughts, (3) a relaxed state, and (4) ending with clarity, a focused mind, and sense of calmness. One participant remained uninvolved, due to the vulnerability of the practice. One participant could not “get into meditation” and abandoned the study, which

does not imply poor leadership (i.e., several participants and faculty struggled to find time to practice mindfulness with their heavy workloads). Another participant described feeling “forced,” to participate, but he mentioned that if it were not for this introduction he would have not practiced mindfulness. Other participants initially felt “awkward” and uncomfortable with the ambiguity (Bright, Turesky, Putzel, & Stang, 2012). Practicing mindfulness for some individuals enabled them to face and courageously work through emotional uncertainty, feelings of discomfort, emotional dissonance, and frustration. As participants processed these feelings they discovered greater self-understanding and clarity. The choice to take part, to stop, to leave, or to stay could have made a difference to their experience. The classroom practice could have forced participants to accept and push through the discomfort that comes with gaining greater self-awareness (Rae, 2015). Studies confirmed, “Awkward or anxious feelings may arise when the mind falls silent” (Seitz, 2009, p. 164). Deep and authentic reflection can cause trepidation, and some teachers are unprepared (Owen-Smith, 2018).

Langer (1992) argued that mindfulness required practice and good management of vulnerability. Mindfulness is a process that requires balancing feelings of security with uncertainty, and this continuous balancing of emotions brings many psychological challenges (as cited in Melzner, 2016). The more personal and sincere the exchanges of emotions participants experienced while practicing mindfulness, the greater the risks of vulnerability. These risks involve “self-disclosure, risk of change, risk of not knowing, and risk of failing – to deep learning” (Brantmeier, 2013; as cited in Meltzer, 2016, p. 80). This study strengthens Meltzer’s (2016) assertion that for individuals to engage in mindfulness, they must be comfortable with becoming aware or conscious, and have the courage to acknowledge and deal with the vulnerability inherent to the practice. In addition, some participants showed the courage needed

to move through their inner conflict towards greater congruence. Brendel and Bennett (2016) shared,

An example of a leadership anxiety that can surface for reflection during mindfulness . . . is when one feels uncomfortable in his or her own skin; perhaps trying to be someone who he or she is not and therefore less congruent with his or her true self . . . all these insights reveal deeper currents that are not only unhelpful but wired to our body's physiology. (p. 418)

For healthy development, young adults may engage in a process to resolve the dysfunction or dissonance encountered via confusion (Erikson, 1968; as cited in Komives & Wagner, 2017). Goldstein (2013) elaborated on the clarity achieved through mindfulness once an individual accepts, non-judgmentally, the awareness of unpleasant, pleasant, and neutral events that arise in the mind. Participants, including those who initially felt awkward or forced, expressed receiving many benefits from the practice, including intrapersonal learning, self-awareness, and strengthening of leadership skills (Adler, 2010; Barbezat & Bush, 2014; Garavan et al., 2015; Kolb & Kolb, 2008; Young, 2016). This suggested that faculty should be aware of the risks of mindfulness and should engage participants in a safe manner that honors their experiences – positive and negative – to ensure students gained the intended benefits of mindfulness. Some participants admitted that they did not look at themselves with honesty. Toward a healthy resolve, participants needed to face circumstances good and bad and move through them effectively with truth and courage (Brown, 2015).

### **Challenges of Mindfulness**

In addition, one of the challenges of facilitating the mindfulness sessions was the religious belief of a participant. This suggests that practitioners should be careful when



dissociating mindfulness from religion (such as Buddhism). Also, practitioners should treat mindfulness as an ancient practice for peace, stripped of any religious traditions or connotations. Mindfulness has many variations of practices (i.e., no single, ‘correct,’ or ‘pure’ method; Dahl & Davidson, 2019; Rao, 2017). Past research has suggested “that cultural, religious, and [the] philosophical context may be important variables to consider when conducting research, since the worldview and perspective that informs these practices may play an important role in how they affect an individual” (Dahl & Davidson, 2018, p. 62). *Dialogical Meditative Inquiry* was one such approach that worked to awaken individual awareness and to suspend any kind of boundaries inherent in conditioning (e.g., religion, political, or social values which are limiting) toward a freedom in discovering one’s true self (Kumar & Downey, 2018; Kumar, 2013).

### **Think - Cognitive Experiences**

Mindfulness trains the brain to be self-reflective (think, be, and do) and leads students to have honest self-understanding and self-awareness. For many participants, mindfulness nurtured focus, opened their minds, and supplied insight on their leadership persona. Other participants were optimistic and those who regularly practiced mindfulness felt it had a cumulative effect (mindfulness-expedited self-awareness). Intrapersonal focus and insight, and clarity of focus were two cognitive experiences that many participants expressed in the present study.

### **Intrapersonal Insight**

In this study, focus group participants believed that mindfulness trained their brains to be self-reflective (Dahl & Davidson, 2018). Participants found that the process they used to break down their self-inquiry (i.e., thinking and doing) became significant overtime. This intrapersonal self-reflection of cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions was a key factor in strengthening participants’ self-awareness and self-understanding as leaders (Kumar & Downey,

2018). Several scholars concurred that self-identity and self-schema provide the knowledge, attitudes, and skills required for leadership. The leadership knowledge, attitudes, and skills increase with self-awareness of the cognitive, emotional, and interpersonal domains (Chan et al., 2005; Kegan & Lahey, 2010; Komives & Wagner, 2017; Lord & Hall, 2005; O'Connell, 2014). In this study, some participants highlighted how important it was to write a reflection of their intrapersonal domains, and supports the literature that states writing helps to cultivate awareness and insight (Blackburn, 2015; Napura, 2013). Through mindfulness and written reflection, participants became fully present (cognitive, affective, and behavioural) of their human existence, and prepared them to learn and promoted leadership readiness (Goldstein, 2013).

An unexpected finding of this study was that individuals gained conscious insights (from a shift in cognitive processing) through the mindfulness practice (Brendel, 2016; Zeiden, 2014). Engagement in the reflection process stimulated the individual thinking of the impact of mindfulness within their persona, reflection that led to “ah-ha” moments (Dunn, 2016; Kounios & Beeman, 2014). Mindfulness instilled insight. An ah-ha moment is a brief period of renewed and divergent clarity or insight that one participant expressed. For cognitive neuroscience, insight is “a shift in consciousness, often sudden, that involves a feeling of knowing, understanding, or perceiving something that had previously eluded one's grasp,” such as an “ah-ha” moment (Dahl, Lutz & Davidson, 2015, p. 520). The participants' self-concept expanded when they incorporated unfamiliar information through mindfulness into their current beliefs or attitudes, which enabled a greater complexity of understanding (Black, Soto & Spurlin, 2016). Mindfulness had a cumulative effect on the participants' self-awareness. The participants felt the combination of self-inquiry and self-awareness was important.

In this study, many participants mentioned they gained better insight, open-mindedness, and an optimistic attitude as they became comfortable with mindfulness. Research showed that mindfulness promotes a sense of renewal, insight, and openness (Dunn, 2016; Rae, 2015). Langer (1992) shared that “mindfulness is a state of conscious awareness . . . it is a state of *openness* to novelty” (p. 289). Csikszentmihalyi (1994) referred to this cognitive focus as “flow,” moment when an individual intentionally concentrates attention, typically on the breath, to cultivate states of high focused attention. Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi (2002) illustrated “the self emerges when consciousness comes into existence and becomes aware of itself as information about the body, subjective states, past memories, and the personal future” (p. 91). Participants in this “state of psychological engagement” (flow) proved intrinsic motivation and were “open to new challenges, persisted in challenging tasks, and were ready to engage” (Macey & Schneider, 2008, p. 20). A state of flow instills a sense of ease and clarity about the focus of one’s attention, enabling a person to operate in a dynamic equilibrium towards their full capacity (Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi, 2002; Young, 2016). The self-determination theory and neuroscience findings aligned with the previous discussion that showed intrinsic motivation, and flow enhanced learning, psychological wellness, performance, and creativity (Domenico & Ryan, 2017; Ryan & Deci, 2017).

### **Clarity of Focus**

The findings of this study showed participants who practiced mindfulness gained clarity, focus, and preparedness. Studies have also shown focus is an inherent element of mindfulness practice and research (Blackburn, 2015; Brendel et al., 2016; Langer, 2000). In this study, mindful self-inquiry gave students clarity and helped them focus in their efforts, preparing them to engage with course content; these outcomes are consistent with the mindfulness literature

(Brendel, 2016; Goldman-Schuyler, Skjei, Sanzgiri, & Koskela, 2017; Lucas, 2015; Roche, Haar, & Luthans, 2014). Mindfulness reinforces a sense of academic preparedness (McCloskey, 2015; Oman et al., 2011; Ramsburg & Youman, 2013). One study did show repeatedly that students who meditated before a lecture performed better “[But] were not due to changes in the meditating students’ mood, their levels of relaxation, conscious increases in students’ interest in the lecture, or because of some unconscious priming between meditation” (Ramsburg & Youman, 2013, p. 438). The scholars suggest that self-regulation might be the factor to help students improve knowledge retention (Ramsburg & Youman, 2013). Schwind et al (2017) illustrated that mindfulness helped nursing students to become more focused and engaged on academic tasks, more so when completed in the initial section of class (rather than at the end of class), perhaps due to the need to prepare for learning. Brendel, Hankerson, Byun, and Cunningham (2016) proved a significant increase in promotional focus and the propensity of turning creative ideas into reality because of students’ engagement in mindfulness practice.

Mindful presence is a disciplined practice in “open-minded inquiry,” this practice is not easy and requires much patience to cultivate (Karssiens, Van Der Linden, Wilderom, & Furtmueller, 2014). In this short six-week mindfulness intervention, participants experienced some sense of clarity and focus as result of their exposure to a 5-minute mindfulness practice. This practice provided participants with clarity, insight, openness, and a focused mindset. In addition, this process potentially contributed to the participants’ flow, metacognitive ability, and preparedness for learning.

### **Be - Affective Experiences**

Many participants believed that mindfulness instilled a sense of relaxation and calmness (mind-body connection) that highlighted their present state of congruence (mind, emotions, and

body) via metacognition or self-concept clarity. Mindfulness also engaged some participants in problem solving of internal conflicts, as they discovered incongruence. Mindfulness promoted empathy towards self and others, and a motivation for participants to act with genuine congruence.

### **Relaxation and Calmness**

Most participants reported feeling relaxed and calm due to mindfulness. Participants' experiences are consistent with those reported by Schwind et al (2017), who found that students increased their sense of calmness due to mindfulness practice in their higher education classroom. Relaxation helped participants be aware of their thoughts, feelings, and actions (congruence), increasing empathy, and highlighting internal conflicts. In addition, participants suggested a greater awareness of their mind-body connection through mindfulness. Varela found that meditation promoted awareness of the mind-body connection for his participants and strengthened their sense of an embodied mind and enhanced self-development (as cited in Rae, 2015). Ritzer, Fagan, Kilmon, and Rath (2015) shared several research studies that illustrated mindfulness reduces stress in higher education students. Participants relaxed and it seemed to decrease their negative psychological states of anxiety and stress, but difficult to say if it impacted any feelings of depression (Brendel et al., 2016; Brown et al., 2009; Greeson et al., 2015; McCloskey, 2015; Oman et al., 2008; Regehr et al., 2013). Mindfulness training is a useful tool for healthy coping as it helped participants combat stress by promoting self-regulation and well-being (Di Pierdomenico & Kadziolka, 2017; Schwind et al., 2017). This study also supports Varela's finding and contributes to the scientific community in its growing understanding of self-development and "the inseparability of the cognitive-emotion spectrum" (Rae, 2015, p. 56). Scholars suggested,

Positive reappraisal is one manifestation of the deeper cognitive processes linking mindfulness to meaning . . . Mindfulness meditation can be used to disengage from extant schema into a metacognitive state of awareness in which attention expands to encompass previously unattended data from which new cognitive structures can be constructed.

(Goldin & Fredrickson, 2015, p. 379)

Engaging in a metacognitive state of awareness prompted participants to consider inconsistencies, adjustments, and thus increase self-concept clarity and awareness (Black, Soto & Spurlin, 2016). Gadamer (1976) discussed the problem of self-understanding and consciousness saying that metacognition is necessary to evaluative self-awareness (Barbezat & Bush, 2014). Based on the findings of this study, relaxation influences the mind-body connection for participants to engage in evaluative self-awareness and metacognitive awareness (Ruderman & Clerkin, 2015).

### **Genuine Congruence**

Through relaxation, participants attended to sensations, thoughts, and feelings (mind-body connection). Participants suggested a holistic perspective of their strengths and weaknesses, which increased their confidence and sense of purpose. This reaffirms the definition of self-awareness, which involves mindfulness (accurate observer of current actions and state of mind or self-concept), and awareness of actions to unify with the self-concept (HERI, 1996, p. 31). This study reaffirmed the following questions, who am I and where am I going (Dugan & Komives, 2010)? Concentrated attention strengthened personal purpose for participants because of the self-awareness and self-concept clarity gained (Gardner et al., 2011; Reichard & Walker, 2016).

Literature suggests that a greater awareness of what is important motivates an alignment of behaviours with values (congruence), which promotes the development of this important competency, the “ability to think, feel, and behave with consistency” (Allen et al., 2012, p. 31). Many participants described several behaviours tied to self-discovery and congruence. Some of these descriptions were (1) abiding by personal codes, and aligning to meaningful and valuable behaviours, (2) holding themselves accountable, (3) having courage to communicate beliefs to others, (4) looking for and gaining feedback on their behaviours, and (5) gaining greater personal well-being - better mood and sleep. This confirms that the participants require a solid understanding of “who” they were (self-awareness), before generating enough confidence in their self-concept (self-efficacy) to act congruently.

Many participants expressed the desire to be congruent, where they tried novel approaches, and applied creativity and courage as they stretched out of their comfort zones. A participant with inner conflict expressed frustration, outcomes that confirmed past research. Dahl, Lutz, and Davidson (2015) described contemplative mindfulness as the examination of “the relationship between self-concept and emotion, for instance by observing the experience of anxiety and noting how the automatic thoughts and visceral sensations associated with the emotion are constantly changing and not intrinsically tied to self” (p. 61). Facing the inner self is not an easy task. Participants that experienced and faced incongruence, received help from interpersonal dialogue, devising and testing new behaviours to achieve greater congruence (Dugan, 2014). Mindfulness promotes relaxation, strengthens self-awareness, instills greater congruence and self-concept clarity within participants, supplying important applications for their self-development, learning, and growth; implications that contribute to intrapersonal development.

**Empathy**

Participants of the present study also expressed greater empathy due to their engagement in mindful self-inquiry. Participants shared the need to become more inclusive, striving to understand the thoughts, feelings, and needs of others with whom they collaborated with, demonstrating compassionate empathy. Goleman and Ekman (2007) defined cognitive empathy (understand individual feelings or thinking), affective empathy (to share feelings with another individual), and compassionate empathy (to move an individual to act towards understanding others). Participants' desires to be empathetic are consistent with a study that included a group of nursing students who practiced mindfulness in their classroom and who showed an increase in empathy (Rizer et al., 2016). Neuroscience shows that mindfulness enhances learning and strengthens the ability for practitioners to engage in greater degrees of empathy (as cited in Rae, 2015, p. 124).

In addition, studies confirm how mindfulness can make strong interpersonal connections with others (Ehrlich, 2015; Oman et al., 2008; Reeds, 2015). Anchor (2010) proved that meditation left participants with calm and contentment, and heightened awareness and empathy. Studies confirmed that with as little as two months of regular meditation the neuroplasticity of the brain changes, which helps develop empathy and increases happiness (Anchor, 2010; Treadway and Lazar, 2010). Mindfulness helped to develop compassion, competency that implies "cognitive and imaginable competencies of putting 'oneself in the shoes of the other' and developing insights into understanding why they may feel or act as they do" (Treadway and Lazar, 2010, p. 106). Feelings of empathy, promoted amongst many participants in this study, translated into beneficial personal behaviours and effective leadership, which I explain in the next section.



### **Do - Behavioural Experiences**

With greater empathy toward self and others, many participants reported that they gained greater self-confidence or self-efficacy in their interactions with others. Mindfulness interventions work towards behavioural change (Ehrlich, 2015; Oman et al., 2008; Reeds, 2015). Because of these experiences, some participants proved higher levels of creativity.

#### **Self-Trust, Self-confident, and Creative**

The participants in this study suggested that once they developed more self-confidence, they were more likely to try new behaviours. Many participants found they learned to trust themselves more as they became self-aware and empathetic. Participants may have gained a better sense of self and feelings of confidence, due to the relaxation and reduction of anxiety that mindfulness provided. The antonyms of confidence are fear, doubt, or anxiety. Mindfulness calms, and for some of the participants this state of calmness seemed to eliminate “fear,” allowing natural confidence to rise (Ehrlich, 2015). With mindful self-inquiry, Kumar and Downing (2018) suggested that an individual would become more creative as the process of mindfulness awakens them and brings out their creative capabilities, making them feel confident.

This study shows that courage-building skills helped participants to seek and accept genuine feedback. Many participants expressed difficulties accepting feedback from others, until starting this leadership program. Some participants illustrated taking risks to ask for feedback and tried different interpersonal approaches. Participants had courage to ask for feedback of their pursuit to personally grow. Daft (2016) shared that self-awareness requires two things, self-assessments and feedback from others. Brendel (2016) said, “Commonly, feedback is uncomfortable and one-sided, but integrating mindfulness created a space for understanding, courageousness, and curiosity” (p. 24). Literature shows the association of mindfulness with a

“more autonomous regulation and more subjective vitality, or the experience of energy being available to the self” (Ryan & Deci, 2008, p. 190).

### **Self-Improvement**

How do undergraduates perceive that mindfulness impacts intrapersonal leader development? As mentioned, it is hard to isolate mindfulness from other relaxation activities. One participant shared it was also hard to put into words how mindfulness had an impact (especially when combined with other mindfulness activities this participant was practicing, such as yoga). This study shows that mindfulness intertwined with leadership. Participants expressed that they could not differentiate between their mindfulness and intrapersonal development experiences. Many participants also suggested that mindfulness did affect the self-awareness required for them to recognize areas of intrapersonal growth (leader - true character), and ways they could improve their interpersonal relations (leadership - impact on others). This study showed that mindfulness impacts or influences intrapersonal development (Goleman, 2013; Komives & Wagner, 2017; Nesbit, 2012). Many participants expressed a desire for self-improvement (i.e., self-actualization; Maslow, 1943), and reported that mindfulness was a tool for self-development, which confirmed the importance of contemplative practices in higher education leadership learning (Goldman-Schuyler, 2010).

In addition, participants mentioned the importance of mindful self-inquiry or self-development as a competency. Other participants expressed a willingness to become adaptable leaders, inclusive, and more considerate toward their followers' needs, while staying true to themselves. This confirms past research that stated leaders benefit from self-awareness as they become present and consciously connect with the people they lead, while remaining aware and open to emerging situations (as cited in Goldman-Schuyler, Skjei, Sanzgiri, & Koskela, 2017).

Ehrlich concluded that when individuals pay attention, they “build self-awareness which is the heart of effective leadership” (p. 22). Many participants justified the intention/behaviours to improve their leadership ability as they integrated their focus of individual character development with interpersonal relations.

This short-term mindfulness intervention affected the following dimensions, cognitive (self-awareness, clarity, and openness), affective (relaxation, congruence, and empathy), and behavioural (confidence, creative and self-improvement). After a longer period and consistent mindfulness practice, the change in behaviours would become clearer (Goldstein, 2013).

### **Implications of Findings**

The results of this case study show that using a conceptual model (thinking, being, and doing) engaged participants in mindful self-inquiry or intrapersonal leadership learning and development. This finding addressed the following research question, what are the undergraduate and instructor experiences in practicing mindfulness (i.e., cognitive, affective, and behavioural)? Results show that with mindful self-inquiry, participants strengthened their understanding of self, their leadership-efficacy, and readiness for learning and leader development. Many participants strengthened cognitive functioning, affective change (relaxation), that promoted congruence, which affected behavioural well-being. This study provided the implications of the definition of mindfulness and the leadership approaches.

### **Mindfulness Definition**

This study has helped to evolve the definition of mindfulness relating to intrapersonal leader development. Mindfulness practice, as a resource for intrapersonal development becomes a mindful self-inquiry, defined as a practice (think), a process (be), and a presence (do); which aligns with meditative inquiry (Kumar, 2013; Kumar & Downey, 2018). First, mindfulness is a

*practice* that has an impact on the cognitive dimension. In this way, mindfulness promotes a consciousness well-being that leads to a transformed mindset (Anderson, 2016; Edwards, 2016, Ragoonaden, 2015). Secondly, mindfulness is a *process* that influences the affective dimension with a quiet, peaceful, relaxed stillness that promotes clarity, calm, and compassionate attentiveness over time (Langer, 2013, Young, 2016). Lastly, mindfulness is a *presence* that embodies our behavioural dimension. After practicing mindfulness for an extended period of time, the practitioner began to operate and present themselves to others as fully aware and integral (Goldman Schyler, 2010; Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Mindfulness stands for a quality of consciousness held internally and promoted externally (Anderson & Anderson, 2000; Brown & Ryan, 2015; Knights, 2015). Also, mindfulness grants individuals with the information to learn from the inside out (Day et al., 2013; Ehrlich, 2015). This leads to mindful thinking, mindful being, and mindful doing, aligning consciousness of self to congruent and committed behaviours (Gonzalez, 2015; HERI, 1996; Haber & Komives, 2009).

To engage in mindful or meditative inquiry as a practice, process and presence required a spiral of learning where students release, receive, and return to their cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions (Artress, 2006; Cook-Greuter, 1999; Kumar, 2013; Wilber, 2000; Baron & Cayer, 2011). In the following section, I discuss the implications of each dimension.

### **Practice - Cognitive Dimension**

Mindful-self inquiry engaged participants in awareness of thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations, deepening their sense of honesty and clarity of cognitive focus (Stahl & Goldstein, 2010). If a short intervention produced these kinds of results - focus, self-awareness, open-mind, and optimism - elements that enhanced preparedness for learning and leadership, what could a longer intervention do? This was important, since focus provided an essential life

skill for young professionals navigating information overload, and for them to leverage their leadership ability (Brendel, 2016; Blackburn, 2015; Goleman, 2013). Higher education does not train students how to focus. Mindfulness was used as a training tool to help students focus for greater academic preparedness and achievement (Roche, Haar & Luthans, 2014). Higher Education's purpose was to transform students into better people and leaders by enriching knowledge and providing opportunities for self-discovery (Anderson, 2019; HERI, 1996; Wilensky, 2016). For this reason, they should consider using mindful self-inquiry or meditative inquiry as a strategy for transformative learning and cognitive training (Gonzalez, 2015; Kumar, 2013; Kumar & Downey, 2018; Owen-Smith, 2018).

Higher education administrators and faculty should consider the importance of creating safe learning communities within their classrooms. Safe spaces help students to explore the contemplative approaches offered for cognitive training (Owen-Smith, 2018). Mirabai Bush, Daniel Barbezat, Parker Palmer, Alexander Helen Astin, Mary Rose O'Reilly, and Owen-Smith are educators who have reinforced the importance of creating spaces in the classroom for contemplation. With mindfulness, schools can communicate and work to build the safe environment needed for individuals to share their voice, feel accepted, and be supported. Faculty could show the structures and standards required to create these safe spaces (classroom agreement, faculty-student team building activities, student intentions on course outcomes, collaborative exploration of contemplative learning methods). Faculty must take time (away from textbook contents), have courage to challenge the dominant paradigm in education, and share evidence on how such processes do fit into academic success and course objectives (Kumar & Downey, 2018). Mindfulness in this way develops a mindset "that is associated with

enhanced teacher well-being and a positive classroom climate” (Schussler et al., 2015; Dunn, 2016, p. 53). Kirsch (2008) shared,

To create such spaces is to listen and wait, to invite wonder, silence, and wisdom into our lives. To create such spaces is to acknowledge that it takes a lifetime of learning, listening, and returning to the inner fountain that sustains us; that it takes faith to honor moments of silence, to foster mindfulness, to learn the art of being present. Creating such spaces—to hold and behold the presence of others—is a gift for teachers and students alike; it is the process of creating a community, of honoring those in our presence, of acknowledging each other’s stories, dreams, hopes, and visions. (p. 66)

Safe learning communities promote healthy coping practices where individuals can be authentic and come to know each other with greater kindness. Kindness is an important competency in our classrooms and for humanity (Harris, 2014; Schawbel, 2018).

Since self-awareness was a foundation of several leadership theories, contemplative pedagogies (e.g., mindfulness) must be a major component within leadership learning and an instrumental facet of curriculum design in higher leadership education. As discussed, intrapersonal learning or self-awareness through mindful self-inquiry may not align with cognitive learning objectives for all disciplines. Kumar (2018, p. 12) mentioned “consciousness, meditative inquiry, and curriculum as deeply connected spheres” has the potential to lead students to self-transformation in higher education. This approach to education is more humanistic than other traditional methods. Parker Palmer said that contemplation allows students to “feel more keenly their responsibilities as educated persons”, and with both, contemplation and great scholarship, they had a great attentiveness towards the phenomena they were trying to understand (Barbezat & Bush, 2014, p. viii).

Participants in this study suggested that a sense of curiosity and wonder helped in mindfulness. Past research shows that mindfulness practice and self-development are not important as a competency until students experience it via coursework, and only then, will they prioritize and value mindfulness practices (Frizzell, Hoon, & Banner, 2016). Thus, faculty could design curriculum that prompts students to explore leader development in a meaningful manner, generate a curiosity for learning, and engage their intrapersonal development through meditative self-inquiry (Kumar, 2013). Not just in graduate programs, but all students can use mindfulness practices that promote awareness, and acceptance of thoughts and feelings (Blackburn, 2015). An earlier introduction to mindful self-inquiry practices could help students self-regulate, and navigate towards their career and full persona (di Pierdomenico & Kadziolka, 2017; Schwind et al., 2017).

### **Process - Affective**

Past research has shown that many students struggle with anxiety and as such, implications that apply to the affective dimension (Anderson, 2019; Brooks & Anumudu, 2016; Regehr, Glancy, & Pitts, 2013; Rizer et al., 2016). Reports on anxiety, stress, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, and other mental health issues have been increasing and have differed from what higher education has confronted in the past (Owen-Smith, 2018). In 2019, I had classroom of sixty students and ten of them had mental health issues, which required me to adjust my teaching style and approach. Students can use mindfulness as a coping tool that promotes health and psychological well-being, decreases anxiety, and enhances their positive mental states and prosocial behaviours (Brendel, 2016; Brown & Ryan, 2015; Frizzell et al., 2016; Ramsburg & Youmans, 2014; Schwind et al., 2017). Faculty members have no training in mental health therapy and would need to take precautions (i.e., altering students with potential

internal conflicts) and provide them with the necessary resources (Owen-Smith, 2018).

Mindfulness is a solution that can promote the psychological, physical, emotional, and intellectual health for this generation of students' needs (Owen-Smith, 2018).

Relaxation can help participants engage effectively with the affective domain, as mindfulness can help with the optimism and curiosity for learning (e.g., to increase student confidence and/or sense of self-efficacy) required for the life-long leadership development process (Kumar & Downey, 2018). Brown (2013) explained that leadership does not build soft-skills, but rather, nurtures "courage" building skills. William James (1890) illustrated that practicing mindfulness was a way of bringing an individual's "wandering attention, over and over again, as the very root of judgment, character, and will" (Ramsburg & Youmans, 2014). This courage translates to confidence or self-efficacy, also an important component of learning in education (i.e., motivation for a person to pursue and keep trying to achieve challenging tasks) that improves with the ongoing process of mindfulness practice (Caldwell et al., 2010). For the majority, instilling a consistent mindfulness practice within the classroom can bring relaxation within students' affective dimension. Mindfulness as process has the potential to increase optimism, courage, and confidence and lead to positive behavioural outcomes actions, academic performance, and personal well-being (Watkins, 2013).

### **Presence - Behavioural**

Mindful self-inquiry enhances the behavioural dimension and motivates self-improvement. These two benefits can justify the use of mindful self-inquiry in classrooms. Mindful self-inquiry is a tool for self-development and if used properly can provide students with a greater chance of cultivating leadership with integrity (Goldman-Schulyer, 2010). Self-development and integrity are important to avoid constant exhaustion and misdirection, proven



to result in poor decisions and leadership (Wheatley, 2013). Integrity and ethics can help leaders, and are not necessarily the qualities that loud, prestigious, or popular leaders demonstrate. Leadership educators and administrators have the biggest opportunity to inspire students to show benevolent leadership behaviours, such as inclusion through contemplative learning (Collinson & Tourish, 2015; Gentile, 2015; Kashdan & Biswas-Diener, 2014).

The awareness, through mindful self-inquiry, helped participants discover their leadership potential and development. Leadership insight is “an invitation to find our true selves, and thus the essence of our best leadership” (Adler, 2010, p. x). We need the best leaders in our society, leaders who know themselves and take time to be mindful and gain the confidence they need to act in genuine congruence. Organizations like General Electric, Google, and Apple have responded by incorporating mindfulness into their leadership development programs (Brendel, 2016; Ehrlich, 2015). More inclusive and benevolent leadership approaches, such as empathy and kindness, could help solve our 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges (Adler, 2010). Mindful self-inquiry helps develop problem-solving skills and should be part of undergraduate curriculums across all subjects (Blackburn, 2015; Kumar, 2013). Commitment connects to learning, moving a person inward thus helping them to connect outward – the highest achievement for an educated person (Owen-Smith, 2018).

A mindful and reflective classroom can promote moral codes, values, and standards invaluable to our society, which promotes kinder minds, homes, companies, schools, and the society that ripples out into our world. Educators and students need to make informed (reflective or thoughtful) decisions, and have confidence to be active in their learning. Just a few moments of mindfulness a day can promote benefits. In addition, mindfulness can support authentic, honest, connected relationships and prosocial behaviours in a place of truth, understanding,

inclusion, and kindness (Brendel, 2016; Brown & Ryan, 2015; Frizzell et al., 2016; Ramsburg & Youmans, 2014; Schwind et al., 2017).

### **Mindfulness Matters**

My desire to research was to understand how to improve student engagement and learning (and thus society). In past experiences (more than a decade) I encountered many unengaged undergraduate students. “Students are coming to school less prepared, while . . . new levels of accountability demand that we [teachers] demonstrate academic improvement under difficult conditions, often without the necessary support systems” (Jennings, 2015, p. xxiii). Many undergraduate learners had: lacked direction resulting from multitasking, individualistic tendencies, feared interacting or communicating to build healthy relations (other than on social media), and lacked an awareness or courage to initiate meaningful change, not to mention rising mental health disorders (Ehrlich, 2015; Flores, 2016; Kumar & Downey, 2018; Schwartz, 2015). Students are completing education as individualistic, since education does not nurture value formation (Flores, 2016). As a result, students are often unaware or do not notice when an ethical issue arises, and if they do students will process, determine and act on judgments differently. The prefrontal cortex can only focus on one task at a time, and as such, multitasking impairs our emotional intelligence, potentially leading to missing social cues needed to enhance decision-making and actions (Ehrlich, 2015).

This variability in students’ developmental stages suggests . . . that we need to understand human development theories; contribute to the creation of environments that accommodate various levels of awareness and agency; tailor programs, processes, and policies to students’ developmental needs; and acquire a deeper understanding of how students develop morally” (Rest et al., 1999; Schwartz, 2015, p. 19).

Higher education has not adapted to meet the larger needs of society or shaped the leaders who are needed now and in the future. Kumar & Downey (2018) reinforced this point stating that higher education in the West,

has become too instrumental and too mechanical . . . contemporary education was contributing little to understanding personal conflicts and the global crisis, . . . [and that] competition and market-driven education is causing many crises at an individual level because students are not happy with their educational experience (Doin, 2012; Lees & Noddings, 2016; Miller, Nigh, Binder, Novak, & Crowell, 2018; Noddings, 2003).

Although students may not necessarily like the educational experience, they go through it for their economic survival, which causes a great deal of stress and anxiety. (p. 61)

We are not considering the larger global or social contexts in higher education when we engage students in curriculum that should be designed to enhance their life, their studies and their future potential. Educators and administrators need to adapt more swiftly to the larger global and societal contexts to shape students into leaders who can address these challenges. Faculty who engage students' enthusiasm and passion for curriculum and establish conditions for a strong learning community, encourage students to exercise leadership to collaborate with others to learn through freedom, discovery and creativity, and promote the joy of learning (Jennings, 2015; Kumar & Downey, 2018).

### **The Student Mind**

As shown with this research, students communicated that prior to mindfulness their mind was tired, running through responsibilities, and anxious (perhaps running on auto-mode or autopilot). Some described being unsure of priorities or how to organize them (i.e., time management, scheduling priorities, and discipline), perhaps due to the multitasking so

common among students. Mindfulness helped many participants to become self-aware and enter into a state of focus, calm and clarity.

Wellness is an inward journey, where the answers to all questions and the destination of all journeys are found nowhere else but in our inner most being. All phenomena arise from consciousness. Without consciousness, there can be no mind, body or the experience of life. It is when we learn to identify ourselves with consciousness, rather than the expressions of consciousness, that we become masters of our own lives.

(Dormoy, 2016, p. 15)

Brendel (2016) and Ehrlich (2015) concluded that leading mindfully improved performance and results, and promoted focus on the process and tasks (rather than just the tasks) to lead more effectively. By having a clear mind, students can focus on the current process to achieve outcomes, while measuring progress (i.e., task accomplishment) and ignoring the irrelevancies or distractions. Brown (2015), Adler (2011) and Kumar (2013) suggested that in today's contemporary society and the complexity of current problems, students must develop critical or mindful awareness and consciousness to live and lead effectively. Students need to be able to prioritize and focus on what is important, and to accomplish personal, professional and collective goals successfully, or succumb to internet temptations and social media distractions that drive procrastination and divert personal and collective efforts to succeed. Koohang, Paliszkievicz, and Goluchowski (2017) found evidence of elevated trust, learning, and performance with individuals who demonstrated strong intrapersonal abilities, which contemplative approaches such as mindfulness have been shown to nurture, and are foundational for leading and learning. Participants in this study became more aware of their potential and the

need for improved thoughts, feelings or behaviours (necessary for holistic learning and growth and healthy human development). The goals of mindful leadership that could guide future courses (see Appendix O) can shape the leaders and learners needed, who are:

Think:

- Conscious, courageous and truthful intentions and reflections
- Critical thinkers and creative innovators - visionary (see possibilities)

Be:

- Authentic (genuine), friendly, and empathetic communicators and collaborators
- Calm, passionate, and inclusive team players

Do:

- Ethical decision makers who show initiative and demonstrate a healthy work ethic
- Purposeful solutions generators who engage people to pursue collective goals
- Time managers who are organized, focused and fair in their approach

John Wooden stated that a powerful leadership skill is having the courage to set your own personal example (as cited in Bartels, 2017), and faculty can instill this courage through knowledge and skill development in higher education.

Traditional, rational-oriented, methods for leadership development are not always effective for today's organizational or societal challenges (Adler, 2011; Kumar, 2013; Sutherland & Jelinek, 2015). Faculty could be more influential in leading contemplative education, and inspiring a more conscious and meaningful approach to learning within post-secondary institutions. Faculty has the noble role of influencing the lives of students. This requires a holistic leadership style engaged through contemplative learning in higher education classrooms (Barbezat & Bush, 2014). In addition, mindful self-inquiry, the context, and the process have a positive impact on the intrapersonal leadership development of students and their ability to engage in personal learning of leadership. Mindful self-inquiry is an important leadership competency for undergraduate education and promotes a holistic self-awareness (e.g., cognitive,

affective, and behavioural; Kumar & Downey, 2018). This learning style leads to behaviours that better self and others. Self-improvement is an important aspect of human development for individuals, universities, and societies. Is contemplation an important subject today (Owen-Smith, 2018)? Should all classrooms train students' mindfulness within a culture that promotes prosocial behaviours, starting at an early age? In a recent conversation with a partner of Deloitte Canada, leadership development opportunities "come too late" (personal communication, July 24, 2019). Individuals "who aspire to great accomplishments will encounter challenges that test inner self" and mindfulness training can help (Colonna, 2019).

We need to shift away from traditional leadership approaches and integrate concepts that promote self-awareness or intrapersonal development (Antonacopoulou & Bento, 2004; Cook-Cottone, 2015; Ghoshal, 2005; Goleman, 2013; Nonaka, 2014; Rao, 2008; Senge, 2006; Shotter & Tsoukas, 2014; Weick, 2006). The findings of this study relate to the SoTL heuristic of context, process, impact, and follow-up that provides faculty with structure. This study is a tool for faculty to integrate mindful self-inquiry practices to the classroom and is not meant to generalize over specific populations (Allen et al., 2012; Rizer et al., 2016). Research scholars suggest different approaches for integrating self-awareness in leadership studies (Collinson & Tourish; 2015); transformational learning, and meditative inquiry or contemplative education (Barbezat & Bush, 2014; Kumar, 2013; Nesbit, 2012; Owen-Smith, 2018). This study gives direction on how to integrate mindfulness practices into the educational curricula, particularly in higher education (Schwind et al., 2017). Many participants did leave with meaningful gains and the knowledge needed to continue developing intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies (Allen et al., 2012).

This short-term mindfulness intervention appeared to impact the cognitive (self-awareness, clarity, and openness), affective (relaxation, congruence, and empathy), and behavioural (confidence and self-improvement) dimensions. After a longer period and a more consistent mindfulness practice, the change in behaviours becomes clearer (Goldstein, 2013). As students, educators, parents, and leaders we should encourage mindfulness practices among our children, peers, and professionals to build healthy mechanisms into our lives that open spaces of dialogue, learning, and personal growth needed today. Mindfulness has the capacity to change inner worlds, which will lead to changing our world.

### **Academic Contributions**

This study contributes to the contemplative learning literature. Also, it confirms the importance of undergraduate intrapersonal development in higher education. In addition, it adds new insights on the integration of mindfulness practices within a higher education setting. Self-awareness is a key component of leadership development. Mindful self-inquiry improved self-awareness for many participants. With strengthened intrapersonal development, participants may have gained enhanced confidence to improve themselves and their leadership ability. The results of this study contributed to investigations of contemplative leadership learning in higher education with specific support toward the following academic understandings in undergraduate leadership education, (a) Mindful self-inquiry has the potential to nurture intrapersonal development, highlighting the importance of this leadership competency in higher education (Eich, 2008; Kumar, 2013; Ricketts and Rudd, 2002; Nathan et al., 2013). Another contribution was that (b) Mindfulness promotes psychological wellbeing and academic preparedness and can put students in an effective mindset for learning. In addition, this study added that (c) Contemplative learning and teaching approaches nurture honest self-reflection and encourage

participants towards greater congruence with confidence and empathy; and (d) Faculty leadership sets the context and process for safe learning communities that facilitate meaningful, contemplative learning.

**Mindful inquiry as a leadership competency for undergraduate education.** This study strengthens the importance of intrapersonal development and self-awareness as a critical component for leadership education. Many universities do not offer opportunities for intrapersonal learning, and may not have leadership education within their business schools (in my research on leadership programs, these often focused on nursing, military, or targeted toward youth, e.g., Day et al., 2014; Didonna, 2009). Some leadership courses include intrapersonal learning, due to its relevance in leadership learning objectives. Traditionally, leadership courses focus more in the theoretical aspects of leadership. Leadership development, if provided within higher education, often focuses on the transmission of knowledge rather than in the capability or skills required to lead (Antonacopoulou & Bento, 2004). Higher education faculty is calling for a more practical, applicable, and contemplative approach to leadership development (Barbezat & Bush, 2014; Kumar, 2013; Owen-Smith, 2018). This is significant, since this study gives students (through a practical, applicable, and contemplative structure and program) a foundation to develop their leadership and learning abilities (Eich, 2008; Ricketts and Rudd, 2002; Nathan et al., 2013). Mindfulness and leadership intertwine, which helps support leadership development. Many participants wanted to learn and improve when they practiced mindfulness. Also, participants suggested including the following improvements to the leadership programs, various styles of meditations, a discussion-based format, role-plays, self-learning encouragement, opportunities for students to lead, and personalization of leadership theories. Despite the suggested improvements, this study contributes teaching methods that engage students in



leadership competency development in a sustainable, relevant, and authentic way (Cress et al., 2001; McNae, 2011). Opportunities for mindful self-inquiry or meditative inquiry within higher education learning of leadership (or in other courses) could help undergraduates flourish, enhance their academic success, and improve their self-awareness and leadership.

**Academic preparedness.** Mindfulness promotes greater focus for learning to occur, within and beyond leadership courses (Brendel, 2016; Goleman, 2013; Roche, Haar & Luthans, 2014). Scholars assert that a shift in higher education can help focus on the necessary development for “socially responsible, team-based leaders” (as cited in Keating et al., 2014). Through greater behavioural and skill-based coursework (Hoover et al., 2010; Rubin & Dierdorff, 2011; Rynes et al., 2003), educators need to ensure that leadership skills are developed and effectively transferred to the workplace (Hoover et al., 2010; Rubin & Dierdorff, 2011; Johnson, Garrison, Hernez-Broome, Fleenor, and Steed, 2012). A growing interest in contemplative learning (e.g., mindfulness, mindful self-inquiry, arts-based) is replacing traditional methods that have not prepared leaders for today’s organizational challenges (Adler, 2011; Carroll, Levy, & Richmond, 2008; Donaldson, 2002; Edwards, Elliott, Iszatt-White, & Schedlitzki, 2013; Ghoshal, 2005; Grey & Mitev, 1995; Khurana, 2007; Kumar & Downey, 2018; Mintzberg, 2004; as cited in Sutherland & Jelinek, 2015).

**Contemplative learning.** Many participants in this study indicated that they gained the confidence to engage in honest and congruent behaviours. Congruence can nurture greater integrity as participants act with confidence to align their behaviours to their values. This alliance is essential for nurturing the psychological needs required to the “processes of growth, integrity, and wellness to ensue” (Ryan & Deci, 2008, p. 189). Within the leadership literature, little empirical evidence shows how integrity develops (Day et al., 2014). Perhaps developing

self-awareness engages an individual to lead effectively and ethically. As shown by the strengthening of intrapersonal skills, mindful awareness also improved participants' leadership (or provided a foundation of knowledge and practical applications for further growth). Many participants expressed that they were more confident, open, and compassionate after engaging in mindfulness practices within the context of leadership learning. My style of teaching is focused on these courage-building skills (Brown, 2013), which require students to be authentic and kind in their leadership approaches. Mindfulness developed a self-care and compassion within me to be a kind individual while simultaneously accepting my shortcomings. It takes courage (and maturity) to practice and become self-aware on a deep level, to live confidently in a conscious way, and to show integrity (Brendel et al., 2016). As Goldman-Schuyler (2010) asserted, it is possible and important to increase leadership integrity through mind training, with the embodied learning that mindfulness and contemplation promotes.

**Faculty leadership to set the context and process for contemplative learning.**

I humbly implore faculty to demonstrate courage and act authentically to set the tone, and create the safe spaces required for contemplative learning (Kumar, 2013; Owen-Smith, 2018). Faculty leadership and knowledge can help facilitate, model, and hold the classroom culture in a safe learning environment (Barbezat & Bush, 2014). Ideally, faculty could integrate contemplative practices to their own lives to model and understand the challenges participants meet while engaging in these practices.

A safe learning space invites and can assist students in exploring the vulnerability of mindfulness and self-reflection (Cotten, 2017; Kumar, 2013). Faculty cannot expect students to engage in contemplative education without guarding a safe learning space within the classroom. In the present study, several participants discussed the importance of creating a learning space

that was inviting, open, and accepting. Safe environments provide a better chance to recognize, protect, and support any challenges encountered during mindfulness (e.g., vulnerability, frustration, and internal conflict). Faculty could offer resources to help students work through difficult thoughts, emotions, or behaviours that they may encounter through mindfulness and can ensure they have access to counselors. Mindfulness helps develop self-awareness and could be an important tool for academic preparedness of undergraduate learning.

### **Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study relies on student and faculty perspectives on how to integrate mindfulness effectively within higher leadership education. I assessed student engagement and evaluated mindfulness as a pedagogy in higher education to recommend improvements, and provided suggestions that could translate into practices, and policies for future teaching and research in higher leadership education (Franzese & Felten, 2017; Owen-Smith, 2018).

In this study, participants acknowledged the importance of mindfulness and its benefits (i.e., enhanced learning by providing calm, concentration, and clarity within an academic learning environment). The participants acknowledged mindfulness by sharing their experiences, which provided insights into the leadership development process and strengthened self-awareness. The findings of this study contributed to the mindfulness literature by promoting an understanding of students' perspectives and the need for practical knowledge in the scholarly community (Roeser & Eccles, 2015). This resulted in the development of innovative approaches within leadership pedagogy, provided insight into mindfulness as pedagogy in higher education, and defined student engagement strategies for academic success and preparedness. Students that participated in this leadership intervention gained a stronger sense of their values and a deeper

understanding of their abilities, contributing to the courage-building skills required of leaders (e.g. self-awareness, self-efficacy, creativity, and employability). Even if these practices did not have an impact on some students, now the scholarly community has a better understanding of mindfulness applications within leadership learning. Future researchers can use the emerging topics of this study as a platform for their scholar papers. This study did not clarify the emerging topics due to methodological limitations.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study had several methodological limitations. I used a qualitative case study design that engaged 13 undergraduate students and 2 faculty members, all from the same university. Case studies do not promote generalizability (Yin, 2014). Many factors can create a unique higher education course (e.g. context, process, impact, and follow-up). The limitations inherent in the design, research methods, and intervention are factors to consider when interpreting the results of this study.

The characteristics of the sample in this study were the following, Caucasian, male and female, U.S.A. residents, undergraduate students, leadership class of spring 2018-2019, and homogeneous culture. In this study, I did not address the following issues, (a) issues across the United States geographic context; (b) large, complex post-secondary institutions; (c) urban city experiences; (d) cultural and colorful perspectives related to the experience (i.e., only Caucasian American); (e) student perceptions related to the value and timing of mindfulness practice or isolating mindfulness from other wellbeing activities; (f) differentiation from gender or race or religious contexts; (g) longer interventions or contemplative practices beyond mindfulness; (h) different age groups; or (i) differentiation between leadership learning in other subjects (e.g., nursing, recreation). These factors limit the results of the study, as it is uncertain how the study's

findings transfer to other populations, locations, institutions, courses, different age groups, cultural or gender perspectives, larger class sizes, or longer interventions. This research does not cover the implication of gender role, age, or cultural aspects. But, I did not intend this study to consider a collectivist culture or difference between genders.

The data collection process had sampling and methodological limitations. This study used a convenience sampling method; the participants of this study were students enrolled in a specific class. As a result, it is even harder to understand how this study's results apply to other undergraduate students within this population.

In addition, part of the data of this study came from a survey source. Self-reported data tends to have limitations, is difficult to verify, and might incorporate bias information. Isolating the measurement of mindfulness from other relaxation activities like yoga was challenging. The feeling that another person is observing you might have influenced the participants to change their answers in the survey (Rae, 2015). In addition, some participants could have completed the surveys quickly and included inaccurate representations. These factors could potentially limit the findings presented.

The frequency and the length of the mindfulness sessions (five-minutes per classroom within a six-week period) was a limitation of the intervention process. A longer intervention over the entire semester and meditation session of ten-minutes may have had a major impact on the undergraduate experiences (Brendel et al., 2016). Another limitation was the use of *Headspace* as the meditation style used for the intervention. This is an online-guided meditation and as participants of this study suggested, varying the type (guided, music, silent) and timing may have had more influence on their experiences and the study results.

Despite these limitations, exploring such areas relating to the research questions provide insight into the realm of contemplative education within postsecondary leadership courses. The research results share a deeper understanding of the undergraduate mindfulness experience.

### **Future Research**

This study contributes to the emerging literature that aims to understand the experiences and the impact of mindfulness on undergraduate leadership students. A replica of this study should analyze the impact of meditative inquiry as curriculum, instead of the use of mindfulness (Kumar & Downey, 2018). This would integrate opportunities for mindfulness within course content. In addition, the replica of this study should consider using a larger sample, integrating pre and post data collection, and examining humanistic self-actualization (Schneider, Pierson, & Bugental, 2014). In addition, future studies should consider using smaller sized classrooms.

To further this study, a participatory action research with longer mindfulness interventions within an educational setting could build upon the research methods. An extension of the duration of the mindfulness practice and intervention could enhance benefits for the participants. Engage participants in mindfulness in a longer meditative practice (e.g., start at five minutes, move to ten and work towards fifteen minutes) and over a longer period (i.e., more than six weeks). The frequency of the meditation was not enough for some participants, and applying a longer intervention could have a better outcome (Brendel et al., 2016). In addition, future research can define one consistent practice of mindfulness (e.g., meditation) or investigate the differences between mindfulness practices. Participants in the present study designed their own practices based on their needs. Defining and ensuring a consistency of practice may strengthen results. However, future research can also review the differences between practitioners who engage in regular versus irregular mindfulness practice.

Another research proposal could explore faculty's interest in meditation to determine its effects on their persona, their students, and the possible gain of understanding the SoTL heuristic (e.g., context, process, impact, and follow-up). A further study could include undergraduate students from universities across the country, during a semester long intervention and evaluate results by (a) institutions; (b) cultural or religious context; (c) geographic locations; (d) multicultural populations; (e) other majors or subjects; and (f) gender differences.

Ten out of the thirteen participants were female, and was not related to classroom composition (i.e., 16 males and 14 females). This aligned with the literature, where participants involved with mindfulness research were mostly female. A systematic review showed that females may have benefitted more from mindfulness-based interventions than men (Katz & Toner, 2013). In addition, race and gender are "important predictors of academic performance," these factors should be part of future research with mindfulness (Napora, 2013). Although, at the end of this study's intervention, more males filled out the post-survey and provided artifacts, illustrating an area for future research (e.g., exploring strategies that appeal to young men; Regehr et al., 2013). Artifacts submitted reversed this participation, with ten males and only three females. Male students may have had a preconceived notion of the meaning of mindfulness. One of the male participants expressed that if it were not for the course, he would have never discovered the benefits of mindfulness. This result opens path for a study on first perspectives of mindfulness on a gender basis. Another proposal for a future study is the analysis of the mindfulness intervention within secondary or postsecondary institutions, along with correlating the findings between each level to determine similarities or differences.

Future research could cover a mindfulness intervention held outside of higher education classes and within a meditation group in a higher education setting. I am currently conducting a

ten-minute mindfulness practice with students before 9:00 a.m. classes start. Research participants could receive an invitation to attend guided meditation sessions and have a choice each day about attending. This could reduce the vulnerability participants felt with mindfulness held in the classroom. A mindfulness practitioner or trainer can facilitate a mindfulness class (to supply additional support and the resources participants may need). The expected benefits of this would be that mindfulness could occur more often (e.g. on weekdays) and with more students, enhancing the benefits of the present study. Future research could collect data after six months and one year following the intervention, to have a greater understanding of the impacts. Follow-up is important to determine how students applied learning, what they remembered the most, and identify if the educational program helped to contribute or further developed the student (Hubball & Clarke, 2010). In the present study, I am considering re-connecting with participants post-graduation to follow-up with them on the mindfulness intervention and to create a blog with them to keep connected. “Longer-term follow-up assessment of meditation interventions is important to determine whether the effects of meditation are stable and enduring or fleeting” (Shapiro et al., 2011, p. 31).

Regardless of the practice of mindfulness, students gained benefits of the practices and all focus group participants unanimously gained self-awareness. Self-awareness comes from feedback and self-assessment, which requires courage (Daft, 2016). Self-determination theory is a human motivation approach that focuses the facilitation of self-motivation and healthy psychological development through understanding innate psychological needs (as cited in Solansky, 2015, p. 631). Future research investigating how mindfulness impacts self-efficacy, or self-determination, or self-regulation as a mediator between meditations and learning enhancement would be valuable (Ryan & Deci, 2017; Ramsburg & Youmans, 2014).



### Conclusion

In closing, intrapersonal learning and research can be of benefit to students. With the incorporation of contemplative methods in research and teaching platforms, scholars and practitioners can learn more about these important opportunities to develop students and each other. As shown in this study, undergraduates gained self-understanding of their own motivations and goals. Students need opportunities to develop intrapersonal skills and access improved resources to promote wellness and healthy coping (Katz & Toner, 2013). Kabat-Zinn (1994) said, “Meditation is really about human development”.

Day and colleagues (2012) affirmed, “That having a solid foundation in human development is essential to understand and intervene in leader development” (as cited in Frizzell et al., 2016, p. 18). Mindfulness has been defined as a spiritual intelligence that integrates ethical practices and activates personal values, by raising an individual’s level of consciousness (Knights, 2015). Today’s lack of good leaders should urge teachers, leaders, and students to be better by taking time to practice mindfulness or meditative inquiry. We need a better world and that starts within.

Mindfulness serves as an instructional method to assist participants in attaining the intrapersonal competencies presented by the *Leadership Competencies for the Council of Academic Standards*, developed by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS, 2015). With the right context and process in higher education learning, mindfulness has the potential to nurture students’ self-awareness. Mindfulness can lead to honesty, clarity, open-mindedness, and focus; promote students’ relaxation, empathy, and genuine actions towards congruence; and enhance students’ creativity and self-confidence to self-improve. These results reflect the characteristics educators hope to nurture in students and

our future leaders. Today, society needs wise and kind leaders (Adler, 2015). Higher education has the perfect opportunity to encourage students' lifelong learning journey of leadership and introduce mindfulness practices as a competency required for effective leadership development (Adler, 2010; Garavan et al., 2015; Kolb, 2009; Nonaka, 2014; Shoddttter & Tsoukas, 2014). Mindfulness could nurture inclusive leadership; self-aware leaders who seek feedback, and work to continuously improve their approach, ability to lead, and persona. To lead others, individuals needed to embody leadership and show behaviours that achieved proficiency, congruence, and purpose (Taylor & Ladkin, 2009).

How do students fully engage if they are not “present” to the experience of learning? As discussed in the literature review, self-awareness provides the foundation for many theories of leadership, in particular the Social Change Model. Higher education classrooms must include self-awareness in the leadership curriculum, and integrate contemplative practices into their classrooms, such as meditative inquiry. Mindfulness has been shown to be a helpful resource to engage students in intrapersonal development, and nurture empathy and awaken genuine leadership approaches. Finally, mindfulness promotes learning, self-awareness, congruence, and commitment within individuals to help them to lead towards the changes and solutions needed today (Owen-Smith, 2018).

## Chapter Six: Conclusion

Play opens the heart, writing opens the mind,  
Like loose sand our thoughts  
Shift their shape over time.  
Be still. – Anonymous

This chapter provides a summary of the research and highlights recommendations for contemplative leadership educators.

### Summary

The inclusion of contemplative approaches is especially important in context of their absence from most leader development interventions (Black, Soto & Spurlin, 2016; Brendel & Bennett, 2016; Lucas & Goodman, 2015; Reeds, 2015; Roche, Haar, & Luthans, 2014). The studies also asserted that faculty are well positioned to create appropriate learning contexts and processes for contemplative reflection within higher education courses. The present study endeavoured to address a gap in the academic literature by engaging students in a mindfulness intervention within a leadership course, gaining their perspectives and experience with mindfulness in a postsecondary setting. The findings from the study demonstrated that students benefited from mindfulness, a form of contemplative learning, especially with respect to further developing their intrapersonal competencies.

The results of the study illustrated the potential of contemplative practices within leadership learning for intrapersonal and interpersonal competency development. The discussion identified how mindfulness practice and leader development activities supported students to relax and focus, nurture self-awareness, promote genuine congruence, and promoted greater empathetic embodiment and self-confidence. The discussion also reinforced the importance of

self-discovery (within contemplative practices) for undergraduate learning; intrapersonal competency development within higher leadership education; and faculty leadership for establishing positive tone, context and process for engaging students in the vulnerable practice of contemplation.

### **Research Answers**

This study is academically relevant to research in higher education, contemplative education, and postsecondary leadership education. The findings (a) provide insights about student perspectives regarding the importance of establishing a safe environment for contemplative learning; (b) illustrate the process and design of contemplative practices for intrapersonal competence; and (c) strengthen the need for faculty to understand, model and prepare for the intrapersonal process participants experience. This section focuses on the context and process that participants engaged in to answer the research question: *How do undergraduate students and the instructor experience a leadership course that integrates mindful awareness practices?*

Many participants benefited from the mindfulness intervention within the undergraduate leadership course, and identified the learning context (i.e., classroom, opening exercises, mindfulness intervention, layout, atmosphere, the professor, technological aspects, peers) as important to intrapersonal development. Participants also appreciated the process of mindful-self inquiry and the combination of mindfulness and self-reflective activities, including journaling, *StrengthsFinder*, and self-assessments (Stahl & Goldstein, 2010). The beginning-of-class mindfulness intervention brought participants to a relaxed state of self-reflection and awareness, provided them with insight on their leadership abilities and potential, and prepared them for learning. Participants in the focus group benefited from reflecting on the cognitive, affective and

behavioural aspects of their experience. While participants did not mention lectures (traditional form) as inherent to the leadership program and learning process (other than the fact that they were available on the Learning Management System), they shared that they benefited from the hands-on activities, discussions, mentorship, poster presentation and research, and the theoretical applications of leadership inside and outside of class (i.e., many participants indicated that they integrated the leadership theories into their work, school or life roles).

*(2) What are undergraduate and instructor experiences in practicing mindfulness (i.e., cognitive, affective, behavioural)?*

In the beginning, most participants were uncertain about mindfulness, as they had never engaged in practicing before. Many participants gained more comfort with the practice as time went on. The majority of participants were unable to integrate mindfulness into their busy schedules, especially during these stressful times such as exam week. In terms of the cognitive, affective, and behaviour, many participants reported that they entered into mindfulness practice anxious (e.g., “jittery”), which then “faded” into a state of relaxation during the practice (on all three domains). Following mindfulness practice, many felt that they experienced a more clear and focused mindset (thinking), feeling more calm (being), and greater preparedness (doing).

*(3) How do undergraduates perceive that mindfulness impacts and influences intrapersonal leader development (i.e., consciousness, congruence, and commitment)?*

In relation to the *Social Change Model (SCM) Individual* domain, many participants of the present study claimed that mindfulness enhanced their self-awareness or *consciousness of self*. Seventy-five percent of participants reported feeling more self-aware, and all focus group participants who practiced mindfulness regularly experienced a sense of deep honesty. For many participants in this study, they expressed that written self-reflection promoted greater self-

understanding of their current approaches to leadership, and their leadership potential.

“Reflection skills should be developed to improve the [leadership] readiness of participants” (Gray, 2007; as cited in Solansky, 2015, p. 632). Many participants also expressed that mindfulness enhanced their cognitive focus.

In terms of the *congruence*, almost all participants reported feeling more relaxed and calm. Participants claimed that they felt more open-minded and optimistic, while others expressed feelings of greater creativity and empathy. Through self-discovery, participants in the focus group recognized the importance of congruence and shared intentions of aligning their personal values towards their desired authentic actions. Many participants relaxed which enabled feelings of self-confidence to arise, perhaps as the process of mindfulness for many was letting the anxiety fade away. This led to intentions of greater congruence for some participants, who communicated feelings of commitment towards their personal values and priorities (Ryan & Deci, 2008).

Lastly, in regards to *commitment*, participants expressed and exhibited self-improvement. Some participants shared that they gained “insight into their behaviours”, while others demonstrated new leadership behaviours as a result. Many participants expressed that they were self-confident to behave in ways that they believed were more congruent with their personal values (i.e., as a result of being more self-aware of who they were). For instance, focus group participants expressed seeking feedback and using that feedback to better self, when in the past they were not as receptive to receiving feedback. In addition, they communicated the importance of holding themselves accountable for their actions. Faculty observed that as participants relaxed they became more aware and focused, and moved into their affective domain (i.e., once one

could get past their mind) and became more aware of congruence, leading to behaviours that promoted genuine congruence.

Many participants claimed that mindfulness and leadership were intertwined. As they practiced mindfulness they often reflected on their intrapersonal (thoughts, feelings or actions) in relation to the interpersonal behaviours (i.e., leadership relations and approaches). The focus group participants also suggested that the reflective aspect of the course combined with mindfulness (e.g., mindful inquiry) expedited the process of self-awareness. Based on their mindful inquiry, participants wanted to better themselves and worked to apply the leadership knowledge/approaches and practical applications gained. Many participants shared intentions to continue to engage in self-improvement and apply the leadership knowledge and approaches gained beyond this leadership program framework and timeframe. Some participants also expressed an interest in continued mindfulness practice.

### **Recommendations**

Participants identified that contemplative approaches to post-secondary leadership programs are important to their development in higher education, and suggested improvements to engaging students in this life-long process. Faculties have an important role in leading students, step-by-step, in contemplative and engaged learning. First faculty must establish a safe space and community and form/strengthen relations with and between students would. Faculty must introduce and engage students in an exploration of silent self-reflection, and provide opportunities for students to write in journals and reflect upon contemplative questions. Faculty can also lead discussions (or have students interested, take turns leading discussions) to help students deepen their understanding and relationships with each other. Lastly, for students to learn they must be encouraged and supported in risk taking and permitted time to explore and

discuss their experiences. A mindfulness practitioner could join and lead the class in a way that honours the practice and integrates preparation for any of the vulnerabilities and risks of mindfulness described in this study (e.g., religious or dissonance/incongruent discomfort and provided access to a professional health professional or counsellor). Some specific recommendations for leadership educators and faculty that participants suggested would enhance mindful leadership education included:

- (a) Integrating more discussions, role-plays, and personalization of leader theories for mindful or meditative inquiry, rather than lecture (Kumar, 2013; Owen-Smith, 2018);
- (b) Encouraging self-learning (curiosity) amongst professors and peers, and engaging in risk-taking (i.e., apply practical and theoretical knowledge) to integrate content and applications with students current practices in their lives, to further build confidence;
- (c) Varying opportunities, times and types of mindfulness methods within a courses (e.g., perhaps offer mindfulness meditation before and after class as another option);
- (d) Ensuring time for self-reflective hand-writing within course content (highlighted as an important component of intrapersonal development; Blackburn, 2015; Napura, 2013);
- (e) Educating participants on the potential positive impacts and challenges of contemplative practices (e.g., vulnerability and personal risk), and providing support and resources to address student challenges (Barbezat & Bush, 2014; Blackmore, 2013);
- (f) Promoting opportunities to practice leadership, be creative and gain feedback from a variety of people/interactions (i.e., to engage in meditative inquiry and more meaningful dialogues regarding their reflections and insights; Kumar, 2013);



- (g) Providing students with a safe environment which requires faculty leadership to ensure a humanistic, student-centred approach that is congruent, compassionate, accepting, and free of judgment (Kirschenbaum, 2004; as cited in Kumar, 2013);
- (h) Defining clear structures for the context and processes of learning, and carefully aligning learning objectives effectively with mindful self-inquiry towards the desired outcomes for leadership learning (Rae, 2015); and
- (i) Offering a leadership alumni program to continue engaging participants in this life-long process of leadership (e.g., support, coaching, events and resources).

Lastly, I had a recommendation in terms of implementing improved leadership education. Perhaps, faculty could design and implement three leadership courses in higher education, that align with the individual domain of SCM. The first course could introduce SCM individual domain in conjunction with meditation and reflection to promote intrapersonal development for undergraduate students. This course would focus on intrapersonal competency development to provide the leadership readiness students would require for the second course. The second course would focus on interpersonal leadership skill development and promote group dynamics and nurture healthy relationships and teams. The final course would offer skill development in the community domain of SCM, and engage students in greater risk-taking to practice these important competencies in real-life situations, along with strong support, feedback and coaching. In another approach, leadership can be integrated into the curriculum of existing programs rather than considered a separate activity (Torrissi-Steele, 2017).

Participants recognized the importance of mindfulness and the important role that faculty leadership played in designing safe-spaces required to effectively engage a conscious approach that builds intrapersonal competencies (Kumar, 2013). In contemplative learning there are many

approaches, and perhaps just small periods of quiet stillness, focused on the breath could help any student in any course become more present to their learning within higher education contexts. Higher education institutions could recognize the important contributions leadership education provides and the potential impact it has on undergraduate students' ability to walk more confidently, consciously, congruently and competently.

### **Final Thoughts**

Traditional, rational-oriented methods for leader development are not always effective for the challenges organizations are experiencing today (Adler, 2011; Sutherland and Jelinek, 2015). Faculty should and could be more influential in leading contemplative education and inspire a more conscious and meaningful approach to learning within post-secondary institutions. This study strengthened that mindfulness or meditative inquiry will be an important leadership competency for undergraduate education that promotes self-awareness holistically (e.g., cognitive, affective and behavioural), leading to behaviours that better self and others, and is an important aspect of human development for individuals, universities and societies (Goldstein, 2013).

The present study reinforced the importance of leadership education for undergraduate students and the important role faculties have in equipping students with these competencies. Many scholars asserted that a shift is needed in higher education to focus on the development of "socially responsible, team-based leaders" (Spralls, Garver, Divine, & Trotz, 2010; as cited in Keating et al., 2014). A move away from the traditional, one-dimensional approaches that faculty typically used towards enhanced cognition is needed if universities wish to continue to transform students into healthy, positive members of society (Roche, Haar, & Luthans, 2014). "Mindfulness is one of the all-time most brilliant technologies for helping to alleviate human

suffering and for bringing out our extraordinary potential as human beings” (Labarre, 2011).

Mindful reflection or contemplative leader development for students could lead to developing more conscious members in society, and better leaders (Kumar, 2013).

Leadership, an area of learning that can awaken individual consciousness, is a necessity for our labour force and society that must be cultivated within higher education (Torrissi-Steele; 2017). In this study, intrapersonal development promoted students’ confidence, creativity and desire for self-improvement and better leadership. Contemplative learning promoted self-awareness and leads students to engage in more conscious and congruent leadership behaviours. With much anxiety, busyness and distraction in the contemporary world, intrapersonal (leader) development will be needed for all students to learn to lead effectively, regardless of their discipline. In the present study, self-awareness through mindful reflection formed a healthy foundation for human potential and growth. Mindfulness provided the following benefits to participants: personal development, enhanced learning preparedness, a greater understanding of their professional aspirations, and improved confidence in leadership.

Administrators of higher education could call for more contemplative approaches within leadership development (adding a more holistic approach), to benefit both faculty and student leadership growth. Research has demonstrated that while employers expect students to have leadership skills, these skills can be lacking amongst recent graduates (Bridgstock, 2009; *Conference Board of Canada*, 2013; Cress et al., 2001; Davidson, 2011; Schmitt, 2015; Shertzer et al., 2005). The *Leadership Competencies for the Council of Academic Standards* (CAS, 2015) within the Higher Education Student Leadership Program Standards, confirmed the value of intrapersonal development, and crafted these competencies for leadership educators to utilize: an awareness and understanding of personal leadership, exploration of a personal leadership

philosophy through reflective practice, holistic human development, and leadership skills development. Intrapersonal development nurtures self-awareness when curriculum is designed to align leadership competencies and outcomes with the context, process and impact effectively. Intrapersonal development was a life-long and time consuming process and effective course designs could engage students more meaningfully in their learning and transform their approaches toward authentic, compassionate and conscious leadership. If students are not engaged in contemplative approaches to intrapersonal leadership (e.g., mindful reflection), they may be left unprepared in their leadership skills (Alder, 2010; Mintzberg; 2004; Shankman, Allen, & Haber-Curran, 2015). Leadership learning must provide undergraduates with a strong foundation to lead confidently, consciously, competently and confidently, to become the socially responsible leaders desperately needed in society today, to better our world.

Dreams fuels happiness and creativity to build meaningful, significant and beautiful outcomes in this world. This is when humanity seeks, envisions and finds exciting notions of positive transformation for themselves and their communities. When teachers discover innovative ways to engage students in their own personal dreams, it can lead to enhanced creativity, healthy psychological capacities and positive human development (Rae, 2015). Based on Krishnamurti's work, if students "find what they love and are passionate about" they will naturally "give their whole being to it" and discover happiness in the process of learning (Kumar, 2013, p. 68). Personal ambition develops through personal dreams and provides the foundation and energy a person needs to contribute to a brighter, more conscious future. How do we nurture these dreams within the busy minds of today? If mindfulness can create the space for dreams, perhaps our youth can dream a brighter version of the future – one that finds peace, joy and beauty at every corner.

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**Appendices**

**Appendix A - Construct Comparison of Wisdom**

In reviewing the academic literature, I also evaluated ancient wisdom traditions, and leadership theories. I found that wisdom was the most occurring characteristic amongst the literature and ancient wisdom traditions examined.

CONSTRUCTS/THEORIES	First Nations Seven Sacred Teachings		Social Change Model (Dugan & Komives, 2010)		Confucian Leadership (MacDonald, 2012)		Hanson (2013)		George (2007)	
	Optimism/Humanity	Love	Joy	Self	*					3. heart,
Respect Self	*	Understanding					Personality		4. relationships, and	
Honesty/Trust	*		Congruence	*			Personal Well-being			
Wisdom/Purpose	*	*	Commit.	*/Knowledge			Vision/Goals		1. purpose	
Authenticity?	Humility	Patience		Piety			Authenticity			

Values/Knowledge	Truth	Knowledge	Faithfulness	*/Beliefs	*
Courage	*	*	Change		5. self-discipline.
Citizenship/Ethics/Action		Wonder/Awe	*	Politeness	

			<b>Koestenbaum's (2000) leadership diamond (in Backstrom, 2014)</b>	<b>Peterson &amp; Seigman, 2004 (in Wright, 2015)</b>	<b>Leader from Inside Out (Cashman; 2008)</b>
PsycCap (Luthans et al., 2007)	Wang et al. (2015)	Grier (2012)			
Optimism	Cheerfulness	Caring	Greatness	*	Balance
		Respect			Interpersonal
Hope	Trust	Trust		Transcendence	Inner Peace

			Vision	*	Purpose
	Kindness	Fairness		Temperament	
		Responsibility	Reality	Knowledge	Personal Growth
Self-efficacy	Obedience		*	*	Change
Resilience	Hopeful Future	*	Ethics	Justice	Action

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## **Appendix B – Self-Awareness is Foundational to Leader Development**

Through my own research investigation of leadership, self-awareness occurred across all literature researched. The following illustrates a summary of self-awareness found in the leadership literature, that asserts self-awareness is a foundational competency for effective leader development. The Social Change Model, Authentic, Transformational and Servant leadership theories, and the Centre for Creative Leadership and Brilliant Leadership books are just a few sources that have illustrated the importance of self-awareness

### **Social Change Model**

One such theory that explicitly outlines self-awareness as a foundation to leader development and was initially created for undergraduate students, is the Social Change Model (SCM) for Leadership (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996) which is rising in popularity in the USA and across North America. SCM has three domains – Individual, Group and Community and the first or ‘Individual’ domain aligns directly with self-awareness as it includes three values: consciousness of self (values, beliefs, and attitudes that drive action or a personal purpose), congruence (actions aligned with convictions) and commitment (the passion to motivate). This aligns with the Insight model that has arose from this literature review. Iachini, Cross, and Freedman (2015) provides a more elaborate description of each value within the ‘individual’ domain:

1. Consciousness of self - Being conscious and self-aware of personal beliefs, values, attitudes and emotions that motivate one’s actions. This involves being mindful, or present to current emotions, behaviour and perceptions (Haber, 2011).



2. Congruence - Conducts oneself so that actions align with convictions, which fosters trust.
3. Commitment - The passion and investment that motivates the individual toward the collective effort.

Fundamental to the SCM is the belief that all people are capable of growing and developing their capacities to become leaders. SCM offers a useful framework for students to assess, learn, and reflect on their capacity and growth as leaders (Iachini et al., 2015). Barnes *Emotionally Intelligent Leadership: A Guide for Students* (2016; Shankman et al., 2015) aligns with SCM's three facets of leadership: consciousness of self (self-development), consciousness of others (group focus), and consciousness of context (societal or community focus). This aligns with Goleman (2013) who divided Emotional Intelligence into five domains: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. The author shares that self-awareness ensures leaders can identify and understand the emotions they feel and the impact these emotion have on others; self-regulation enables leaders to behave rationally; and intrinsic motivation helps leaders to be energetic and persistent in their work. All domains facilitate the attainment of leadership (Goleman, 2013).

### **Authentic Leadership**

“Authentic leadership does not come from the outside in, it comes from the inside out” (Kouzes & Posner, 2006, p. 92). Through increased self-awareness (e.g., values, identity, emotions, goals and motives) authentic leaders can foster the development of authenticity in followers that nurtures increased engagement, wellbeing and sustainable performance (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Leaders are considered authentic when they engage in behaviors such as self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing information and internalized moral perspective (Kernis, 2003; Lucas, 2015). Self-awareness means the process of understanding

personality, behaviors, habits, emotional reactions, motivations and how they may impact others.

Authentic leaders are aware of their strengths and weaknesses. Their self-esteem helps them to be truthful in relationships and to achieve relational transparency. They are less likely to look for self-enhancing information thus, process information in a coordinated and balanced manner.

They use self-control through internalized standards (Kumar, 2014). Leaders who are perceived as authentic, tend to show increased commitment, satisfaction and superior performance

(Walumbwa et al., 2008). Here is a list of authentic leadership traits:

- **Self-knowledge,**
- Self-regulation (internalized moral perspective),
- Self-development, and
- **Self-concept;**
- **Self-awareness;**
- Genuine;
- Balanced;
- Positive - hopeful, optimistic, and resilient; compassionate, open and honest  
(Avolio, 2016; George, 2003; George & Sims, 2007; Lucas, 2015; Shamir & Eilam, 2005; Walumbwa et al., 2008).

Gardner, Avolio, and Walumbwa (2005) illustrate a self-based model of authentic leadership which was later refined and defined by Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, and Peterson (2008) as: leader behaviour that incorporates and nurtures “positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate” needed to cultivate and strengthen “self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective ... and positive self-development” (as cited in Lucas, 2015, p. 86).

### **Transformational and Authentic Transformational Leadership**

Bass and Reggio (2006) suggest growing popularity with transformational leadership due to the emphasis it places on inner knowing and intrinsic motivation (Northouse, 2016). This stems from Bennis and Nanus (1985) notions that transformational leaders who “use creative deployment of self through positive self-regard” based on the awareness of their competence and willingness to fuse their self-concept to their work roles/tasks (Northouse, 2016, p. 173). Howell and Avolio (1993) share that authentic transformational leaders are individuals that transcend their own interest for the sake of the collective good to promote ‘moral uplifting’, to raise the consciousness within individuals, and positively impact those they collaborate with (Northouse, 2016). Transformational leadership requires individuals to embody: self-understanding and knowledge; a sense of self and a positive self-regard; awareness of self-competencies; self-determined sense of identity; confident and competent; and a highly developed set of moral values (Avail & Gibbons, 1988; Bennis & Nanus, 1985).

**Servant leadership** requires the following characteristics:

- Self-awareness; self-understanding and understanding of the impact one has on others;
- Empathic, self-less, caring, nurturing;
- Ethical;
- Self-actualization (Greenleaf, 1970, 1972, 1977)

### **Other Leadership Scholars and Authors on Self-awareness, and self-consciousness**


Self-Management is a key element of leader development that includes: self-awareness, the ability to balance conflicting demands, the ability to learn, and understand leadership values. In addition to self-management, social capabilities and work facilitation capabilities are other

important components (Martineau, 2004). This relates to Watkins' (2013a) theory of developing "brilliant leadership" which includes self-awareness as a primary component of expanding perceptions through conscious attention and effort.

Appendix C - Tri-Council Certificates

**PANEL ON  
RESEARCH ETHICS**  
*Navigating the ethics of human research*

**TCPS 2: CORE**



# ***Certificate of Completion***

*This document certifies that*

**Jody Rebek**

*has completed the Tri-Council Policy Statement:  
Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans  
Course on Research Ethics (TCPS 2: CORE)*

Date of Issue: **6 July, 2015**

PANEL ON  
RESEARCH ETHICS

*Navigating the ethics of human research*

TCPS 2: CORE



## ***Certificate of Completion***

*This document certifies that*

**Melissa Shaffer-O'Connell**

*has completed the Tri-Council Policy Statement:  
Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans  
Course on Research Ethics (TCPS 2: CORE)*

Date of Issue: **14 January, 2018**

PANEL ON  
RESEARCH ETHICS

*Navigating the ethics of human research*

TCPS 2: CORE



## *Certificate of Completion*

*This document certifies that*

**Karly VanderMolen**

*has completed the Tri-Council Policy Statement:  
Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans  
Course on Research Ethics (TCPS 2: CORE)*

Date of Issue: **8 March, 2018**

## Appendix D - Letters of Approval



Research Ethics Board  
t: (807) 343-8283  
research@lakeheadu.ca

April 30, 2018

**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Seth Agbo  
**Co-Investigators:** Jody-Lynn Rebek-DiCerbo, Melissa Schaffer-O'Connell  
**Research Assistant:** Karly Vandermolen  
Faculty of Education\Education (Orillia)  
Lakehead University  
500 University Avenue  
Orillia L3V 0B9

Dear Dr. Agbo and Research Team Members:

**Re: REB Project #: 160 17-18 / Romeo File No: 1466364**  
**Granting Agency: N/A**  
**Agency Reference #: N/A**

On behalf of the Research Ethics Board, I am pleased to grant ethical approval to your research project titled, "Mindful Leader Development of Undergraduate Students".

Ethics approval is valid until April 30, 2019. Please submit a Request for Renewal to the Office of Research Services via the Romeo Research Portal by March 30, 2019 if your research involving human participants will continue for longer than one year. A Final Report must be submitted promptly upon completion of the project. Access the Romeo Research Portal by logging into myInfo at:

<https://erpwp.lakeheadu.ca/>

During the course of the study, any modifications to the protocol or forms must not be initiated without prior written approval from the REB. You must promptly notify the REB of any adverse events that may occur.

Best wishes for a successful research project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kristin Burnett".

Dr. Kristin Burnett  
A/Chair, Research Ethics Board

/sm



**Appendix E - Invitation Letter****Informed Consent Process****Title of the research project**

Mindful Leader Development of Undergraduate Students

**Project Principal Investigator**

Jody Rebek (PhD Student, Lakehead University), [jrebek@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:jrebek@lakeheadu.ca) or 705-542-3011

**Supervisor**

Dr. Seth Agbo, Associate Professor, Leadership and Policy Studies, Lakehead University, 705-330-4008 ext. 2642 or [sagbo@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:sagbo@lakeheadu.ca)

**Research Ethic Board Contacts**

Board Chair, phone and email provided for the school where study conducted

Sue Wright, Lakehead Research Ethics Board, 807-343- 8283 or [research@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:research@lakeheadu.ca)

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**Informed Consent**

You are invited to take part in a research project entitled the Mindful Leader Development of Undergraduate Students. This form is part of the process of informed consent. It will inform you about this research project, the risks and benefits, and the participation requirements to help you decide whether you wish to participate in this research study. It describes your right to withdraw from the study, and who to contact during the study should you have any concerns, questions, etc. Take time to understand this document, by reading it carefully and internalize the information provided. Please contact the researcher, Jody Rebek, if you have any questions about the study or require more information included within this document.

Participation is entirely voluntary, and it is up to you to decide whether you would like to participate. If you choose not to participate or if you decide to withdraw at any time during the study once it has started, there will be no negative consequences for you during or following the study (i.e., there will be no effect on student course marks). Participation in the study is not a requirement of the MGMT380 Leadership Principles course.

**Introduction and Purpose**

As a graduate student at Lakehead University, in the Faculty of Education, this research focuses on leadership or leader development. The purpose of this study will be to explore undergraduate

students' engagement with personal or self-development within leadership learning at a university in the U.S. This will help to further define the effectiveness of self-development approaches, and also define approaches that students find most effective in leadership learning of 'self'. In addition, the study will assess student engagement and learning, teaching methods, and student pedagogical recommendations to create improvements and standards for future teaching and research in leader development (Owen, 2012).

The primary benefit of this research is to provide insight to policy makers, post-secondary institutions, educators, and human resource trainers regarding specific practices for intrapersonal development from the student's perspective. This insight may inform and influence the development and delivery of future leadership development programs, and postsecondary programming. In addition, this research may assist educators in understanding the key competencies required for intrapersonal leader development, and identify practices and pedagogies that are effective in strengthening the leadership knowledge, skills and/or abilities within students.

### **What do participants do?**

In this study, the researcher will share an online survey with you, prior to and after the course. This survey will contain a series of questions. All information will be captured anonymously, using a confidential pseudonym. Some participants will also be invited to a focus group at the conclusion of the MGMT380 course. A facilitator will ask you approximately 8-10 questions to gain an understanding of your experience in the leadership course. Some students will also be invited to participate in a personal interview, to gain a deeper understanding of your personal experience. A Research Associate, Dr. Melissa Shaffer-O'Connell, will conduct both the interviews and focus group. No data collected will be reviewed until after grades are released.

### **Length of Time:**

The focus group and interview will take approximately 60-90 minutes to complete. The surveys will take approximately 10 minutes each to complete. If participants engage in only the interviews, the total time would be approximately two hours. If participants engaged in only the focus group, the total time would be three hours.

### **Withdrawal:**

In the interview, participants are free to skip any questions they do not wish to answer. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time up until the focus group and data analysis begins (May 25, 2018), at which point it will not be possible to separate individual participant data from the themes that have emerged. You can withdraw by informing the Dr. Melissa Schaffer-O'Connell, verbally that you do not wish to continue. The data collected up to the point, that the researcher withdraws will be immediately deleted from the researcher's password protected files, and any hard-copy data, including the consent form will be shredded. Member checks will be conducted with all participants to ensure the recording of ideas shared is accurate. Participants will be able to withdraw permission to use direct quotes attributed to their pseudonym at any point up until the dissemination of research results, which is expected to take place in Winter 2019. No participants will be able to withdraw once the dissertation has been

completed. There are no consequences for participants if they choose to withdraw from the study.

**Possible benefits:**

You may benefit by strengthening self-knowledge, and gaining greater focus on learning mechanisms that are meaningful to you. Participants may also benefit by knowing you have contributed to a better understanding of a topic that is emerging in the research and has not received much attention in the past. As a result, you may be contributing to the betterment of education, and strengthening the credibility to the pedagogies employed to strengthen leadership from within.

Many struggle to develop strong leadership abilities, and not enough research illustrates pedagogies required to establish effective leader development. Currently, it is hard to find strong leaders within the American labor force today. With this research focused on the Social Change Model of leadership, students may gain a stronger understanding of themselves, the ethics required to lead, expand their creative potential, strengthen their focus and achievement academically, and enhance their ability to lead with confidence, congruence and commitment.

**Possible risks:**

Although the risks involved in this research project are minimal, you should know there is a potential risk of experiencing emotional discomfort during the focus group discussion. You have the right to withdraw at any point from the focus group discussion. In addition, you may contact Counseling Services for help on campus at LSSU or other telephone supports. Please contact Kristin Larsen or James Muller, should you require counseling services at email provided (This mailbox is not monitored after 5PM or on the weekends. In the case of an emergency, please contact Local 24 Hour Crisis Line 1-800-XXX-XXXX)Numbers and email were provided here.

While the researcher will take all possible precautions to ensure the identities of participants are kept confidential and anonymous, there is a potential for social risk for participants in a study that may be a byproduct a group of participants that are familiar with each other.

**Confidentiality:**

Confidentiality is ensuring identities of participants are accessible only to those authorized to have access. Only the researcher and her supervisor will have access to data collected as part of the study. The data will be published in a Doctoral dissertation. All participants will be given a pseudonym and any direct quotations taken from the focus group will be given the pseudonym.

Any and all identifying information (organization, program of study, position, etc.) will be removed from the report.

**Anonymity:**

Every reasonable effort will be made to ensure anonymity when reporting results and the final dissertation. Pseudonyms will be used in every instance when reporting results. Master key linking participant names to their chosen pseudonym will be maintained by the researcher in a locked office and destroyed by secure shredding upon completion of the study.

**Recording of data:**

The associate researcher will audio-record and transcribe the information shared as the study progresses. The audio recordings will be secured in a password-protected data file in the associate researcher's (or researcher if with pseudonyms) locked office at the university, where the study is taking place. Only the researcher will have access to these files. This consent form includes a checkbox of whether or not you agree to the use of an audio recording. An audio/video recording device may be used in some classes to record the professor's lectures.

**Data storage:**

Only the researcher and her supervisor will have access to the data (audio-recordings, transcripts, surveys and any artifacts collected). All data will be retained in password-protected files and in locked cabinets (if in paper/audio form). Upon completion of this research study, the researcher will destroy all documents. All email correspondence with participants will be immediately copied to a USB key that will be held in the researcher's locked office, and participant emails will be permanently removed from the researcher's email accounts. All data will be securely stored at Lakehead University for a minimum of five years.

NOTE: Information stored in USA-based surveys (such as Google forms) are subject to the US Patriotic Act. This allows USA law enforcement agencies, with or without a court order, to access the records of internet service providers. Similarly, the Anti-Terrorism Act of Canada allows Canadian law enforcement officials to access the records locally, once they are repatriated to Canada for analysis.

**Reporting and Sharing of Results:**

The data collected will be used to complete the dissertation in partial fulfillment for the requirements for the researcher's PhD. Data will be for the most part, in summarized form and in instances where direct quotations or data is shared, it will be reported using their chosen pseudonym.

Participants will be invited to a public presentation upon completion of the study at the university. A short report that summarizes the findings will be created for participants and key stakeholders at the research site. This summary report will be shared via email to all participants. Any reports from this study can provided to you by contacting Dr. Melissa Schaffer O'Connell at email provided, or Jody Rebek at email provided.

In addition the complete dissertation thesis will be available via the Lakehead University digital archives.

**Questions:**

You are welcome to ask questions at any time during your participation in this research. If you would like more information please contact the associate researcher, the researcher or her supervisor at the coordinates mentioned above. Also, feel free to contact

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by an Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics and found to be in compliance with Lakehead University's ethics policy. If you have ethical

concerns or any complaints about your treatment as a participant in this study, please call or write either:

Contact information repeated for the Chair of Ethics Boards at the university where the study was conducted (removed to protect anonymity of the students).

Sue Wright, Research Ethics Board,  
Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, ON  
[research@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:research@lakeheadu.ca) or [807-343-8283](tel:807-343-8283)

### **Insight Timer Invite**

Dear students,

Please sign-up for the Insight Timer Smartphone application, using a pseudonym, to capture your individual mindfulness practice (at least 4 days per week, suggested 10 min. in the morning upon waking and 10 min. before bedtime). Here is the link:

Please consider if you would like five-minute meditation at the beginning, or end of class, or both the beginning/end, for the next few weeks. Also consider if you would like to have them increase in time/duration as the weeks go by. Look forward to practicing together inside and outside of class over the next six weeks!

Melissa Shaffer-O'Connell, PhD

### **Interview Invite**

Dear students,

As part of Professor Rebek's mindfulness research titled "Mindful leadership development of undergraduate students", she requires two to four students to interview post-mindfulness practice. I am sending this email to invite you to take part in this experience. I will require one to 1.5 hours of your time to ask you some questions regarding your perspectives of learning leadership with mindfulness. Please email me at your earliest convenience so we can set up sometime next week to complete the post-interview. Look forward to hearing from you!  
Melissa Shaffer-O'Connell, PhD (Note: Coordinates provided).

**Appendix F - Participant Consent Form**

I have read the information letter describing the study entitled “Mindful Leader Development of Undergraduate Students”. I understand that I will be asked to participate in a research project led by Professor Jody Rebek, a Ph.D. student, with Lakehead University Faculty Dr. Seth Agbo supervising.

My consent to participate in this research project is made under the following conditions:

1. That I have read and understood the information in the study provided.
2. My participation is completely voluntary and all data collected will be used solely for research purposes.
3. All information will be kept strictly confidential, accessed only by the researchers involved in the project. Pseudonyms for all participants involved will be used on all documents pertaining to the study and in all oral and written reports of the project. My name will never be used.
4. Data will be published in aggregate form, and any identifying information will be removed from the final report, unless explicit consent has been provided.
5. I may withdraw from the study prior to June 1, 2018 by simply notifying the researchers and may refuse to answer any questions that I am not comfortable answering. All information pertaining to my participation will be destroyed. My withdrawal from the research will have no impact on my experiences and access to present or future services in my community.
6. I understand that the researcher cannot guarantee complete anonymity of the focus group information as there will be other members of the group, and I agree to be audio-recorded during the focus group and/or interview.
7. I understand the survey data will be stored on the Google server.
8. It is not anticipated that I will experience physical or psychological harm.
9. All data will be securely stored at Lakehead University for a minimum of five years. I may request a summary of the findings of the study by contacting Dr. Melissa Schaffer O’Connell at [mshafferoconnell@lssu.edu](mailto:mshafferoconnell@lssu.edu). It is anticipated that this will be available by Winter 2019.

This study has been approved by the Lakehead University Research Ethics Board and the [school where study was conducted] Ethics Board. If you have any questions related to the ethics of the research and would like to speak to someone outside of the research team please contact Sue Wright at Lakehead ([807-343-8283](tel:807-343-8283) or [research@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:research@lakeheadu.ca)) or [Chair name] at [phone number provided].

I agree to participate in the “Mindful Leader Development of Undergraduate Students” study.

**Name of Participant** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Participant** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Researcher** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix G - Interview Questions

Interview questions will follow an appreciative framework, and adapt interview questions crafted by Cotten (2009), along with addressing important aspects of the Scholarship for Teaching and Learning frameworks (e.g., context, process, impact and follow-up).

### Personal Profile

Pseudonym:

Status in school (i.e. freshman, sophomore, junior or senior):

One Unique Characteristic or Feature (that they admire in themselves):

Mindfulness Practice: (e.g., not practicing, novice, intermediate, mastery)

Community/sports involvement: current participation in academic, school or community (i.e., student club, athlete, recreational, school activities/events, etc.)

Current GPA/Attendance:

### Discover “What is”

- How would you describe your level of self-awareness? In what ways do you demonstrate that you are self-aware?
- What does self-awareness mean to you?
- How is self-awareness enacted in terms of leadership?
- Can you describe your personal purpose? What are your personal values?
- How do you act in congruence with your personal values? Please describe how you ensure your actions and words (behaviours) reflect the personal values you describe.
- What key leadership characteristics or qualities would you say you hold?
- Please answer yes or no to the following. Are you: creative? intrinsic or self-motivated? ethical? optimistic? self-efficacious (believe you are capable of achieving an intended result)? Depressed? Stressed? Others traits?

### 1. Context

- Was there anything specific about the classroom environment that helped you to engage in mindfulness practice? learning of leadership?
- How did the classroom environment enhance your learning? Can you describe a specific element of:
  - a. context (e.g., classroom, furniture, lighting, etc.),
  - b. relations (e.g., faculty, peers), and
  - c. technology (e.g., Moodle, apps, etc.) that helped you to engage in mindful leadership activities? Or that helped you to take risks to demonstrate new leadership approaches/behaviours?

### 2. Process of Learning Mindfulness

- What has mindfulness been like for you so far? How has it felt to experience mindfulness practice in the classroom? Outside of the classroom?
- What was the most important thing you gained/learned from the mindfulness-based learning? What was it specifically about your experience in the mindfulness that

gave/taught you this? Can the student share a specific story of an experience they had with mindfulness practice.

- Please describe your mindfulness practice in terms of thinking, feeling and doing.
- Which specific experiential activities strengthened your leadership skills? (Cotten, 2009, p. 426).

### 3. Impact

- What changes, if any, have you noticed about yourself since the mindfulness practice started (i.e., in knowing, in feeling, and in acting or doing)?
- For each change, how much have you expected this change versus were surprised by it?
- How likely would the change have been if you hadn't been practicing mindfulness?
- What do you think caused these changes? What might have brought them about (and include causes both inside and outside of the individual or classroom mindfulness practice)?
- What do you remember/value the most about your mindful leadership learning?
- What outcome did you achieve as a result of this semester?
- How has mindfulness made an impact on you, if any?

#### Dream “Determine what should be”

- What kind of leader do you hope to become? What kind of leadership presence do you hope to have in the future?
- How has your participation in the course helped you to get clearer about who you are and/or what you want to achieve in your life? What specifically brought this clarity?
- How do you best engage in leadership development or self-development?

#### Design “Determine what should be”

- What is one thing you will do, or do differently, as a result of this course in mindful leadership development? What, if anything, will you carry forward as a regular practice, value or behaviour from this leadership learning?
- What motivates you to learn about leadership?
- What motivates you to practice mindfulness?
- How can mindfulness help you to learn about leadership?

#### Destiny “Create what could be”

- What kind of actions did you take this semester, to ensure you developed towards the leader you envisioned?
- What thoughts, feelings and behaviours do you feel you embody as a leader?
- What values and behaviours do you think are essential for creating a mindful learning environment and community?
- Describe the most ideal and exceptional leadership development experience for students?
- Are there any activities or practices that you would like to suggest be integrated for future leader development courses in higher education?



## Appendix H - Focus Group Questions

The research team will welcome participants, and request that participants do their best to keep the information discussed in the focus group confidential. The team will also remind participants that due to the nature of focus groups, information cannot be guaranteed as confidential.

### Part One:

Participants will engage in independent self-reflective thinking on the following:

#### Discover:

1. Outline key themes of this experience for you in three to six words.
2. What outcomes have you achieved? What did you learn?
3. How have you changed? How have you applied your learning?
4. What activity or course component made you feel the most energized?
5. Was there anything specific about the classroom environment that helped you to engage?
6. What has mindfulness been like for you so far? How has it felt to experience mindfulness practice in the classroom and outside of the classroom?
7. How have you benefited from the course?
8. What did you discover about yourself?
9. Describe your:
  - a. self-awareness (I know myself well and can articulate my priorities and express myself, in a self-confident way);
  - b. congruence (actions or behaviours align with personal values in an authentic and genuine way), and
  - c. commitment (I focus on my responsibilities, follow-through on promises, hold myself accountable and devote time and energy to things that I value)

#### Dream:

10. How has your participation in the course helped you to get clearer about who you are and/or what you want to achieve in your life? What specifically brought this clarity?

#### Design:

11. What kinds of actions will you continue take to achieve your vision of leadership?

#### Destiny:

12. Are there any activities or practices that you would like to suggest be integrated for future leader development courses in higher education?
13. What resources or tools has this course provided you with to help you endure the life-long journey of leadership?

Individual answers will be recorded anonymously within a Google Form, and the facilitator or associate researcher will work to combine these themes collaboratively with focus

group participants. All answers will be visible but anonymous for each question so that participants can visualize and dialogue about the combined results.

### Part Two

The second part of the focus group deals with developing personal narratives, and student perspectives on suggestions for improvement of student leader development activities in higher education. McLeod (2010) shares an approach that leading researchers in narrative psychology use called writing therapy stories. Adler and McAdams' (2007) engage participants in writing stories about their experiences in the form of 'scenes'. Students will be invited to individually document, using Google Forms, to capture the following scenes:

1. The Decision: Describe how you decided to register for this leadership course.
2. Most Important Activity: Describe one or two specific activities or moments in the course that you deemed to be the most significant
3. Ending: Describe a specific time either before, during, after the course when the impact of mindfulness was particularly clear or vivid (McLeod, 2010).
4. Optional: Other thoughts.

Once students are complete this writing, the facilitator will invite students to share any information that they feel comfortable sharing. If students, are reluctant or once the conversation ends, the associate research will facilitate a closing dialogue circle for participants to share (or pass) on any last thoughts or comments.

Focus group discussions will be captured via audio recording of all group members. The Associate Faculty member will share transcripts with both focus group and interview participants to ensure the content was captured accurately, and to give them the opportunity to clarify meaning. The final research study will also be shared with participants, along with an action plan to improve upcoming leadership courses at the university.

### Appendix I - Post Survey

#### Post-Survey - Undergraduate Mindfulness Research 2018

You are invited to complete this survey and join a research project, completely anonymously, from now until forever. The researcher is taking every measure to protect the identity of participants in this research. The survey will take less than 10 minutes to complete. It will allow the researcher to form a case story about leadership development from the undergraduate perspective.

Only after all grades in MGMT380 are provided to students will the data from this research project be shared. The intent is to investigate the data collected to determine better ways of engaging students in learning leadership as part of Prof. Jody Rebek's dissertation research (Supervised by Dr. Seth Agbo, Lakehead University). By completing this form, you are consenting to the confidential and anonymous use of this information (or as originally signed).

Please select a pseudonym (another name) or number that you can easily remember. For those of you interested, a student leadership profile will be created for you a few weeks following exams, and can be picked up in a box at Mrs. Janine Murray's office. Janine will provide you with the box of folders, and you will find your folder by pseudonym or number so that you will remain anonymous throughout the study and following the study.

Thank you so much for your participation in this project!

**Please enter your pseudonym or number here. This will be used to maintain your anonymity in this research project.**

**Gender**

Male

Female

Prefer not to say

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Age**

18-21

21-25

26-30

30 or older

	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have participated in other personal development activities.					
I have participated in other leadership development activities.					
I have practiced mindfulness.					
I engage in quiet, personal reflection often.					

**Please identify and describe examples of participation in any of the above (e.g., personal development, leader development, mindfulness, quiet reflective activities).**

NOTE: The following is the SRLS-R2.

	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am unable to articulate my priorities.					
I have low self-esteem.					
I am usually self-confident.					
The things about which I feel passionate have priority in my life.					
I know myself pretty well.					
I could describe my personality.					
I can describe how I am similar to other people.					
Self-reflection is difficult for me.					

I am comfortable expressing myself.					
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	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My behaviors are congruent with my beliefs.					
It is important to me to act on my beliefs.					
My actions are consistent with my values.					
Being seen as a person of integrity is important to me.					
My behaviors reflect my beliefs.					
I am genuine.					
I it easy for me to be truthful.					

	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am willing to devote time and energy to things that are important to me.					
I stick with others through the difficult times.					
I am focused on my responsibilities.					
I can be counted on to do my part.					
I follow through on my promises.					
I hold myself accountable for responsibilities I agree to.					

**What is your greatest learning about leadership in this course?**

**Why is leadership development important to you personally?**

**What motivated you to learn about leadership?**

**What motivated you to learn about yourself?**

**What benefits did you achieve academically or professionally as a result of this leadership course?**

**What did you learn or gain personally as a result of participating in leadership development activities?**

**How have you become more aware of yourself?**

**What did you like about the mindfulness awareness practices?**

**How has mindfulness influenced your leader development, if at all?**

**On a scale from 1-5 (1 = very low, and 5 = very high), how much leadership knowledge do you feel you have?**

1	2	3	4	5
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**On a scale from 1-5 (1 – very low, and 5 = very high), how strong are your leadership skills and abilities?**

1	2	3	4	5
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**Any other comments or thoughts?**

## **Appendix J – Guided Meditation and Personal Journal**

### **Guided Meditation**

The professor, on occasion, led students in a silent meditation using the following guideline:

1. First students were invited to get into a comfortable seated position, straight back and feet flat on the floor.
2. By taking a few deep slow inhales and exhales, students were invited to take in peace and relaxation with their inhale, and to release any tension on the exhale and completely relax. After a few breaths students were invited to close their eyes if they felt comfortable.
3. Next the professor suggested “allow yourself to be silent”, accept anything that comes, and use the breath to bring you back to quiet stillness, “allowing it to flow in and out without effort” (Hart, 2004). Students then sat in silence.
4. Once the period of five-minutes was nearing the end, students were invited to recognize the sounds in the room and the weight of their body on their chair, wiggling fingers and toes. Students were then invited to open their eyes whenever they felt ready.

### **Personal Online Leadership Log (POLL)**

The POLL that was used for this research as a personal journal, following mindfulness, can be found online here:

<https://goo.gl/forms/2jNBmO6b5sf3G5Nb2>



### **Appendix K- Sample Interview Transcript and Post Survey Results**

Here is a sample interview transcript, followed by a summary of post-survey responses:

Speaker 1: Thank you again for participating in Professor Rebek's post-interviews for her research. Just a reminder that any time you can pass on a question or end the interview. That's your choice. You don't have to answer. Are we ready to get started then?

Speaker 2: Yes.

Speaker 1: All right. Is it okay with you if I record it again?

Speaker 2: Yes.

Speaker 1: All right. Great. The first question then. Was there anything specific about the classroom environment that helps you to engage in mindfulness practice?

Speaker 2: I guess a lot of the students knew each other so it kind of made it more comfortable because we talked and stuff and worked in groups. It was kind of everybody did it so there wasn't any pressure of being uncomfortable with it either.

Speaker 1: Great. Was there anything specific about the classroom environment that helped you in learning about leadership?

Speaker 2: I guess just different activities. That was helpful to discuss it and stuff with groups before going through it in the class. Also, doing the group discussions about it.

Speaker 1: Okay. How did the classroom environment enhance your learning? I'm going to be asking you about context, relations, and technology. What I mean by context is the actual classroom itself, the furniture, the lighting. Was there anything about the classroom itself that helped you with your learning?

Speaker 2: I don't think anything specific.

Speaker 1: Okay. Anything with relations? Relations with faculty or with your peers?

Speaker 2: Well, I know for me I have had Professor Rebek before so I am comfortable talking to her.

Speaker 1: Did you know a lot of the students who are in the class prior?

- Speaker 2: There's some. What's different about this leadership class is the mix of different majors too. About half the class I've had in classes before or I know them but the other half I really didn't.
- Speaker 1: All right. The other question that is with technology. Was there anything about using apps for example? Or using Moodle or anything like that that helped you with your learning?
- Speaker 2: Just Moodle to keep up on your grades and stuff. Professor Rebek also does tests through Moodle, which makes it easier because you get your feedback right away. She also uses PowerPoints and stuff, which I think are very helpful because you can also go back and look at it.
- Speaker 1: Okay. Great. This is a very broad question, the next one. What has mindfulness been like for you so far?
- Speaker 2: I guess I'm just still in that learning process of it. I got the insight timer and I've been using that a little bit more of like when I'm trying to sleep and stuff I think it's helpful. Just trying to learn it. I really have mostly just done guided meditation with it so far.
- Speaker 1: Okay. How has it felt to experience mindfulness practice in the classroom?
- Speaker 2: It's kind of awkward at first I guess. You don't know if you're doing it right. I know for me I feel like people are watching me do it even though they're not.
- Speaker 1: There's a lot of people feel like that.
- Speaker 2: Yeah.
- Speaker 1: How has it felt to experience it outside of the classroom?
- Speaker 2: I guess it's just different because you're by yourself instead and trying to learn how to do it. If I'm uncomfortable with one of the guided meditations I'll just end it and find a different one.
- Speaker 1: Okay. Which do you think you benefited from more? The classroom experience of mindfulness or mindfulness outside of the classroom?
- Speaker 2: Probably outside just because I used it a little bit more. I tried to vary times a little bit. In the classroom it was just five, six minutes of a similar thing every time before we started the day.
- Speaker 1: Okay. What was the most important thing you gained or learned from the mindfulness-based learning?

- Speaker 2: I guess just trying to give yourself time to relax. I think it actually is important, especially for stress or anxiety with school or anything.
- Speaker 1: What was it specifically about your experience in mindfulness that taught you that or that gave you the ability to relax?
- Speaker 2: I guess just a lot of meditations I was using were kind of calming. They're taking you instead of focusing on the day you're focusing on your breathing or different tension you have in your body.
- Speaker 1: You think it was the guided meditations rather than just sitting in silence?
- Speaker 2: Yeah.
- Speaker 1: That helped you a lot?
- Speaker 2: Well, I really hadn't used a lot of the silence ones. I kind of worked really with the guided meditations.
- Speaker 1: Okay. Do you have a specific story with one of the experiences of guided meditations you'd like to share? Your experience going through it?
- Speaker 2: I guess I did one where it was like you just laid in your bed and you try to relax. You just push everything aside. You're calm and you're just watching your breath mostly. It was more of a confidence one. There's statements like, "I am strong", "I am confident" and just those things I think help you think about that and try to I guess trick your body into believing that. I think that's probably helpful.
- Speaker 1: All right. I'm going to ask you to describe your mindfulness practice in terms of thinking, feeling, and doing. You had a similar question in the pre-interview. Hopefully it's not too much of a surprise. Can you describe your mindfulness practice in terms of thinking?
- Speaker 2: I guess I'm just trying to get away from everything that I have to do and for the day, especially with school. There's a lot of assignments you have to do and tests and stuff that you have to study for. Just taking that time to not think about that and just relax.
- Speaker 1: Okay. Can you describe your mindfulness practice in terms of feeling?
- Speaker 2: I guess just trying to feel calm and ... At first, I'm very anxious about it but as I've done it more I'm feeling more comfortable with it.
- Speaker 1: Do you find yourself calming down faster now that you're more familiar?
- Speaker 2: Yeah.
- Speaker 1: Then in terms of doing?

- Speaker 2: I guess just the time away, which I kind of find hard, which is why I do it mostly before I go to bed.
- Speaker 1: Which specific experiential activities strengthen your leadership skills?
- Speaker 2: Can you read that again?
- Speaker 1: Which specific experiential activities strengthen your leadership skills?
- Speaker 2: I think that actually the group project that we did in class was the best just because I actually got to practice some of the things. It was also different because I actually had a really good group. A lot of them turned to me for the business side of stuff because I had biology majors. I actually got to practice that. We all did a little bit of practice again obviously but just trying to step up and say, "I think we need to do this" and actually using some skills that I learned in class and putting them into work.
- Speaker 1: Did you find it satisfying to be able to utilize things you had just learned in class or in the classroom?
- Speaker 2: Yeah. I think it definitely helped to strengthen those skills.
- Speaker 1: Okay. What changes, if any, have you noticed about yourself since the mindfulness practice began?
- Speaker 2: Just letting stuff go more and not worrying about it and just trying to focus on what I need to do then and not worrying about all these other things. There is times where all this other stuff I have to do comes up but I'm just like, "Right now I'm relaxing. That's what I need to do" so I just push those out of my mind.
- Speaker 1: Would you say that that result of being able to relax was a surprise or that was expected?
- Speaker 2: I kind of expected it just because you're taking the time away to actually relax. I felt like with more time I would get used to doing that and train my brain to relax and not worry as much.
- Speaker 1: How likely would the change in ... I guess we're talking about the ability to relax have been if you had been practicing mindfulness?
- Speaker 2: I think it would be a lot better and stronger now. I'd be able to relax more often and it'd be quicker. Then also just I wouldn't use much time to adjust to that. I think I could sit down for one or two minutes and have that relaxed feeling already instead of having to do five or 10 minutes before I actually feel comfortable in it.
- Speaker 1: Okay. What specifically about mindfulness do you think causes that change to happen?

- Speaker 2: I guess just trying to push everything out. I guess with the guided meditation it's talking so you're focusing on the talking and then you're also focusing on what it's talking about. You're multitasking but you can only multitask so many things at once. It's teaching you to just focus on one or two things instead of everything else.
- Speaker 1: What do you value most about your mindful leadership learning?
- Speaker 2: I guess just knowing that I can take that time to relax. Obviously I probably should do it more often. I think it would help. I think that if I did take the time aside ... Like I'm planning on trying to practice through the summer also. I think that it'll just get better and help, especially going into the fall next year.
- Speaker 1: Okay. Were there any outcomes that you achieved as a result of this semester?
- Speaker 2: None that I can think of.
- Speaker 1: Okay.
- Speaker 2: Just another semester to think through.
- Speaker 1: Do you think the end of the semester went more smoothly this year because you were taking that time to relax?
- Speaker 2: In way, yes, just because I think I was able to focus more on one thing instead of focusing on everything. I think it helped me that I'm focusing on leadership or I'm focusing on this class and not worrying about other stuff that's going on and just be more attentive to one thing at a time.
- Speaker 1: Okay. This is a bit of a wrap-up question. We've already spoken about it a bit but this is just big picture. How has mindfulness made an impact on you? If any, in fact.
- Speaker 2: I think just being able to focus more on one thing at a time and relaxing when I can and trying to take that time to myself.
- Speaker 1: Okay. We're going to switch a little bit more to leadership ends. With mindfulness interspersed throughout this. This is a question that you were also asked on the pre-interview but there's no bonus points for replicating the answer. What kind of leader do you hope to become?
- Speaker 2: Just one that's more competent and inspiring to others.
- Speaker 1: How has your participation in the course helped you get clear about who you are and what you want to achieve in your life?
- Speaker 2: I think it just brings up different things like your values and goals and stuff. We did a little bit of discussion with that, like our values and the different assignments that those

were included in to help you try to think about it. Then you just go on reflecting. For me, I'm more optimistic. I don't know where I want to end up. I'm trying to leave that open. It tries to make you think about it I guess. That was kind of hard for me because I don't know what I want to do. I'm just trying to leave that open. You had to actually think about what you might want to do.

Speaker 1: How do you best engage in leadership development or self-development?

Speaker 2: Just through practice I guess, which can be hard for me because I'm not a confident person. Just trying to speak up when I have that opportunity just doing it I guess.

Speaker 1: What is one thing you will do or do differently as a result of this course in mindful leadership development?

Speaker 2: Definitely practice mindfulness more often. Just give myself that break.

Speaker 1: What motivates you to learn about leadership?

Speaker 2: I guess a lot of people that you hear about are leaders. I think it's important to have some of those skills. Not to just be known by people but just to be able to help people. I think it's important to be able to step up and be a leader.

Speaker 1: What motivates you to practice mindfulness?

Speaker 2: Just the changes where I can actually relax and focus on one thing at a time. I think that's just helpful to be able to ... Instead of a scattered brain, just that focus I can get.

Speaker 1: We're going to combine the two. How can mindfulness help you to learn about leadership?

Speaker 2: I think it helps you to reflect on your own leadership and then what you want to do.

Speaker 1: Have you narrowed down ... You said you're leaving open what you would like to do. Have you narrowed it down? Has it helped you narrow it down or has it helped you ... How has mindfulness helped you as you move forward in that process?

Speaker 2: I guess it just made me think about it more. For me, I know I want to stay in Michigan just because I have a lot of family here. I like the Michigan culture and the weather and stuff. It fits in with some of the hobbies I have. I think maybe looking outside of just the area I'm from and looking at more of Michigan as a whole and expanding it to some stuff I might not be as comfortable with. Even just looking into it instead of just focusing on a certain area.

Speaker 1: Okay. What kind of actions did you take this semester to ensure you develop towards a leader you envision?

Speaker 2: Just trying to be more confident and taking some of the opportunities to speak out and speak up in class and give my opinion to others and take charge if I need to.

Speaker 1: Did you think the class helped you to take more risks in leadership to do things outside of your comfort zone?

Speaker 2: Yeah. Just you have to actually ... When we're doing group discussions and stuff a lot of time I tend to be one to sit back and agree with others. I'm more defending my beliefs and stuff with that and what I think and just speaking out and even trying to help others to speak their minds and stuff. We did do a bunch of activities where we were in larger groups and so I see that where it was like, "Well, what do you think?" Or, "I think this" and just coming out with that instead of just sitting back like a lot of the other people were doing.

Speaker 1: Okay. This is also a repeat question. What thoughts, feelings, and behaviors do you feel you embody as a leader? We're going to do each individually. What thoughts do you feel you embody as a leader?

Speaker 2: I can be very determined. I guess just having an idea or a goal in mind and working towards that and not trying to give up and just trying to get to where I want to be.

Speaker 1: Okay. What feelings do you feel you embody as a leader?

Speaker 2: I'm very strong in my values I guess. I think it's important for a leader to not be swayed easily.

Speaker 1: Okay. What behaviors do you feel you embody as a leader?

Speaker 2: I can be very organizational. I can help decide who is the best for this job and determine roles for people.

Speaker 1: What values and behaviors do you think are essential for creating a mindful learning environment and community?

Speaker 2: Can you repeat that one more time?

Speaker 1: Sure. What values and behaviors do you think are essential for creating a mindful learning environment and community?

Speaker 2: I think determination is important. I think there also has to be a level of confidence in the people, especially the ones that are the leaders of larger groups.

Speaker 1: Do you think you can have a good leader who is not confident in themselves?

Speaker 2: Yes but I think it definitely helps. It helps you to speak your mind. It helps you to be more comfortable sharing your opinion with others.

- Speaker 1: Okay. Describe the most ideal and exceptional leadership development experience for students.
- Speaker 2: Just giving them opportunities to practice it. I think it's also important to challenge them and get them out of their comfort zone at times because the only way to improve on skills is to practice them and to work on stuff that you're not as good at.
- Speaker 1: Okay. The last question. Are there any activities or practices that you would like to suggest to be integrated into future leader development courses?
- Speaker 2: Not any that I can think of but I think it's just because I'm not as familiar with the topic yet.
- Speaker 1: Okay. This gives you the opportunity last minute to talk about anything you'd like to as far as leadership, mindfulness, the research that you're participating in, if you have any last comments or suggestions.
- Speaker 2: Nothing that I can think of.
- Speaker 1: No? All right. Thank you very much.

1. Here is a summary of the post-survey responses to illustrate the type of data collected:

What motivated you to learn about leadership?	What motivated you to learn about yourself?
My family at a young age	The class
My desire to see others succeed	Gaining the understanding that knowing myself well will help me help others in a more effective way was motivating to me
Trying to better myself.	Wanting to be a better individual/leader.
Future plans and goals.	Wanting to be the best I can be.
-0-	-0-
Sports	After a few reflections, it was interesting so I wanted to learn more.
N/A	N/A
Inspire me for my future.	I want to better myself so I had that going for me.



I needed this class to satisfy a degree.	The self-reflections.
N/A	N/A
Desire to be a successful leader going forward.	Because it is fun to learn about yourself.
I want to create a good environment for people around me.	I tend to not be honest about myself.
I can learn to be a better leaders. I can help younger girls.	I never take time for myself and this helped.
My professor, but then myself.	Being motivated to learn about leadership.
Knowing there is a lack of good leaders existing today urged me to learn to become a better one so I can be more employable.	You really need to know yourself to know how you'll handle certain situations so getting to understand myself motivated me.
Taking a step back I realized that there were areas of myself I wasn't as familiar with and wanted to learn more about who I am so I can improve.	Being able to understand others actions. Conflict resolution types.
Course grade.	N/A
My uncle, who was tribal chairman. I wanted to put a name to what he did.	I am not sure.
I think it's always been something I want to be good at and this course is meant to improve the knowledge and skills of being a leader.	Comes natural when you are asked questions about yourself.
My past experiences leading teams.	To be a great leader, you must know who you truly are and what is important.
I think that it will help me be more aware and well rounded person.	Better serve the world.
Planning for my future.	Planning for my future.

What benefits did you achieve academically or professionally as a result of this leadership course?	What did you learn or gain personally as a result of participating in leadership development activities?
Case Competition victory!!!	A lot of self confidence and motivation
Higher levels of self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, and discipline in self-reflection	Higher levels of self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, and discipline in self-reflection
The ability to reflect and see my flaws.	

Learning how to do better academic research, and learning different tools to become a better leader.	More confidence in public speaking.
-0-	-0-
N/A	Found out who I am as leader.
N/A/	N/A
Professionally I understand myself more.	Patience.
I understand leadership better now.	A better understanding of myself and my view on leadership.
N/A	N/A
I just look at life with a not so narrow mindset now.	I gained different skills I can use every day to better myself and others.
The poster/research is a great thing to be able to add to my portfolio.	N/A
I achieve to better understand others.	N/A
I am a better leader.	Gained leadership experiences.
I feel more confident in myself. I don't get as nervous in interviews and speaking as I used to.	I learned many approaches to leadership which will be useful for me to deal with any positions I may be in some day to be a leader.
Self awareness. That a variety of leadership styles and strengths fit me personally.	Learned more about my strengths, skills, traits and how I work with or see others.
N/A	N/A
I was able to get an internship.	How trusting I am.
A good grade in this class hopefully	N/A
Knowledge on multiple leadership approaches and how to be mindful of my routine.	More about who I am and how I may be perceived.
I think I achieved more awareness in what I would like to pursue.	Much greater self awareness.
I now have a basis to continue learning off of and can continue to grow myself into a better leader and person.	How to change approaches based on the type of follower I am interacting with.

### Appendix L - Social Responsibility Leadership Scale (SRLS-R2)

The Individual domain of the SRLS-R2 scale will be the only section used for this study, since it aligns with self-awareness and the components. The following table illustrates the Individual domain of the SRLS-R2, along with the sample questions and scale reliabilities for each area (Consciousness of Self, Congruence, and Commitment):

Construct	Description	# of Questions	Sample Question	Cronbach Alpha
Consciousness of Self	Being aware of the beliefs, values, attitudes, and emotions that motivate a person to take action	9	I can describe how I am similar to other people.	0.78
Congruence	Thinking, feeling, and behaving with consistency, genuineness, authenticity, and honesty toward others	7	My behaviors are congruent with my beliefs.	0.80
Commitment	Having the energy that motivates an individual to serve and drives the collective effort	6	I hold myself accountable for responsibilities I agree to.	0.81

Source: Descriptions from Designing an instrument to measure socially responsible leadership using the social change model of leadership development, by T. M. Tyree, 1998, unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Maryland, College Park, MD (as cited in Haber & Komives, 2009, p. 142). Here are the scale items provide for each construct (note: The numbers correspond next to each item follow the actual question order and numbers on the scale. A negative sign (-) in front of question number indicates a negative response question. Scores

for these items were reversed before the statistical analysis was conducted). Here are the questions:

<p><u>Consciousness of Self</u></p>	<p>4 I am able to articulate my priorities                      -6 I have a low self esteem                      9 I am usually self confident                      18 The things about which I feel passionate have priority in my life                      22 I know myself pretty well                      34 I could describe my personality                      41 I can describe how I am similar to other people                      -56 Self-reflection is difficult for me                      59 I am comfortable expressing myself</p>
<p><u>Congruence</u></p>	<p>13 My behaviors are congruent with my beliefs                      27 It is important to me to act on my beliefs                      32 My actions are consistent with my values                      52 Being seen as a person of integrity is important to me                      63 My behaviors reflect my beliefs                      64 I am genuine                      68 It is easy for me to be truthful</p>
<p><u>Commitment</u></p>	<p>23 I am willing to devote time and energy to things that are important to me                      24 I stick with others through the difficult times                      28 I am focused on my responsibilities                      51 I can be counted on to do my part                      53 I follow through on my promises                      54 I hold myself accountable for responsibilities I agree to</p>

**Appendix M - Predetermined Codes Derived from Academic Literature**

<b>1. CONSCIOUSNESS OF SELF (Think)</b>
Cognitive
Thinking
Metacognition
Self-Aware
Mindful
Conscious or Consciousness of Self
Personal Purpose
<i>Taken from SRLS-R2 (Quantitative Survey):</i>
Articulate my priorities
Self esteem
Self confident
Personal passions have priority
Know self well
Can describe personality
Can describe similarities (of self) related to others
Self-reflective
Comfortable expressing self
<b>2. CONGRUENCE (Feel or Be)</b>
Emotional
Affective
Self-regulation
Compassion
Congruent
Personal PASSION or compassion
Feeling or Being
<i>Taken from SRLS-R2 (Quantitative Survey):</i>
Behaviors align with beliefs

<b>Act on my belief</b>
<b>Actions align with values</b>
Seen as a person of integrity
<b>Behavior reflect beliefs</b>
<b>Genuine</b>
Ease with being truthful
<b>3. COMMITMENT (Do)</b>
Interpersonal
Behaviour
Self-Motivation / Self-Concept
Hope (Positivity)
Commitment
Align word and actions (walk the talk)
Action
Personal PRESENCE
<i>Taken from SRLS-R2 (Quantitative Survey):</i>
Devote <b>time and energy</b> to my priorities
Stick with others in difficulties
Focus on <b>responsibilities</b>
<b>Accountable</b> (can be counted on to do my part)
<b>Follow through</b> on my promise
<b>Hold myself accountable</b> for responsibilities/promises
<b>4. MINDFULNESS CODES</b>
Present-moment awareness
Calm or peace
Clarity or focus
Concentration power - can intentionally focus on a single aspect of human experience (i.e., mind, emotion, physicality, etc.)

Sensory Clarity - can distinguish between qualitative, quantitative and spatial differences with sensitivity to detect subtle shifts in sensory signals
Equanimity - can be ‘hands-off’ and avoid pushing, holding or grasping the content of their sensory experience
Non-judgmental
Creativity
Ethical actions or benevolence
Intrinsic motivation
Self-efficacy (ability to believe one can do it)
Personal achievement - goal or priority shifting/setting
Strengthened self-concept
Optimism or positivity
Self-compassion
Self-regulation
Preparedness (goal or priority shifting or setting)
Productivity, performance or achievement of effective outcomes
Well-being, human flourishing, or mental and physical health
Empathy or compassion towards others
Transformation, change or transformative learning
Decrease in stress, anxiety or depression

<b>5. Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (Codes related to mindfulness learning)</b>	
<b>Content</b>	Any reference to the actual content of the class or mindfulness practice
<b>Process</b>	Any reference to the process of learning and continual use of mindfulness
<b>Impact</b>	Any reference to how mindfulness impact their learning or life
<b>Follow-up</b>	Any reference to the transfer or continued use of mindfulness

**Appendix N - Artifacts**

A few samples of the artifacts derived from the course, along with the *Insight Timer* records.

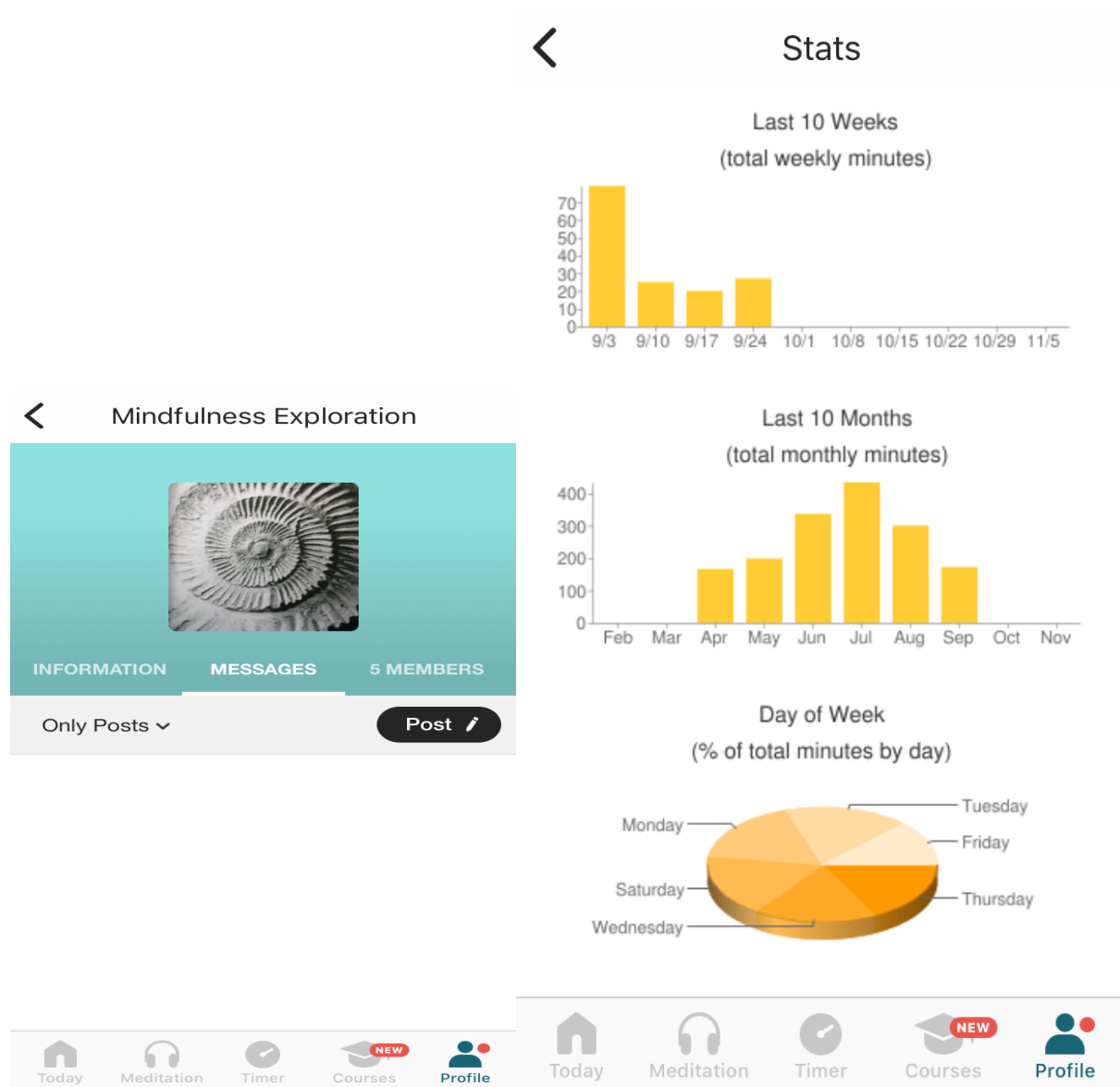
5. Creative Placement

Here is a creative activity that one participant went above and beyond to create. To protect her anonymity, I can not include her pseudonym.





6. Insight Timer Records



7. Emma Artifact from Journal (Think, Be, Do)

Here is a sample of a several journal entries from the course broken up in think, be and do.

Activity/ Domain	Opening Activity	Strongest Trait	Debate	Mentor	Strengths	Persona	Role Play	Mindfulness	Vision - Dream Sheet	Defines Leader C7
Think	"neat", pay close attention	Hard for me at first (p. 7) - not best at building my confidence	Insightful, "back up reasoning in a safe way" and could add my beliefs (p. 6).	Beneficial to have someone have a look over your work and provide constructive feedback .	Agree - accurate, rationale to support strengths currently displays	Fun - more challenging to develop a team person a and find comm on "quickly find weaknesses" but not interests.	Visualization the definitions was helpful (i.e. Behavioral approach).	Beneficial, "from research I have done on it there seems to be downfalls towards practicing it" (p. 31).	Writing down thoughts in an organized way provided focus on the vision.	Open minds to different leadership perspectives by sharing as a class. "No one was wrong with their definitions. Clearly, leadership means many different things to everyone"



									"I plan to continue practicing. I really can see the results. I feel that making this a part of my daily routine can greatly benefit me. Before exams or other stressful situations this will be perfect to calm down and focus" (p. 31).
		Try to now find other traits I hold to continue to know myself better. I can use them as motivation to keep me going as well as guiding principles to make sure I stay true to who I am" (p. 7).	Could change view to incorporate similarities between mgmt. and leader	Help my partner and to share ideas	Useful to know others strengths, and would like to know what "I'm weak in and be more confident in myself"	Use to get to know other people.	Help remember the forms that exist. Know what I can do to improve .	Continued to use a sheet "to make sense of my vision and dreams" (p. 31).	Could expand my definition or apply different views. Learning to be more aware of other things in life, and the different views.
Do	Get out comfort zone								

### Appendix O – Mindfulness and Leadership Goals

These goals of mindful leadership can serve as a guideline for developing curriculum or other leader development programs, to be integrated with leadership texts and other scholarly works.

#### **Mindfulness Goals:**

1. Calm, peaceful relaxed state of mind
2. Gain (or re-gain) focus and clarity (fully awake or conscious)
3. Nurture critical self-awareness of thoughts, feelings and actions (congruence)
4. Awaken insight - strength inner wisdom of self and in relation to others and create intentions for improvement (foundation for effective leadership)

#### **Leadership Goals:**

##### A. Critical Awareness and Authentic Learning - foundation for effective leadership

5. Self-reflective stillness - perspective taking to develop insights, goals and actions towards personal growth (passion, purpose, presence)
6. Become aware of mental models, unhealthy perceptions and limiting thoughts and “edges” - to integrate changes required to take the risks to grow and develop more inclusive behaviours
7. Instill life-long learning for personal and professional development, and improved leadership behaviours aimed towards congruence (for self and others)

##### B. Strengthen Ethical Relations and Teams:

8. Confidence and courage to: know self, face the inner self with complete honesty and compassion, and be authentic with others
9. Power and influence to grow self and others positively
10. Build healthy functioning and productive, happy performing teams by nurturing relations
11. Demonstrate ethical intentions, behaviours and outcomes with a friendly, empathetic and inclusive (or collaborative) approach to making decisions
12. Communicate authentically, connectively, kindly, calmly and clearly
13. Illustrate an organized, focused and fair approach to delegate, disseminate and deliver (time management, prioritization and discipline) long with a healthy work ethic

##### C. Develop Innovative Solutions and Approaches

14. Critical thinker and initiator of visionary solutions to create meaningful outcomes
15. Achieve greatness by creatively envisioning possibilities that collaboratively engage and inspire meaningful pursuits with others. These pursuits are larger than individual boundaries.