

The Bangor, Exeter and Oxford

**Mindfulness-Based Interventions
Teaching Assessment Criteria
(MBI:TAC TEACH)**

Addendum for Mindfulness Training in Schools

This addendum includes contributions from Richard Burnett, Rebecca Crane, Chris Cullen, Tamsin Ford, Mark Greenberg, Trish Jennings, Willem Kuyken, Liz Lord, Dominic Morris and Sarah Silverton (alphabetical order).

Background and context

The MBI:TAC was developed to assess the competence and adherence of MBI teaching (Crane et al., 2012). It has been extensively used in training and research contexts and shows promising psychometric properties (Crane et al., 2013). This addendum should be used alongside the latest version of the full MBI:TAC manual and summary. It adds additional information to enable the MBI:TAC to be used to rate classroom teachers teaching mindfulness to young people in school contexts. With thanks to Mark Greenberg and Trish Jennings for sharing their mindfulness in schools fidelity scale.

Assessors should themselves be proficient MBI teachers and normally also be school classroom teachers.

The additional adherence checklist at the end of this document relates to the .b curriculum developed by the Mindfulness in Schools Project. Assessors should normally have been trained in .b themselves to complete these ratings or be very familiar with the curriculum and issues in teaching the curriculum.

Domain 1: Coverage, pacing and organisation of session curriculum

- The curriculum is presented in a clear and engaging way in accordance with the instructions in the teacher manual
- Materials (visual aids, pupil materials) are prepared in advance to facilitate the lesson flow
- The teacher adapts well to any constraints under which s/he is working (e.g. time of lesson, size and lay out of classroom, black out blinds etc.)
- Teacher shows patience with how the program unfolds by not giving students more information than they can handle in the early parts of the curriculum (e.g. that they should 'turn toward the unpleasant' in the first class, etc.).
- Teacher avoids working in a highly task-oriented way (e.g. trying to complete as many activities as possible, not processing experiences fully, appearing rushed, harried, etc.).
- Teacher is able to **balance the goals of the lesson while responding to spontaneous events** (e.g. teacher uses students' comments and questions as a means to further group understanding; teacher skilfully brings the group's attention back to the main focus of the lesson when attention has been diverted, etc.).

Domain 2: Relational skills

- Teacher uses effective **nonverbal and verbal communication** skills with students:
 - Facial expressions are *congruent* with felt emotions and verbal expression;
 - Demonstrates *attentive body language* (eye contact, encouraging gestures, positive facial expressions, nodding, etc.)
 - Notices and reflects feelings and thoughts of students accurately using *reflections of feeling* and *paraphrases*;

- Teacher demonstrates authentic **compassion, warmth, respect and interest** in working with students. (e.g. teacher displays authentically warm and friendly affect, listens with full attention, thanks students for participating, encourages and supports participation, invites students' observations and comments but does so without coercion and makes an effort to learn and use pupils' names)
- Teacher is mindful of the boundaries about how appropriate it is for students to share more personal thoughts and feelings in a classroom context, given the lack of confidentiality in a school environment. For example, knows when to stop them for their own wellbeing. Moves on if students do not choose to share at the moment, encourages student sharing as a way of modelling respect for the importance of the experiences and the value of the observation process (**trust**).

Pupils with special educational needs and disability (SEND) or behavioural issues are skilfully managed in the classroom. For example, a pupil with attentional and/or behavioural difficulties is able to learn as much as possible from the course whilst causing minimal disruption to the class dynamic. If they are unable to participate, the teacher skilfully deals with the situation by, for example, from encouraging them to quietly get on with another activity, or rest their head on desk and sleep, or quietly listen to music on headphones. This is with a view to enabling the learning of the whole class.

- The learning process is **collaborative** and involves both teacher and students alike (e.g. teacher points out, when appropriate, how everyone shares the experiences being discussed- wandering mind, difficult emotions- so that no student feels isolated, etc.).

Domain 3: Embodiment of mindfulness

- Teacher demonstrates willingness to **step out of 'teacher mode'** to the extent that she/he does not engage class in lengthy analytical or didactic interactions, is comfortable not knowing an answer without defensiveness. Teacher shows willingness to suspend judgment about correctness or incorrectness of any experience and simply takes a fresh look at situations (**beginner's mind**).
- Teacher knows when to mindfully step in and out of 'teacher mode' if disruptive behaviour is impeding the progress of the lesson and class control is becoming an issue. Teacher shows willingness to be firm and use sanctions, without losing their presence and sense of perspective.
- Teacher allows periods of silence to occur within discussions or while processing practice, should the classroom dynamic allow this. If the mood of the class permits it, teacher allows for some periods of silence after questions with a wait time of approx.10-15 sec. giving students sufficient time to sense, feel and think before responding).
- Teacher models willingness to be with situations as they are without needing to change or fix them (**non-striving**).
- Teacher demonstrates compassionate acceptance of self and students given the reality of the present moment situation in the class (e.g. not being defensive or overly anxious to 'get things right', tolerates less than optimal class participation flexibly, maintains motivation to keep going despite class resistance, may relinquish personal agenda should

the situation warrant, reminds students to be kind to self and others in the face of difficulty, etc. (**acceptance, letting go**.)

The teacher is able to communicate their confidence and trust in mindfulness, even in the face of doubt, scepticism or resistance in the group.

Domain 4: Guiding mindfulness practices

- The appropriate schools-based MT in schools practices are taught in ways that children can understand and use them
- Practices are guided in the way teachers were trained to guide practices for this age group.
- Practices are guided from the experience of the teacher participating in practice with the group but maintaining appropriate visual contact as the group requires.
- The teacher moves around the classroom skilfully when required, e.g. to gently wake up a snoring pupil, or to move closer towards a giggling or misbehaving clutch of pupils.
- Teachers evidence good judgment in knowing how to manage pupils' sleepiness/wakefulness. This includes knowing the pupils and how to manage posture in terms of wakefulness/sleepiness. It may sometimes be appropriate for pupils to be encouraged to have their heads stay up as they practice and equally it may sometimes be appropriate when exhaustion prevails to allow them to rest their heads on their desks, and be allowed to sleep.

Domain 5: Conveying course themes through interactive inquiry and didactic teaching

- Teacher demonstrates understanding of the curriculum and is able to relay this through the curriculum
- Language, examples, and activities are **clear, accessible and developmentally appropriate** to the groups (e.g. practices and/or lessons are shortened for younger or special needs groups; case studies or examples are tailored to the characteristics of the group, etc.). Teacher knows how to contextualise and make relevant any PowerPoint images, words or concepts which the class may not immediately understand or connect with.
- Teacher does not introduce extraneous activity, but may show initiative in bringing the curriculum to life in line with its aims and intentions through examples or activities.
- The teacher uses any aides (e.g., PowerPoint, video and props) skilfully such that they support the teaching rather than lead it. Whenever possible, general learning is 'drawn out' of pupils rather than 'telling' them. However, there are passages in the lessons that are more didactic, particularly when introducing a new idea.
- Uses *open-ended* rather than *closed-ended prompts* to invite exploration.
- Answers questions directly and clearly without going off course.

Domain 6: Holding the group learning environment

- The teacher is aware of necessary/relevant information about individuals' needs in this group to be sure that they are able to respond to the group in skilful ways.
- The teacher is aware of the setting's safeguarding procedures and uses those appropriately, as necessary. For example, the teacher might find ways of directing a pupil to other sources of help within the school if appropriate.
- Classroom management appropriately supports delivery of the mindfulness training. Strategies to engage and support individuals to participate as fully as possible are used where these complement the approach of the mindfulness lessons. For example, the teacher is able to adapt his/her teaching style in whichever way is required to 'hold' the group. Sometimes this may be gentle, patient and receptive (the 'guide on the side' mode); at other times it may be entertaining, even eccentric, and faster-paced (the 'sage on the stage' mode); at other times the teacher may have to shift into a stricter and more authoritative mode to 'hold' a misbehaving class, so that mindfulness training is feasible, and then know how to shift back into a more classical mindfulness teacher mode without losing balance.
- Teacher facilitates a **safe** and effective learning environment by establishing and maintaining group guidelines and includes students in their creation when possible (e.g. teacher reminds students of the guidelines when appropriate, offers positive praise for adherence to these and addresses any behavioural issues appropriately; teacher encourages students to explore a range of experiences –both pleasant and unpleasant- to cultivate an environment where it is safe to explore. etc.).
- The teacher transitions well between different phases of a lesson (e.g. from a more didactic phase, into a video clip, into a practice, out of the practice into pair work etc.). This includes the ability to orchestrate difficult whole class transitions quickly and smoothly (e.g. in Lesson 3 getting all the pupils out of their chairs and onto the floor, or getting them up and standing in a circle in Lesson 7 if using 'shock ball').
- Teacher demonstrates the ability to deal effectively with **challenging students**, including those who dominate the discussion, are combative, or present perspectives that undermine the program (e.g. teacher reminds students of the group guidelines; allows students to 'opt out' of practice while respecting others; avoids defensiveness or emotional reactivity in the face of student challenges; displays genuine curiosity about experiences of students regardless of preference, appeals to individual student's interests or needs, considers what is a helpful seating plan for pupils, possibly separating friends or ensuring a pupil causing disruption is not front and centre etc.).
- Teacher uses discipline skilfully when required. S/he does so in a way which is in line with the school's disciplinary procedures and child safeguarding policies. Once discipline is used, the teacher is able to move on with the lesson without being too 'thrown' by the previous, necessary intervention.
- Teacher demonstrates the ability to deal effectively (or skilfully) with **unmotivated students**, including those who appear uninterested, detached or distracted during the class activities and practices (e.g. teacher remembers to look around the room and make eye contact with all students; avoids calling on a few students when seeking responses;

uses boredom or lack of interest as some of the examples, when appropriate, of the range of possible experience; includes short segments of small group or dyadic discussion when appropriate; avoids defensiveness or emotional reactivity in the face of student disengagement; displays genuine curiosity about experiences of students regardless of preference, etc.). Teacher is happy to accept and allow a degree of disengagement from some students without becoming defensive.

- Teacher maintains sense of humour and perspective throughout. If the pupils are not in the mood and everything s/he has tried to get them into the mood for practice has failed, s/he accepts this, tears up the lesson plan and salvages what s/he can.
- Teacher maintains a focus on **group process** while attending to the needs of the individual students (e.g. teacher is responsive to individual students' comments and questions but skillfully avoids allowing any student to monopolise the discussion; teacher encourages all students to participate and makes eye contact with all students, etc.).