

---

**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

## The Implementation of Mindfulness in Chinese College English Teaching

Jiang Hongji

*School of Foreign Languages, Guangxi Science & Technology Normal University, Laibin, China*

**Corresponding Author:** Jiang Hongji, **E-mail:** [jianghongji@gxstnu.edu.cn](mailto:jianghongji@gxstnu.edu.cn)

---

**ABSTRACT**

This study aims to analyze the application cases of mindfulness in foreign language education overseas and provide suggestions for implementing mindfulness in Chinese college English teaching. It first introduces the application cases of mindfulness in the field of mental health at home and abroad. Then, it analyzes the application cases of mindfulness in foreign language education overseas. Finally, it explores the implementation of mindfulness in college English teaching, aiming to help students more effectively cope with learning pressure, reduce negative emotions, increase positive experiences, and ultimately improve their English learning outcomes.

**KEYWORDS**

Mindfulness; College English Teaching; Emotion Regulation

**ARTICLE INFORMATION**

**ACCEPTED:** 01 March 2025

**PUBLISHED:** 14 March 2025

**DOI:** 10.32996/ijels.2025.7.1.6

---

### 1. Introduction

Jon Kabat-Zinn, one of the main founders and promoters of modern mindfulness science, known as the "father of mindfulness", believes that mindfulness refers to an open, accepting, and non-judgmental awareness of the present moment experience (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). One of the most common forms of practice, mindfulness of breathing, involves the following three basic steps: 1) Sit in a comfortable and stable position; 2) Focus your attention on the breath, follow and observe it as you inhale and exhale without trying to change it; 3) Whenever you realize that your attention has wandered, gently bring it back to the breath (Crane et al., 2017). Although the basic practice steps of mindfulness seem simple, it is not easy to conduct mindfulness training well. Persistent practice and training are required to truly master mindfulness and obtain its benefits. Due to the various benefits of mindfulness training, it has been widely applied in the field of individual mental health education. A large number of studies have shown that mindfulness can effectively reduce stress, improve attention, and enhance resilience (Xu et al., 2015). For example, mindfulness practice can reduce anxiety among primary school students and improve their cognitive control ability; it can alleviate the depressive tendency of middle school students and help them cope with stress; it can enhance the attention and resistance ability of high school students, thus facilitating their preparation for college entrance examinations (Lomas et al., 2019). Therefore, mindfulness training has gradually been applied in primary and secondary schools, universities, and teacher training in European and American countries, achieving remarkable results (Black & Amaro, 2019). Although mindfulness has received attention in the Chinese education field in the past decade, for example, Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University established the W.E. leader Mindfulness Center in 2021 (Xie & Chen, 2021), its application in classroom teaching is still relatively limited.

With positive psychology being introduced into the field of foreign language learning and teaching, the role of mindfulness in emotion regulation has been increasingly emphasized. Positive psychology focuses on individuals' positive emotions, strengths, and potential, aiming to promote students' all-round development by cultivating a positive learning attitude (Li, 2021). Previous studies have shown that mindfulness practice based on positive psychology theory can not only enhance students' learning motivation but also effectively improve language learning efficiency, especially in terms of alleviating test anxiety, enhancing

learning endurance, and improving the overall learning experience (Morgan & Katz, 2021). Therefore, this paper will explore the specific application of mindfulness in college English teaching through case analysis of foreign cases and propose corresponding implementation strategies.

## **2. Application Cases of Mindfulness in Mental Health Education at Home and Abroad**

### **2.1 Application Cases of Mindfulness in Foreign Mental Health Education**

On a global scale, to seize the opportunity of mindfulness becoming part of mainstream education, many countries actively advocate introducing mindfulness into school education. In North America and the UK, these mindfulness programs include the Mindfulness in Schools Project, MindUP, Learning to Breathe, and Mindful Schools (Rebedew, 2018). The MindUP curriculum has been promoted in over 150 schools in the United States and Canada, and more than 1,000 teachers have received training (McCaw, 2020). In Australia, professional development programs such as "Calm Kids-Teaching Mindfulness to Students" and "Mindfulness Workshops for Children" provide face-to-face training for teachers (Felver, 2015; Jennings, 2015). In the UK, the Mindfulness in Schools Project provides mindfulness training and courses for educators. These books, seminars, and training programs introduce the theory and practice of mindfulness, and explore various opportunities and techniques for applying mindfulness in the classroom. Besides in-class mindfulness, there are also some mobile applications specifically designed for mindfulness practice for school-age children on the market. For example, the Australian "Smiling Mind" app, the Headspace Kids mindfulness app, and the Danish "Mindful Kids Stop, Breathe & Think" app (Rebedew, 2018). These apps provide guided mindfulness audio tailored to different ages and school levels, and can monitor data related to users' emotions and health.

The following case is from John Adams Middle School in California, USA. This junior high school, located in the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District, has implemented a mindfulness program since August 2014. The program is funded by a local education foundation and cooperates with a mindfulness education organization. Students spend some time every day relaxing, taking deep breaths, and practicing mindfulness (Mindfulness Program at John Adams Middle Enhances School Climate, 2015). Teachers have integrated mindfulness training content into the school's social curriculum. Principal Steven Richardson said that since the implementation of this program, the number of school suspensions and student conflicts has significantly decreased, and academic performance is expected to benefit as well. He believes that the program has enhanced the school's cohesion and given students a sense of belonging, which is crucial for the growth of teenagers. After mastering some breathing techniques that can calm or motivate students, the physical education teacher leads students to practice these techniques in daily activities and emphasizes six core values: build a relationship with a teacher; create a sense of belonging; make a new friend; act, don't react; respect for others is self-respect; and always be present. Richardson said that it is remarkable that the energetic middle-school students can calm down before exams, remind each other to "take a deep breath", and lead the whole class in breathing exercises. In addition, students received 13 hours of mindfulness training over an academic year, learning how to use breathing and mindfulness techniques in situations such as dealing with exams, solving problems, and resolving conflicts, and cultivating empathy and teamwork spirit.

### **2.2 Application Cases of Mindfulness in Domestic Mental Health Education**

In recent years, mindfulness has developed rapidly in the academic and application fields in China. However, the mindfulness-related courses and products on the market vary in quality. To improve the scientificity and standardization of relevant research, practice, education, and dissemination, in 2019, the Mindfulness Sub-group of the Clinical and Counseling Psychology Professional Committee of the Chinese Psychological Society and the Mindfulness Sub-group of the Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy Professional Committee of the Chinese Mental Health Association formulated the "Expert Consensus on Mindfulness Intervention" (Mindfulness Sub-group of the Clinical and Counseling Psychology Professional Committee of the Chinese Psychological Society, Mindfulness Sub-group of the Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy Professional Committee of the Chinese Mental Health Association, 2019). It introduced 10 common mindfulness-based intervention practice methods, such as body scan, awareness of breathing, mindful listening to sounds, awareness of thoughts, mindful walking, mindful stretching, non-selective awareness, breathing space, loving-kindness mindfulness, and mindfulness in daily life.

The following case is from Houhai Primary School in Shenzhen. From November to December 2021, in order to help fifth-grade students improve their adaptability and address parents' educational confusion, Houhai Primary School in Shenzhen cooperated with the Child Health Research Group of Shenzhen University and a psychological institution to offer mindfulness training courses for students and parents (Let the Flower of Growth Bloom in Mindfulness, 2022). The student course lasted for 8 weeks, aiming to cultivate concentration, emotion management ability, and promote physical and mental health. The parent course, on the other hand, helped parents master mindfulness-based parenting skills to achieve home-school co-education and ensure the healthy growth of children. The contents of the two courses echoed each other, and with diverse teaching forms, both achieved good results. Under the guidance of teachers, students and parents participated in the practice continuously and achieved remarkable gains. The course was divided into three major modules: cultivating concentration, perceiving beliefs and thoughts,

and exploring emotion management. Through the four key words of "focus, feel, accept, and grow", it was expected that students could enhance their concentration, self-perception ability, ability to accept thoughts and emotions, and promote their physical and mental health. The students responded positively to the mindfulness course, and the classroom atmosphere was lively. Teachers set up small mindfulness exercises, such as body scan, identifying water droplets by sound, and mindful sitting meditation. Students engaged in the experience earnestly and shared their feelings sincerely. The course had diverse forms, including mindfulness practice, and experience activities involving vision, touch, etc., such as focused searching, picture recognition, and word - interference games.

### 3. Application Cases of Mindfulness in Foreign Language Education Abroad

The application case of mindfulness in foreign language education abroad analyzed in this paper is from an academic paper titled "Mindfulness in the foreign language classroom: Influence on academic achievement and awareness" written by Luisa Zeilhofer in 2023 (Zeilhofer, 2023), which was published in *Language Teaching Research*. The paper aims to explore the impact of implementing mindfulness practices in foreign language classrooms on students' academic achievements and awareness.

#### 3.1 Research Design, Plan and Tools

The research adopted a quasi-experimental classroom research design, as randomized controlled trials are often not feasible in classroom settings. In the study, all conditions except mindfulness practice, such as teachers, classrooms, textbooks, and tests, were the same as the participants' regular course activities. This design aims to achieve scientific conditions as much as possible in educational research while maintaining ecological validity, that is, the degree of similarity between the research environment and the actual teaching environment. The research tools included academic achievement tests, the Five-Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ), and the Freiburg Mindfulness Experience Survey (FSMES). The academic achievement test used questions from the "Goethe Zertifikat" test. The FFMQ contains 39 statements to assess students' mindfulness levels, and the FSMES is designed to understand students' perceptions of mindfulness practices. All students participated in six academic achievement tests throughout the year, including two tests at the beginning of each semester, two mid - term exams, and two final exams. The test questions were from the official "Goethe Zertifikat" test (A2 level), a high-quality standard test promoted by the German "Goethe Institut".

#### 3.2 Research Subjects and Grouping

The research subjects were 75 first-year students taking German courses at Kyushu University in Japan. The study lasted for one year and the students were divided into three groups. The first group (control group) consisted of 18 students who did not practice mindfulness. The second group (mindfulness-by-counting group) had 31 students, and the third group (guided - mindfulness group) had 26 students.

#### 3.3 Two Mindfulness Training Methods

Mindfulness practices included mindfulness-by-counting and guided-mindfulness, both of which were carried out before class, twice a week, each time for 3 minutes.

##### 3.3.1 Steps of Mindfulness-by-counting

- a) Silently count "one" in your mind at the end of exhalation.
- b) After inhalation, silently count "two" at the end of exhalation, and continue counting up to "ten".
- c) Then count backwards from "ten" to "one".
- d) If you make a mistake or hesitate, start counting from "one" again.
- e) After three minutes, the teacher instructs the students to return to the classroom environment.

##### 3.3.2 Steps of Guided-mindfulness

- a) After the teacher and students greet each other, play a 3 - minute Japanese - language mindfulness recording.
- b) The recording is made by a professional speaker, guiding students through the mindfulness process.

### **3.4 Research Conclusions**

The research results show that mindfulness practices have a significant impact on improving students' academic achievements and mindfulness levels. Compared with the control group, the mindfulness groups performed better in academic tests, and there were significant improvements in all aspects of mindfulness and overall. Students' perceptions of mindfulness practices were generally positive, and they considered mindfulness a pleasant experience. These findings suggest that mindfulness practices may play a role in the design and development of new teaching practices, especially in enhancing students' self-regulation and academic achievements. The research recommends that future studies should further explore the role of mindfulness in the second language learning process and consider using measurement tools specifically tailored to the language learning process. At the same time, it is suggested that educators implement mindfulness and other mindfulness practices in the classroom to improve students' learning effectiveness and reduce language learning anxiety. Teachers can consider implementing these practices within the first five minutes of the class to attract students' attention and prepare them for learning. In addition, teachers themselves can consider becoming proficient in these mindfulness practices in order to introduce these teaching tools to students.

## **4. Implementation of Mindfulness in College English Teaching**

As college English teachers, the following specific strategies and measures can be adopted to integrate mindfulness into teaching designs, aiming to help students improve their concentration, alleviate learning anxiety, and enhance language learning outcomes.

### **4.1 Mindfulness Breathing Exercises and Classroom Guidance**

At the beginning of each English class, conduct a short mindfulness breathing exercise to help students focus their attention and relieve the anxiety caused by schoolwork or exams. Teachers can guide students to sit in their seats, focus on the rhythm of their breathing, and observe the process of inhalation and exhalation without making any changes. In this way, students can enter a calmer and more focused learning state, mentally preparing themselves for English learning.

### **4.2 Application of Mindfulness in Listening and Speaking Teaching**

In listening and speaking teaching, students often feel nervous and unconfident. Teachers can incorporate a short mindfulness practice before listening training or speaking activities to help students relax their minds and bodies before starting to learn. For example, at the beginning of a listening class, ask students to engage in a few minutes of breathing or concentration exercises to relieve the anxiety caused by difficult listening materials, thus improving their listening comprehension ability.

### **4.3 Mindfulness in Writing and Reading Activities**

During writing and reading activities, students are often troubled by chaotic thoughts or a lack of inspiration. Through mindfulness-guided writing, teachers can encourage students to conduct a few minutes of concentration training before writing to clear their minds, enabling them to be more creative and organized when writing. In reading classes, teachers can guide students to enhance their attention through mindfulness practice before reading, so that they can maintain focus during long-term reading.

### **4.4 Mindfulness in Group Discussions and Cooperative Learning**

Mindfulness can also be integrated into group discussions and cooperative learning. Before a group discussion, teachers can guide students to do a short mindfulness exercise, which helps students express their ideas clearly and maintain a focused and open-minded attitude during the discussion. Through mindfulness practice, students can better listen to others' viewpoints in group activities, enhance their sense of cooperation, and improve their communication skills.

### **4.5 Mindful Walking and Break-time Activities**

To relieve the physical and mental fatigue caused by long-term classroom learning, teachers can organize "mindful walking" activities during break times. For example, lead students to do a few minutes of mindful walking on campus, focusing on the feeling of their footsteps and changes in the environment. This helps students regain their attention and energy during the short break and get ready for the subsequent learning.

### **4.6 Integrating Mindfulness into Pre-exam Preparation**

Before final exams or important tests, such as College English Test Band 4 and Band 6 or Tests for English Majors-Band 4 and Band 8, many students are prone to anxiety due to exam pressure. Teachers can introduce mindfulness training in review classes or pre-exam preparations, such as guiding students to do mindfulness exercises or breathing training, helping them regulate their emotions, reduce anxiety, and thus face exam challenges with a more stable mindset.

#### 4.7 Integration of Teachers' Self-mindfulness Training and Teaching

When conducting mindfulness teaching, teachers can first cultivate their own mindfulness awareness through self-mindfulness training, so as to better provide mindfulness guidance to students in class. At the same time, teachers can explore how to naturally integrate mindfulness methods into daily English teaching, such as conducting a short mindfulness practice before each class, or combining mindfulness with teaching to improve students' concentration and learning efficiency during the teaching process.

#### 5. Conclusion

As a psychological training method, mindfulness has demonstrated significant potential in foreign language education. Through mindfulness practice, college students may enhance their concentration, alleviate negative academic emotions such as anxiety, and strengthen self-regulation abilities, thereby optimizing language learning outcomes. The strategies proposed in this paper offer a theoretical foundation for integrating mindfulness into college English classrooms, empowering students to better navigate learning pressures while improving motivation and emotional management.

This study acknowledges several limitations. First, as a conceptual analysis rather than an empirical investigation, the findings rely on synthesizing existing literature rather than primary data. Consequently, the practical efficacy of the proposed mindfulness strategies remains untested, particularly within the Chinese educational context. Cultural, institutional, and pedagogical differences in China—such as varying classroom dynamics, language learning objectives, and student-teacher relationships—may influence the applicability of mindfulness techniques derived from Western studies. Additionally, the lack of empirical validation limits the generalizability of the conclusions, as unmeasured variables (e.g., individual differences in mindfulness receptivity) could affect outcomes.

To address these gaps, future studies should prioritize empirical validation of mindfulness interventions in Chinese college English classrooms. Mixed-methods approaches, combining quantitative assessments of learning outcomes with qualitative explorations of student and teacher experiences, could provide robust evidence. Comparative studies across diverse regions in China or between Eastern and Western contexts may clarify cultural influences on mindfulness effectiveness. Furthermore, research could investigate the long-term impacts of mindfulness training through longitudinal designs or explore its integration with technology-enhanced language learning tools. Practical investigations into teacher training frameworks for mindfulness implementation are also critical, ensuring educators are equipped to adapt these strategies appropriately.

**Funding:** This research was funded by Guangxi Science & Technology Normal University(2024校级教改项目), grant number 2024GKSYG16 and The APC was funded by GXKS2025GKY001.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The author declares no conflict of interest.

**ORCID iD:** <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5666-0302>

**Publisher's Note:** All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and the reviewers.

#### References

- [1] Black, D. S., & Amaro, H. (2019). Moment-by-Moment in Women's Recovery (MMWR): Mindfulness-based intervention effects on residential substance use disorder treatment retention in a randomized controlled trial. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 120, 103437.
- [2] Crane, R. S., Brewer, J., Feldman, C., Kabat - Zinn, J., Santorelli, S., Williams, J. M. G., & Kuyken, W. (2017). What defines mindfulness - based programs? The warp and the weft. *Psychological Medicine*, 47(6), 990-999.
- [3] Felver, J. C. (2015). *Mindfulness for Teachers: Simple Skills for Peace and Productivity in the Classroom*. New York, NY, 286-288.
- [4] Jennings, P. A. (2015). Early childhood teachers' well-being, mindfulness, and self-compassion in relation to classroom quality and attitudes towards challenging students. *Mindfulness*, 6, 732-743.
- [5] Kabat-Zinn, J. (2003). Mindfulness - based interventions in context: Past, present, and future. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 10(2), 144-156.
- [6] Li, C. C. (2021). Jiji Xinlixue Shijiao Xia De Eryu Xide Yanjiu: Huigu Yu Zhanwang (2012—2021) [Research on Second Language Acquisition from the Perspective of Positive Psychology: Review and Prospect (2012 - 2021)]. *Waiyu Jiaoxue [Foreign Language Teaching]*, 42(04), 57-63.
- [7] Lomas, T., Medina, J. C., Ivtzan, I., Rupprecht, S., & Eiroa-Orosa, F. J. (2019). A systematic review and meta - analysis of the impact of mindfulness - based interventions on the well - being of healthcare professionals. *Mindfulness*, 10, 1193 -1216.
- [8] McCaw, C. T. (2020). Mindfulness 'thick' and 'thin'—a critical review of the uses of mindfulness in education. *Oxford Review of Education*, 46(2), 257-278.
- [9] Morgan, W. J., & Katz, J. (2021). Mindfulness meditation and foreign language classroom anxiety: Findings from a randomized control trial. *Foreign Language Annals*, 54(2), 389-409.
- [10] Rebedew, D. (2018). Five mobile apps for mindfulness. *Family Practice Management*, 25(3), 21-24.
- [11] Xie, L. L., & Chen, Y. R. (2021). Xijiao Liyingfulu Daxue Zhengnian Zhongxin Zhengshi Jiepai Chengli [The Mindfulness Center of Xi'an Jiaotong - Liverpool University Officially Inaugurated] [Z].

- [12] Xu, W., Wang, Y. Z., & Liu, X. H. (2015). 8 Zhou Zhengnian Xunlian Dui Fuxing Qingxu De Gaishan Xiaoguo [The Improvement Effect of 8 - Week Mindfulness Training on Negative Emotions]. *Zhongguo Xinli Weisheng Zazhi [Chinese Mental Health Journal]*, (7), 497-502.
- [13] Zeilhofer, L. (2023). Mindfulness in the foreign language classroom: Influence on academic achievement and awareness. *Language Teaching Research*, 27(1), 96-114.
- [14] Zhongguo Xinli Xuehui Linchuang Yu Zixun Xinlixue Zhuanye Weiyuanhui Zhengnian Xuezu, Zhongguo Xinli Weisheng Xiehui Renzhi Xingwei Zhiliao Zhuanye Weiyuanhui Zhengnian Xuezu. (2019). Zhengnian Ganyu Zhuanjia Gongshi [Expert Consensus on Mindfulness Intervention]. *Zhonghua Xingwei Yixue Yu Naokexue Zazhi [Chinese Journal of Behavioral Medicine and Brain Science]*, 28(9), 771-777.
- [15] Mindfulness Program at John Adams Middle Enhances School Climate. (2015). Retrieved from <https://caschoolnews.net/articles/mindfulness-program-at-john-adams-middle-enhances-school-climate/>
- [16] Let the Flower of Growth Bloom in Mindfulness-The "Mindfulness Course" for Fifth-Grade Students and Their Parents. (2022). Retrieved from <https://www.jianshu.com/p/06f82177bf9e>