

## **Meditation and Wellbeing- What's the link? A Study into the effects of Meditation on Teenage Boys.**

“Wellbeing” was a word that we noticed was becoming more and more frequently used in our lessons and in our school. We were aware that the concept of wellness was very important in the new Junior Cycle and it was something we were curious about. We had been introduced to meditation and its researched benefits on an individual’s wellbeing and we decided to investigate how meditation affects the wellbeing of our peers- teenage boys in our post-primary school.

After doing some of our own research on the wellbeing indicators outlined by the new Junior Cycle guidelines and reading about the alleged benefits of meditation, we reached out and contacted some people that could provide us into an insight in conducting this project. We emailed Monica Cody (a trained professional in the .b Mindfulness Programme working for the charity group Elevate) and David McGrath (a scientist in residence at GMIT) to ask them for assistance and guidance in our project. Thankfully, they agreed and, after asking the permission from our school principal, we invited both to our school.

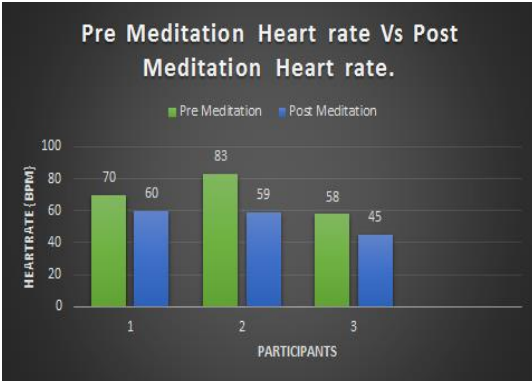
Monica helped us greatly in our project by aiding our 20 randomly selected meditating participants by introducing them to elements of the .B Mindfulness Meditation programme. She explained very clearly and easily how to go about meditating for beginners to the subject and she provided us with the sound files to aid meditation. This was of great benefit to everyone involved in the project as it meant that all participants were on the same page and ensuring they were all practicing meditation in the same way which increased the validity of the study. David agreed to meet with us in our school and after we explained our system of surveys and questions, he guided us on how properly and efficiently analyse our results. This made viewing our collected results and calculating statistics much easier and resulted in us being able to display our results in a clear and accessible manner.

After the meditation journals were completed, three students were not previously involved in the study were randomly selected on the final day to perform a reaction test and to have their heart rate monitored with their consent. We allowed them to sit in the classroom for a class period, in this time they could read, browse on their phones or chat, during this time we got their average heart rates and tested their reaction times. We then asked them to meditate for 10 minutes and after this period they performed a reaction test and we monitored their heart rate to see if any changes took place. We compared the results after they performed this task to before and they are as follows:

### **Heart Rate Analysis**

Pre Vs. Post Meditation.

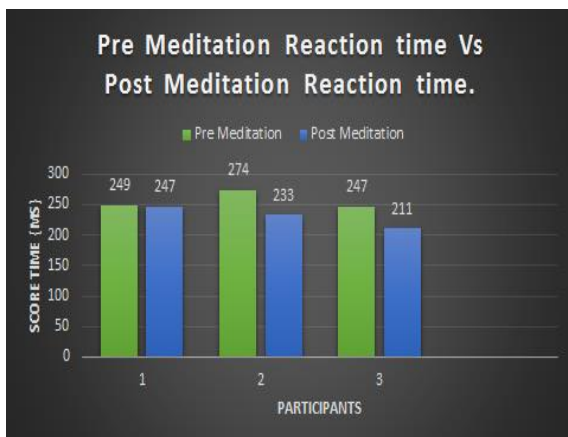
- BPM lowered heart rate in all three cases.
  - Lowered heart rate by at least 14% in all three cases.



Reaction Times Analysis

Pre Vs. Post Meditation.

- Improved reaction times in all three cases.
- Improving reaction times by almost 15% in two of the three cases.



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