UNIVERSIDAD DE QUINTANA ROO

DIVISIÓN DE CIENCIAS POLÍTICAS Y HUMANIDADES

The Effect of Contemplative Practices in Children from the Peraj Program of the University of Quintana Roo

Tesis

Para obtener el grado de

Licenciada en Lengua Inglesa

PRESENTA

Mónica Yolanda Alatorre Xool

DIRECTORA DE LA

Mtra. Maria Isabel Hernandez Romero

Chetumal, Quintana Roo, México, septiembre de 2019

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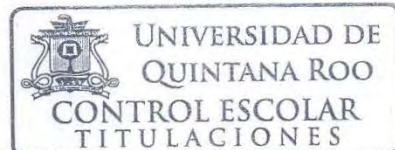Para obtener el grado de

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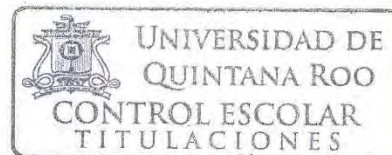
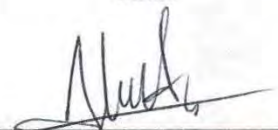## Declaratoria de originalidad

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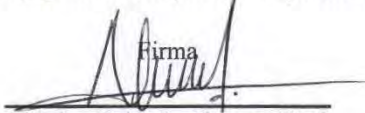
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ABSTRACT

Most professionals in education field might not know about the positive effects that can be brought applying contemplative practices in that field. This research provides some insight about this statement. The general objective is to explore the changes that may have occurred in children after being exposed to contemplative practices. Additionally, its purpose is to investigate children's preference in practices and to identify if children develop empathy that motivate them to apply these practices in their life and share them with people from their social environment.

The research has a qualitative action research design. Three instruments were used to collect data: Two semi-structured interviews and The *Stress Scale* (Shapiro & Sprague 2009). The participants were a group of 10 children with an age range age of 10 to 12 years old who were part of the Peraj Program of the University of Quintana Roo. It was a six-week intervention of sessions of 45 minutes where children were exposed to different contemplative practices. The Stress Scale was used in each session while the interviews were applied at the end of the program.

The results revealed that, according to parents, children experienced changes related to well-being, academic achievement and social competence features. Children demonstrated a remarkable reduction of stress after each session. Moreover, children demonstrated preference for two practices: Coloring Mandalas and Mindful Eating. Finally, they developed empathy that they were willing to share the benefits with their social environment.

Key words: contemplative education, Mindfulness, contemplative practices, meditation, children

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Through time, new philosophies of education emerge in order to develop new strategies and tools for making the learning process better. Their positive advantages are found when they are applied and when they are used as a subject of research in different institutions all around the world. Contemplative Education is one of these philosophies. It emerged and developed in the United States in the early 1970's. It is particularly popular in this country. Moreover, it has been subject of study of prestigious colleges such as Naropa University, the University of Massachusetts, Stanford, and the University of California at Los Angeles as cited by Mackler, Peña, & Camacho (2008).

Contemplative practices are the heart of contemplative education since these practices are the tools to carry out the implementation of contemplative education. These practices involve regulation of attention and "often focus on cultivation of prosocial attitudes and behavior, such as compassion, empathy, and respect for others, and as such, they reflect a system of values and have moral implications" (Shapiro, Lyons & Miller, 2014. P.3). However, contemplative practices have been present in human life through history of humanity in different cultures.

Stock (2006) states that contemplative practices were part of the humanity curriculum, since it was taught in philosophical schools, monastic communities and universities. "Buddhist India was the first civilization to develop a monasticism and that monasticism developed curriculum into a network of universities with a liberating curriculum. The Buddhist curriculum always cultivated

contemplative mind, both for empowerment and for liberating transformation." (Thurman, 2006, p.1779). This curriculum was used for more than ten centuries in a vast of Buddhist monastic universities in India and many more were developed in other Asian countries.

Although contemplative practices have been part of eastern traditions for many centuries such as Buddhism tradition, the practices should not be defined as religious practices. Thurman (2006), declares that Buddhism should be viewed as an educational tradition, despite, Buddhism is identified as one of the most popular religions of the world nowadays. The researcher emphasizes this since Buddhism roots are not too religious in the usual sense of that word, as it teaches people to cultivate wisdom.

In this tradition, meditation has been the main tool for educating the human mind in order to transform the human life. Meditation is an important term for this study since it is the most used contemplative practice. According to Johannes (2012), "Meditation is mental exercising which silences the chatter of one's thoughts and brings rest to one's mind. Our mind is continuously. It is a contemplative practice, which slows down our mental activity and increases our level of awareness." (P.4). Regardless of religion or spiritual beliefs, meditation is an important tool that cultivates awareness, attention and remembering. Those three terms are not only inner characteristics of the human being, but also, they are related to the word Mindfulness.

The term Mindfulness is used most of the time to describe the approach of contemplative practices. According to Desbordes et al (2015), Mindfulness has been proposed as a measurable outcome of contemplative practices. Mindfulness is the translation of the Pali word *sati*. In that language, this word means awareness, attention and remembering (Sieguel, 2010). It is important

to say that the definition of *remembering,* in the context of mindfulness, connotes the act of remembering to be aware and pay attention to the present moment rather than recalling past events.

With respect to Mindfulness, there is a great deal of definitions. Jon Kabat-Zinn's definition is the one that best describes the nature of this concept as it is used in this research. He defines Mindfulness as "paying attention in a particular way: on purpose in the present moment, and non-judgmentally" (Kabat-Zinn, 1994, p. 4). In other words, mindfulness means that when we do something, we do it with all our attention and consciousness in that matter, while not doing any kind of judgement about it.

Contemplative practices have been implemented in the development of many courses in different disciplines and professional fields. These include psychology, anthropology, history, literature, creative arts, social and natural sciences, humanities, performing arts, architecture, health science, neuroscience and education (Hill, 2006). The implementation of those courses in that array of fields brought to light the vast advantages that these practices, which most of the time involves mindfulness, can bring us in our everyday life.

For instance, Hill (2006) explains that when a teacher uses contemplative practices to facilitate mindfulness to their students, they may become more attentive in the classroom or more focused on what they are reading. At the same time, it transforms the way teachers interacts with students and how students interact with each other inside the classroom. On the other hand, implementing contemplative practices in our personal life can improve the way a person deals with everyday problems as the psychologist Ronald Siegel (2010) describes it in his book *The Mindfulness Solution*. He explains that:

Research it shows that it (mindfulness practice) can help us work effectively not only with worrying about being late for appointments and other anxieties, but also with sadness and depression; stress related medical conditions, such as insomnia, digestive difficulties, sexual problems and chronic pain; and addictions that can go from alcohol and drug through food, gambling and shopping. It can help us get along better with our children, parents, friends, coworkers and romantic partners (p. 8).

This might give us an idea about why many specialists in such a variety of fields have been using contemplative practices in the designing of courses with different purposes each of them. These instructors could certainly be using these practices as tools to help to alleviate certain problems that people all around the world might be facing. As it can be used by anyone, from children to adults, in different levels of education and with different conditions this explains why those practices are used in such a variety of fields.

An important report about the effects of the use of contemplative practices in Foreign Language Education field was reported by Smith in 2007. This researcher applied contemplative practices to her students from post- secondary foreign language learning environment. Her aim was to bridge contemplative practices and education (Smith, 2007). She decided to approach contemplative practices from three different perspectives:

- As a way to help students to calm and focus their mind. For this approach, she based their practices with their students in what is called the "Hygienic Use" of contemplative practices. This means the use of those practices, which have the goal of calming and focusing the mind. As a result, practitioners reduce their symptoms of stress and, over time,

they come to learn about their own minds. Related to academic experience, "practitioners learn to observe their selves and mind in the learning process" (p.3).

- As modes of inquiry, that according to the author of this report, "expands the life of the mind beyond the greatest western strengths of intellect, such as analysis, logic and reason, to include complementary ways of knowing --through the senses, intuition, feelings and the self" (p.7). It allows students to discover or infer knowledge on a deductive way that usually occurs in the relaxed and contemplative mode.

- As transformational practices to improve inter-cultural understanding. Since, through continual use of contemplative practices practitioners might experience transformation in different aspects of their lives including academic area. "A greater capacity for synthetic thinking, conceptual flexibility, appreciation for different kind of intellectual process, increase compassion and greater willingness and ability to engage with "the other" (p. 11).

Those are the changes the author mentioned in her report in this approach. As conclusion, Smith thinks that when contemplative practices are included in teaching, she feels integrated and balanced. Feelings that she wants to transmit to her students. The author also thinks that contemplative approaches are well suited in the study of foreign language since it enhances self-awareness and learning. Moreover, Smith mentions that reports of faculty affiliated with the *Center of Contemplative Mind and Society* (CCMS), indicate that students respond with overwhelming enthusiasm to courses that include contemplative approaches.

There is a variety of different activities that can be considered contemplative practices. *The Center of Contemplative Mind and Society* depicted these practices in a diagram which is called *The Tree of Contemplative Practices*. "The Tree illustrates some of the contemplative practices

currently in use in secular organizational and academic settings" (The Centre of Contemplative Mind in Society, 2015). The roots of this tree are the terms *communion, connection and awareness*. Meanwhile, it organizes the practices in different branches according to different contexts to have a better descriptive organization. And then, those branches break down in the different activities that are considered as contemplative practices (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 1 The Tree of Contemplative Practices
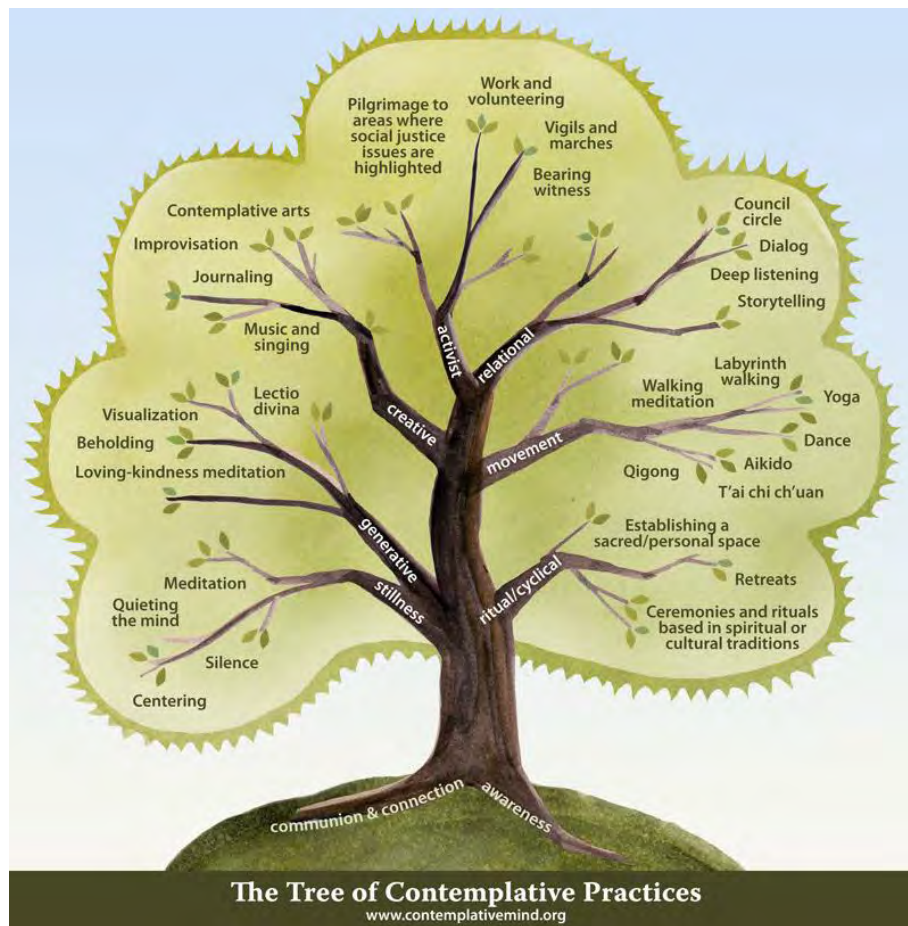
Duerr & Bergman. (2015).

It is important to say that not all the practices that are illustrated in Figure 1 were used in this research since the intervention was designed for children that probably were never exposed to

contemplative activities before. There are some activities that require previous experience or that are out of the nature of this research, for instance, *Pilgrimage to areas where social justice issues are highlighted* or *Retreats*. These activities that were not suitable to the types of participants and the nature of this research were not applied. Practices that were used in this study are meditation, quieting the mind, visualization, journaling, deep listening, storytelling, walking meditation, and yoga.

Another term that should be described is Peraj. Participants of this research were part of a social service program within the University of Quintana Roo. *Peraj* is a Hebrew word that means *flower*. It is the name of an active international program created in Israel in 1974 in the Weizmann Institute of Science. Its main objective is to reinforce children capacity to overcome adversity trough the establishment of a meaningful relationship between the child and a university student. This university student carries the role of tutor of that child, to support his academic, social and emotional development. Thereby, Peraj works with children of 5th and 6th grade in areas such as self-esteem, social skills, academic performance, as well as to prevent anti-social behavior and decrease dropout rates. The university student becomes a model for the child. This student is the person that will guide one child, for the period of time this program takes place (Peraj Mexico, 2011).

1.2 Rationale

As it was previously mentioned, contemplation was applied in children that were part of the Peraj Program in the University of Quintana Roo during the spring of 2012. This study intended to show the effect contemplative practices have in children that were participating from February to March 2012 in the PERAJ Program University of Quintana Roo. This thesis presents and disseminates the results that the application of contemplative practices in the Peraj program brought to children. In this way, it reveals vision of how feasible can be to implement those types of practices in the program, not only at the University of Quintana Roo but also in other colleges that implement and promote the Peraj program in their communities.

At the same time, —if that was the case — it will show the acceptance that children which participated in the PERAJ program in the University of Quintana Roo in spring of 2012 had regarding the contemplative practices. Additionally, this work allows us to identify what they think about them in terms of their application at school, at home and in public places. In general, the results of this study might encourage educators, psychologists and social workers by learning about the beneficial repercussion the use of contemplative practices might have not only in education and with children, but in other different areas.

This study could help to create a new perspective about what effects of the contemplative practices could be present in the individuals who are exposed to them. Moreover, it might help people realize how the practice of this type of exercises could help to experience transformation in the professional and personal life. Being more specific, since this study was done with children in

the range age of 10 and 12 years, it could be useful for teachers who work with children in elementary schools.

1.3 Statement of Problem

As remarked before, Contemplative Education is a current line of research which is trendy among different colleges abroad; however, in Mexico, just a few projects about this field have been developed. This topic is not well- known in our country yet. Tobar & Garcia (2017) affirm in the article named *The Impact of Mindfulness in the world*, that in Mexico, at least in the health field, the research of implementation of Mindfulness is null. If in the health field, the empirical evidence about these practices is almost nonexistent, probably it is the same case in education field. In other words, a high number of Mexican educators might not know what this philosophy involves, neither the results of its application inside a classroom.

Most teachers might not know about the positive effects that can be brought by the application of contemplative practices to their students. They possibly do not know how feasible and advantageous could be to implement them in the classroom. This research provides some insight to teachers that are interested in this approach and want to know more about it.

I decided to conduct this research since I discovered through my own experience that the approach mentioned can bring positive results in the life of every human being who gets involved in those practices. During my years in college, I could get in touch with this approach for the first time when some of my professors shared these practices. My professors spread the practices in

form of guided meditation and breathing techniques before exams, inside the classroom. It helped me to get relaxed and to pay more attention in the exams and professors' explanations.

However, I felt the necessity of increasing the use of contemplative practices in my life, so I decided to take yoga classes. Yoga was also a fitness activity that college facilitates to its students. These yoga classes where not only about doing exercise or yoga postures, but we also practiced different types of meditation, wrote reflexive journals, had discussions about our feelings and perceptions and practiced deep listening. We were encouraged to promote compassion to ourselves and others. As we can see, the activities just mentioned are classified as Contemplative Practices in the diagram that is above.

While being part of that group of yoga integrated by students of the University of Quintana Roo from different majors and semesters, I realized how much our lives showed transformation. We experienced a process of taking mindfulness in each aspect of our life. This was revealed as most of us liked to share our changes with the group and the teacher who guided that college subject.

As a student, I could say that my academic life had an enormous change when I started to do contemplative practices in my daily life. My attention capacity increased, as a result, my learning process got better. It became easier for me to remember the things that were said during classes since my mind was not wandering in past or future events. I was paying attention with consciousness to the present moment on what teachers and classmates shared with the class.

Besides, I developed skills such as the ability to manage my time better and to have more organization; this helped me to change for good the way I used to fulfill my homework. Because all of this, the nature of my research had to have contemplative dimensions.

1.4 Objectives

In this section, the general and specific objectives will be defined in order to comprehend better the reasons why this research has been carried out. The research questions and relevance of this study are discussed in this section, too.

1.4.1 General Objective

The main objective of this research is to explore the changes that may have occurred in children after being exposed to contemplative practices during six sessions of 45 minutes each (One session per week).

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

- To identify if children were motivated in applying contemplative activities in their life, after being exposed to mindfulness.
- To determine what places children liked the most to implement this type of practice.
- To find out if children are interested in developing contemplative practices with people from their social environment.

- To report children's perceptions and feelings presented during the sessions.

- To describe which practices were the easiest, the most difficult and the most favorite ones according to the participants.

- To explain the parents' perceptions about the changes of their children during and after the program.

- To explore to what extent children to develop empathy, as a result of contemplative practice.

1.5 Research Questions

In order to develop this thesis and to fulfill the objectives below, the following research questions were designed.

- What changes did the children experience after the six-week intervention?

- How motivated were the children about the idea of keeping practicing?

- In what places did they like the most to practice?

- Who would they like to practice with?

- What was the easiest practice to children?

- What was the most difficult practice to children?

- What was the most favorite practice to children?

- What are the changes children experienced according to parents' perceptions related to contemplative practices?

- Did children develop empathy as a result of contemplative practice?

1.6 Significance/relevance of the study

For academic purposes, this research can be meaningful because it presents an alternative to enhance the learning process in the classrooms. When tools that develop the capacity of attention and concentration are given to students, they are willing to improve their academic performance. Moreover, the outcomes may help to enhance the development of future academic programs that include this approach.

In personal life, educators have a great impact and responsibility since their profession allows them to help to nurture societies. They might be motivated to use contemplative practices in order to encourage wellness and empathy in the students what might generate a big change in society.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to undertake this study, the researcher reviewed and looked for previous studies that could be used as examples or basis to sustain it, with the intention to show the effects that could be present in children when or after they were exposed to contemplative practices.

2.1 Theorical Framework

A research conducted by Semple, Reid & Miller in 2005 was replicated for this dissertation since the research method was followed, but some adaptions were displayed in order to adjust it to the circumstances and requirements, considering the particularities of the Peraj Program in the University of Quintana Roo. More details about this inquiry will be described in the next lines along with the description of some other studies related to the nature of research of this thesis. Heading this account up with a description about the study that Semple et al. (2005) guided, and on which the present study was placed.

In 2005, Semple, et al. conducted a clinical trial that examined the feasibility and acceptability of a mindfulness training program for anxious children. They created a 6-week program, one session of 45 min per week, to treat anxiety with mindfulness. The participants of this study were five children in the range age of 7-8 years old. These children were diagnosed as anxious by the school psychology department. The contemplative practices used for this program are different types of meditation. For instance, guided breathing meditation, mindful eating, and

group discussions. The evaluation of the acceptability of this treatment was led by a co- therapist during the sessions in group discussions.

The results showed that four of five children responded enthusiastically to the program. It also demonstrated that five children reported reductions of total internalizing and externalizing problems. Furthermore, it was suggested that gains were for all the participants in several areas of adaptive functioning. More details about this intervention will be exposed in the method section of this thesis since it was used as foundation for this work.

Semple et al. (2005), who conducted this study, are psychologists and led it in order to attend a problem related to their subject of study. This study was led to discover if mindfulness can be an alternative to deal with behavioral clinical problems and its results were positive.

It was decided to replicate this study, since it focuses on improving children wellness as Peraj does. Moreover, the idea of having weekly sessions fit with Peraj schedule, too. Materials, practices and approach that were decided to use are similar to Semple et al. The study of Semple et al. also relates its achievements with the achievements of the present dissertation.

2.2 Studies that include similar contemplative practices

A similar study was directed in 2005 by Wall, but in this case, the subject of the study was stress instead of anxiety. Some of the contemplative practices used by Wall are the same as Semple et al (2005). Nevertheless, the main practice applied for the research conducted by Wall was a contemplative movement practice, Tai Chi and Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) as

an educational program. It was a 5-week program, one hour per week and was applied to middle school-aged boys and girls.

The group of participants were selected by the school nurse. None of the participants were described as students with serious behavioral issues. The contemplative practices used in this research, besides Tai Chi, were guided meditation, breathing exercises, mindful eating and storytelling through koans. Koans are "short nonlinear stories or questions. Koans are used extensively for increasing awareness or mindfulness in the Japanese Zen Tradition" (Wall, 2005, p.232).

The results suggested that they experienced well-being, calmness, relaxation, improved sleep, less reactivity, increased self- care, self-awareness, and sense of interconnection and interdependence with nature. Additionally, it demonstrated that participants showed interest in this type of practices. The author stated that his research infers that Tai Chi and MBSR may be a transformational tool in education programs for middle school.

In 2016, a research was led by Folleto, Pereira, Valentini. They investigated the effects of implementing a yoga program in physical education classes. Participants were sixteen children from the 1st grade of a public elementary school in the South of Brazil. It was a 12-week intervention, twice weekly, with 45 min each session. Children only practiced yoga during the intervention.

The yoga program was well accepted by children. They demonstrated significant and positive changes in balance, strength, and flexibility. Moreover, social behavior was improved, and children developed the ability of using the knowledge learned in the program in contexts outside of school.

2.3 Studies on meditation effects

As complementary information, a review of different studies about Meditation and Higher Education was written by Shapiro, Brown & Astin (2008) for The Center of Contemplative Mind and Society. This study used meditation regularly for the intervention. A summary of the benefits discovered by Shapiro et al. (2008) were classified into three categories: *Cognitive and Academic Performance, Mental Health and Psychological Well-Being and Development of the Whole Person (*see *Figure 2).*

Some of the benefits described in the first category, *Cognitive and Academic Performance*, are improving ability to maintain preparedness and orient attention, improving the ability to process information quickly and accurately; and positive impact on academic achievement. While the benefits in *Mental Health* are the reduction of stress, anxiety, and depression, supporting better regulation of emotional reactions and the cultivation of positive psychological states. Finally, the benefits in *Psychological Well-Being and Development of the Whole Person* are supporting the development of creativity, enhancing of the development of skills needed for interpersonal relationships and Empathetic responses are increased, moreover, self-compassion is also cultivated through Mindfulness (Shapiro et al., 2008, p.3).

Watters, Barsky, Ridd & Allen (2014) conducted a research to collect reliable evidence of the effect of Meditation Interventions in Schools. They made a review of evidence from 15 peer-reviewed studies of school meditation programs to discover the outcomes of meditation. These outcomes were classified in three different approaches: well-being, social competence and academic achievement. Waters et al (2014) identified the different effects caused by meditation to

the participants of fifteen studies led by different researchers. They classify the reported results of those studies in the following chart:

Figure 2 1. The School Based Meditation Model
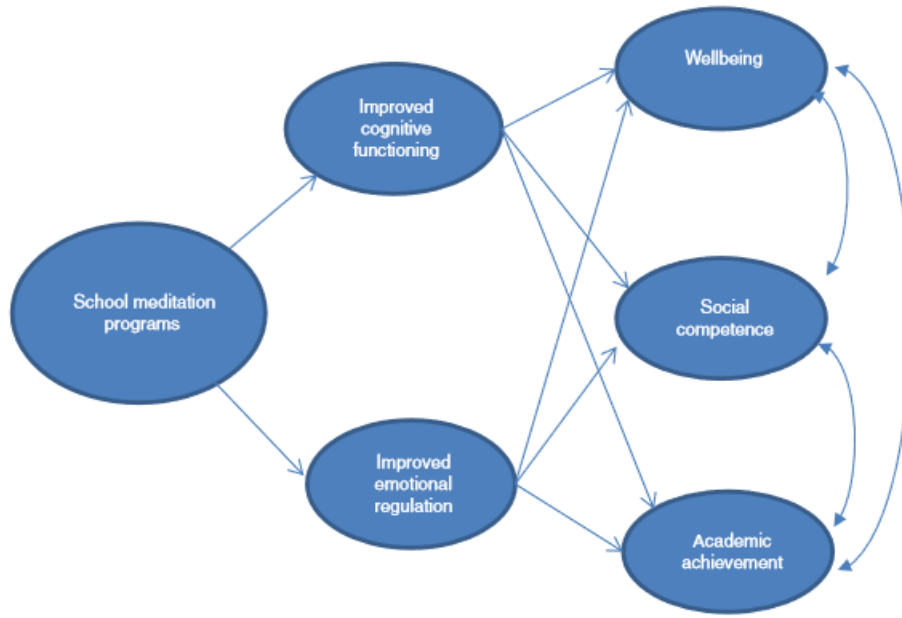
Waters et al. (2014, p. 121).

2.4 Studies on contemplative education

Moving into topics related to education and the interventions of contemplative practices in the classroom, Garrison Institute published a report in 2005 about Contemplative and Education. They collected information about the contemplative programs that were taking place in those years. This information was about the people who guided the programs, the places and context where the programs took place, the process and activities used and the results. Garrison Institute divided all these programs in two branches:

1) Contemplative Programs that prioritize developing mindfulness and attention training.

2) Contemplative Programs that prioritize emotional balance and wellbeing (p.5).

Contemplative practices can be used either for developing of attention to improve learning process propose. Furthermore, the practices are also useful to promote emotional balance, empathy and good actions for the participant and his environment. Garrison classified those programs according to its approach.

Garrison Institute declares:

Despite methodological and pedagogical differences, contemplative programs share a common set of outcomes consistent with those of mainstream education…However, the emphasis on prioritizing distinct but interrelated short-term outcomes – and the focus of the techniques used to realize these outcomes – provides a rationale for constructing two closely related, but separate methodological domains (p.4).

Based on this, the following studies that are being presented are placed in the first description of the programs, according to its positive results that involves developing of attention skills.

About contemplative practices application to students in a range age of primary school, it is essential to mention the study directed by Napoli, Krech & Holley in 2005. Napoli et al. (2005), designed a 24-week training program for students to learn to focus and pay attention. This study involved plenty of children since they worked with 254 students of second and third grade. Breathing exercises, body scanning, visualizations, body movement and group discussions about the sessions at the end of them were some of the contemplative practices that were used to do this

study. The activities used were breathwork, body scanning and movement meditation, and sensorimotor awareness activities.

Results showed significant differences between those students who did and did not participate in mindfulness practice training. Also, the authors state that incorporating mindfulness training in education, for instance, as physical or health education, is an ideal way to teach children how to deal with stress and anxiety and to learn to focus and pay attention. In contrast with this paper, the intervention led by Napoli et al., took place with more sessions. The time used for their intervention was longer. Also, the participants were in an average age lower that participants of this study.

In 2010, Nuangchalerm & Prachagool conducted a study related to Transformative Learning through Contemplative Practices. The research was led at the University of Mahasarakham. The participants were a group of 44 preservice teachers who had to learn to fulfill human values and contemplative education with many learning activities during a course of fourteen weeks or 42-hour classes. In this study, the participants were future teachers who were supposed to be aware of their own learning process. The contemplative practices that were used for this research were meditation, personal journals, journal reading, role-playing, active listening, and class discussions.

The results indicate that the majority of preservice teachers raised their opinions about contemplative practice influencing a change in their mind and will to learn. "All of them showed positive domain of perception about class of contemplative practices. It stimulates inner perception in each level and enhances eager to know what they have learned by beginning with "what do I learn?", "how do I learn?", and "why do I learn to be teacher?" (Nuangchalerm & Prachagool,

2010, p.97). It was shown that the awareness of their learning process increased. This research indicates the effect that students of higher education experienced as a result of being exposed to contemplative practices.

On the other hand, Davidson et al., (2012) stated, in the article Contemplative Practices and Mental Training: Prospects for American Education, that subjects such as developmental psychology, education, and scholarship from contemplative traditions related to positive development, are recommended to improve a set of mental skills and socioemotional dispositions that are central to the aims of education in the 21st century (p.1).

Within the skills they suggest that should be developed through education are included self-regulatory skills associated with emotion and attention, empathy and compassion. The authors declared that those positive skills should be progressed to contemplative practices. These practices, according to Davidson et al., (2012), "induce plastic changes in brain function and structure, supporting prosocial behavior and academic success in young people"(p.1).

The contemplative practices these researchers suggested are different types of meditation, yoga and Mindfulness. They paid attention mainly on the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) developed by Kabat-Zinn, Lipworth, & Burney in 1985. This approach provides systematic training in meditation as a self-regulation to stress reduction and emotion management which is the central reason why authors suggest it. They mentioned that there are some "findings that suggest that training and practice specifically designed to cultivate positive qualities such as emotion regulation and mindfulness may also produce beneficial alterations in brain function and structure" (p.2).

Davidson et al. (2012) concluded that contemplative practices that are tools to enhance attention, emotion, motivation, social cognition, and behavior are very beneficial for reducing the risks children face every day in daily school life. They also mentioned that the practices improve both social and academic outcomes through schools.

It is important to know teachers' opinion about the implementation of this types of programs in the schools. This is the reason why Jean- Baptiste (2014) conducted a research about teachers' perceptions and experiences regarding implementation of mindfulness practices in their classroom.

The participants were eight teachers in the Bay Area of Northern California. These teachers worked with K-12 students. The main objective of this study was to collect teachers' experiences and perceptions regarding the mindfulness program in their schools. Semi- structured interviews were applied to the participants. Those interviews focused on three areas:

- Teachers' introduction to and training in the mindfulness program
- Teachers' experiences and beliefs about implementing mindfulness practices in their classrooms
- Teachers' perceptions of benefits of contemplative practices for their students and themselves.

Results reported that the teachers expressed that students were encouraged to include Mindfulness in their everyday life as well as in their academic life. However, they also mentioned that there is a problem in timing when they tried to achieve this. Another fact that teachers explained was that some implications related to the age level of the students must be considered.

Jean- Baptiste (2014) mentioned that "Despite these challenges, the teachers believed that their school's mindfulness program was beneficial in increasing their students' attention skills,

self-regulation skills and social-emotional competence" (abstract). Teachers reported students increased their enthusiasm for teaching and encouraged unity and collaboration among the teaching staff thanks to the program.

Furthermore, Tebar & Parra lead a study in 2015, in Spain. They designed a seven- week intervention, one session per week. The time for session varied from 15 to 35 depending on the contemplative practice chosen for each session. The participants were a group of 25 children in the range age from 5 to 6 years.

The contemplative practices used for this intervention were sitting meditation, walking meditation, mindful eating, breathing exercises, body scanning meditation and other activities to be aware of emotions. The results showed that contemplative practices are motivated to children. Also, they understand what mindfulness is and its use. Moreover, observers perceived that children increased a calm state and their level of attention after realizing most of the contemplative practices. This study is pretty similar to the present study since there were weekly sessions. The duration of the sessions was the same.

There is another similar study were this variation about the time of the intervention, the sessions and the age of participants are also present. In 2016, Da Silva reported a study to teach Mindfulness to high school of 2nd grade. The students were enrolled in a Psychology class. This class was used to teach them contemplative practices based on Mindfulness. Two principles were decided before applying these practices to students:

1) It is essential that students should be motivated to be part of the sessions in order to experience better the changes they might have.

2) It is necessary to consider Mindfulness as an attitude towards life, a habit to be developed, instead of a unique relaxation technique.

At the beginning of this intervention, an anonymous survey was applied to students to design sessions according to students' necessities. This survey was about attention, stress, self-esteem and emotional balance. After analyzing students' responses, eight sessions were designed. Session had a duration of 45 minutes and took place once per week. The practices that were applied were different types of meditation such as body scanning, breathing exercises, mindful eating, deep listening, as well as Meditation with a Pebble (Nhat, 2003).

At the end of the sessions, the same survey was applied to participants. The results showed that most of the students reported to improve their attention. Moreover, they expressed that they were able to control their thoughts, feelings and their behavior. They enjoyed more the present moment and used breathing exercises before studying or going to the bed. Also, students were asked about their preferences among contemplative practices. They chose breathing exercises, mindful eating and Meditation with a Pebble as their favorite practices. This study is similar to this one since Meditation with a Pebble and other activities were applied to participants, too. The main similarity is that students were asked about their favorite practices.

All in all, the researchers and instructors affirm in the previous studies that the application of meditation in higher education affects cognitive, emotional, and interpersonal domains in a positive way. The review of the studies that were carried out suggested that meditation can have a positive impact on academic performance, psychological well-being, and interpersonal experience for students in college, medical school, and other higher education settings.

2.5 Studies about Mindfulness in Mexico

In 2016, Lopez, Guadarrama, Mendoza & Gomez conducted a research about Mindfulness and depression symptoms in teenagers of a Mexican High School. The main propose of this study was to identify the relation between depressive symptoms and mindfulness levels in Mexican teenagers high school students. The participants were 930 teenagers of an average age among 14 and 19 years old. Different scales were used to evaluate the relationship between Mindfulness and depression. For Mindfulness, it was used the Mindfulness Awareness Attention Scale (MAAS-A; Brown, West, Loverich & Biegel, 2011). To evaluate depression symptoms, it was used the Depression Scale (CES-D; Radloff, 1977).

The results bring to light that there is a negatively significant correlation between Mindfulness and depression. This indicates that, the lower scores of consciousness, the greater presence of depression symptoms. In general, this literature review was placed in order to find contemplative practices used in other studies that involve the increasing of the capacity of attention, stress and anxiety management. But more specific, this literature review was done to find studies that combine contemplative practices with education, with children and its effects on the participants.

In 2018, Martinez conducted a research named *A Mindfulness-Based Educational Intervention for Orphaned Youth in Atlixco, Mexico.* For this study, the researcher worked with an eight- week program, where he lived in an all-boys institution. The curriculum for this program was designed by Martinez (2018). This curriculum included the application of different types of

meditations such as sitting meditation, body scanning, walking meditation and mindful eating, deep listening and kindness and gratitude practices. He worked with two groups of teenagers in the average age from 12 to 17 years old. One group was provided an eight-week mindfulness-based curriculum while the other group continued with standard programming. The participants were seventeen teenagers. These participants were exposed to this program once a week for eight weeks.

Sessions took approximately 45 minutes to one hour and 15 minutes. The results revealed that the boys who were exposed to this program, improved their behavior. Moreover, they had stress and anxiety reduction. They showed understanding in the fact "that through their breath, meditation, and other exercises, they could calm themselves and find a more tranquil state, in order to regulate difficult emotions" (p.24). Educators of that Institution declared that the changes they perceived in the participants were that they were more reflexive and controlled when difficult situations were presented. They also reported that teenagers used breathing exercises to calm themselves when they were facing those difficult situations.

This literature review was useful to find out that these types of studies in Mexico and Latin America are almost inexistent from the perspective of the researcher. As Tobar & Garcia (2017) inform in the article *The Impact of Mindfulness in the world*, the research of implementation of Mindfulness in Mexico is null. Due to this fact, it was difficult to find research related to this subject of study present in this country. This is the main reason this thesis is focused on contemplative education. From my personal point of view, research about applying contemplative practices to discover its effects is incipient. Leading some research related to this might create a new perception of the benefits and use of contemplative practices. At the same time, it offers an opportunity to contribute to education community with new tools and strategies to help students to have a more effective learning process.

An important information that have not been explored in research about Mindfulness and contemplative practices is the preference and motivation of the participants. Here are some important facts that this study will spread to consider for future research:

- It is imperative to ask to the participants about their perceptions of contemplative practices.

- It is essential to identify children's preference in practices such as the activities that are easiest, the most difficult and the most favorite to children.

- It is needed to foster children in mindfulness practices in their daily life.

- It is required to find out what motivates them to practice contemplative practices.

It could be possible to promote contemplative practices to cultivate awareness, attention and balance through their use. Subsequently, these practices help everyone to face better difficult situations that are present in life. It might help children to have an emotional awareness which will allow them to use those emotions and apply them to problem solving, to develop the ability to manage and regulate one's own emotions when necessary and develop empathy to other people emotions. For all these benefits reveled through this previous literature review, it is important to encourage teachers and people who work with children to encourage mindfulness practice in order to achieve positive changes in their life and, as a result, in our society.

CHAPTER 3 METHOD

In this chapter, the method adopted to accomplish the objectives of this study is explained. The parts of the method defined in this section are the research design, the context, as well as the participants involved, and the instruments and the procedure carried out during the implementation of the sessions. Moreover, collecting data and data analysis are explained.

3.1 Research Design

In terms of research design, this study can be considered as action research in that the researcher intervenes in the classroom to somehow implement any educational approach. Action research was developed by Lewin in the late 1930 (Adelman, 1993). As it is explained by Adelman (1993), "for Lewin action research must include the active participation by those who have to carry out the work in the exploration of problems that they identify and anticipate. After investigation of these problems, the group makes decisions, monitoring and keeping note of the consequences" (p.9). Since this study was led by a teacher, who was able to examine their own process of including these practices in her educational life not only as student but also as teacher, and who has experienced the influence that the use of contemplative practices provides, in both, academic and personal life inside and outside the classroom, this inquiry is defined as action research (Ferrance, 2000).

Also, it can be placed under the line of qualitative research since it intends to show meaning of the participants' experience (Cresswell, 2003). In the same vein, Seliger & Shohamy (1989) suggest ways to conduct qualitative research, in which the point of departure is to define the

phenomenon of the learning process to be described, followed by the use of qualitative methods to gather data.

3.2 Context

This research took place within the Peraj Program at a public college, the University of Quintana Roo, Campus Chetumal. In the University of Quintana Roo Implementation Plan of the Educational Model (2012) the motto of this college is described as:

> …to impulse an integral education at undergraduate and post-graduate level to educate people engaged with the service to others in all areas of knowledge; to promote a harmonious environment which is suitable for a full development; to apply innovative knowledge to contribute to the social and economic development of Quintana Roo and the country; to promote the sustainable development in the area; to generate and apply innovative knowledge; to generate effective conditions for human living; to preserve a regional, national or international projection; to contribute to the human development and to the knowledge from an innovative, sustainable and multicultural perspective; to preserve scientific collections and to promote universal culture through the development of ethical values, attitudes and abilities; to impulse collegial work and flexible, self- taught, group, and interdisciplinary educational practices; at the same time, to integrate multiple learning environments, to cultivate important scientific and humanistic traditions that allow to enrich their environment (p.25).

In addition, Peraj program's main objective, as was mentioned earlier, is to reinforce children capacity to overcome adversity and to improve their social academic and emotional life by promoting a meaningful relationship between the child and a university student (Peraj Mexico, 2011).

3.3 Participants

The participants were a group of 10 children with an age range age of 10 to 12 years old. There were four girls and six boys who were attending the 5th and 6th grade of elementary school in "Escuela Primaria 5 de Abril" in Chetumal, Quintana Roo. They were participating in the Peraj Program during the spring of 2012. This project was proposed to the organizers of the Peraj Program at the University of Quintana Roo to be part of the activities of the program; who accepted the researcher to lead this inquiry within the program.

People who were in charge of this social service Peraj program in University of Quintana Roo were who decided which children were going to be part of the sessions by choosing them according to children's attitude and attention. Since they were working with the group of children for around two months before this intervention began, they already had made some observations to determine which children were the most suitable for this study.

Children who needed some type of guide and attention, according to the perspective of Peraj people and their observation on previous Peraj sessions, were considered as participants for this research. This is what Peraj Coordinator in the University of Quintana Roo, reported on February 2012.

3.4 Instruments

For this research, three instruments helped the researcher to collect data. Two semi-structured interviews, one interview designed for children and another one designed for their parents, along with The *Stress Scale* designed by Shapiro & Sprague (2009), which was applied only to children twice by session.

According to Seliger & Shohamy (1989), "a semi-structured interview consists of specific and defined questions determined beforehand but at the same time it allows some elaboration in the questions and answers" (p. 167). This was the main instrument to collect data for this study. The interview was applied to participants and their parents by the researcher in order to reach the objectives of this research.

Two different interviews were designed. One interview collected answers of children's experience, while the other interview collected answers of parents' perceptions. Seventeen questions were designed beforehand. The interview was applied to participants at the end of the whole intervention in the University of Quintana Roo. Every child and every parent were invited for the interview consequently, the researcher could interview the participants one by one. The interview was recorded in mp3 format with a digital recording. Transcriptions of those interviews were transcribed in Office Word format. Those transcriptions were the data that was analyzed by codifying ideas and similarly patterns expressed by every participant.

Another instrument was used to obtain additional information. The *Stress Scale* designed by Shapiro & Sprague (2009) was applied to children to identify the changes in the mood and stress of the participants. See *Figure 3.1*. Those mood changes were reported before and after children

were exposed to contemplative practice. So that, they could report their stress (or mood) before and after experiencing contemplative practices.

Children received one scale at the beginning of the session and another scale at the end. This scale was designed to teach children to identify their own stress and mood to start to deal with it by giving them "ideas about what can be done to make stress reduction a daily habit" (Shapiro & Sprague, 2009, p.17).

This exercise was done to determine whether contemplative practices had helped or not improving the level of stress of the participants. This is the original Stress Scale that was used:

Figure 3 1 The Stress Scale
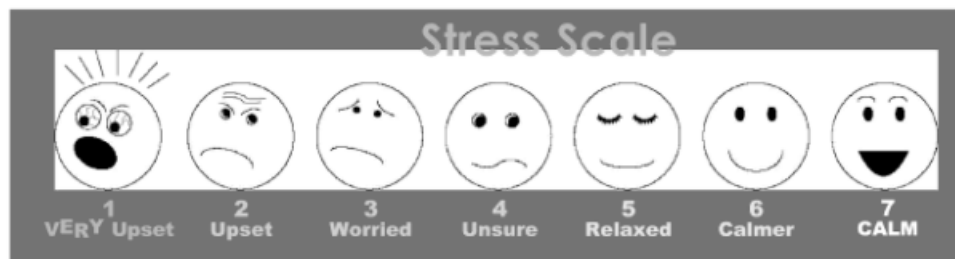
Shapiro & Sprague (2009).

Those are the three instruments that were part of this intervention to fill the requirements according to the objectives described in previous section. On one hand, the interviews provided the data to identify the perceptions of children and parents about contemplative practices. On the other hand, *The Stress Scale* was used to determine if children's level of the stress changed after sessions.

3.5 Procedure

The intervention was planned as a six-week program, following some considerations given by Semple et al. (2005) in the study that they conducted. The 6-week program was developed in 45-minute sessions, one session per week. Each one took place every Tuesday from 17:00 to 17:45 hrs.

The sessions took place in a classroom of the University of Quintana Roo that was allocated specially for those sessions. The contemplative practices that were selected to work with children in the program were chosen basically from three different books by considering the activities mentioned in the *Tree of Contemplative Practices* (The Center of Contemplative Mind and Society, Duerr & Bergman, 2015). These books are:

- The Relaxation & Stress Reduction Workbook for kids: Help for Children to Cope with Stress, Anxiety & Transitions (Shapiro & Sprague, 2009)
- The Anxiety Workbook for Teens. An Instant Help book for teens (Schab, 2008)
- Un Guijarro en el Bolsillo: El Budismo Explicado a los Niños (Nhat, 2003)

The contemplative practices chosen from those books were sitting meditations such as body scanning meditation, meditation with a pebble (Nhat, 2003, p.13)., and meditation with a pet, movement meditations such as yoga and walking meditation were used, too. In addition, coloring mandalas, mindful eating, writing in a journal, and *Feeling Penny Pitch Activity* (Shapiro & Sprague, 2009, p.29) were selected.

Since the sessions were in the Spanish Language, and the activities of two out of three books enlisted above are in English, the activities that were used for the intervention were translated

into Spanish by the researcher. Yoga mats were provided to children in every session, as well as other incidental materials such as small pieces of chocolate, different sheets, for instance, to indicate their emotional state at the beginning and the end of each session and a variety of small objects such as pebbles and pencils.

3.5.1 Structure of the sessions

All the sessions included different types of guided meditation that the researcher organized in order to teach children different tools with different proposes that they could use to manage their stressful moments. These meditation practices were sitting meditation, walking meditation, body scanning meditation, mindful eating, and some sessions of yoga (movement meditation).

Sessions were planned to fulfill a specific propose each one. There was not only a main practice depending on the propose of each session, but also, complementary practices that were chosen in order to reach that aim. In the next lines, you will find the objective of each session with the description of its main practice.

- Session 1: To give children a vision about what to expect from the intervention and introduce them to contemplative practices by sharing information and visual materials.
- Session 2: To encourage children to be mindful by telling them a story about the use of a pebble for meditation (Nhat, 2003, p.13).

- Session 3: To guide children through a Mindful Eating activity (Shapiro & Sprague, 2009, p.69), by eating a little piece of chocolate in order to teach them to be mindful in daily activities.

- Session 4: To identify how and where their bodies manifests symptoms of stress by coloring a human body drawing with the activity named *Where do you feel stress?* (Shapiro & Sprague, 2009, p.25), to make children aware of how stress is felt.

- Session 5: To teach children yoga postures for beginners by a yoga session guided through a story telling created by the researcher and based on yoga for kids.

- Session 6: To encourage children to talk about their feelings by doing the *Feeling Penny Pitch Activity* (Shapiro & Sprague, 2009, p.29) by guiding them to realize how alleviative it is to talk about them.

3.5.2 Mindfulness in everyday life

Participants were encouraged to discover their own ways to practice mindfulness in daily life. To facilitate this, a weekly experimental home practice exercise was assigned. For instance, children practiced *Mindful Eating* (Semple et al., 2005) at home and they had to report to their partners about their practice. In each session, children were invited to discuss their experiences about the practice at home.

The next chart was developed to present the general structure of a session:

Table 3.1 General Session Plan

	Activity	Objective	Description	Time
1	**Worries Warst Wastebasket** (Semple et al., 2005)	-To help children to forget their worries one moment; at least, during the session, in order to increase their attention to the programed activities.	- Children had to write their worries of the day in a sheet of paper and then throw that paper into the wastebasket.	2 minutes
2	**Stress Scale** (Shapiro & Sprague, 2009)	-To determine in which level of stress children are when the session begins by evaluating and reporting children's own mood- state.	-Children had to choose their mood- state at the beginning of the session in the scale and mark it.	1 minute
3	**Opening Meditation** This mediation varies by session.	-To help children to get a relaxation state of body and mind, so they could be more accessible to do the session practice by using a short-guided breath meditation. -To help children to be more focused during the session.	- Instructor guided a meditation that children had to follow by listening to while they were sitting on the yoga mats with eyes closed.	5 min
4	**"No Homework" discussion.**	-To offer children the opportunity to express their experiences, feelings and perceptions that they went through by doing their weekly homework.	-Review a discussion group for previous week's home exercise.	5 minutes
5	**Main Contemplative Practice.**	-To introduce children to a new Contemplative practice by explaining its use and its benefits for people. -To practice the exercise with the group, in order to guide children to the way the practice should be done. -To encourage children to do the practice by themselves, in their daily life, when they think it would be necessary.	- This practice varies by session.	10-12 minutes
6	**Contemplative Practice Discussion.**	-To give children the opportunity to express their experiences, feelings and perceptions that they went through by doing their exercise in group during the session.	- A group discussion about the main contemplative practice of the session.	5 minutes
7	**Yoga for kids.**	-To introduce Yoga as a Movement Meditation. -To teach children how to do yoga postures that no require a lot of experience or supervision of an expert, so they can do it by themselves out of the sessions.	- Postures of yoga. Most of the postures for this part of the session where chosen from the books mentioned before. However, some of them were proposed by the researcher according to her own experience with yoga postures.	8-10 minutes
8	**"No Homework" Instructions**	-To provide the instructions to children to do the weekly homework. -To answer any question that children might have about the instruction of the homework.	- This part varies by session according to the "No Homework" related to each week.	3 minutes
9	**Stress Scale** (Shapiro & Sprague, 2009)	-To determine in which level of stress children are when the session ends by evaluating and reporting children's own mood- state.	- Children had to choose their mood- state at the end of the session in the scale and mark it.	1 minute

10	Final Meditation	-To guide children to close the session with a meditation so that they could leave the classroom in a relaxed state to continue with their daily activities.	- Instructor guided a meditation that children had to follow by listening to while they were on the yoga mats with eyes closed.	5 minutes

As it is declared in this section, activities used for this study were supported by the work of different authors. Those authors have developed, during many years, activities that best fitted to the age range of the participants of this study. This is the reason why it was decided to work with these activities; without forgetting the recommendations from *Tree of Contemplative Practices* (The Center of Contemplative Mind and Society, Duerr & Bergman, 2015).

3.6 Collecting Data

To collect data, two semi-structured interviews were designed. Those interviews were applied to children and their parents. This was the main tool to collect data to fulfill the main objective of this research.

There was another instrument which was complementary to the interviews. The *Stress Scale* (Shapiro & Sprague, 2009). This was used to determine the changes of the participants after each session.

In the first session of the intervention children received a notebook to use it as a journal. Thus, they could write their impressions, feelings and perceptions that they experienced when doing the "No homework" (contemplative practice) at home. Furthermore, to write their impressions when they used a contemplative practice to solve problems of their everyday life, for

instance, when they had an argument with a classmate. Or when they were able to use the contemplative practice to heal stress or anxiety moments such as having a complex school project. However, this instrument was returned back by three out of seventeen children, so it was decided not to use it.

3.7 Data Analysis

According to Seliger & Shogamy (1989), there are two main types of analyzing qualitative data. The first one derives a set of categories to dealing with text segments. Once the categories are established, they are applied to the rest of the data. It allows to improve the categories and discover patterns.

The second one implicates that the categories are created at the beginning of the process. This system of categories is developed according to a conceptual framework or research questions. So, the researcher applies this system of categories to the data. The segments are selected and classified according to the system. Then, the categories are investigated by cross-referencing to find out a relationship that supports to understand the phenomenon.

The second type of analyzing data was used for this study. In the following diagram, the process followed is described:

1) The researcher transcribed the recording data, so that she could focus in the whole participants' answers from the interview.

2) The system of categories was derived according to the research questions.

3) Segments of the interview, where the research questions were answered, were lightened in transcriptions. Thus, the researcher could focus on finding commonalities or patterns.

4) Data of each participants was analyzed, compared and organized by following the system of categories.

In table 3.2, the categories developed for analyzing data are presented. These categories were developed by following the research questions and objectives of this study.

Table 3.2 Themes and Subthemes for analyzing data

Themes	Perceptions about Contemplative Practices	Opinions about Sessions	Reported Changes
Subthemes	- Perceptions before experiencing Contemplative Practices - Perceptions after experiencing Contemplative Practices	- Duration of sessions - Number of sessions - Involvement of tutors - Behavior at home during the development of the	- When finishing sessions (reported by children) - Description of Children before session program (REPORTED

	- The easiest practice - The most difficult practice - The favorite practice - Intention to keep practicing - Places where they would like to keep practicing - Intention to develop contemplative practices with people from their social environment.	program (REPORTED BY PARENTS)	BY PARENTS) - Eventual changes after sessions (REPORTED BY PARENTS)

Three were the themes defined to organize the data of this study. Each theme has different subthemes for better organization of the data. *Perceptions about Contemplative Practices* was developed to categorize children's opinion about the contemplative practices, while *Opinions*

about Sessions relates to the information that children and parents expressed about the sessions. Furthermore, *Reported Changes* supported to organize the changes that children experienced according to their perception and parents' perception.

The information collected with both participants and parents' interviews were analyzed by a coding process. All the information of the interviews was crossed out by looking for repetitive or connected patterns which could provide answers to the researcher questions stated before while *Stress Scale* information was analyzed in a comparison chart participant by participant per session.

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, data obtained through the instruments was analyzed and comparisons were made to explain the answers to the research questions. However, the structure of this section is not in the traditional way of answering the research questions in the order in which they were presented in Chapter One.

The structure of this section responds to the category of themes stablished to analyze the interviews. Therefore, the results and discussion are presented in a structured way that maintains the integrity of the research questions but shows the relationship between themes, as Martinez (2018) did in his research.

This chapter presents the outcomes of the interviews and *The Stress Scale.* Firstly, the themes and subthemes developed for analyzing the interviews and showed in table 3.2 are discussed. As it was mentioned before, these categories were developed by following the research questions and objectives of this study. Secondly, the outcomes of *The Stress Scale* are discussed in tables by sessions. These outcomes of the scale are organized according to the participants and their attendance to sessions since some of the participants were absent in some sessions.

4.1 Perceptions about contemplative practices

For this subtheme, the children were asked if they already knew what Contemplative Practices such yoga and meditation are. Most of them expressed that they were not familiar with the definition of

those practices, but they had thoughts about them that were shared during the interviews. In this part, their answers were particularly short because of the lack of knowledge of the topic.

Moreover, the other subthemes, from 4.1.3 to 4.1.8, the result of the answers that children gave in the interview is discussed. The discussion is related to the following research questions:

- What was the easiest practice to children?

- What was the most difficult practice to children?

- What was the most favorite practice to children?

- How motivated were the children about the idea of keeping practicing?

- In what places did they like the most to practice?

- Who would they like to practice with?

4.1.1 Perceptions before experiencing Contemplative Practices

For this subtheme, children were asked if they already knew what Contemplative Practices such yoga and meditation are. Most of them expressed that they were not familiar with the definition of those practices, but they had thoughts about them that were shared during the interviews. In this part, their answers were particularly short because of the lack of knowledge of the topic.

Seven out of ten participants expressed that they were not familiar with contemplative practices, but still they gave some adjectives to give opinions they had before experiencing them in the session with us.

In the following lines, the words they used will be enlisted:

PARTICIPANT 1: bored

PARTICIPANT 2: funny

PARTICIPANT 3: flexibility

PARTICIPANT 4: different

PARTICIPANT 9: Calm and happiness

PARTICIPANT 10: Good but difficult and complicated

Only two participants said that they already knew those practices and used the words *good, interesting* and *right* to express their opinion about them. One of the children did not say if he had previous knowledge, he just used the word *weird* to describe the practices.

The words that PARTICIPANT #9 used to describe practices coincide with what one of the participants of the research guided by Martinez (2018) used to talk about Mindfulness. Before he experienced Mindfulness, the participant of that research said that he would have liked to meditate to be calm. In next subtheme, the opinion of the same participant will be expressed and compared, so that the change in his perception could be appreciated.

The children might have heard about these contemplative practices since yoga and meditation became very popular some years ago. Nowadays, there is a lot of information about it in social media and TV. Perhaps, that is why children have these opinions about contemplative practices although they had not experienced the practices by themselves.

Tébar & Parra (2015) explained that most of the time, Mindfulness is taught to children while they do not know the definition or the description of the term. This might be related to avoid

extern influence in the process of the child. However, they exposed that through sessions, children developed understanding about what Mindfulness is and what the practice is useful for. The most remarkable result is that, due to sessions, children learned to practice Mindfulness by themselves.

4.1.2 Perceptions after experiencing Contemplative Practices

There was a contrast between the answers in the previous subtheme with the answers in this one. While in subtheme 4.1.1 the answers were more descriptive and some of them were negative, in subtheme 4.1.2 children's answers were positive.

In this section, almost all children expressed that their opinion about contemplative practices had changed. Most of the children said that they think that contemplative practices are funny, nice and that they liked them. Also, some of them said that they felt relaxed and calmed when practicing them.

This is similar to what Folleto et al. (2016) reported in their study about applying yoga to children from 6 to 8 years old. When children were asked about the reasons to continue the yoga practice, most of them responded using the words *funny*, *nice activity* and *relax and calm feelings* as answers. Children from Folleto et al (2016) expressed their positive acceptance to contemplative practices as the children of this study.

There were three participants who gave a more elaborated opinion about what they think about contemplative practices, about how they felt and the changes that were perceived by them after being exposed to them during the intervention.

PARTICIPANT #3

"I think it is very nice because I also learned to express myself a little bit more, at least a little bit more."

PARTICIPANT#4

"I felt calmed. I calmed down a lot. I calmed…and I liked the exercises."

PARTICIPANT #7

"Sometimes, I played (alone) just for a while…but now, I don't…I did not use to play with my little sister, but now I do."

In addition, PARTICIPANT #7 said that he believes these practices helped him to get along better with other people such as his little sister.

As well as in previous subtheme, the changes in this subtheme agrees with one participant of Martinez (2018) research. It is important to remember that in previous subtheme, the participant believed that the practice of meditation was to be calm. Nevertheless, Martinez expressed that his participant experienced a change in his opinion. He started to see the practice as a tool "to improve the way they interacted with the world around them, with others" (p.88) as PARTICIPANT #3 and PARTICIPANT #7 did.

As it was proved, perceptions of the participants changed after experienced the practices. Perceptions, that they created after receiving stimulus from social media or TV, changed after being part of the sessions. In some cases where the opinions in subtheme 4.1.1 were positive, it remained the same in this subtheme 4.1.2. For instance, PARTICIPANT #5 who in the past subtheme expressed that he thought contemplative practices were good and interesting and for this subtheme he expressed that his opinion was still the same, without any changes.

4.1.3 The easiest practice

For this subtheme, children were asked about what the easiest practices (of all the practices they did during sessions) were.

It is important to mention that two of the participants indicated two practices as the easiest one for them. Curiously, both participants mentioned the same practices. Participant #1 and Participant #2 identified Coloring Mandalas and Mindful Eating as the easiest ones for them.

In this way, Mindful Eating was the practice that was the most mentioned for the participants. Five participants indicated that was the easiest practice for them. One of the comments about why Mindful Eating was the easiest is as following:

PARTICIPANT #4

"…because with the chocolate you had to wait to eat it…feel it, taste it." "…with the food. You have to see the smell, its smell, see it, feel it."

In many studies that had to identify preferences of participants in contemplative practice as an objective, Mindful Eating has been chosen as the favorite one. This is the case of Da Silva (2016) who leaded a Mindfulness intervention with students from high school of Psychology class.

The participants of this research reported a preference for Mindful Eating. They expressed that due to this practice they were able to appreciate more the flavors and smells of the food. In addition, Tébar & Parra (2015) applied Mindful Eating using a gummy which brought up interest and enthusiasm in the participants of their study, who were children among the ages of 5 and 6 years old. The children of that study showed preference for Mindful Eating, too.

There were two practices that were mentioned the most after Mindful Eating. There were Coloring Mandalas and Walking Meditation. Those practices were mentioned by three different participants.

For coloring mandalas, the participants did not give more comments related to that practice, just mentioned it. However, about Walking Meditation there were some comments that will be shared in the next lines.

PARTICIPANT #9

"The walk was easiest for me…In the walk…I felt more…calmed because when I walk, I feel calmed. Like, like by bicycle I do it fast. Also walking…I go slowly, and I take care and that is why I liked the walk."

PARTICIPANT #10

"Walking Meditation. I do not know. I felt relaxed while walking." He also confirmed that he likes walking.

Tébar & Parra (2015) had similar comments about this practice. They declared that the participants of the study found this activity funny. This, because they perceived it as a movement game. However, in their study, it was not guided as a Mindfulness activity, since children were playing with movements during the process according to the observers.

In contrast, this perception is different according to the participants of our inquiry. In this study, children paid attention to the present moment while walking meditation was guided. This difference could be due to the place where this activity took place. We took the participants to a nice garden where bird sounds, sea sound and leaves sounds were listened by practitioners. These stimuli might help to our participants to pay attention to their senses, as a result, to pay attention to the present moment.

In addition, Meditation with a Pebble was mentioned for one participant in this part. PARTICIPANT #6 expressed:

"The pebble…because I liked that I had to watch the pebble… it helped you to get relaxed, yes, the pebble."

The research that Da Silva guided in 2016 used this activity, developed by Nhat, (2003). The participants of that study expressed that was one of the activities that caught their attention. Actually, they still have a pebble with them, so they can use it when they are in need.

In summary, here is table 4.1 that contains the practice that each participant chose:

Table 4.1 The easiest contemplative practice.

# PARTICIPANT	EASIEST PRACTICE
1	Coloring Mandalas and Mindful Eating
2	Coloring Mandalas and Mindful Eating
3	Coloring Mandalas
4	Mindful Eating
5	Mindful Eating
6	Meditation with a Pebble
7	Walking Meditation

8	Mindful Eating
19	Walking Meditation
10	Walking Meditation

As it is observed, the order of preference was the following:

- Mindful eating (mentioned by 5 participants).

- Coloring Mandalas (mentioned by 3 participants).

- Walking meditation (mentioned by 3 participants).

- Meditation with a pebble (mentioned by 1 participant).

These results prove to take some considerations when choosing and designing contemplative practices to be applied to children. Those practices who children expressed as easiest should be used in future research. Though, alternatives should be developed when applying practices that children did not consider in this section.

4.1.4 The most difficult practice

In this subtheme, the participants chose the practice that was the most difficult for them. They mentioned more practices in this section than in the previous one. The most mentioned as the most difficult one was sitting meditation. Sitting Meditation was practiced by the participants in

different forms: as body scanning meditation, guided meditation with visualizations and meditation to forget worries.

Three participants expressed that sitting meditation in its different forms were the most difficult for them. All of them said that it was difficult to close their eyes and be focused to get relaxed. This information given by the participants is the same that is reported by Semple et al. (2005). They discovered that "the children found it difficult to close their eyes when sitting together. We learned that it was challenging for young children to sit and practice watching their breath for more than three to five minutes" (p.389).

Of all the participants that chose sitting meditation as the most difficult practice, only one of them specified that body scanning meditation was the most difficult to her. The others two just mentioned sitting meditation in a general form.

This practice was considered as the less motivating in the inquiry made by Tébar & Parra in 2015. While Jean-Baptiste (2014) mentioned that teachers of their study remarked that some adaptations should be made when sitting meditation are applied to children in lower grades. The suggested adaptations are related to asking children to close their eyes because they usually are afraid of that and "the length of time in which younger children can sit quietly... (since) they have difficulty sitting still, composing their bodies enough to pay attention and listen" (p.65).

In contrast with the previous subtheme, Mindful Eating was also the second practice that was mentioned as the most difficult one. Two participants chose it as the most difficult. It is interesting to observe how in Subtheme 4.1.3, PARTICIPANT #4 expressed why Mindful Eating was difficult to him. The reason that PARTICIPANT #4 exposed in the previous subtheme was the

same reason for PARTICIPANTS #3 to consider Mindful Eating as the most difficult one. PARTICIPANT #3 said:

PARTICIPANT#3

"The chocolate…because I wanted to eat it, but how I had to do it slowly, slowly, every minute I ate a little bit, so it was difficult, as I eat a lot so…"

Tébar & Parra (2005) also add information about this. The children of that study expressed "dislike or indifference about Mindful Eating when they did not like the food they were using for the practice, not about the activity itself" (p.91).

This does not seem to be the case of PARTICIPANT #3. He loves chocolate so the difficulty that he described was related to the fact that he wanted to eat fast the chocolate (because he likes it a lot). Nevertheless, in this exercise, he had to be patient with the process.

There were some other practices that children mentioned. Those practices were Yoga, Emotions Game, Meditation with a Pet and Coloring Mandalas. These were the practices mentioned as the most difficult. Each practice was mentioned just by one different participant. So, the practice was mentioned just once when asking this question in interviews during the research.

Within the other practices that were mentioned just once, one interesting comment was made by PARTICIPANT #10. This child chose Coloring Mandalas.

 PARTICIPANT #10

"Coloring. I do not like coloring. (Because) It was difficult because I got (a mandala) that I did not understand… and I was trying to do it and I did it…but it was really difficult."

This participant is referring in his comment to the form of the mandala he got for this practice. It is important to say that mandalas were given randomly to children. To improve the development of this activity, Tébar & Parra (2005) suggested two alternatives:

- To use other plastic techniques and "gradually increase the duration of the practice" (p.93).

- "To carry out it with different formats and different materials" (p.93).

In addition, in my experience as a teacher who intends to expose students to Contemplative Practices, I received the same comment from another student of a higher grade.

She literally said: "I like Contemplative Practices, but with Mandalas is different. Patterns of Mandalas stressed me out." This could be as they think too much about the patterns and about how to color them by keeping them symmetrical, which it is not the intention of meditation with mandalas.

This practice was also chosen as the easiest one by other participants in the previous subtheme. Similarly, to what occur with Mindful Eating, PARTICIPANT #10 gave an explanation in this subtheme that is contrary to the opinion that his classmates gave in subtheme 4.1.3.

For better understanding, here is a table 4.2 with the practice that each participant chose:

Table 4.2 The most difficult practice

# PARTICIPANT	THE MOST DIFFICULT PRACTICE
1	Yoga
2	Sitting Meditation
3	Mindful Eating
4	Sitting Meditation (Body Scanning)
5	None
6	Emotions Game
7	Mindful Eating
8	Sitting Meditation
19	Meditation with a pet
10	Coloring Mandalas

This time, the order of preference to the most difficult practice was:

- Sitting Meditation (mentioned by 3 participants).

- Mindful Eating (mentioned by 2 participants).

- Yoga (mentioned by 1 participant).

- Emotions Game (mentioned by 1 participant).

- Meditation with a Pet (mentioned by 1 participant).

- Coloring Mandalas (mentioned by 1 participant).

These results benefit to take some considerations when choosing and designing contemplative practices to be applied to children. Alternatives should be developed when applying practices such as sitting meditation to group of children.

4.1.5 Favorite Contemplative Practice

This subtheme is about the favorite contemplative practice of the participants. Their answers were very clearly when identifying their favorite one. It was a significant opinion about the ones that they chose, which showed an almost general preference. My comment as an observer and educator is that the practices that were chosen were related to the preferences according to the age of the participants.

Since they were children, they might be more attracted to activities that involve enjoyment and entertainment. All the activities were chosen (or adapted) by taking into consideration the age of the participants. This is supported by what as Semple et al. (2005) suggest in their study, "children's mindfulness exercises need to be shorter than those typically offered to adults—gradually increasing the duration with practice" (p.389).

Even though, there were just few practices that were mentioned for participants as the favorite, one of the children mentioned more than one practice as his favorite practice. One child mentioned he likes most coloring mandalas and walking meditation. This was the only child who mentioned walking meditation. The child (PARTICIPANT #4) said it was because he liked to walk.

The other practices chosen by the participants were

- Mindful eating (mentioned by 3 participants).

- Meditation by coloring mandalas (mentioned by 3 participants).

- Meditation with a pebble (mentioned by 2 participants).

Two practices were chosen for the equal number of participants. 3 participants mentioned meditation by coloring mandalas as well as 3 participants mentioned mindful eating. And two participants did not express an opinion about what practice was their favorite one.

Moving on to children's opinion about meditation by coloring mandalas, one of the participants reported the following:

PARTICIPANT #8

"Coloring…because it makes me feel relaxed…coloring…without distractions."

Comments about Mindful eating were given by PARTICIPANT #10. He said:

"The one that liked me more…umm…with the…with the food…yes…because I enjoyed more. We took time (to eat)."

It was asked if he felt he enjoyed the chocolate more and he said that he did.

Two participants chose meditation with a pebble as the favorite one. One of them did not express more information about his reason, but the other child, PARTICIPANT#9, said:

PARTICIPANT #9

"The pebble, because I like to play with pebbles…it makes me feel happy."

Here is table 4.3 which summarizes the answers of the participants from subtheme 4.1.4,4.1.3 and 4.1.5.

Table 4.3 Summary of easiest, difficult and favorite practice

# PARTICIPANT	EASIEST PRACTICE	THE MOST DIFFICULT PRACTICE	FAVORITE PRACTICE
1	Coloring Mandalas and Mindful Eating	Yoga	Meditation with a pebble
2	Coloring Mandalas and Mindful Eating	Sitting Meditation	Not mentioned
3	Coloring Mandalas	Mindful Eating	Not mentioned
4	Mindful Eating	Sitting Meditation (Body Scanning)	Coloring Mandalas and Walking Meditation
5	Mindful Eating	None	Mindful Eating

6	Meditation with a Pebble	Emotions Game	Coloring Mandalas
7	Walking Meditation	Mindful Eating	Mindful Eating
8	Mindful Eating	Sitting Meditation	Coloring Mandalas
19	Walking Meditation	Meditation with a pet	Meditation with a pet
10	Walking Meditation	Coloring Mandalas	Mindful Eating

As it can be appreciated, Mindful Eating, coloring mandalas and meditation with a pebble were chosen as the easiest and the favorite contemplative practices; the same results that were found by Da Silva (2016) and Tébar and Parra (2015) in their proper studies. About Mindful Eating, Tébar and Parra (2015) reported that the practice "caught their attention and generated great enthusiasm" (p.91).

While Da Silva (2016) explained that with the same practice (Mindful Eating) the participants "appreciated the flavors and smells of the foods much better (after experienced the activity)". Additionally, about meditation with a pebble, Da Silva informed that children liked so much the activity that "in fact, they take the pebbles with them from time to time to help them face the rest of the school year with positivity" (n/p).

4.1.6 Intention to keep practicing

For this subtheme, all answers of the participants were positive. All of them affirmed that they would like to keep practicing. In fact, some of them reported that they keep practicing by themselves when stress situations came up in their lives. For instance, PARTICIPANT #6, who reported that she has done contemplative practices before an exam.

Some of the reasons given by participants to keep practicing were:

PARTICIPANT #8

"Because we all get relaxed."

PARTICIPANT #9

"Because it was something that makes me happy… I felt calm and doe to that calm, I felt happy."

PARTICIPANT "10

"…It helps me a lot. I feel that I am not alone…because sometimes, nobody wants to get along with me and with this I feel that I have company. Even in exams."

The same finding took place in 2016 when Folleto et al. asked the participants of their inquiry about the desire to keep practicing yoga after the intervention, all of them asked positively. The comments that the participants of that study expressed to keep practicing were related to positive feelings, overcome difficulties, sadness and fears as the comments of our participants. Both participants' comments are similar as it can be noticed in the next lines:

"Yoga is for us to relax, to feel better and to feel calm while in sad and emotional moments" (Speech 2);

"Yoga is breathing, to breathe better, for when we feel sad, for when we are in a bad mood, then Yoga does well" (Speech 3);

"Yoga is something that can make us feel calmer and more relaxed in the days that we are mad or angry." (Speech 4).

(Folleto et al. 2016. n/p).

Wall (2005) found out the same results. He said that one some of his participants told the school counselor they would like to continue practicing. This demonstrates that children not only feel affinity to this type of practices, but also that they liked the contemplative practices used in this program, which I repeat, were chosen according to their age. Also, it helped to show that it is suitable to use these practices for children as alternative activities oriented to kids.

4.1.7 Places where they liked the most to practice

In this part, participants expressed the places where they liked to practice the most, and places where they liked to include contemplative practice. They did not comment anything relevant about these places. They just stated the name of the places. These are the places they mentioned:

- School (mentioned by 3 participants).
- Home (mentioned by 3 participants).
- Every place mentioned by the researcher as example (mentioned by 3 participants).

- Parks (mentioned by 1 participant).

For the option "every place mentioned by the researcher as example", it refers to the fact when the researcher asked that question about where they would like to practice. She mentioned some options of answers to give ideas to children and they confirmed.

The interview question was "Would you like to practice in other places such as your home, your school, or parks?"; so, the answer of these three participants for this question was "yes". Three participants mentioned the school and other three children mentioned home. Park was mentioned only by PARTICIPANT #3.

This report agrees with what was reported by Folleto et al. (2016). Children expressed a majority preference for practicing yoga in the school.

4.1.8 Intention to develop contemplative practices with people from their social environment

This subtheme discusses the intention of the children to share contemplative practices with people from their social environment. In order to get information for this subtheme, the question in the interview was "Would you like to practice with other people such as your teacher, classmates or family?" What the participants answered is organized in order of preference in the next lines.

- Family (mentioned by 4 participants).
- All people mentioned by the researcher as example (mentioned by 3 participants).
- Classmates and teacher (mentioned by 2 participants).

- Classmates (mentioned by 1 participants).

In this section, children show a big difference about who they would like to practice with. Most of them expressed that they would like to practice with their family. Some of the comments said by one of the children who gave this answer were:

PARTICIPANT #9

"with my family… since with my family I do not share a lot."

PARTICIPANT #3

"With you… I do not want to practice with my teacher because she is old (laughing)…with my mom and with all my family:"

One of the children in Folleto's research expressed the importance of sharing the practice with his family. "One child also reported not only the personal benefits of yoga but also the positive impact extended to her family, specially related to health aspects" (2016. n/p.).

It is essential to pay particular attention to what PARTICIPANT #3 said. She was the only participant who mentioned that she would like to keep practicing with the researchers. It might indicate she developed empathy for them.

Once again, for the option "All people mentioned by the researcher as example", it refers to affirmative answers given by the participants when the researcher asked the question quoted at the beginning of this subtheme in the interview.

In this subtheme, it was confirmed that most of the children had the intention to develop contemplative practices with people from their social environment. Not only most of them wanted

to share these practices with the family but also wanted to share this knowledge with all the people possible.

4.2 Opinions about the sessions

This theme is about the opinions of the participants about the sessions they experienced. It took place in order to know some ideas to consider for next research related to Contemplative Practices with children. In addition, the answers of this subtheme might help us to identify if children developed empathy as a result of contemplative practice.

The questions from the interview for this theme were:

- For Children
  - Our sessions took 45 minutes; do you think this time is enough or would you like each session to last more or less time?
  - We had 6 sessions, do you think that number of sessions is enough, or would you like to have more or less sessions?
  - Would you like to practice with your tutor too?
- For parents
  - What was the behavior of the child during the period of time that took our intervention?

Those questions were not designed to be part of the interview. They emerged during the interview as a necessity to know (as it was mentioned in lines above) the opinions of the participants about the characteristics of the sessions.

This theme confirms what Semple et al. (2005) discovered. They declared that four out of seven participants of their study developed empathy to the program. The same happened with the participants of this research. Nine out of ten participants expressed empathy and like for contemplative practices. More comments about this fact are presented in following subthemes.

4.2.1 Duration of sessions

This subtheme is about the opinions of the participants about the time the session last. Every session was designed of around 45 minutes. Children were asked based on this time.

Here, the participants gave just two types of opinions, that it was enough time and that they would have liked it to last longer. The option with more answers was that they would have liked that the sessions would lasted longer. Eight participants answered this, whereas two of them expressed the time of the sessions was enough.

Children that answered they would have liked it to last longer were asked about their opinion of how much time they would have liked to last. The answers were the following:

PARTICIPANT #6 and PARTICIPANT #7 expressed they would have liked sessions of 1 hour.

PARTICIPANTS #5 said he would have liked 1 hour and a half by session.

PARTICIPANT #3 told us that he would have liked sessions of 2 hours, and she added she would enjoy that time; therefore, it sounded too much time.

PARTICIPANT #4 gave a curious opinion, since he said he would like 74 minutes of sessions.

PARTICIPANT #10 gave an opinion that supports this. He said, he would have liked more time of sessions "because I have more fun and I get relaxed more."

As we can see in this subtheme, children developed a preference for the contemplative practices and the sessions, since the majority of them expressed that they would like to have more time practicing. This is commented by Tébar and Parra (2015) when they expressed children developed a like for the practices.

4.2.2 Number of sessions

For this subtheme, the children were asked their opinion about the number of the sessions. The whole intervention had 6 sessions, so children were asked in base of that number of sessions. This time, participants revealed a remarkable opinion, since nine of ten declared they would have liked to have more sessions and more days of practice. This discovery is revealed by Semple et al. (2005) when they reported that one of the participants of their study "complained that the sessions were only once a week" (p.389).

Just one of the participants declared that the number of sessions decided for this research was enough. When some of the children were asked about how many sessions more they would have liked to have, they answered the following:

PARTICIPANT #5 and PARTICIPANT #6 answered that they would have liked the sessions to be part of all the Peraj Program.

PARTICIPANT #7 said he would have liked to have 17 sessions instead of six.

PARTICIPANT # 8 expressed he would have liked to have 10 or 12 sessions.

The answers of this subtheme also supported the statement declared in the previous subtheme, where it was remarked that children developed empathy and preference for these practices.

4.2.3 Involvement of tutor

In subtheme 2.3, participants were asked about the involvement of their tutors of Peraj Program in the sessions. The sessions only were applied to children, that is why it was asked if they would have liked to their tutors to be part of the sessions too. All of them answered they would have liked to take the sessions and do the practices with the company of their tutors.

When participants were asked the reasons why they would have liked to involve the tutors in the sessions they expressed some opinions. Four of them said that because of the company of the tutor and to share the activities with him or her, whereas one of the children, PARTICIPANT #9, declared that he would have liked to compete with his tutor

According to Aguayo & Gamboa (2009), children and tutors of PERAJ Program build a strong bound socioemotional relationship. This could explain why all children would have liked to share with their tutors the experience that they found funny, calmed, and good for everyone.

4.2.4 Behavior at home during the development of the program (PARENTS)

The information in this part was given by the parents of each child in the interview that was applied to them. The perceptions of the parents about the behavior of the children during the process of our intervention was investigated. This, in order to identify if it was a characteristic developed by the children that the parents would notice and relate to the intervention.

Moreover, the parents gave information about if their children did the contemplative practices at home during the development of the program. It is important to remember that children were asked to do contemplative practices at home as a "no homework" activity.

Children did not receive any reward, grade, penance or retribution for doing the activity at home. This might reveal that if children did the activities at home, it was because they were interested by themselves. Also, some parents expressed that children shared contemplative practices with their family and asked them to do the practice with them.

An observation that should be considered is about PARTICIPANT #1 and PARTICIPANT #2. They are cousins, due to this, only one person came to the interview as a representation of them. In this case, their grandmother was the person who answered the interview for both children. In some questions, she did not answer the questions we asked her, but she wandered to other topics related to the personal life of the children that are irrelevant for the research. So, she left some questions unanswered. That is the case of the questions for this part. She did not mention if she perceived the behavior of both children during the development of the program or if she could see the children practicing at home.

Results of the interview made to the parents of the participants showed that only five parents gave information about the behavior of the children during the development of the program. The other five parents did not mention this information during the interview. They just omitted that information about behavior or characteristics of their children related to the program. Something parallel occurred to Fotello et al. (2016), they just received comments of half of the parents of the participants of their research, this might happen since parents focused more on other things instead to the program. In the case of our study, it could be because we were not very persistent in the question that should answer this part. Modifications should be done in next studies to prevent this.

Meanwhile, the five parents that gave information about their children mentioned that their children showed interest and liking to contemplative practices. The children expressed to them that they enjoyed and liked doing the activities they were having in the sessions. For instance, the mother of PARTICIPANT #3 expressed:

"She tells me: I would like to learn everything about yoga, mom, because… because it makes you think, to meditate. I loved a lot the Yoga class she (PARTICIPANT#3) says. I told her that is good. And she says: Could you enroll me to Yoga classes? (laugh). I told her, my love, I really do not know where the yoga classes are, but we are going to investigate it. She said: Yes, mom because it helps me a lot, even in my body'. That is why I think she got interested in the sessions."

This statement is supported by Semple et al. (2005) discovery. They declared that the majority of the participants of their study found the program "interesting and enjoyable" (p.390).

Also, all of them expressed that they could see that their children developed a skill that helped them to get along better with the people, built better relationships and that they increased their number of friends.

When we asked the mom if she realized of a change during this period, she answered the following:

The mother of PARTICIPANT #3

"Yes, that, too. She gets along better. In a general form, I can say that now, she spends time chatting with friends, even in her dance classes. She is more friendly."

Another example is what the father of PARTICIPANT #6 reported.

PARTICIPANT #6

"I felt that her group of Friends increased…yes it was on the period of time when you practiced with her."

One mother reported that her son showed to increase his motivation.

Mother of PARTICIPANT # 7

"…Like he did the things with more energy. Yes, he changed… In the way he gets along with others. In the school, he participates in everything now, he started to be involved. He has been doing everything with more energy."

The mother of PARTICIPANT #9 declares that the child started to help her in some activities at home. This is related to the development of empathy, one of the skills that is worked during a type of contemplative practices.

The mother of PARTICIPANT #10 was the one who gave more information in this part. He declares that:

"He said that he liked (the practices) and then he started to tell me that there is a bubble (this was part of a guided meditation) and keeps telling me about his bubbles and everything. I asked him if he likes the sessions and he

said 'Yes' so, I started to ask him about it and he told me about Yoga postures of animals, that they saw figures (mandalas). his *Special Place* (a guided meditation)."

About behavior, she reported that the teacher of his son told her that the child was participating more and got along better with his classmates in the period that the intervention took place.

About the question to know if they noticed if the children did the activities at home, 8 parents said that they saw their children practicing at home. One grandma of two participants did not answer the question, so she did not say that information. Another parent said he did not pay attention to it.

The activity that was mentioned the most by the parents was that they saw their children writing in the journal. That was mentioned by three parents, whereas other two parents talked about meditation and yoga postures.

Teacher of participants of the research of Fotello in 2016 declared that "students were very affectionate to the yoga classes, and she said that the values of respect developed and discussed in the yoga classes had impact on her classes by improving children positive interactions" (p.1). All the parents that gave comments for that intervention reported that they could notice the children practicing what they had learned in the intervention at home. This information agrees with what parents of our participants declared.

4.3 Reported Changes

This is the main theme of this research since in this part the participants' reports about the changes they perceived in themselves during the program are discussed. These changes were reported not only from the perceptions of the children involved in this program, but also from the perception of their parents. The research questions that are answered in this section are:

- What changes did the children experience after the two-week intervention?
- What are the changes children experienced according to parents' perceptions related to contemplative practices?

This data was collected with two different tools: The interview to collect data from parents' viewpoint and *The Stress Scale* (Shapiro & Sprague, 2009) to know the changes that children experienced after the sessions.

A comparison of what children marked at the beginning and the end of each session was done. It is important to remember that the stress scale was applied on children twice. On the first time, it was applied at the beginning of the session and the second time it was applied at the end. In this way, the researcher could identify the mood children reported before and after each session and determine if there were changes in their mood and consequently, in their level of stress, just after experiencing contemplative practices in sessions.

4.3.1 Eventual changes after sessions (reported by parents)

For this subtheme, a comparative chart is used to describe and compare the information given by the parents of each participant. In this part of the research, the information varies, as every child is completely different from one another.

The information was organized in three columns. The first column indicates the number of the participant. It was decided to number the participants instead of providing their names in order to keep their identity private. The second column is about the description of the participants (given by their parents) before they experienced the sessions with contemplative practices. In the third column, the changes that the parents perceived in their children after being part of the session program are listed.

This is the table where changes are reported:

Table 4.4 Description of participants before and after the program.

# of participant	Description of the participant before the program	Description of the participant during and after the program (reported changes)
1	Pampered and without initiative to participate at school.	Not mentioned.
2	Rebel, aggressive and gainsaying with her grandmother but friendly with other people.	Not mentioned.

3	With a lot of initiative, well behaved.	Improved their grades, she became more positive and showed interest in learning more about contemplative practices. She gets along better with her friends. Showed more initiative.
4	Overactive	Her initiative to participate improved, in general.
5	He could never be quiet. Very active in things that he likes. Good grades. Easy going. Active participation in class.	He became quieter. He practiced the contemplative practices at home which made changes in his routine because he started to include the practices to his daily activities. He kept good grades.
6	Not mentioned.	He became responsible and has more friends. Moreover, he has more initiative to do activities.
7	Stubborn. He does not like to do homework.	He became more active and has more initiative to participate in school. He gets along better with other people.
8	Intelligent but absent-minded and procrastinator. He does not give importance to eat.	He cares about eating now. He became more active, responsible and do things before deadlines (he doesn't procrastinate as much).

| 9 | Sensitive and explosive. | Obedient. He started to help his mom at home. More initiative with activities. He eats slower. |
| 10 | Wordless. He doesn't communicate his feelings. Shy. | With initiative and very active. More confident. He participates more in class and is talkative. |

This table shows the comparison of the description of each participant before and after the program. The description was made by the parents of each participant. Information used for Table 4.4 was merely the words from parents' participants. They were originally interviewed in Spanish, but the words in the chart were translated and used as they were in the transcripts of the interviews.

Regarding the third column, the tutor of PARTICIPANT #1 and #2 did not give information about them. Her answers for this question, for both participants, were not clear. It is important to remember that PARTICIPANT #1 and PARTICIPANT #2 are cousins and the person that represented them in the interview was the same, their grandmother.

These descriptions, given by parents, involve well-being, social competence and academic achievement. This is linked to what Waters et al. (2014) reported as effects caused by meditation (see *Figure 2.1*). As well as Shapiro et al. (2008), who described the effects of contemplative practices in a report about a review of researchers results related to Contemplative Practices. They describe the effects of meditation in the participants as the following:

- Cognitive and Academic Performance: Mindfulness may improve ability to maintain preparedness and orient attention and to process information quickly and

accurately. As well as concentration-based meditation, practiced over a long-term, may have a positive impact on academic achievement.

- Mental Health and Psychological Well-Being: Mindfulness meditation may decrease stress, anxiety, and depression, supports better regulation of emotional reactions and the cultivation of positive psychological states.

- Development of the Whole Person: Meditation can support the development of creativity, enhances the development of skills needed for interpersonal relationships and may help to cultivate self-compassion. Moreover, empathetic responses are increased with meditation and mindfulness practices.

Shapiro et al (2008. p. 4).

Those authors expressed effects of meditation the same with different words. That is why those effects were considered when designing and applying the interview to the parents. In general, the changes that the children mostly showed according to their parents' perceptions were:

- They showed more initiative and participation.
- They showed an increase in their social relationships.
- They became more responsible at school and at home.

Seven out of ten parents indicated that children showed more participation and initiative in school and housework. This is what parents of the research made by Folleto et al (2016) reported. They declared that "answers demonstrated that in the parents' perceptions, most of children started to be more active at home" (n/p). This is related with the questions in the interview about well-being.

Furthermore, regarding academic achievement, just one parent reported that the child achieved higher grades. However, this is supported by what Waters et all. (2014) said about *Academic Achievement*. After revising fifteen studies about the impact of Meditation School Based Programs, they concluded that "For academic achievement, there has simply not been enough research to warrant any conclusions" (p.120). This is the reason why some recommendations will be developed in the conclusion part of this study.

There were three isolated cases where parents gave additional information. Those cases should be considered since they gave a deep opinion about parent's perceptions around the sessions guided to this project. They also gave information perceived by parents about how contemplative practices improve children's well-being. First, according to the comment of his father, PARTICIPANT #5 became quieter and his daily routine changed as a result of the contemplative practices.

Interview fragment of FATHER OF PARTICIPANT #5

- Researcher: You just commented that the child was restless, and he likes being this way, did he get calmed now?

- Father: Yes, he got calmed.

- Researcher: Do you believe this was due to the intervention that we made? or was it in collaboration with PERAJ?

- Father: I believe that is due to what he made with you, because of the yoga and all those things. Yes, because before you started, he came as usual, he arrived home and his routine were the same; however, when you started to practice yoga and all the practices I started to see that he began to do the practices at home (and his routine changed).

- Researcher: We worked with the children at the end of February and all March, did you notice these changes in this period of time?

- Father: Yes

The last question showed in the fragment above is also useful to realize the effort of the researcher to remark that the changes reported should be specially related to the Session Program and not as a result of PERAJ program. As in this question, the researcher emphasizes this in the interview every time it was necessary.

For the second case, MOTHER OF PARTICIPANT #9 declared that his child eats slower now. However, this participant did not mention this practice in Theme 4.1, where we described the impressions of the children about the practices. This activity was encouraged by the researcher when practicing Mindful Eating in one of the sessions.

In the third case, the mother of PARTICIPANT #8 informed that before her child experienced contemplative practices, he refused to eat when she asked him to do so. But after being part of the sessions, she described that her child changed at this point.

MOTHER OF PARTICIPANT #3

"He used to go to watch T.V. (instead of eating), and he stayed there. I asked him to eat many times and he just did not. But now, this does not happen. He himself comes to the table and he eats…"

Again, this is something that was taught to the participants when practicing Mindful Eating. It is essential to remember that Mindful eating was considered by the participants as one of the two favorites practices of the sessions. The other practice was Meditation by Coloring Mandalas.

It is important to notice that the changes reported by the parents of the participants of this inquiry can be classified on *Figure 2.1*, since the question of the survey related to those description were classified in those three aspects (well-being, social competence and academic achievement).

Some comments of the parents are presented in the following lines:

MOTHER OF PARTICIPANT #4:

- Researcher: Do you consider that a change in the child's behavior or development has occurred due to our intervention?

- Mother: I mean, the only thing that I noticed in her is that at the beginning, she was very… you have to compel her. "Go now", "did you do your homework?", "Did you do…?". But now, not. Now, it is like she does it by herself. I mean, she does the things without the necessity of telling her anything. She has initiative.

MOTHER OF PARTICIPANT #7:

- Mother: … He started to participate in everything, he started to… put effort in everything.
- Researcher: Do you believe this was a consequence of the course that we gave them? The course of Yoga and meditation
- Mother: Yes.

MOTHER OF PARTICIPANT #8:

"Nowadays, I can see his change. He himself does it when he has...for example, yesterday, he had to go to the cinema, he dressed and everything, but before, he did not used to do that".

MOTHER OF PARTICIPANT #10:

"Now, I do not have to tell him "do the homework"… If I have to go out to do things, when I get home, I tell him "do your homework because you have to go to PERAJ" and he answers me "No, mom. I have already done the homework."

In the topic related to social competence, 3 parents declared that children get along better with classmates, friends, and family members.

MOTHER OF PARTICIPANT # 6 also said:

- Mother: His group of friends is bigger,

- Researcher: But, was it in the period that we gave him the intervention?

- Mother: Yes, it was in that time.

MOTHER OF PARTICIPANT #10 said:

"(His teacher) tells me "look, David participates now (in class), he plays with his classmates", I mean, he speaks now."

As it is explained in previous lines, parents' report about changes that they children had, agrees with the discovery of two previous research. Waters et al. (2014) and Shapiro et al. (2008), reported that those effects that were expressed by parents are caused by Mindful meditation.

4.3.2 Changes after sessions (reported by children)

The changes in stress that the children perceived in themselves and reported at the end of each session are discussed in this subtheme. As it is described in previous lines, participants received one *Stress Scale* (Shapiro & Sprague, 2009) at the beginning of the session. So, they could report their stress before doing the contemplative practices and one Stress Scale at the end of each session, so they could report their stress (or mood) after experiencing contemplative practices. This exercise

was done to determine whether contemplative practices had helped or not the participants' level of

stress. This is the original Stress Scale that was used:

Figure 4 1 The Stress Scale
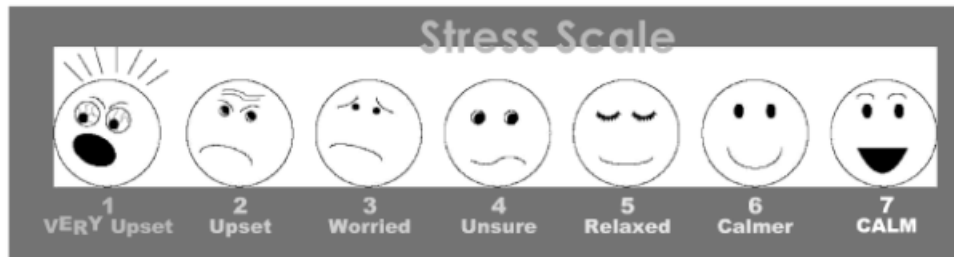
Shapiro & Sprague (2009).

It was necessary to translate the *Stress Scale* into Spanish since participants were native

speakers of this language and did not have a high level of proficiency in English. Moreover, a name

and date section were added to the translation, so the researcher was able to identify the stress of

each participant in every session. This is the Spanish version of the *Stress Scale* made by the

researcher for this inquiry:

Figure 4 2 Translation of Stress Scale with name and date for data identification

The Scale has seven different states of stress to describe the mood of the participants. It goes

from the highest level of stress to the lowest. As it is noticed in *Figure 2*, the order is in a scale

from one to seven. Children were asked to choose the state of mood in which they were at the

beginning and at the end of each session. As they were six sessions, there are twelve different Stress

Scale reports per children. This information is presented in Figure 4.3. In this figure, average results

by session (beginning and after) are presented.

Figure 4 3 Summary of Stress Scale results per session. Information provided by each participant
before and after the sessions.
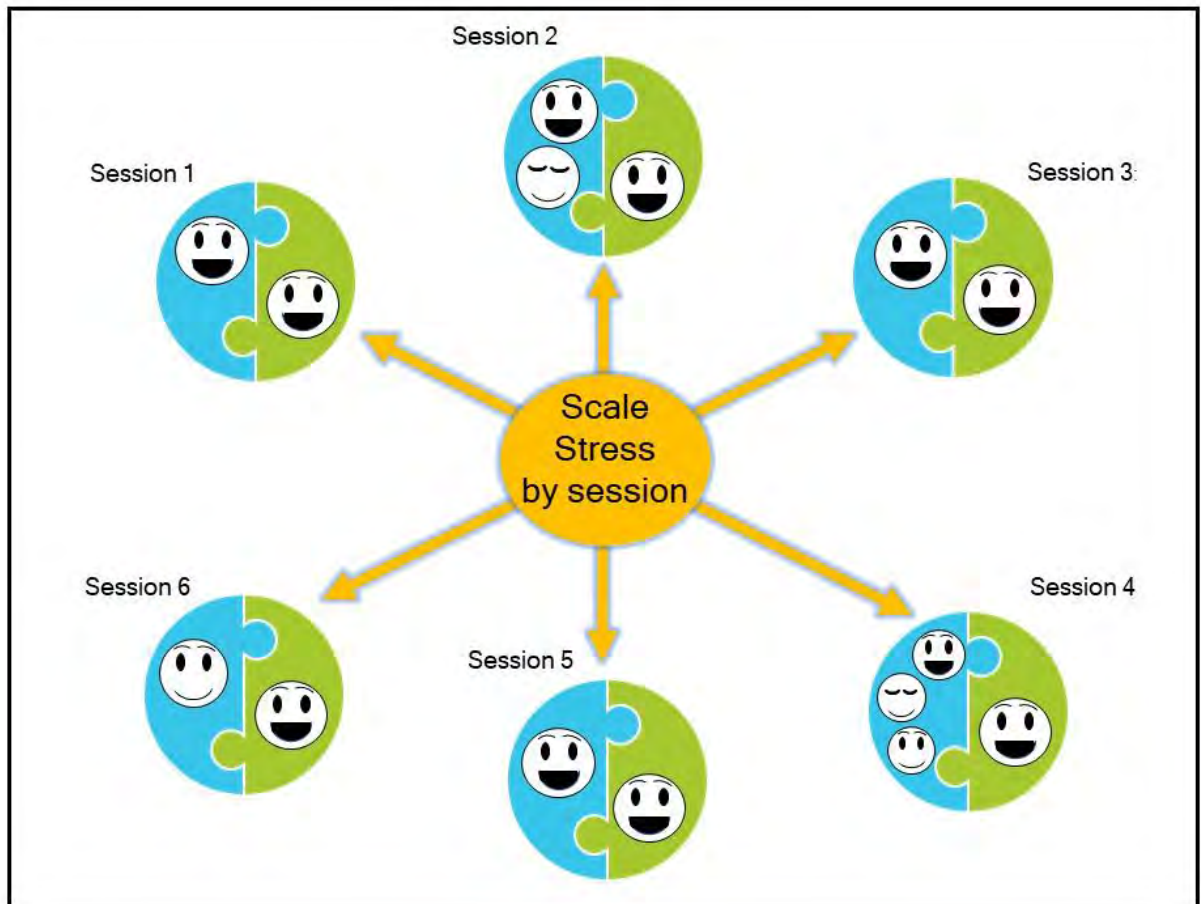
As it can be appreciated in Figure 4.3, in session 1 the average of stress was number 7 (calm).

This occurred not only at the beginning of the session, but also at the end of it. This could be since

children showed enthusiasm for starting the intervention. In session 2, children started the session

with a stress average of 5 and 7 of the scale. This refers to relaxed and calmer. They finished the

session with and average stress of 7 (calm). The main practice for this session was meditation with

a pebble. That practice was chosen by most participants as one of their favorite, which might have influenced in the improvement of children's stress.

Moreover, in session 3, children showed the same average in their level of stress at the beginning and at the end of the session. The average was 7 (calm). However, in session 4 children started with a stress average of 5, 6 and 7 which corresponds to relaxed, calmer and calm. They finished with an average of 7 (calm). In that session, children colored mandalas. They demonstrated interest for the activity and was one of the activities that they reported as their most favorite. Nevertheless, in session 5, children started and finished the session with the same level of stress. Once again, the average was 7 (calm). In the last session, children started with an average of 6 and ended the session with 7 (calm).

As the results show, even when in the half of the session children did not start them with an average of the calmest level of stress, the average at the end of all session was the calmest level of stress. In this study, it is not possible to know why some children began the session with a lower stress level since children were not interviewed at the beginning to identify if there were some situations in that day that made them feel stressed. But what it is possible to identify is that the average at the end of all the sessions turned or remained the calmest level of stress. This proved that contemplative practices that were done in sessions helped children to improve their level of stress those days.

Six charts to compare the stress of each participant at the beginning and at the end of each session are presented in *Appendix C* for more details. There are six tables, one per session. Specific information is explained in those tables, such as the assistance of the students and changes presented in the stress of the participant presented in a particular way.

Here is a summary of the tendencies of the sessions. Table 4.11 shows the general tendency so it can be seen more clearly.

Table 4.5 Summary of tendencies per session.

# of Session	# of participants present in the session	# of cases with positive changes reported	# of cases with negative changes reported	# of cases without changes reported
Session 1	7	4	2	1
Session 2	10	4	4	2
Session 3	9	2	4	2
Session 4	8	5	1	2
Session 5	7	3	2	2
Session 6	10	5	3	2

The tendency of the session is four out of six sessions showed that the majority of the participants had positive changes (see *Table 4.11*). One session showed that four participants had positive changes, and four had negative changes. The same number of participants for positive and negative changes. One session showed that most of the participants had higher level of stress after the session.

The positive changes that most of the children experienced and that are expressed in previous paragraphs might be due to the different guided meditation that were used in each session as Wall (2005) expresses. He said that the result of these practices often induces to relaxation. Moreover,

children that have not experienced changes or that experienced unfavorable changes might not be due to that they did not feel comfortable with the meditation of that session.

An observation of the session that I can add to that statement is that during meditation, some children were not able to close their eyes. In some cases, one or two were talking during the guided meditation. That distracted the others who were willing to follow the instructions while the instructor was guiding them.

Jean Baptiste (2014) suggested that even when the contemplative practices were meticulously selected in order to the age of the children, and they were taken from books especially designed for children, with practices adapted to their age. There still are some practices that are not fitted to all children, since every children response differently to them.

It was a surprise to find some similarities and contrast with the studies of other authors. Principally in the subthemes about practices that children perceived as the easiest and most difficult for them, because that information help to make considerations about what practices fit better to that age range. Moreover, it helps to improve the use of those practices in early childhood.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, the conclusions are developed and presented by sections. Relevant findings are discussed by following the research questions order. In addition, limitations of the study are described as well as advice for future research and pedagogical implications.

5.1 Relevant findings and conclusions

In this section, relevant findings of this intervention are declared by answering the research questions. Changes that children experienced by their own perception and parents' perceptions are explained. Additionally, children's determination to keep practicing, children's preference about practices, places and people they liked to practice with and children's empathy with the contemplative practices are described.

5.1.1 What changes did the children experience after the six-week intervention?

Conclusions in this section are about the changes that the participants reported. These arguments are related to the two instruments used to collect data for this study: Children's interview and *Scale Stress* (Shapiro& Sprague, 2009) (see *Figure 3.1*).

More description about changes that children experienced but reported by their parents are presented in section 5.1.8.

5.1.1.1 Changes in the children's perceptions about contemplative practices

Most of the children from this area were not familiar with contemplative practices or other topics related to it, such as yoga or meditation, before being part of the study. Most of the participants identified practices as boring and difficult. Their opinions about contemplative practices were not enthusiastic at the beginning of this intervention. A few participants demonstrated that they usually have the typical idea of what these practices involve. For instance, relaxation, flexibility, and calm are some of their perceptions after experiencing them.

However, as Tébar & Parra (2015) declared in their study, after practicing and being in touch with the different contemplative practices, they developed interest and responded enthusiastically to the practice. Furthermore, they reported that they felt not only relaxed and calmed but also had fun and found the practice nice.

5.1.1.2 Changes in the children's stress after sessions

Scale Stress (Shapiro& Sprague, 2009) was used to collect information for this section. Results from this instrument showed that children's level of stress was reduced in most of the sessions (see *Table 4.11*). This means that contemplative practices helped children to be less stressed. This result cannot be compared with results of other research since there was not found any research that used the same scale (or a similar one) to reveal this type of data.

5.1.2 How motivated were the children about the idea of keeping practicing?

Besides the difficulty in some activities reported by the children, all of them expressed their willing to keep practicing. Moreover, some of them reported to use contemplative practices to face and solve difficult situations in their daily life. These difficult situations are related with their age range. For example, before an exam and when they had agreements with a member of their family or classmates were the situations where they expressed to use contemplative practices. These findings are proved by Folleto et al. (2016), Wall (2005) and Martinez (2018).

5.1.3 In what places did they like the most to practice?

Children developed such empathy that they expressed they would like to have the opportunity to practice in every place they go. The most popular answers were that they would like to practice at home and in the school (Folleto et al., 2016). Nevertheless, there were the same number of opinions that expressed they would like to practice everywhere. This shows their like for contemplative practices.

5.1.4 Who would they like to practice with?

Children would like to share contemplative practices with their family. This is because they want to spread the benefits they perceived with their beloved ones. In Folleto's (2016), one participant

expressed the importance of sharing the practice with his family, too. The opinion of this participant was supported by her idea of spreading the benefits and that positive impact to her family to help with health problems. Also, it might be because they want to share quality time with them, as one participant reported.

In addition, all participants declared they would like to practice in Peraj program with their tutors. Since their tutors were not part of this intervention, children were asked if they would like to involve them. All the answers were positive. Children established a bounding relationship with Peraj tutors (Aguayo & Gamboa 2009). This explained why they want to share the benefits of contemplative practices with them.

5.1.5 What was the easiest practice to children?

As the easiest contemplative practice, children showed preference for practices that are related to actions that they are familiar with, such as eating, coloring, and walking. It is probably due to the fact that they have already done these and find them easier in result. This agrees with the results reported by Tébar & Parra (2015) and Da Silva (2016). Both studies showed that children expressed preference for these activities.

5.1.6 What was the most difficult practice to children?

Sitting meditation, closing their eyes and trying to focus while listening to the instructor are difficult for them. As Sample et al. (2005) and other researchers such as Jean-Baptiste (2014) and

Tébar & Parra (2015) found before, when working with children, some adaptations about sitting meditation should be taken into consideration.

In contrast, Meditation with a Pebble, developed by Nhat (2003) to teach Mindfulness to children was one of their favorites even thought they had to be sat with eyes closed. This might be because the author created this sitting meditation specially for children of that age range.

5.1.7 What was the most favorite practice to children?

For this question, children chose the same practices as in 5.1.7. The practices chosen as the most favorite ones were two. Coloring mandalas and Mindful Eating were selected by the same number of participants. These results are similar to other research such as Tébar & Parra (2015) and Da Silva (2016).

5.1.8 What are the changes children experienced according to parents' perceptions related to contemplative practices?

Parents could perceive and report changes that can be organized by the classifications made by two authors. Waters et al. (2014) classified the effects caused by meditation (see Figure 2.1) in three approaches. These approaches are well-being, academic achievement, and social competence.

While Shapiro et al. (2008), established three approaches, too. Shapiro et al. named the approaches as mental health and psychological well-being, cognitive and academic performance, and development of the whole person. The classifications made by the authors are the same, but with different names.

Well-being changes reported by parents are that their children showed a change in their attitude. After the intervention, children became more positive, participative, and responsible. Within *academic achievement*, parents reported that children showed more interest in school and initiative to do their homework. Some of them increased their grades and became more participative in class. For *Social competence* children demonstrated to get along better with their siblings and their classmates. Moreover, they showed initiative to help in housework and familiar responsibility.

5.1.9 Did the children develop empathy as a result of contemplative practice?

Participants enjoyed the session so much that they wanted more sessions to last longer. As it can be perceived, participants developed empathy to these practices. This information is confirmed by their parents as children expressed those to them. Moreover, they showed this enthusiasm about their participation in this program at home and when answering this question in the interview. When Semple et al. (2005) and Tébar and Parra (2015) investigated this fact, they found the same results in their participants.

5.2 Limitations of the study

The changes that can be proved as a result of the intervention are not specific since parents did not give detailed information in the interview. This is probably because of the time allotted for the intervention. Even though the time used for this study was replicated from Semple et al. (2005) research, this time was not long enough for collecting data about changes and giving children enough practice to experience deep changes.

As quoted by Davidson et al. (2012), it is presumably that these changes would be most prominent in long-term. However, these authors also mentioned that there is evidence that indicates that even very brief practice in, for instance, emotion regulation can produce reliable alterations in brain function. Mindfulness practice promote emotional regulation.

The interview is another fact that should be considered as it was semi-structured, as well as the characteristics of the participants. Mainly because some parents were wondering and did not answer the questions concisely. This combination affected the data collection because this data was not concise. The interview should be more structured and less open in such a way that will not allow wide answers and help to get more specific reports of changes. This was suggested by Shapiro et al. (2008), too.

5.3 Recommendations for future research

This research was done to spread the benefits of contemplative practice in children. There were a few authors that were concerned about the children's preference for different contemplative practices. Thanks to these studies it was determined that some adjustments should be done when working these practices with children. However, it is needed to research more about this fact. This recommendation is in order to complement and improve the types of practices that can be used when interventions with children.

Another recommendation is that researchers should consider the characteristics of the participants and the people who is going to be involved in the data collection. In this way, the researcher can choose an instrument that fits those participant's characteristics in order to avoid deficient answers.

Increasing the time of the interventions could help to get better results (Waters et al., 2014). It is another recommendation to make the efficacy of these practices more remarkable. This is supported Davidson et al. (2012), when they assured that changes would be most prominent in long-term.

Finally, the research about contemplative practice and Mindfulness in Mexico (Tobar & Garcia, 2017) and Latin America seems almost inexistent. It is important to investigate about these topics since the life and culture in these countries are different from countries where Mindfulnes research and contemplative practices are considered a necessity for the integral development of children and young people. Moreover, to spread the results of this type of interventions in this

area might increase the interest of professionals to include these activities in their professions which might mean a positive impact to the society.

5.4 Pedagogical Implications

One pedagogical implication for this type of research is timing. Most of the time, teachers deal with time of the class or even the whole school cycle. Sometimes it is not enough time to cover all the topics designed. Because of this, adding contemplative practices to a regular classroom could be difficult (Waters et al. 2014).

It would be important to consider promoting a Mindfulness program that can be implemented at schools. This might allow to assign special time for practicing Mindfulness in order to spread tools that help students to manage their stress and anxiety.

As the intention of this research is to disseminate these types of practices, it is essential to provide recommendations where these interventions can be applied. Another option should be to implement contemplative intervention in Peraj. This intervention could be as a permanent class within Peraj. This might not affect timing or other situations when implementing a Mindfulness program in the social service program.

To spread the benefits of contemplative practices, these activities should be proposed to integrate the curriculum of all the majors of the University of Quintana Roo as a new general subject. This might help students to decrease their academic stress and to increase their well-being

and their level of attention. Some considerations should be done in order to implement these practices without affecting the regular curriculum and time designed for the semester.

Nowadays, socioemotional development is an important feature of every educational program in all the educational levels. So, it might be an important support to include contemplative practices to reinforce and complement the development of this feature in all the schools and colleges.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Consent Letter

Universidad de Quintana Roo

Carta de consentimiento para estudio de investigación

Título del proyecto: *Efecto de prácticas contemplativas en niños del programa de servicio social PERAJ de la Universidad de Quintana Roo*

La profesora Argelia Peña Aguilar y tesista de la licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa, Mónica Yolanda Alatorre Xool, se encuentran realizando una investigación sobre el tema mencionado anteriormente.

Estimado padre de familia:

La siguiente información se le proporciona para que decida si desea que su hijo/a participe en el presente estudio. Debe tener en cuenta que su hijo es libre de decidir no participar o de retirarse en cualquier momento sin que esto afecte su relación con el programa PERAJ, el instructor, o la Universidad de Quintana Roo.

El propósito de este estudio es averiguar cómo el uso de algunas prácticas contemplativas influye en el desempeño diario del niño en diversos ámbitos: el escolar, el familiar y social. Este trabajo pretende identificar no solamente cómo la práctica de estas técnicas de relajación y concentración coadyuvan en el aprendizaje de los estudiantes, pero igualmente la manera en que influyen en su actitud hacia sus familiares y amigos.

Los datos se recogerán en tres puntos: al inicio del curso, durante el curso y al final de éste. La recolección de los datos incluirá ciertos documentos como: diarios reflexivos hechos por los niños y las instructoras, entrevistas cortas a los niños, tutores y padres; además de notas de campo de observación de clase. Las personas que participarán en la recolección de datos serán las instructoras e investigadoras, y en menor medida, los niños que participen. Es importante aclarar que no todos los niños y padres serán entrevistados, sino que serán seleccionados al azar. De un grupo de 22 estudiantes, serán seleccionados 6 de ellos para medir el efecto de esta pequeña intervención, en caso de que haya habido alguno.

Los niños participantes pueden realizar cualquier pregunta sobre el estudio, antes de participar o durante el tiempo que estén participando. Nos dará mucho gusto compartir los resultados con ustedes después que la investigación

haya concluido. Sin embargo, el nombre de su hijo no será asociado con los hallazgos de la investigación, ya que su identidad como participante será conocida sólo por el investigador.

Por favor, al firmar esta carta de consentimiento hágalo con pleno conocimiento de la naturaleza y finalidad de los procedimientos, por lo cual le pedimos que no dude en hacernos preguntas en caso de tenerlas. Una copia de esta carta le será proporcionada para su garantía y protección.

Atentamente,

Profesora Argelia Peña Aguilar

Yo, _____ he leído y comprendido la información anterior y mis preguntas han sido respondidas de manera satisfactoria. He sido informado y entiendo que los datos obtenidos en el estudio pueden ser publicados o difundidos con fines científicos. Convengo en permitir la participación de mi hijo en este estudio de investigación.

_____   _____

Firma del padre de familia o tutor   Fecha

APPENDIX B

Children Interview

Cuestionarios para los niños.

1. ¿Qué pensabas acerca de las prácticas como el yoga y la meditación antes de las sesiones?
2. ¿Es fácil para ti describir o expresar tus sentimientos con los demás? Si o no, ¿Por qué?
3. ¿Preferirías escribir estos sentimientos en un diario para que solo tú puedas leerlo? O ¿Crees qué es mejor compartirlo con los demás?
4. ¿Prestas atención a las sensaciones que tienes a lo largo del día? Por ejemplo, al efecto que tiene el viento cuando roza tu piel o tu cabello o el agua cuando te bañas.
5. ¿Qué tan seguido presta atención a tus alimentos? Por ejemplo, su forma, su color, su olor o su sabor al momento de probarlos y a las sensaciones que estos te provocan.
6. Cuando tienes algún sentimiento como preocupación, enojo o estrés. ¿Cómo te sientes? Y ¿Qué haces para controlarlos?
7. Si este sentimiento es causado por alguna persona en particular, por ejemplo, tu hermano al no querer prestarte algún juguete. ¿Qué tan fácil es para ti expresarle tus sentimientos a esta persona?
8. ¿Afecta tu concentración el estar preocupado por algo? ¿Qué haces para que tus preocupaciones no te distraigan a lo largo del día, como en la escuela?
9. ¿Prestas atención a los paisajes que te rodean? Como, por ejemplo, los lugares por donde pasas para ir a la escuela.
10. ¿Cómo te sentiste al llevar un diario durante las sesiones? ¿Te gustó?
11. ¿Cambio tu manera de pensar sobre este tipo de prácticas después de haber experimentado con ellas?
12. ¿Qué técnicas fueron más fáciles de realizar para ti?
13. ¿Qué técnicas fueron más difíciles de realizar para ti? ¿Por qué?
14. ¿Crees que hubo algún cambio en ti debido a tu experiencia con estas prácticas?
15. ¿Crees qué obtuviste cosas buenas a través de estás practicas? Por ejemplo, que ahora te concentras mejor, prestas más atención a tu entorno y las personas que te rodean.
16. ¿Piensas seguir aplicando a tu vida diaria este tipo de prácticas?
17. ¿Te gustaría que se implementaran estas prácticas? ¿En qué lugares (casa, parques, escuelas)? ¿Con qué personas (familia, maestros, compañeros, otros niños o personas desconocidas)?

Parents Interview

1. ¿Cómo era el comportamiento de (nombre del niño) antes de nuestra intervención?
2. ¿Cómo era su forma de relacionarse con los demás (familiares y personas desconocidas)?
3. ¿Cómo era su desempeño escolar?
4. ¿Qué comentarios sobre el niño, tanto sobre su personalidad como su desempeño académico le han dado sus profesores de la escuela a la que asisten?
5. ¿El niño realizaba en casa las actividades que aprendió con nuestra intervención?
6. ¿En algún momento su hijo le pidió que participara con él en el uso de las prácticas que aprendió con nosotros? ¿Usted las realizó junto con él? ¿Nos podría comentar como fue esa experiencia?
7. En caso de haber realizado prácticas en casa, ¿Qué técnicas fueron más fáciles de realizar? ¿Qué técnicas fueron más difíciles de realizar para ti? ¿Cuál cree usted que haya sido el motivo?
8. ¿Consideras que hubo algunos cambios en el comportamiento y desenvolvimiento del niño durante o después de la intervención? Menciona algunos.
9. ¿Qué tipo de cambios pudo notar? (comportamiento, social, cognitivos, motivación, escolar)
10. ¿Mejoró de alguna manera su desempeño escolar o su participación en clase?
11. ¿Cuál es tu opinión sobre este tipo de prácticas?
12. Después de ver estos posibles cambios ¿Crees que sería bueno implementar estás prácticas en la vida de las personas? Por ejemplo, en su casa o centro educativos.

Tables

Table 4.1 Session 1: Stress Scale

Participant	Present	Stress at the begining	Stress at the end
1			
2	*	7	5
3	*	3	5
4			
5	*	7	7
6	*	4	7
7	*	5	7
8	*	7	6
9	*	5	7
10			
Present:		Absent:	
7		3	

Description of participants before and after the program. Alatorre (2017).

This table compares the stress of the participants before and after session one. This data was collected on February 22, 2012. Four out of seven participants reported positive changes by the end of the session. One did not report any change as he was already calmed and kept this mood through the session. Two of them selected a higher level of stress.

Table 4.2 Session 2: Stress Scale

Participant	Present	Stress at the begining	Stress at the end
1	*	5	6
2	*	6	7
3	*	8	8
4	*	7	7
5	*	7	7
6	*	5	7
7	*	8	7
8	*	7	7
9	*	5	7
10	*	6	5
Present:		Absent:	
10		0	

Description of participants before and after the program. Alatorre (2017).

This table compares the stress of the participants before and after second session. This data was collected on February 29, 2012. In this session, all the participants were present. Four out of ten participants reported positive changes by the end of the session. Four of them did not report any change as they were already calmed and kept this mood through the session. Two selected a higher level of stress. It is important to mention that from this session, participant #3 and participant #7 started to add a number to the scale. They both wrote the number 8, draw a face and wrote "happy" under it.

Table 4.3 Session 3: Stress Scale

Participant	Present	Stress at the begining	Stress at the end
1	*	6	5
2	*	7	6
3			
4	*	-	5
5	*	7	7
6	*	5	7
7	*	7	7
8	*	7	5
9	*	5	7
10	*	6	5
Present:		Absent:	
9		1	

Description of participants before and after the program. Alatorre (2017).

This table compares the stress of the participants before and after session three. This data was collected on March 7, 2012. Two out of nine participants reported positive changes by the end of the session. Two of them did not report any change as they were already calmed and kept this mood through the session. Four participants selected a higher level of stress. One did not indicate her level at the beginning, so it could not be compared.

Table 4.4 Session 4: Stress Scale

Participant	Present	Stress at the begining	Stress at the end

1	*	5	6
2	*	3	7
3	*	2	8
4			
5	*	7	7
6			
7	*	6	7
8	*	6	6
9	*	7	5
10	*	5	6
Present:		Absent:	
8		2	

Description of participants before and after the program. Alatorre (2017).

This table compares the stress of the participants before and after session four. This data was collected on March 14, 2012. Five out of eight participants reported positive changes by the end of the session. Two of them did not report any change as they were already calmed and kept this mood through the session. One participant selected a higher level of stress.

Table 4.5 Session 5: Stress Scale

Participant	Present	Stress at the begining	Stress at the end
1	*	5	6
2	*	7	7
3			
4			

5	*	7	7
6	*	5	7
7	*	6	7
8	*	7	6
9			
10	*	7	5
Present:		Absent:	
7		3	

Description of participants before and after the program. Alatorre (2017).

Table 4.10 compares the stress of the participants before and after experienced the session five. This data was collected on March 21, 2012. Three out of seven participants reported positive changes by the end of the session. Two of them did not report any change as they were already calmed and kept this mood through the session. Two participants selected a higher level of stress.

Table 4.6 Session 6: Stress Scale

Participant	Present	Stress at the begining	Stress at the end
1	*	6	5
2	*	7	6
3	*	8	7
4	*	7	7
5	*	7	7
6	*	5	7
7	*	6	7
8	*	6	7

9	*	5	7
10	*	6	7
Present:		Absent:	
10		0	

Description of participants before and after the program. Alatorre (2017).

This table compares the stress of the participants before and after experienced the session six. This data was collected on March 28, 2012. Five out of ten participants reported positive changes by the end of the session. Two of them did not report any change as they were already calmed and kept this mood through the session. Three other participants selected a higher level of stress.

APENDIX D

Pictures