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Прегледни рад

Towards Multicultural Schools: Exploring the Potential of Mindfulness

Abstract: *In today's multicultural societies, schools play a vital role in nurturing multicultural values and fostering students' positive interethnic relations. This paper contributes to discussions about the ways of building positive school climate, interethnic relations and multicultural practices by exploring the potential of practicing mindfulness in schools. Mindfulness is defined as the process of paying attention in the present moment and non-judgmentally that can, when practiced regularly, become a state and finally, an individual's trait. In the last two decades the effects of the mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) on students' cognitive and socioemotional outcomes, as well as on school climate and interethnic relationships have been studied. Although the results are not unambiguous and depend on the research design, duration and comprehensiveness of the intervention and characteristics of students, one can conclude that MBIs can have a positive impact on students' cognitive and socioemotional functioning. Studies indicate positive effects of the MBIs on school climate, prejudice reduction, and willingness to engage in social contact with the youth of other ethnic backgrounds. Despite the potential of mindfulness, one should not overlook that we need to adopt a whole-school approach and to advocate for structural system changes to ensure positive interethnic relations in society.*

Keywords: *multicultural education, school, students, mindfulness, interethnic relations*

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Introduction

In the current global landscape, it is crucial for children and young individuals to develop the skills and competencies necessary to navigate multicultural environments in their daily lives (Hughes et al., 2006; Levy & Killen, 2008). Parents, families, schools, and communities must effectively adapt to increasing levels of cultural diversity, creating supportive and nurturing environments for all children (Feinberg, 2012). Schools are seen as places that should promote both excellence and equity, while teachers are seen as the main agents and creators of such activities (Darling-Hammond, 1995; Kazanjian, 2022; Simić, 2019). However, current educational institutions are unfortunately rarely successful in providing an equal level of opportunities, participation and belongingness to all students, especially to those from marginalized groups (Huijnk et al., 2016; Stevens et al., 2017). Students coming from non-dominant groups often experience overt discrimination and microaggression, leading to negative emotional and academic outcomes (Ong et al., 2013; Verkuyten et al., 2019), which has been found to be the case in Serbia as well (Simić & Vranješević, 2022).

In the last few years, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, scholars and practitioners have pointed to the value of socioemotional learning (e.g. Durlak et al., 2011), cross-curricular competencies (Leask & Younie, 2022; Malazonia et al., 2021), and most recently - to the potential of mindfulness to improve the school climate, nurture positive interethnic relationships, and enhance intercultural competencies, values, and practices (Dodson-Lavelle et al. 2014; Kazanjian, 2021; Lillis & Hayes, 2007; Marković, 2020; Semple, et.al., 2017). This review paper aims at contributing to the discussions about the effectiveness of practicing mindfulness within the school context, specifically in the endeavor to cultivate culturally responsive schools. First we will address the concepts on intercultural or multicultural education that we consider synonymous

in this paper, followed by the concepts of culturally responsive schools and teaching, with the focus on interpersonal dimension of these concepts; later we will introduce the concept of mindfulness and present studies that evaluated diverse mindfulness-based interventions in schools; and finally we will draw conclusions about the effectiveness of mindfulness practices and provide recommendation for schools on how to use the most effective practices to improve their school climate and interethnic relations, and promote intercultural values.

Multicultural schools

Multicultural or intercultural education aims to enhance students' capacity to thrive in an increasingly diverse society and empower them to make a positive impact (Zeszotarski, 1998). It is a form of education that also brings about transformation of educational institutions and the society as a whole (Gorski, 2010). Its goal is to elevate the achievement of all students, provide them with an equitable and high-quality education, and equip them with the skills to be critical and productive members of a democratic society, and finally, to facilitate equal educational opportunities and remove inequalities (Nieto, 1999).

Banks offered five fundamental dimensions of multicultural education which overlap with each other (Banks, 2002, 2006a): 1) the content integration, 2) the knowledge construction, 3) equity pedagogy, 4) empowerment-focused school culture, and 5) prejudicial discrimination reduction, the last one being of particular interest for this paper. Schools that strive for positive interethnic relations and multicultural practices should continuously address students' negative attitudes towards cultural differences, create school and classroom opportunities for students to learn to develop more democratic attitudes and behaviors (Banks & Banks, 1995; Banks, 2002, 2006a).

Although the effects of institutional policies and practices are not negligible (Gay, 2010a), scholars agree that teachers play a crucial role in promoting values and practices of intercultural education (Aboud & Fenwick, 1999; Mickan et al., 2007; Paluck & Green, 2009; Petrovski & Petrovska, 2017). Banks introduced the concept of culturally responsive teaching, which is seen as a practical manifestation of the reform objectives and dimensions of multicultural education (Banks, 2010). The core principles of culturally responsive or culturally relevant teaching encompass three main aspects: 1) incorporating teachings on racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity into the curriculum; 2) employing culturally diverse approaches to impart knowledge and skills to ethnically varied students through pedagogy; and 3) establishing an environment of culturally responsive care and pleasant learning atmospheres. In line with that, Gay (2010b) and Ladson-Billings (2009) assert that culturally relevant teaching entails, among others, nurturing relationships, and the cultivation of a favorable learning environment specifically tailored for marginalized students within the classroom where students' cultures are used to facilitate understanding of themselves and others.

In culturally relevant classrooms students feel psychologically safe, and there is potential to increase student engagement through improved understanding, positive peer relationships, and thus improved feelings of relatedness (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Teachers play a vital role in maintaining culturally responsive classroom management and nurturing positive relationships between students (Abacioglu et al., 2023; Bondy et al., 2007; Brown, 2003; Weinstein et al., 2003). One way to achieve a positive climate is by employing cooperative and collaborative learning, particularly well-designed heterogeneous group work (Vavrus, 2008).

Besides that, teachers are models to their students and as they demonstrate relevant competencies in their everyday work, students also begin to improve and demonstrate these competencies. In

the context of multicultural schools, one important competence is active listening, so individuals can engage in meaningful conversations with other individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. Some authors have recently started to associate intercultural competence with mindfulness. Ting-Toomey (2007a, 2007b, 2017) presents mindfulness as one of the essential cornerstones of intercultural competence, alongside knowledge and skills, while Gudykunst (2002) and Deardorff (2009) consider mindfulness as a dimension of intercultural competence.

Nurturing intercultural competencies in school staff and students is definitely an important way of building a positive school climate and positive relationships between students of different cultural backgrounds. One way to achieve positive school climate and interethnic relations seems to be through practicing mindfulness. Therefore, we present this concept in more detail, as well as effects of mindfulness-based interventions in the educational context in the following lines.

Mindfulness - Conceptualization and mechanisms

Approximately, three decades ago, mindfulness found its way into modern Western psychology. John Kabat-Zinn, founder of the MBSR program, one of the first mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) describes it as "paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally" (Kabat-Zinn 1994, p. 4). Bishop et al. (2004) defined it as "a process of regulating attention in order to bring a quality of non-elaborative awareness to current experience and a quality of relating to one's experience within an orientation of curiosity, experiential openness, and acceptance (Bishop et al., 2004, p. 234). From a social-cognitive point of view mindfulness is defined as an active mindset characterized by novel distinction-drawing which results in being (1) situated in the present, (2) sensitive to context and perspective, and

(3) guided (but not governed) by rules and routines (Langer & Moldoveanu 2000).

Mindlessness, by contrast, is defined as a mindset of rigidity in which one adheres to a single perspective of distinctions/categories drawn in the past and acts automatically, oblivious to context or perspective (Langer 2005, 2009). This mindless, less “awake” state of habitual or automatic functioning may be chronic for many individuals (Brown & Ryan, 2003, p. 823). It is clear, from these definitions, that attention control is a central characteristic of mindfulness, but its second and equally important (for our work critical) aspect is an attitude of curiosity, openness, acceptance and non-judgment (Creswell, 2017).

As for the psychological mechanisms that are in the roots of mindfulness, Bishop and associates (2004) proposed a two-component model with two main factors: 1) self-regulation of attention towards present experience and 2) adopting an orientation of curiosity, openness and acceptance towards one’s experiences. These two elements lead to enhanced metacognitive monitoring and decentering (i.e., capacity to adopt a detached perspective towards one’s thoughts and emotions). Shapiro et al. (2006) suggested a three-component model of mindfulness, attention, attitude, and intention, i.e., the personal motivation or vision about the reason somebody engages with mindfulness practice. Kang et al. (2013) outline a four-component model of mindfulness, with attention being the first factor, best cultivated through awareness, present-moment focus, and non-judgmental acceptance of thoughts, experiences and events. Similarly, Kathirasan and Sunita (2023) suggested a model with four key mechanisms (Figure 2): (1) practice of attention, (2) acceptance, (3) awareness and (4) insight, often characterized by wisdom, self-understanding, or knowledge of the self (Kathirasan & Sunita, 2023). Deployment of attention and acceptance leads to the enhancement of awareness. Insights are then generated from enhanced awareness which then create the results such

as stress reduction, prevention of relapses of depression, increased levels of happiness, and clarity over purpose among others.



Figure 1. Flowchart on the four mechanisms of mindfulness (Kathirasan & Sunita, 2023)

There are debates about the stability of mindfulness and its status within personality. Black (2011) suggests that the cultivation of mindfulness can be organized into three important stages: mindfulness practice, state mindfulness and trait mindfulness. Mindfulness practice is most often categorized as formal and informal. Formal practices include the body scan, sitting meditation, mindful movement, mindful yoga, awareness of breath and loving-kindness meditation. Informal mindfulness practices, on the other hand, are usually the ones that are woven into daily routines such as mindful walking, brushing teeth, showering, eating, and dishwashing amongst others (Black, 2011). Both formal and informal practices have been found to create positive results, although the formal ones have been found to create more consistent and predictable outcomes. State mindfulness is defined as a momentary condition enhanced by the practice of mindfulness and something that is repeatedly evoked during mindfulness sessions (Baer et al., 2006; Garland et al., 2015). And finally, trait mindfulness is defined as an effortless tendency to embody mindfulness which is stable over time (Baer et al., 2006; Brown & Ryan, 2003). Trait mindfulness also contributes to the exhibition of mindful attitudes and behaviors in daily living (Kiken et al., 2015). Therefore, trait mindfulness is also called dispositional mindfulness as it impacts the personality of the practitioners.

Mindfulness-Based Interventions in Schools

Mindfulness-Based Interventions (MBIs) in school environments were first implemented in the early 2000s. The need for MB programs was based on the assessment of the school as a highly stressful environment that can negatively affect both students and teachers, and lead to burnout, dropout and other (mental) health issues (Crain et al. 2017; Flook et al. 2013; Simić & Krstić, 2017).

Some intervention programs in schools were primarily oriented at improving cognitive abilities and students' intellectual achievements (Mrazek et al., 2013, Yildiz, 2020), while the others aim to suppress negative emotions, prevent aggression and resolve conflicts (Wright et al. 2011) or nurture positive emotions and relationships and improve socio-emotional competencies (Haymovitz et al., 2018). While it was observed in only a limited number of studies within higher education and college settings, it is worth mentioning that MBIs can also be examined in the context of critical pedagogy and social inclusion, where mindfulness is perceived as a tool that heightens awareness regarding issues of oppression, identity, gender, and racism (Hyde & LaPrad, 2015). In these MBIs, the central emphasis was not solely on the individual, but on the community, and not solely on effects of mindfulness but rather on curriculum-based processes that can be stimulated by integrating mindfulness within educational environments (Repetti, 2010). Regardless of the main aims, most of the research on MBIs carried out in schools were conducted with teaching staff (51%), followed by children belonging to ethnic minorities and children from socially and economically disadvantaged families (19%) (for more about this metaanalysis, see Ergas & Hadar, 2019).

Research on effectiveness of MBIs in children and adolescents reports that these programs are well accepted by this age group (Deplus et al., 2014). However, as for the effectiveness of the MBI programs in schools, the results are not completely unambiguous and depend on the target group, aims

and the structure of the programs. For example, effects are higher in clinical than in non-clinical populations and for the individuals with more conspicuous challenges (with attention, anxiety), compared to those with modest challenges (Michel et al., 2021; Schramm, 2021). Similarly, MBI shows larger longitudinal success for the population of students that have social and emotional challenges (Kazanjan, 2022). Finally, while studies indicate improvements in mindfulness practices, it is still questionable to what extent MBIs in schools lead towards mindfulness states and traits.

Mindfulness-Based Interventions in Schools and students' cognitive and socioemotional outcomes

A recent meta-study revealed that MBIs positively affected children and adolescents in terms of cognitive abilities, while the results were significantly poorer for the adults (Sedlmeier et al., 2012). However, as indicated by a qualitative study involving teachers and relying on their self-assessments, their engagement in mindfulness practice resulted in them having enhanced concentration, improved ability to find focus, and better regulation of attention (Fidler & Trunk, 2021).

Regarding student population specifically, several meta-analyses showed that MBIs improved students' attention measured through behavioral tasks or computerized tests, compared to an active control group (Kaltwasser et al., 2014; Waters et al., 2015; Zoogman et al., 2014). Similarly, in a mixed-methods study on the eight-week intervention program which included 48 students in the experimental and 48 students in the control, it was shown that there was a small to moderate effect size between the experimental and control groups in terms of self-reported attention (Luong et al, 2019). In other studies, MBIs also proved to have positive effects on physical health and the cognitive domain, like, for example, inhibition control abilities (Tang et. al, 2019; Weare, 2018; Fidler & Trunk, 2021; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015). Within the field of neuroscience, changes on

both structural and functional levels of the brain were detectable, particularly in the areas influencing emotional regulation, self-awareness, and attention control (Larrivee & Echarte, 2018; Tang et al., 2019). However, there were also studies that showed no improvements in attention, working memory and cognitive flexibility in children aged 6-13 who participated in a MBI (Ricarte et al., 2015).

In studies that included interventions to promote students' mental health and subjective well-being the results are also not unambiguous. In a meta-analysis conducted by Zenner, Herrnleben-Kurz and Valach in 2014, which included 24 studies involving 1348 participants, the effect size was reported to be in the range from small to moderate between the experimental and control groups, including resilience and coping with stress. Weare (2018) also conducted a meta-analysis of studies that dealt with interventions that were short-term (within ten series) and that were implemented in schools. Key components of these interventions involved practices such as breathing exercises, present moment awareness, mindful actions like mindful eating or walking, relaxation exercises, and body scans. Overall, the findings supported the use of mindfulness for improving mental health - positive effects on self-regulation and emotion regulation were found, as well as on empathy, primarily through the fundamental attitudes of openness, curiosity, and kindness (see Weare, 2018). There were many other studies that also showed improvements in students' well-being, emotional control skills and empathy (Kaltwasser et al., 2014; Luong et al., 2019; Metz et al., 2013; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015), as well as decrease in use of dysfunctional coping strategies (Fung et al., 2016; Gould et al., 2012; Sibinga et al., 2016) and reduction of so-called internalized behaviors such as depression and/or anxiety (e.g., Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015; Theurel et al., 2020; Weijer-Bergsma et al., 2012). Kuyken and associates (2013) showed that beneficial effects of MBI on reducing depressive symptoms in adolescents persisted three months after the end of the intervention. On the

other hand, some published studies did not find any significant effects of MBIs on students' emotion regulation (e.g., Broderick & Metz, 2009; Johnson et al., 2016) or stress/ anxiety (e.g., Kaltwasser et al., 2014; Lau & Hue, 2011; Michel et al., 2021).

Mindfulness-based interventions have been shown to impact so-called externalized behaviors. For example, Vattl (2019) showed that MBIs reduce problematic behaviors such as aggression and defiance in children and adolescents struggling with behavioral competencies, thereby decreasing the likelihood of school dropout. Similarly, other studies (e.g., Fung et al., 2016; Parker et al., 2014; Schonert-Reichl & Lawlor, 2010) report a beneficial effect of their programs on the reduction of social problems and externalized behaviors such as aggression and opposition in children and adolescents aged 9 to 14. A study by Crescentini et al. (2016), externalized behaviors of the inattention/hyperactivity type in 7-8-year-old students who underwent MBI were compared to those of students in an active control group and a decrease in externalized behaviors of the hyperactivity type was determined. In contrast, Britton et al. (2014) did not observe any differences in terms of externalized behaviors among 11-year-old adolescents who underwent similar MBI and others who participated in an active control group attending classes on the culture of Egypt.

There were several studies that explored the effects of MBIs on the school climate. The comprehensive and long-lasting program (MMBS) developed in Israel Center for Mind-Body Medicine and since 1999 implemented in many Israeli schools has been evaluated on many occasions. MMBS was developed for students ages 6 to 13 years and integrated into a "whole school" curriculum that is offered to teachers and students across all elementary grade levels. Its main goals were to enhance self-awareness, improve self-efficacy and resilience, develop social-emotional skills, prevent risky behaviors, and improve learning potential. This program lasted two years, which made it much longer than other simi-

lar programs and it included workshops with teaching staff and parents, which made it more holistic than the rest of similar programs. Expectedly, evaluations of this program showed good results - qualitative analyses suggested that students' coping skills, emotional intelligence and friendliness improved (Semple, et.al., 2017) and that the school climate became encouraging and cohesive, with virtually no violence (Limone, 2011; Semple, et.al., 2017).

A large meta-study that analyzed 66 implemented mindfulness programs that focused on school climate showed that the effects of the program were positive. In addition, greater participation and engagement of students was recorded, including regular attendance at school (Voigh & Nation, 2016). On the other hand, shorter, more separate and less holistic programs, such as one implemented in Germany with 88 students, lasting for ten hours, showed no improvements in the school climate. More specifically, quantitative data indicated even deterioration in wellbeing and climate, while qualitative data pointed to improvement (although still 30% of interviewees reported no improvement in school climate) (Schram, 2021).

Mindfulness-Based Interventions in Schools and Interethnic Relationships

Given that school bullying and discrimination lead towards emotional problems, suicide ideation and psychosomatic illness (Xu et al., 2019), it is important to explore various ways schools can prevent such practices and student outcomes. This is particularly important in multicultural contexts and areas with interethnic tensions, where prejudices and discrimination in the community build on such practices in the school. Some authors believe that mindfulness is a practice that transcends cultural barriers that can help classrooms to achieve culturally relative self-actualization and positive interpersonal relationships by learning to engage in the present here-and-now moment (Kazanjan, 2022). There are however only a few studies that tested the

effects of MBI on interethnic relationships and their results will be presented below.

One such example is the Call to Care (C2C) program (Dodson-Lavelle et al. 2014) which was implemented in Israel with 3rd–5th grade Israeli-Jewish pupils from public elementary schools. The objective of the program was to improve academic success and well-being, but also to foster good interethnic relations. One of the objectives was to make students aware of the prejudices they have about people who are not members of their ethnic group. The program had three extensive sessions: 1) receiving care, aimed at understanding the universal human need for care and breaking down barriers to asking others for help, 2) developing self-care, aimed at developing self-help skills, coping with stress and calming down, and 3), extending care, aimed at developing skills of noticing the needs of others and the skills to appreciate other people's needs, provide support and understanding to others. Results showed prejudice reduction immediately upon completion of the program, but positive effects were maintained even six months later. More specifically, compared to the pupils in the control group, the Israeli-Jewish elementary school pupils from the experimental group significantly reduced their expressions of negative feelings toward and negative stereotyping about the Israeli Palestinian outgroup, while simultaneously increasing their readiness and willingness to engage in social contact with Israeli-Palestinian youth.

In their pilot study Lillis and Hayes (2007) demonstrated the effect of a program based on the principles of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and mindfulness on reducing prejudiced attitudes. Additionally, they suggested that mindfulness training can even have an impact on behavioral intentions, as participants indicated their willingness to maintain closer relationships with Moroccan immigrants (i.e., less social distance). Similarly, the research conducted with 46 fourth-year high school students from a public school in the province of Almería, Spain who attended 11 hours of ACT

program and daily practiced mindfulness exercises at home showed positive changes in attitudes. Participants who engaged with the program exhibited significantly fewer subtle and old negative emotions towards people of Moroccan origin, more positive emotions, lower perceived discrimination, and less social distance compared to the group that did not receive this training. Additionally, authors suggested that mindfulness training can even have an impact on behavioral intentions, as participants indicated their willingness to maintain closer relationships with Moroccan immigrants. Authors of both studies assumed that participants of the programs reduced the differences between social categories of “us” and “them,” focusing mindfully and without value judgments on their prejudiced feeling processes rather than on the content of those feelings. It is also noteworthy that the most significant changes occur in the affective component, while changes in the cognitive component of prejudice are minimal, which is aligned with other approaches to prejudice reduction, such as contact theory (Pettigrew, 2008).

Mindfulness, school, and multiculturalism – lessons learned and prospects

A review of studies that discussed effects of MBIs showed that mindfulness practices can be a good way of improving individuals’ attention and socioemotional skills (both considered components of mindfulness) (Kaltwasser et al., 2014; Luong et al., 2019; Metz et al., 2013; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015; Waters et al., 2015; Zoogman et al., 2014), as well as group dynamic and school climate (Kazanjian, 2021; Semple, et.al., 2017). The studies also showed potential of using mindfulness to promote multicultural competencies in school-age children and youth (Dodson-Lavelle et al. 2014; Lillis & Hayes, 2007). By slowing down and focusing on the present-moment and non-judgmental acceptance of experiences, students can become aware of their

own emotions and coping strategies, as well as (implicit) biases towards other groups.

For these processes to happen, several prerequisites are however necessary. First, intervention should not be short and separate, but should be carefully integrated into regular school activities available to all students. They should not be delivered by external experts, but by teachers known to students. We cannot expect teachers who lack intercultural competencies to foster these competencies in their students and to promote a multicultural school climate. Therefore, a whole-school approach needs to be applied and mindfulness programs should encompass school staff (Kazanjian, 2021). Teachers should regularly apply mindfulness in a flexible manner, taking into consideration the needs and preferences of individual students, and should recognize when a student is not able to learn because of a cultural barrier (Delpit, 1995). This can be done through regular classes of arts and physical activities, projects that deal with surrounding and inner physical processes, sound maps and outdoor activities (e.g., in parks around schools) (Marković, 2020). The role of school expert associates can be particularly significant for creating a community dedicated to these values, empowering teachers to involve parents, providing additional education, and mentoring beginners. From the program developed in Israel Center for Mind-Body Medicine we know that involving parents also brings positive results. Finally, when students are advised to practice new skills outside of school, effects can be even better. For the concrete structure of the program and activities we can rely on the Call to Care (C2C) program (Dodson-Lavelle et al. 2014), for example.

It is important that both multiculturalism and mindfulness are not perceived as mere add-ons, but as comprehensive approaches to understanding and improving learning, relationships, and institutional functioning. Schools can even create mission and vision statements that encompass the values of multicultural education and mindfulness and

based on that create a variety of activities with students, teachers and parents. However, these activities should be critically approached, with an awareness of their limitations. Relying on the advocates of critical pedagogy framework, concurrently with the development of mindfulness in individuals, efforts should be made to implement structural changes in the system to ensure the appreciation of diversity and reduction of social injustice in society. Common values of mutual respect and diversity appreciation have to be promoted in a wider society as well.

As for future studies on the relationship between mindfulness and intercultural schools, it is recommendable to involve active control groups (Luong, 2017) and to provide larger groups of participants, with more rigorous procedures (Theurel

et al., 2018). When implementing interventions, it is necessary to consider the motivation of the students, as well as the group dynamics in the class (Luong, 2019). Effects have to be evaluated not only immediately after the intervention but several weeks and months later, as well, to see if effects persist over time (Shankland et al., 2021). Additionally, researchers need to focus more on underlying mediators and mechanisms that lead to change (Luong, 2019). In the context of multicultural education, as defined within the critical pedagogy framework, evaluation studies of MBIs should focus not only on interethnic relationships, but also on other dimensions of multicultural education, particularly on the potentials of mindfulness to reshape structural dynamics within schools towards greater justice.

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КА МУЛТИКУЛТУРАЛНИМ ШКОЛАМА: ИСТРАЖИВАЊЕ ПОТЕНЦИЈАЛА МАЈНДФУЛНЕСА

Резиме: У савременим мултикултурним друштвима истражује се значај мултикултуралној (или интеркултуралној) образовања, његовог креирања културно релевантних наставних пракси и његовог позитивних интеретичких односа. Иако школске политике и вршњачки односи имају важну улогу, наставници се одају као кључни агенси промена мултикултуралних вредности и пракси у школи. Овај референтни рад има за циљ да допринесе дискусији о начинима унапређења школске климе, интеретичких односа и мултикултуралних пракси, и њиховом искоришћавању потенцијала практиковања мајндфулнеса у школи. Мајндфулнес, или њена свесност, дефинише се као процес усмереног обраћања пажње на садашњи тренутак са отвореним и непроцењујућим ставом. Ако се редовно практикује, може постати стање и најзад црта појединца. Неки истраживачи мајндфулнес чак смањују димензијом интеркултуралне компетенције. Практиковање мајндфулнеса може бити формално, када укључује вежбање техника попут скенирања тела, медијације, свесног дисања или јоге, и неформално, као што су свесно ходање или једење. У последње две деценије истражени су ефекти интервенција заснованих на мајндфулнесу на когнитивне и социоемоционалне исходе, као и на школску климу и интеретичке односе. Већина студија приказивала је ефекте интервенција код наставника, а мањи број истраживања истражује се ефекта практиковања мајндфулнеса код ученика. Према резултатима нису једнозначни и зависе од дизајна истраживања, трајања и обухватности интервенције и карактеристика ученика, као што су узраст и почетни ниво менталног функционисања, може се закључити да практиковање мајндфулнеса може позитивно утицати на пажњу и контролу инхибиције, као и на вештине саморегулације, емоционалну контролу и ефикасност. Иако малобројне, студије су показале позитивне ефекте интервенција заснованих на мајндфулнесу на школску климу, смањење предрасуда и социјалне дистанце и на spremност за улазак у друштвени контакт са младима из других етничких група са којима у даљем контексту иначе постоје тензије. Ефекти на креирање уважавајуће школске климе били су већи када су интервенције трајале дуже и биле индивидуалне у свакодневне активности школе, када су их реализовали ученицима познати наставници који су и сами прошли кроз тренинг њене свесности, ње када су ученици подстицани да практикују мајндфулнес и ван школе и,

најзад, када су били укључени и родитељи. Закључујемо да није довољно само унапређивати интеркултуралне компетенције наставника и ученика као појединаца, већ је неопходно мењати визију и мисију школе у правцу веће мултикултуралности, те и подстицајући реализацију разноврсних пракси кроз које ће се ове вредности промовисати међу ученицима и родитељима. У складу са принципима критичке педагогије, неопходно је и улажити најореза подстицању структуралних промена у систему како би се осигурало уважавање различитости и бољи интеретнички односи у друштву.

Кључне речи: мултикултурално образовање, школа, ученици, мајндфулнес, интеретнички односи