

Institution: University of Huddersfield		
Unit of Assessment: 33 Drama		
Title of case study: Bringing Mindfulness Centre Stage: Establishing Mindfulness in International Performer Training and Artistic Process		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2012 - 2018		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Names: 1. Dr Deborah Middleton 2. Prof Monty Adkins 3. Prof Franc Chamberlain	Roles: 1. Senior Lecturer in Drama 2. Prof. of Experimental Electronic Music 3. Prof. in Drama, Theatre & Performance	Periods employed by submitting HEI: 1. 1993 - present 2. 1998 - present 3. 2012 – 2020
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 1 August 2013 – 31 July 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
1. Summary of the impact Mindfulness practices have been scientifically shown to develop qualities of attention and awareness that are crucial for artists, but performance practitioners have struggled to apply mindfulness in their work due to limited guidance and analysis in the field. To address this gap, researchers at the University of Huddersfield's Research Centre for Performance Practices have created bridges between artistic and meditation traditions, and between performance practice and the science of mindfulness. As a result of this research, performance practitioners in the UK, Europe, New Zealand, and Latin America have been empowered to incorporate mindfulness into their performance work. They have adopted and developed new ways of training performers, and of engaging in artistic processes. The impact of the research also extends beyond performance disciplines: research into mindful arts experience has informed strategic plans for woodland engagement at the National Trust, and has enabled d/Deaf communities in New Zealand to access mindfulness techniques for the first time.		
2. Underpinning research Theatre practitioners have long been invested in attention and awareness training for artists. These qualities are systematically developed through 'mindfulness' - a practice which is derived from meditation traditions and supported by extensive recent science. Despite the evident applicability of mindfulness within the arts, performance practitioners have lacked guidance on how to apply and incorporate mindfulness into their work. Recognising this, researchers at the University of Huddersfield's former Centre for Psychophysical Performance Research (CPPR) (now incorporated into the Research Centre for Performance Practices - ReCePP) including Dr. Deb Middleton (also published under the pen-name Templeton), Prof. Franc Chamberlain and Prof. Monty Adkins have, since 2012, developed a range of approaches to the integration of mindfulness practice in performance training and in artistic processes. Middleton and Chamberlain's work in 2012 [3.1] built on Varela and Shear's (1999) use of the meditation-derived 'first-person perspective' in consciousness studies and applied it to reflective practices in theatre. This paper demonstrated both the effects of mindful attention within the performance experience and the way in which this could be used to develop practice and inform the articulation of practice. This approach provided an early example of how theatre work could be enriched by an applied mindfulness modality. Aware of the rich potential for further work at the intersection of mindfulness and performance, CPPR convened a symposium on <i>Psychophysical Performance as Mindfulness Practice</i> in 2013. Subsequently, the University of Huddersfield's Mindfulness and Performance Project (MAP) was launched in 2015 to establish key practices and discussions in this area, and the <i>International Symposium on Performance and Mindfulness</i> was convened in 2016. The MAP Project was globally the first comprehensive scholarly investigation into mindfulness and performance, and enabled Middleton and Chamberlain to engage with theatre practitioners from eleven countries and to work closely with leading international practitioners whose practice is informed by meditation traditions, such as Lee Worley (USA) and Nicolás Núñez (Mexico). This led Middleton to identify an emerging new field of practice, 'mindfulness-based performance' in her 2017		

publication [3.2], which was subsequently published in Portuguese translation in Brazil. In 2018 Middleton co-authored a paper [3.3] with Dr. Daniel Plá (University of Santa Maria, Brazil), who had carried out postdoctoral research with the MAP Project in 2015-2016. This article [3.3] gave a detailed analysis of examples of mindfulness-based performance practice in the work of Worley and Núñez respectively. By tracing the Buddhist origin of the practices, this paper established performance training as a viable alternative to standard mindfulness modalities.

In collaboration with Núñez and the Taller de Investigación Teatral (Mexico), Middleton extended her research into mindfulness in performer training. Middleton and Núñez's 2018 publication incorporated Middleton's analysis of Núñez's practitioner perspective to argue for the role of meditation in creating the extended awareness required by performers in participatory and immersive theatre [3.4].

The MAP research was also applied by Middleton and Adkins to the development of mindfulness-based writing, composition and performance-making. Their initial research together resulted in a mindfulness-based 'contemplative' audio performance produced by UK-based IOU Productions, and subsequently published with a contextual essay [3.5]. This led to several further research projects exploring the application of mindfulness-based practice in contemplative performance works for a range of contexts, including a 50-minute radiophonic work commissioned and produced by Czech Radio Vltava in 2018 [3.6]. In 2019 Adkins published a chapter discussing mindfulness-based and 'slow' composition processes in a book [3.7] which to date has attracted 13,340 downloads.

This body of research emerging from the Research Centre for Performance Practices speaks directly to the previously untapped potentials of mindfulness practice within performance contexts and has identified strategies and processes through which mindfulness can inform, enhance and guide performer training, artistic process, and performance in applied settings.

3. References to the research

Evidence of the quality of the research: The following outputs were all subject to a rigorous peer-review process prior to publication, with the exception of [3.6] which was a commissioned radio piece for the Czech Republic's national broadcaster (the equivalent of BBC Radio 3):

[3.1] Middleton, D. and Chamberlain, F. (2012) 'Entering the Heart of Experience: First Person Accounts in Performance & Spirituality' *Performance and Spirituality*, 3 (1), pp.95-112. ISSN 2157-4049. <http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/id/eprint/15873/>

[3.2] Middleton, D. (2017) 'Mapping Mindfulness-based Performance Practice' in *Journal of Performance and Mindfulness*. 1, 1. <https://doi.org/10.5920/pam.2017.02>

[3.3] Middleton, D. & Plá, D. (2018) 'Adapting the Dharma: Buddhism and Contemporary Theatre Training' in *Journal of Global Buddhism*. Vol. 19 (2018): 113-125. <http://www.globalbuddhism.org/jgb/index.php/jgb/article/view/232>

[3.4] Middleton, D. & Núñez, N. (2018) 'Immersive Awareness' in *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training*. 9, 2, pp. 217 – 233. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19443927.2018.1462252>

[3.5] Templeton, D. [Middleton] & Adkins, M. (2016) 'Borderlands: An Exploration of Contemplation in Creative Practice' in *Liminalities: A Journal of Performance Studies*. 12, 2. ISSN:1557-2935 <http://liminalities.net/12-2/borderlands.pdf> (article) <http://liminalities.net/12-2/borderlands.html> (audio)

[3.6] Templeton, D. [Middleton] & Adkins, M. (2018) *Na Okraji Vody* [Translated title: Water's Edge], 50-minute radiophonic performance, performed by Summers, S-J., Woods, S. P., Green, S. & Fetokaki, S. Czech Radio Vltava, 26 Dec 2018. [can be supplied on request]

[3.7] Adkins, M. (ed.) & Cummings, S. (ed.) (2019) *Music Beyond Airports*. University of Huddersfield Press. <https://unipress.hud.ac.uk/plugins/books/19/>

4. Details of the impact

Middleton, Chamberlain and Adkins have developed and created a wide body of rich practices, artworks and critical understandings to support performance practitioners in bringing mindfulness practices into their work. This research has been shared with artists through a range of MAP activities, including symposia in 2013 and 2016, and international artists' practice exchanges in Mexico and the UK in 2014, 2015 and 2018. Between 2013 and July 2020 Middleton and Adkins also applied their research in creative performance projects which reached public audiences and artistic communities in Europe, USA, Mexico, Panama, Colombia and Brazil through live and broadcast contemplative arts performances, workshops, and presentations. This range of activities has had impact in relation to two areas of performance practice: performance training, and artistic process, with the latter extending to contemplative performance practices being adopted in new non-arts-based sectors.

Influencing new ways of training performers

The MAP research has informed and guided the pedagogical approach to professional performer training being undertaken by practitioners working in Europe, New Zealand and the Americas. In 2019, a survey was conducted among individuals who had taken part in one or more activities of the MAP Research Project between 2013-2018 [5.1]. Of 28 respondents, 78% agreed that they had a better understanding of mindfulness in relation to performance, and 68% thought differently about mindfulness and performance as a result of their engagement with the MAP project [5.1]. Additionally, practitioners in Europe [5.2], Mexico [5.3, 5.4], Brazil [5.5], and New Zealand [5.6] reported that the MAP research has had a high level of impact on their work and on the extensive artistic communities that they interact with, as detailed below.

Survey respondents detailed a range of changes to their pedagogical practices, including: '*Leading with "qualities of attention" in my teaching*' (Australia); '*I have... shifted the pace... to allow individuals to sit longer in their own processes, observing and reflecting...*' (UK); '*It has helped my teaching... it's helped me find ways of communicating and exercising [mindfulness] practises in a secular setting*' (South Africa); and '*My teaching work changed, with new exercises but mainly with a new approach to theatrical pedagogy. Also my view on the relationship between meditation and performing arts changed*' (Brazil) [5.1].

The Artistic Director of Duende (Greece) writes, '*introducing perspectives of mindfulness into the training has offered participants deeper resources and precise mechanisms for self-observation*' [5.2]. Such resources include reflective tools, such as Middleton's model of 'Skillful Means' and 'Near/Far Enemies' which '*allows trainers to offer students a profound but accessible way of developing self-knowledge*' [5.2]. Duende is a theatre company that creates performances and offers training in ensemble physical theatre in both Europe and internationally, and the Artistic Director notes that: '*Our work has grown in depth, complexity and effectiveness because of our increased access to mindfulness teachings as a way to understand the performer's awareness. [...] Collectively, we have reached – directly or indirectly – thousands of artists and students across all continents, in professional, educational, community, therapeutic and corporate contexts since 2013*' [5.2].

Other practitioners cite the use of new techniques for contemplative writing and contemplative inquiry (e.g. 'First Person Reporting' [3.1] [5.3, 5.5]), which support processes of inner learning. The Artistic Director of Espacio Kuu (Mexico and Estonia) writes, '*I now base my pedagogy on concepts of mindful embodiment and on contemplative reflection on embodied understandings, as developed by Middleton and Chamberlain in their work on First-Person Reporting*' [3.1] [5.3]. They go on to write that: '*The [MAP] research has provided me with unique access to approaches and understandings not otherwise readily available in the field of theatre training and performance*' [5.3].

Practitioners acknowledge the impact of the MAP research on their understanding of performance practice. The Artistic Director of the Taller de Investigación Teatral (Mexico) writes, '*Middleton has increased my capacity to improve the quality of the "dynamics" [training techniques]. Through her research, I have been given theoretical fundamentals which make a strong foundation from which to build my work*' [5.4]. They go on to write that: '*I now use the English term 'mindfulness' to describe a very old aspect of my training practice. The term and the understandings with which Middleton uses it are very concrete. They allow more penetration in the work, and the terminology helps the students to know that there is a higher dimension possible in their attention*' [5.4]. Similarly, the Artistic Director of Equal Voices Arts (New Zealand) says: '*I now use mindfulness modalities in my work with professional and community groups, and have developed my understanding of embodied practice through the science of Mindfulness that Dr. Middleton incorporates. This has allowed me to inform my practice so as to support the mental health of participants.*' [5.6]

By creating bridges between theatre practice and both meditation practice and the science of mindfulness, the MAP research has enabled theatre and performance practitioners to articulate processes of mind and body with greater precision [5.2], and to use the language of mindfulness with greater confidence [5.1; 5.4].

Practitioners also report impact on their own quality of mindfulness within the training space, resulting in greater efficiency in managing mental processes [5.2]; an enhanced ability to avoid reactivity [5.3]; and an increased capacity for identifying and responding to the needs of trainees [5.2, 5.3]. The Artistic Director of Equal Voices Arts (New Zealand) writes: '*The clarity, reflectiveness and self-awareness that I have developed through access to Dr. Middleton's work on mindfulness has transformed the way I practice*' [5.6].

In Europe, Mexico, Brazil and New Zealand, these influences have had secondary impact with reach to wider professional communities [5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5]. In Brazil, the Head of Performing Arts at Universidade Federal de Santa Maria notes that '*because of the experience at the MAP Project, I have been able to make a contribution to the development of performing arts in a national context [by creating] a working group at the main Brazilian performing arts research association*' [5.5]. While this working group stems from a University-based network, its impact extends beyond academia in that it informs a national group of practitioners. A second group, Tradere, was registered in 2018 with the Brazilian Government's National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq), with a remit to offer workshops, organize events, and develop artistic projects; its work is '*based especially on the practices developed during my [the Head of Performing Art's] stay in Huddersfield [on the MAP project]*' [5.5]. The Head of Performing Arts writes: '*the great contribution we have is connecting practitioners and academics in this big discussion of mindfulness, contemplative practices and performance, and I believe it has impact on practice*'; in 2020, the group engaged approximately 50 practitioners and academics from nine countries in South America, North America, Europe, Asia and Australia [5.5]. In New Zealand, '*Equal Voices Arts have been delivering professional theatre training workshops to the national d/Deaf community in New Zealand for the first time, and it is important to acknowledge Dr. Middleton's influence on our mindful approaches in creating performance scores, and increasing embodiment*' [5.6].

Shaping contemplative artistic processes

Middleton and Adkins' research into contemplative artistic process and form has had considerable international reach through performances and broadcasts. Recent examples of Adkins' contemplative compositions, all occurring in 2020, include: 'Winter Tendrils' performed by Seth Parker Woods in a tour of the USA; 'At the Water's Edge' [3.6] broadcast in France and the USA; 'Saenredam's Dream' included in an exhibition at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte in Madrid, and broadcast in Germany; and '21 People in My Bathroom' released online as part of an exhibition for La Casa Suena, Auditum, Colombia, and broadcast in Holland. Middleton's contemplative performance texts have been produced by companies in Europe (2016) [5.3], Mexico (2016, 2017) [5.4], and Brazil (2020) [5.5].

Performance-makers and Artistic Directors of performance companies in Europe (Duende), Mexico (Espacio Kuu & the Taller), and New Zealand (Equal Voices Arts) all identify ways in which the MAP research has had impact on their artistic processes; for example, the Artistic Director of Equal Voices writes, *'Dr. Middleton's work now informs how we start our creative and collaborative processes'* and continues, *'We have been using mindfulness modalities inspired by Dr. Middleton as a way to increase presence and responsivity in the rehearsal room when devising'* [5.6]. In 2019, MAP survey respondents noted structural changes to their artistic processes; for example, including scheduled time for mindfulness, contemplation, observation and reflection [5.1].

There has been external recognition of the significance of these developments: the Artistic Director of Espacio Kuu (Mexico and Estonia) writes, *'My Soundings project which emphasised mindfulness-based contemplative approaches to creativity... was selected for a competitive residency at the prestigious Saari Residency in Finland, and was awarded funding from the Kone Institute'* [5.3]; and the Artistic Director of Equal Voices Arts (New Zealand) writes *'The changes this approach afforded us was particularly evident to me in my work on 'Salonica', an award winning production which was highly successful in New Zealand and was commissioned to tour internationally'* [5.6].

Beyond the Stage

The MAP research has introduced new sectors to the power of applied contemplative performance. In March 2019, Middleton and Adkins created a live 30-minute contemplative performance for an event co-created with the National Trust (NT) at Hardcastle Crags (HCC). This application of the MAP research enabled HCC to recognise that mindfulness-based arts practice in the woodland would enable them to meet their well-being targets in an integrated and effective way. The Visitor Experience Officer at HCC writes: *'Dr. Middleton's research has demonstrated that mindfulness can be delivered through artistic experiences, and it can deepen the public's engagement and add to their experience in the woodlands. Middleton and Adkins' contemplative performance, The Dreaming of Trees, provided us with a clear example of how mindfulness-based arts could be used to deepen the public engagement in the woods through a well-being related activity'* [5.7]. As a result, the NT at HCC commissioned Middleton to co-produce the contemplative poetry trail, *one thus gone* (installed November 2019), to provide visitors to the site with an integrated arts-wellbeing-woodland experience. The Visitor Experience Officer writes: *'As a result of engaging with Middleton's research, HCC integrated a contemplative arts strategy into their 5-year plan'* [5.7]. In New Zealand, Equal Voices Arts are creating secondary impact beyond the field of performance in their pioneering work with d/Deaf communities; standard mindfulness modalities are not accessible to d/Deaf people, and Equal Voices are making mindfulness training possible for d/Deaf people for the first time. Their Artistic Director notes that *'This work has only been made possible by Dr. Middleton's mentorship and guidance'* [5.6].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- [5.1] Mindfulness and Performance Project Participant Survey Results, 2019
- [5.2] Testimonial Letter, Artistic Director, DUENDE, (Greece and international)
- [5.3] Testimonial Letter, Artistic Director, Espacio Kuu (Estonia/Mexico)
- [5.4] Testimonial Letter, Artistic Director, Taller de Investigación Teatral (Mexico)
- [5.5] Testimonial Letter, Head of Performing Arts, Federal University of Santa Maria (Brazil)
- [5.6] Testimonial Letter, Artistic Director, Equal Voices Arts (New Zealand)
- [5.7] Testimonial Letter, Visitor Experience Officer, National Trust Hardcastle Crags