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Vipassana Meditation and Teacher Decision-Making

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2012

Abstract

Vipassana Meditation and Teacher Decision-Making

by

Jeffrey Ronald Glogowski

M.A.E.L, Aurora University, 2007

B.M.E, Illinois State University, 1997

Proposal Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Education

Walden University

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Abstract

The purpose of this grounded theory study was to build a theory about the process and function teachers construct around the effect Vipassana meditation has on stress, teaching, and decision-making. This study addressed the problem of how teachers respond to daily tasks and demands that can negatively impact their longevity in the profession. The starting point was the conceptual framework, including resolving cognitive dissonance, choice theory, mindfulness, and the perspective of Vipassana meditation. The research questions addressed how Vipassana meditation influences a teacher's daily routine, decision-making, classroom management, general procedures, and stressful situations. The data collection was done in 2 stages and included triangulation through 2 interviews, journals, and a questionnaire for all 9 participants. The analysis used pre, open, axial, and selective coding with both inductive and deductive processes which connected the conceptual framework to emerging concepts including equanimity, awareness, observation, context, detachment, nonjudgment, flexibility, being present in the moment, and engagement. Using these concepts, a possible theory involving the anicca perspective (one of non-permanence) on the decision-making process and as a stress management tool was generated. Implications for positive social change include a demonstrable positive effect on relationships in the classroom, pedagogy, and classroom management. This process can be considered in teacher training and professional development programs to decrease stress in order to help prolong teachers' careers.

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Dedication and Acknowledgments

I dedicate this piece of work to all who believed in me especially my wife Tori Hicks. I am forever grateful to all those who have helped me reach this point in my academic career including family, teachers, and the Illinois Vipassana Center.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction and Background

This study helps educators better understand how Vipassana Meditation, mindfulness, and decision-making interrelate and contribute to the teaching and learning process and how that process influences and addresses teacher stress and burnout. The problem of teacher job stress and burnout stems from how teachers react and deal with personal and professional issues through decision-making, which impacts a teacher's longevity in the profession and relationships in the work place and within the community. In addition, literature about mindfulness and Vipassana Meditation also addresses stress, burnout, and decision-making through the perception and understanding of the present moment, which are interconnected to decision-making. This observation gives rise to the possibility that Vipassana Meditation may contribute to helping teachers deal with stress and burnout.

The history, background, and problem of teacher stress and burnout can be linked to the decision-making process (Chang, 2009; Margolis, 2009), which researchers have addressed through choice theory (Glasser, 2010), mindfulness (Carson & Langer, 2006; Ritchhart & Perkins, 2000; Sternberg, 2000), meditation (Lee, Semple, Rosa & Miller, 2008; Segal, Teasdale, Williams & Gemar, 2002; Teasdale et al., 2002), and more specifically Vipassana Meditation (Falkenstrom, 2010; Hall-Renn, 2006; Marques & Dhiman, 2009; Pagis, 2009). With a better understanding about stress and burnout and the possible effects of effective decision-making, mindfulness, and meditation, teachers and administrators may better understand how to deal with work stress and demands

within the school day and beyond. The impact could also affect educator preparation programs, resources, training, and professional development programs.

The studies listed above on recognizing and resolving cognitive dissonance, using choice theory, mindfulness, and meditation, have shown that each solution is effective on its own for reducing stress and burnout, but none of the studies have addressed the problem from a way of life perspective or studied the effects that Vipassana Meditation has on teachers' decision-making. Most studies on recognizing and resolving cognitive dissonance, using choice theory, mindfulness, and meditation have used quantitative methodologies, demonstrating the usefulness and effectiveness of these single approaches to stress, but no studies have addressed the integration of all these concepts from a holistic perspective, investigated the way or manner they are used, or the uncovered the process of how those approaches are effectively being used. Therefore, a qualitative method, such as the grounded theory method, addresses the phenomenon and experience that is needed to uncover the process in order to build a theory about how Vipassana Meditation, a holistic, lifestyle perspective, could help better understand teacher stress and burnout. A review of literature is covered in Chapter 2.

Problem Statement

There is a problem with how educators react and deal with work stress and demands within the school day in relation to decision-making (Pas, Bradshaw, Hershfeldt, & Leaf, 2010). Despite educator preparation programs, resources, and leadership training, some educators still have difficulties responding to daily tasks (Chang, 2009). This problem has negatively impacted educators' longevity in the

profession (Klassen & Chiu, 2010), in relationships in the work place (Otero, Bolano, Santiago, & Pol, 2010), and within the community because the knowledge and skills learned are not enough to function effectively (Clunies-Ross, Little, & Kienhuis, 2008). A possible cause of this problem is the lack of training and understanding about the present moment (Gold et al., 2010; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010; Thompson & Waltz, 2008; Van den Hurk, Giommi, Gielen, Speckens, & Barendregt, 2010), which is the perception, attention, and nonjudgmental awareness or attitude about immediate experiences. A study that describes and generates a theory about Vipassana Meditation and teacher decision-making related to stress and burnout may provide some suggestions to address this problem.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this grounded theory study was to discover, uncover, and build a theory through systematic, rich data collection and inductive and deductive analysis with regards to understanding the process and function of Vipassana Meditation practice by educators on classroom decision-making. The central phenomenon in this study was the perceived effects educators experience in their professional lives in regards to stress and decision-making. I explored the meaning teachers construct around the essence and experience of Vipassana Meditation to build a theory around the influence of meditation on educational work demands related to stress and cognitive dissonance.

I examined the central phenomenon of this study, teacher stress and burnout, through several lenses including Vipassana Meditation, mindfulness theory, current understandings on decision-making, and cognitive dissonance. Teacher stress is “the

experience by a teacher of unpleasant emotions such as tension, frustration, anxiety, anger, and depression, resulting from aspects of his or her work as a teacher” (Dunham & Varma, 1998, p. 4). Although Dunham and Varma’s (1998) book is a classic reference that covers the wide spectrum of teacher stress as a holistic combination of aspects, it also gave some historic context and perspective on a problem still prevalent today. Dunham and Varma (1998) also stated that prolonged job-related stress leads to the syndrome of burnout. Burnout, as considered in this study, consists of three components: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lack of a sense of personal accomplishment (Brock & Grady, 2000; Hartney, 2008).

In this study a broad sense of Vipassana as an art of living (Goenka, 2002) and “a clear awareness of exactly what is happening as it happens” (Gunaratana, 2002, p. 3) through observing reality without judgment to uncover truth (Goenka, 2000) set the overall foundation of this study. In addition, I addressed Vipassana Meditation as a practice and process that expands into, extends, and influences everyday life and activities, such as teaching and decision-making. Furthermore, within the practice of Vipassana Meditation, mindfulness is a main concept, which is the awareness of context. It stems from comparing and contrasting observations and experiences that stretch the understanding of a situation by keeping an open mind to alternative perspectives and categories (Langer, 2004).

Similarly, Festinger (1962) defined the theory of cognitive dissonance as a psychological discomfort or inconsistency that exists “between two pairs of elements” such as a cognition, which is what a person knows about themselves, a behavior, or the

environment (pp. 2, 9). There are three main ways to reduce dissonance, including changing the knowledge, changing the action, or changing the perspective through rationalizing the actions and cognition (Festinger, 1962). The process of dealing with this dissonance will in turn affect stress and burnout. It may also help uncover how Vipassana Meditation and mindfulness address teachers' stress and burnout, which could provide administrators and teachers with information about how meditation enhances teaching and the curriculum.

Nature of the Study

In this qualitative, grounded study, I explored and generated a theory about the process of how the practice of Vipassana Meditation expands into and influences teachers' decision-making related to stress, such as the effects of meditation on educational work demands and classroom management. Due to the goal of generating a theory about a process and action, a grounded theory study design provided the best fit (Creswell, 2007). My role in this study was an observer-as-participant, as I collected, coded, and analyzed the data from interviews, participant journals, and an open-ended questionnaire to uncover the emerging concepts and patterns.

I increased the trustworthiness of data through member validation, member checking, and triangulation of data collected through the interviews, participant journals, and questionnaire. The population for this grounded study included teachers who practice Vipassana Meditation. A snowball, theoretical, homogeneous, criterion-based purposeful sampling technique and strategy were used to select participants. Therefore, the sample required participants to have teaching experience, still be currently teaching in the

classroom, have participated in at least one 10-day Vipassana Meditation training, and still meditate daily. The participants were selected, contacted, and asked to be a part of this study through email and phone.

Research Questions

The research questions were:

1. How does Vipassana Meditation influence a teacher's daily routine in the classroom?
2. How, and under what daily school situations or stress, do teachers use the concepts practiced in Vipassana Meditation?
3. How does the practice of meditation influence classroom decision-making, classroom management, and procedures?

I discuss the objective of these questions and the details about the nature of this study further in Chapter 3.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework starts with teacher stress and burnout as the backdrop topic and problem. Solutions and approaches offered have drawn on cognitive dissonance theory, choice theory, mindfulness theory, and the perspective of Vipassana Meditation philosophy that sheds a new light on the problem of how teachers react to stress. I have designed a visual chart that brings attention to the crux of these overlapping concepts and theories as the foundation for this grounded theory study (Figure 1). Some main concepts at that overlapping point include: awareness, observation, context, detachment, nonjudgment, flexibility, the present, emotions, relationships, choice, and action. Thus,

these concepts set the foundation and starting point for this grounded theory method design to generate a cohesive theoretical background and framework to better understand and explore the process of Vipassana Meditation and teacher decision-making as it relates to stress and burnout in regards to classroom management (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Overlapping theories and concepts.

There was no disputing literature found on cognitive dissonance theory, choice theory, mindfulness theory, or the practice of Vipassana Meditation, although there are multiple perspectives. Furthermore, some of the resources used throughout could be arguably dated, but I used them because they stipulate a definition that creates historical context to the problem, covers a wide spectrum of concepts within teacher stress, and addresses the holistic combination of aspects about teacher stress, which are still

applicable and prevalent today. Other dated resources used within are also from seminal books by the main meditation gurus who are still alive today, making them appropriate and significant to include.

For example, Goenka (2000, 2002) and Gunaratana (2002) are the main meditation gurus alive today, and the timeless information taken from their seminal books are still appropriate today, including Goenka's *Meditation Now: Inner Peace Through Inner Wisdom* (2002), and *The Discourse Summaries: Talks From a Ten-day Course in Vipassana Meditation* (2000) as well as Gunaratana's *Mindfulness in Plain English* (2002). Vipassana is a practice that helps individuals deal with demanding situations. Vipassana is the oldest Buddhist meditation practice (Gunaratana, 2002, p. 31). It "can be translated as insight, a clear awareness of exactly what is happening as it happens" (Gunaratana, 2002, p. 3). It is "observing reality as it is, without any preconceptions, in order to disintegrate apparent truth and to reach ultimate truth" (Goenka, 2000, p. 90). Gunaratana (2002) provided a more specific and literal definition:

Vipassana is derived from two roots. *Passana* means seeing or perceiving and *Vi* is a prefix with a complex set of connotations that can be roughly translated to mean in a special way, and also into and through a special way. The whole meaning of the word Vipassana is looking into something with clarity and precision, seeing each component as distinct, and piercing all the way through to perceive the most fundamental reality of that thing. (pp. 33-34)

Vipassana is a universal, scientific, rational, and nonsectarian practice that can be used by everyone, as it is not a religion (Goenka, 2002). It is an observation of mind and matter

and the reactions of what is happening inside and out (Goenka, 2002). Vipassana meditation includes three main parts: *sila*, *samadhi*, and *panna*.

The Vipassana Research Institute (2010) noted, “Vipassana is a part of Buddha's teaching, it contains nothing of a sectarian nature, and can be accepted and applied by people of any background” (para. 4). At any given time, individuals are all experiencing what it is to be human. The Vipassana Research Institute stated, “People from all backgrounds who practice Vipassana find that they become better human beings” (para. 5). For example, when humans experience anger, this anger is not specific to any religion. Similarly, love and compassion are also not specific to a particular population, community or group because they are all “universal human qualities resulting from purity of mind” (Vipassana Research Institute, The Courses section, 2010, para. 5).

In general, this framework, centered on Vipassana Meditation, encourages responding rather than reacting when making decision and dealing with emotions. The framework may aid in explaining how and why meditation and awareness builds reasoning and critical thinking skills to reduce stress.

Definition of Terms

Anapana: The practice of being aware of respiration and breath (Goenka, 2005, p. 2).

Anicca: Impermanence or change; understanding that suffering comes from attachment or aversion and that one should strive toward removing the ego or self (Goenka, & Hart, 2000, p. 128).

Burnout: Consists of three components: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lack of a sense of personal accomplishment (Brock & Grady, 2000, p. 4; Hartney, 2008, pp. 11-12).

Choice theory: Behavior is driven to satisfy five basic needs: survival, belonging, power, freedom, and fun. It revolves around the seven caring habits, including, supporting, encouraging, listening, accepting, trusting, respecting, and negotiating differences that counteract the old external control psychology (Glasser, 2010). The theory offers “an explanation of human behavior,” including actions, thinking, and feelings, which also addresses self-talk, the role of the past, external world, and the present environment (Wubbolding & Brickell, 2007, p. 29).

Cognition: Any thought, opinion, or belief about self, others, and the environment (Festinger, 1962, p. 3) including wants, desires, and emotions either satisfying or painful (p. 9). Furthermore, a person’s beliefs, values, attitudes, and opinions are also forms of knowledge, as a person only holds those which they think is correct (p. 10).

Cognitive dissonance theory: Defined by Festinger (1962), it is the phenomenon or mental conflict that happens while making decisions, and states that people are

motivated to reduce dissonance, an uncomfortable feeling, or achieve consonance, good feelings, by avoiding situations, information, or actions that contributes to dissonance, which is the uncomfortable feelings or inconsistencies between attitudes, opinions, beliefs, and behaviors (pp. 1-33).

Decision-making: The thoughts, processes, and action that take place between a person's responsibility, demand, and control related to options within a situation (Festinger, 1962, pp. 34-36).

Depersonalization: Psychologically removing or distancing oneself from others and relationships that evolve into a negative attitude (Hartney, 2008, p. 11).

Dissonance: A psychological discomfort or inconsistency that exists between elements or cognition one holds about their behavior and environment (Festinger, 1962, p. 2, 9).

Emotional exhaustion: A state in which teachers are drained of the ability to sustain and give energy to the job and students as they did in the past (Brock & Grady, 2000, p. 4; Hartney, 2008, p. 11).

Equanimity: A calm balanced mental and emotional state of mind built on the acceptance and impermanence of the present moment while being detached from past or future outcomes (Goenka, 2002, pp. 55-62).

Lack of accomplishment: The perception of effectiveness, competence, and building of feelings around low self-esteem (Hartney, 2008, p. 12).

Metta: Selfless love, the practice of sending out thoughts and feelings of goodwill for all beings (Goenka, 2005, p. 3).

Mindfulness theory: A Western psychological perspective that “refers to an individual’s sensitivity to context” through gathering an awareness of characteristics and differences, “challenging the limits of strict categories, and considering alternative perspectives” (Langer, 2004, p. 2). The psychological interpretation of “mindfulness can be considered both a state and a trait” (p. 4). The state describes the “behavior in a particular situation” (p. 4), while the trait is a tendency “to think and behave mindfully” (p. 4). The trait of mindfulness can be measured in four domains such as novelty producing, flexibility, novelty seeking, and engagement (Langer, 2004). These domains “describe a person’s relative openness to experience, willingness to challenge strict categories, and continual reassessment of the environment and their reactions to it” (p. 4).

Mindfulness: An Eastern perspective, which is a mirror to thought that has no bias, and “reflects only what is presently happening in the exactly the way it is happening” (Gunaratana, 2002, p. 139). It is pure awareness, “impartial watchfulness” of the “fleeting instant” just before conceptualization that cannot get caught up in categories and perceptions, as it is a “nonconceptual,” “present-moment awareness,” and nonegotistical alertness (Gunaratana, 2002, pp. 138-140). “Mindfulness is an awareness of change,” as “one watches the universe within” (Gunaratana, 2002, p. 141). The three activities of mindfulness include the reminding us of what we are to be doing, helping us seeing things as they really are, and seeing things as true nature, meaning the cultivation of and practice of the essence of patience (Gunaratana, 2002, pp. 142-145, 153-154).

Panna: Wisdom, achieved through the systematic observation of sensations or in layman terms, a body-scan (Goenka, 2005, p. 2).

Samadhi: The practice of concentration, achieved through *anapana* (Goenka, 2005, pp. 2-4).

Sila: A morality made up of five precepts or morals including abstaining from killing, abstaining from stealing, abstaining from sexual misconduct, abstaining from wrong speech, and abstaining from all intoxicants (Goenka, 2005, p. 2).

Stress: A physical, emotional, and mental strain on a person with relationship to demand, responsibility, and control with an environment, which affects the ability to cope and function normally (Cosgrove, 2002, p. 28).

Teacher stress: A teacher's experience of anger, frustration, anxiety, and depression as a result of work in the classroom as a teacher (Kyriacou, 1997, p. 156; Dunham & Varma, 1998, p. 4).

Assumptions

There is an assumption that every job, including those within education, and especially teaching, gives rise to some level of stress. Furthermore, I assumed that classroom management--an aspect of teaching that deals with the process of delivering classroom lessons and preventing, monitoring and modifying disruptive student behavior, related to motivation and respect--is one of the main challenges, causes, and issues that teachers face daily, which contribute to the level of stress experienced. I also assumed that Vipassana Meditation is more than just a practice but a way of life that impacts a person's professional life and, more specifically, the work of a teacher. I assumed that the participating teachers were authentic with their responses in the interviews, journals, and questionnaire. I assumed that they had the capacity to reflect on their practice and that the

interpretation of their experience gave value to the study, although memory could have been unreliable.

Limitations

I have been practicing Vipassana Meditation for 2 years and have 14 years of classroom teaching experience. These experiences could have aided me in my data collection, inductive analysis, and the understanding of the process and phenomena being studied, as it is something that needs to be experienced before having the ability to clearly write about, but may limit the objectivity of the research. However, I did address any bias in collecting or interpreting the data resulting from my personal practice of Vipassana Meditation through the use of epoche, bracketing field notes, memos, and a personal journal to document my own thoughts and feelings through the whole process, which was used to further document the relationship I have with the data and analysis. Furthermore, using the process of member checking also helped with controlling researcher bias. In addition, this study also deals with a very specific type of participant, a teacher who practices Vipassana Meditation, which is so specific that it may not be applicable to most general educational situations and classrooms, but is important to study, as it could uncover the process and impact meditation has on teaching and learning.

Another limitation to this study included all interviews being done via Skype or by phone due to all of the participants living and teaching more than one hour away. Face to face interaction would have been best so subtle, nonverbal cues could also be added to the research notes and analysis. Furthermore, some of the concepts within this study are spiritual and can be tied to other procedures and practices, meaning there are many

concepts that impact decision-making, and it is hard to verify that one action is more significant than another, especially the subjective practice of meditation.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this study did take into account the individualistic, multiple, and varied perspectives of teachers who practice Vipassana Meditation while focusing on how it affects the decision-making process in classroom management, which did include the general effects on daily work tasks and stress. The study included 10 teachers who were invited to participate in this study through the snowball method. Students and other staff members who are in contact with each participant were not included in the study as data sources. There was no attempt to evaluate if the amount of time meditating has any affect on the ability to influence daily tasks or work. The educational levels of the teachers were not discussed or evaluated. In addition, other school programs or procedures that possibly address teachers' decision-making or classroom management such as Character Counts or PBIS (Positive, Behavior, Intervention, System) were not taken in account. Furthermore, personality, although a very important factor, was not considered, since personality is much more diverse and complex to address here. Finally, the concept of spirituality and the connection meditation has with religion were not taken into account, as there is a fine line with including the practice of meditation in public schools, which some interpret to be a form of prayer.

Significance of the Study

Although this study population is relatively small and specific, the significance and contribution in general can help teachers and administrators better understand how to

deal with work stress and demands within the school day such as classroom management. The influence of this research could also affect educator preparation programs, resources, and training by establishing a tool that can positively affect a teacher's everyday life when dealing with the stresses involved with this demanding profession. More importantly, it could also affect professional development programs that mainly consist of teachers who have been in the profession for a number of years, giving these veteran teachers a new perspective on how to deal with the stress of the classroom. In addition, this grounded study also provides a theory that addresses the problem of teacher stress and burnout, which has negatively impacted educators' longevity in the profession.

This study helped better understand whether mindfulness, Vipassana Meditation, and decision-making interrelate with each other and contribute to the teaching and learning process and influence relationships that address the problem of stress and burnout. This study gives support to the use of Vipassana Meditation in education, as it can impact teaching and student learning by decreasing stress and prolonging teachers' careers through increasing awareness of the present moment to support responsive decision-making. The centering nature of Vipassana may impact student learning as it may allow a teacher to be more connected to the students, more confident, and more relaxed while delivering a lesson. Furthermore, the reactive nature of confronting a difficult student could become more responsive and positive, as Vipassana helps to increase the space between thoughts and support better decision-making and teaching. Therefore, this study can create a positive social change within an individual, a school,

and community by increasing the number of teachers who practice Vipassana Meditation, thus affecting a future generation of students and teachers.

Summary and Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 introduced the background to the research problem and discussed the purpose, nature of the study, research questions, conceptual framework, operational definitions, assumptions, limitations, scope, and delimitations. Chapter 1 also covered the background and history of the problem of how educators react and deal with work stress and the demands within the school day in relation to decision-making as addressed through the concepts of mindfulness and Vipassana Meditation. It also included the purpose and nature of this grounded theory study, which is to discover and build a theory about the process and function of Vipassana Meditation practice by educators on decision-making, stress, and affects classroom management. I outlined the research questions and connected them to the conceptual framework, described as the overlapping concepts of cognitive dissonance theory, choice theory, mindfulness theory, and the perspective of Vipassana Meditation philosophy. Lastly, I outlined the assumptions, limitations, scope, and delimitations to help focus the study to uncover how the process and practice of Vipassana Meditation can lessen teacher stress and burnout, help support the learning and teaching process, and create positive social change within a school and community.

The remaining chapters outline the literature, methodology, results, and conclusions. Chapter 2 presents a review of literature surrounding the research problem, questions, and conceptual framework, which include stress, burnout, decision-making,

cognitive dissonance, choice theory, mindfulness theory, meditation, and Vipassana Meditation as they all relate to teaching and learning regarding classroom management. Chapter 3 describes the methodology and grounded theory research design chosen to investigate the stated problem along with more details about the research questions. In addition, this chapter explains the role of the researcher, setting, sample population, data collection, analysis, and measures taken to confirm the ethical protection of each participant.

Chapter 4 presents participant recruitment, participant profile information, the two-stage system used for generating and gathering data, the analysis of data, and the findings with evidence. Overall, the participants in this study were of various ages, backgrounds, subjects and grades taught, and teaching and meditation experience. Chapter 5 interprets the findings of Chapter 4 through addressing each research question in succession to outline and explain the three phases of the anicca perspective decision-making process and stress reduction tool. Lastly, I address a discussion on implications for social change, recommendations for action, recommendations for further study, researcher reflection, and a summary of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

This qualitative grounded study sought to create a better understanding of the process, function, and influence of Vipassana Meditation practice by educators on classroom decision-making, which also addresses teacher stress and burnout. There is an emerging body of literature and research that addresses the problem of job stress and burnout for teachers, considering how teachers react and deal with classroom management issues through decision-making (Pas et al., 2010), stress and burnout's impact on teachers' longevity in the profession (Klassen & Chiu, 2010), teachers' relationships in the work place (Otero et al., 2010), and teachers' relationships within the community (Clunies-Ross et al., 2008). In spite of this evidence and the connection between teachers' stress and classroom management (Mintz, 2007; Tsouloupas, Carson, Matthews, Grawitch, & Barber, 2010), little is known about how mindfulness and Vipassana Meditation could address this specific problem by increasing understanding of the present moment (Gold et al., 2010; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010; Thompson & Waltz, 2008; Van den Hurk et al., 2010), which is the perception, attention, and nonjudgmental awareness or attitude about immediate experiences. This research review demonstrates the gap in literature about mindfulness, Vipassana Meditation, and decision-making as they interrelate and contribute to the teaching and learning process, impacting classroom management skills and addressing the problems of stress and burnout (see Figure 1 in Chapter 1). This review also includes literature about the background and current trends regarding grounded theory methodology related to the problem and purpose of this study.

Research Questions and Strategies

The main research questions to address the gap in the literature, problem, and purpose of this study include:

1. How does Vipassana Meditation influence a teacher's daily routine in the classroom?
2. How, and under what daily school situations or stress, do teachers use the concepts practiced in Vipassana Meditation?
3. How does the practice of meditation influence classroom decision-making, classroom management, and procedures?

The objective of these questions supports the grounded theory method, which generates a cohesive theoretical background and framework to better understand and explore the meaning people construct around the phenomenon, experience, and process of Vipassana Meditation and mindfulness on a teacher's daily routine and classroom management related to decision-making. This literature review frames the gap in the literature and the need for a better understanding about how Vipassana Meditation relates to an educator's work such as effectiveness, competency, and stress.

The literature review is comprised of empirical and theoretical information retrieved from the Walden University Library and seminal books. The Walden University Library databases used in this review included, but were not limited to, the Educational Resources Information Center, Education Research Complete, SAGE full-text database, Dissertations and Theses, Teacher Reference Center, SocINDEX, Academic Search Complete, Expanded Academic ASAP, PsycINFO, and PsycARTICLES. The journals

used included, but were not limited to, *International Journal of Stress Management*, *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *International Journal of Learning*, *Teacher Development*, *Journal of Cognitive, Psychotherapy, Education*, *Teaching Education*, *Teacher Education Quarterly*, *Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy*, *American Journal of Education*, *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health*, *Journal of Alternative & Complementary Medicine*, *Contemporary Buddhism*, *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *Journal of Social Issues*, *Journal of Rational-Emotive & Cognitive Behavior Therapy*, *Educational Psychologist*, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *Human Relations*, *Social Theory & Practice*, *Decision Processes*, and *Journal of Educational Thought*. Some examples of keywords used separately and in combinations for this review included, but were not limited to, *teachers*, *educators*, *school*, *stress*, *burnout*, *mindfulness*, *meditation*, *Vipassana*, *In-sight meditation*, *decisions*, *decision-making*, *cognitive dissonance*, *choice*, *Langer*, *Goenka*, *Glasser*, *Festinger*, and *grounded theory*.

Content and Organization of Literature Review

The review of literature for this study is organized by the concepts that were uncovered in the empirical and theoretical research that include: (a) stress and burnout, (b) choice theory, (c) decision-making and cognitive dissonance, (d) mindfulness theory, (e) mindfulness and Vipassana Meditation, and (f) literature related to differing research methodologies and the need for qualitative, grounded theory. The overall purpose of this review was to demonstrate the gap in literature to support the need for a grounded study that builds a theory about the overlapping concepts, process, and function of Vipassana

Meditation practice that relates to decision-making in regards to classroom management. It also explored the gap between the research about Vipassana Meditation and education such as the effects of meditation on educational work demands.

Teachers' Stress and Burnout

Teachers' job stress and workload are becoming a growing concern contributing to burnout from job dissatisfaction (Davidson, 2009; Otero et al., 2010), which stems from three aspects of stress, including emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and accomplishment (Chang, 2009; Margolis, 2008; Sonnentag, Kuttler, & Fritz, 2010; Tomic & Tomic, 2008). Some of the main sources of teachers' stress include student behavior (Clunies-Ross et al., 2008; Tsouloupas et al., 2010), classroom management (Pas et al., 2010), workload (Sonnentag et al., 2010), emotional reactions and habits (Chang, 2009), psychological and psychosocial relationships (Margolis, 2008), self-efficacy (Otero et al., 2010; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010), and context or environment (Davidson, 2009; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009).

Davidson (2009) claimed that heavy workload and classroom management, which impact stress, are the largest factors contributing to emotional exhaustion. In other words, classroom management is related to and lumped together into workload. Davidson's qualitative data, such as teachers describing situations in the classroom dealing with student discipline, support the emotional exhaustion element found in the quantitative study of Tsouloupas et al., (2010), which measured the effect teachers' perceptions have on student misbehavior. Together, both studies state that the perceptions from teachers about their own success and student misbehavior are pivotal views in affecting levels of

emotional exhaustion. This point further supports the importance of perception, a main concept of mindfulness and Vipassana Meditation, which could aid in addressing this issue of student behavior and workload. Moreover, classroom management strategies are another aspect that contributes to teachers' stress and the issue of burnout (Clunies-Ross et al., 2008).

Classroom management strategies such as directing student behavior, time on task, emotional reactions (Clunies-Ross et al., 2008), proactive responses, and emotional competence (Jennings & Greenberg, 2010) are linked to stress and emotional exhaustion. Notwithstanding, there are still few known interventions being used in the classroom (Clunies-Ross et al., 2008). Similarly, teachers' attitudes about student behavior also impact overall stress levels (Pas et al., 2010). For example, teachers with high efficacy and who are able to meet normal demands are more open to using interventions recommended by specialists, and thus would be less likely to be stressed due to the openness to be proactive (Pas et al., 2010). Clunies-Ross et al. (2008), Davidson (2009), Pas et al. (2010), and Tsouloupas et al. (2010) all found a need for developing more interventions, teacher practices, and strategies that address teachers' stress in relation to classroom management and student behavior.

Similarly, Sonnentag et al. (2010) stated that workload and the ability to detach psychologically from work when not on the job is an important response in dealing with stress. For example, high levels of emotional exhaustion were related to low levels of psychological detachment, therefore drawing the connection between the ability to separate work from home and how that detachment influences job stress levels.

Sonnentag et al. (2010) examined this correlation with multiple measures such as a self-report survey, a spouse-report measure, Oldenburg Burnout Inventory, and Van Veldhoven and Broerson's (2003) Scale. Interestingly, meditation is the practice of clearing perception, attention, and nonjudgmental awareness of the immediate experience, which could help support the ability to detach psychologically from work to home and even detach from the present moment to see things as they really are and thus lower stress (Falkenstrom, 2010). However, Sonnentag et al. (2010) did not mention that meditation could be a way of detaching from work.

Similarly, in considering detachment from behavior patterns, Chang (2009) argued that habitual patterns and judgments all impact emotional exhaustion because emotions are a response or interpretation of a situation, and the use of appraisals can perhaps regulate how teachers experience unpleasant emotions that lead to stress. The use of situational appraisal and emotional regulation is a form of reflection while in the moment (Chang, 2009). This form of reflection within the present moment is similar to mindfulness though Chang does not directly make that connection.

Margolis's (2008) qualitative study about social and professional dynamics explained that the largest factors contributing to stress for teachers are psychological and psychosocial relationships. The psychological facets include self-knowledge and acceptance while the psychosocial relationships consist of isolation, colleagues, and leadership. All those factors impact stress through the connection to emotion, as with the motivation to engage students and build relationships with administrators. Jennings and Greenberg (2010) made a similar point in their study:

Socially and emotionally competent teachers set the tone of the classroom by developing supportive and encouraging relationships with their students, designing lessons that build on student strengths and abilities, establishing and implementing behavioral guidelines in ways that promote intrinsic motivation, coaching students to conflict situations, encouraging cooperation among students, and acting as a role model for respectful and appropriate communication and exhibitions of prosocial behavior. (p. 492)

Likewise, self-efficacy--the capacity to produce successful action (Klassen & Chiu, 2010) or a belief in one's ability to plan, organize, and carryout activities (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010)--has been tied to achievement and behavior (Klassen & Chiu, 2010) just as psychological well-being, psychosocial relationships, and emotion have, thus connecting self-efficacy to job satisfaction and stress.

Basically, a "teacher's confidence in engaging students, managing student behavior, and using instructional strategies" are all parts of self-efficacy that negatively correlate to stress (Klassen & Chiu, 2010, p. 748). In general, higher levels of self-efficacy result in lower classroom stress and higher job satisfaction. Similarly, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2010) found that teachers' self-efficacy was also related and connected to relationships with parents; for example, as teachers have stronger or more positive relationships with parents, the higher and stronger their self-efficacy beliefs are, which in turn can impact well-being and stress levels. Furthermore, self-efficacy as measured by the Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy's Self-Efficacy Scale was found to be more significant in the relationship between teacher and school principal on stress, which starts

to connect emotional exhaustion to the depersonalization aspect of burnout, thus putting emphasis on the importance of self-efficacy. Equally, Otero et al. (2010) found that aspects of teachers' self-efficacy such as optimism, hardiness, and peer support combined with daily hassles and life events all impact job dissatisfaction, stress, and burnout. Moreover, teachers' self-efficacy and personal relationships are dependent on context and environment, which also impact stress. Nevertheless, Vipassana Meditation cannot directly affect the environment, but it does focus on self-perception and context, which could impact self-efficacy and thus stress and burnout.

Context--such as supervisory support, time pressure, relations to parents, and autonomy--make up a multidimensional construct, which are all correlated to stress (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009). Additionally, supervisory support means the relationship between teacher and administrator, which is related to job satisfaction. In addition, each part of context also affects stress differently. For example, Skaalvik and Skallvik (2009), in a study of 563 Norwegian elementary and middle school teachers, found that relations with parents were correlated to depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment, whereas time pressure was related to emotional exhaustion. Both relations with parents and time pressure were found to affect stress and burnout. Also, Davidson (2009), in a qualitative study of middle school teachers from rural Mississippi, uncovered that context, such as workload, paperwork, interaction with students, parents, and administrators, and achievement related to No Child Left Behind legislation also affect stress levels. These findings demonstrates the complex interrelationships that context brings to the issue, contributing to stress and burnout. Even so, the practice of Vipassana

Meditation could help a teacher deal with context and thus address stress and burnout. This can be done through increasing concentration, observation, and description skills connected to awareness and accepting the present moment (Falkenstrom, 2010). Also, the increased awareness and accepting of the present moment affects the ability to understand emotions and past experiences to self-monitor a situation (Pagis, 2009).

In summary, stress and burnout in relation to emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and accomplishment can come from many sources including student behavior, classroom management, workload, emotional reactions and habits, psychological and psychosocial relationships, self-efficacy, and context or environment. All of these sources can be addressed in some way through the practice of Vipassana Meditation. For example, emotional exhaustion can be addressed through psychological self-distance or detachment (Sonnetag et al., 2010; Tomic & Tomic, 2008). This concept of detachment can also allow an individual some response time to lessen habitual mindless patterns and help regulate emotions (Chang, 2009) to reduce stress, while also helping a person reflect on relationships and beliefs within decisions (Margolis, 2009).

There are many known causes of teacher stress, but few studies suggest how to address the problem as a whole or from a perspective of a way of living or total behavior, as teaching is more than a career but a lifestyle. Therefore, this supports the need for discovering whether a holistic, lifestyle perspective, through Vipassana Meditation, could help better understand teacher stress and burnout. Overall, research about stress and burnout, decision-making, cognitive dissonance, mindfulness, and meditation separately

are limited because most only use a singular perspective, primarily use the quantitative methodology, and have not been done in the field of education.

Most research on teachers' stress and burnout rely heavily on quantitative methodology to test programs, curriculum, theories, treatments, and behaviors. More specifically, most studies of teachers' stress and burnout such as Clunies-Ross et al. (2008), Klassen and Chiu (2010), Otero et al. (2010), Pas et al. (2010), Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2009, 2010), Sonnentag et al. (2010), Tomic and Tomic (2008), and Tsouloupas et al. (2010) used the Maslach Burnout Inventory or a similar scale to assess stress and burnout, to compare participants, or to determine the cause and effect of various possible sources of stress. Therefore, these studies do not address how stress or burnout is created, as would a qualitative study or taking the holistic lifestyle of teaching into consideration.

However, Davidson's (2009) study did use a phenomenological, qualitative approach to uncover the professional dynamics of teachers' relationships to stress, which included excessive paperwork and unfair workloads, while Margolis (2008) used the phenomenological approach to uncover and find the challenges that contribute to stress and burnout, such as the actions of the principal, relationships among teachers, and personal beliefs about leadership. Nevertheless, still more qualitative research in general is needed to uncover a process about how to deal with stress or suggest some ways to lessen the effects of stress (Chang, 2009; Jennings & Greenberg, 2010), and the grounded methodology specifically would do just that, generating a theory about a process and action such as stress. Furthermore, such an approach can uncover how Vipassana

Meditation could directly affect stress and burnout and more specifically in terms of behavior or choice.

Choice Theory

The basis of choice theory is that “all we do is behave... almost all behavior is chosen, and that humans are driven by our genes to satisfy five basic needs: survival, belonging, power, freedom, and fun” (Glasser, 2010, p. 1). Choice theory revolves around Seven Caring Habits--supporting, encouraging, listening, accepting, trusting, respecting, and negotiating differences--which counteract the old model of external control psychology (Glasser, 2010, p. 1). Most people use external control psychology, which is destructive to relationships and is “the source of almost all human problems” (Glasser, 2010, para. 4). Choice theory offers “an explanation of human behavior” and helps answer the “questions about why people do what they do” (Wubbolding & Brickell, 2007, p. 29). The explanation of total behavior including actions, thinking, and feelings also addresses self-talk, the role of the past, external world, and the present environment (Wubbolding & Brickell, 2008), which is related to stress and stress management.

In addition, choice theory addresses student discipline problems as not being external, which stems from a stimulus-response and behavioral perspective, but rather as internal, with a built-in mechanism based on satisfying needs of survival, love, relationships, power, freedom, and fun (Glasser, 1985). Similarly, perception plays a large role in reality theories such as choice theory, just as awareness plays a role in mindfulness. This point adds an element of self-awareness and a filter to the context of relationships and the present moment (Langer, 1994; Wubbolding & Brickell, 2009),

which could impact stress. Therefore, it also demonstrates the connection, importance, and need to uncover the overlapping perspectives of choice theory, decision-making, and cognitive dissonance theory.

Decision-Making and Cognitive Dissonance

The decision-making process and phenomenon is related to stress and burnout because “intellectually, individuals experiencing burnout have problems making decisions” (Brock & Grady, 2000, p. 6). According to Brock and Grady (2000) the issue lies in taking responsibility and having control over the decision-making process. In addition, teacher morale, motivation, and job satisfaction stem from the balance of control over a decision’s input (Brock & Grady, 2000). When teachers believe that they do not have that control, the balance of responsibility then becomes stressful (Brock & Grady, 2000). Furthermore, teachers need control over the decision-making process to help deal with personal feelings and to help schools reach higher standards, which can reduce stress (Brock & Grady, 2000). Similarly, Dunham and Varma (1998) stated that control over the decision-making process is the most important factor in dealing with stress. Therefore, control in relation to the decision process directly affects stress levels.

Decision-making theories are in essence about the management of thought (Festinger, Torrey, & Willerman, 1954; Wubbolding & Brickell, 2007), which can relate to experiencing and managing stress. Festinger (1962) created the cognitive dissonance theory, which is about the mental conflict that happens while making decisions and states that people are motivated to reduce dissonance by avoiding situations, information, or actions that contribute to dissonance. Likewise, these mental processes are also practiced

within Vipassana Meditation as an awareness of the present moment and balance of interpreting information.

Festinger (1962) defined the term cognition as “any knowledge, opinion, or belief about the environment, about oneself, or one’s behavior” (p. 3). The term dissonance pertains to a psychological discomfort that exists “between two pairs of elements” such as a cognition (pp. 2, 9). For example, knowledge, opinions, and beliefs also include “what one does, what one feels, what one wants or desires, what one is, what is where, what leads to what, and what things are satisfying, painful, or important (p. 9). All these elements, knowledge functions, or responses, are cognitions within a context that is physical, social, or psychological (Festinger, 1962). Finally, the interrelations, interplay, and phenomenon of all the above create the interworkings of the theory of cognitive dissonance, which directly corresponds to the practice of nonjudgment and the training of the mind within Vipassana Meditation.

Wong (2009) stated that cognitive dissonance is a process an individual goes through to justify actions to beliefs. Similarly, and more specifically, Stone (2009) stated that it is a process of rationalizing the relationships between knowledge, beliefs, and actions. Both those processes of justification and rationalization are comparable to the process and practice of Vipassana Meditation. In addition, the concept of control in relationship to making a decision is an important factor in decreasing dissonance (Koller & Salzberger, 2007). For example, when one faces a decision, the cognitions will create a motivation to reduce dissonance (Festinger, 1962).

According to Festinger (1962), there are three main ways to reduce a dissonance, including changing the knowledge, changing the action, or changing the perspective through rationalizing the actions and cognition. The changing of knowledge or perspective are the most applicable ways in relation to Vipassana Meditation, as those are both cultivated in awareness of the present moment. Festinger (1962) also stated the weight, pressure, or importance of the dissonance also fluctuates dependent on the function of the element, connections to other relevant elements, and the value of each element, thereby creating a weighted proportion to the presence of dissonance. Furthermore, Eisenstadt and Leippe (2005) found that personal relevance in relationship to cognitions also impacted levels of dissonance, which are also strongly related to attitude (Starzyk, Fabrigar, Soryal, & Fanning, 2009). Consequently, importance, relevance, and attitude are also refined and balanced within the practice of Vipassana Meditation.

Furthermore, the role of attitude is like the motivation behind cognitive dissonance (Elliot & Devine, 1994). The more important, heavy, or strong a belief is, the more influence it will have on the decision (Elliot & Devine, 1994; Starzyk et al., 2009). In addition, Gosling, Denizeau, and Oberlé (2006) confirmed that attitude and the weight of a decision coupled with denial of responsibility were possible mechanisms to reduce dissonance. In some instances, denial of responsibility and the option of choice (Gosling et al., 2006) impacted group interaction and dissonance (Matz & Wood, 2005). This complex interaction, especially the denial of responsibility, is similar to the practice of letting go and observing impermanence within Vipassana Meditation. Nonetheless,

individuals and groups are influenced by attitude, trivialization, and denial of responsibility, as they experience dissonance and the decision-making process, which also corresponds to the practices within Vipassana Meditation.

Therefore, the importance of a decision impacts the dissonance and consonance of a decision, just as attitude and choice do. For example, resistance can also affect a decision thus making dissonance inevitable in every decision (Festinger, 1962). Overall, decision-making and changes are influenced by the motivation to reduce dissonance through changing behaviors, the environment, knowledge, or perspectives, which is also found in the practice of Vipassana Meditation. Thus, understanding the function of decision-making, the workings of cognitive dissonance theory, and their connection to Vipassana Meditation offers a clearer picture of teachers' stress and burnout.

Notwithstanding, the research studies on choice theory, decision-making, and cognitive dissonance are all primarily theoretical arguments. In addition, most studies used some type of attitudinal measure from quantitative surveys to compare populations. Furthermore, these studies are also limited as they only used undergraduate students. Therefore, in general, research on choice theory, decision-making, and cognitive dissonance need to be expanded to include a wider population, especially in the field of education, and more specifically on teachers. The research on choice, decision-making, and cognitive dissonance also needs to focus on discovering how a process works by using a qualitative design, such as the grounded theory method (Creswell, 2007).

Decision-making and cognitive dissonance are connected to stress (Brock & Grady, 2000), which is also related to understanding perspective and context (Davidson,

2009; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009). The weight, pressure or importance of a decision (Eisenstadt & Leippe, 2005) coupled with attitude (Starzyk et al., 2009), trivialization (Elliot & Devine, 1994; Starzyk et al., 2009), and denial of responsibility (Gosling et al., 2006) all clarify the process in making decisions that can lessen stress. The addition of a clearer understanding of perspective and context (Carson & Langer, 2006) could aid in the analysis of dissonance between elements and further clarify seeing a situation from multiple perspectives to address stress. These multiple perspective concepts are one aspect of mindfulness, which could further help teachers cope with stress and burnout. Interestingly, all these concepts support the need of bring in more space between thoughts, actions, decisions, and awareness of surroundings, which are cultivated through mindfulness within the practice of Vipassana Meditation and explained in mindfulness theory.

Mindfulness Theory

Mindfulness theory addresses awareness of context in the present moment. It stems from comparing experiences that stretch the understanding of a situation by keeping an open mind to alternative perspectives and categories (Carson & Langer, 2006). For instance, mindlessness, habitual or automatic behavior, and operating from a singular perspective could make it difficult to see the whole situation and therefore impact performance and relationships (Burgoon, Berger, & Waldron, 2000). Mindfulness, however, allows people to be sensitive to an environment, supporting clearer thoughts and behaviors (Demick, 2000) as well as better performance, decision-making, and reduction of stress (Ritchhart & Perkins, 2000; Sternberg, 2000). Furthermore, there is a

bigger connection to how awareness, mindfulness, and context can affect decision-making (Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000).

Mindfulness Versus Mindlessness

More formally and specifically, mindfulness theory “refers to an individual’s sensitivity to context” through gathering an awareness of characteristics, freshness, and differences, “challenging the limits of strict categories, and considering alternative perspectives” (Langer, 2004, p. 2). Mindfulness theory grew out of a contrast to the concept of mindlessness, which is a habitual and automatic behavior that generates closed mindsets and singular perspectives (Langer, 2004). For instance, automatic behavior and operating from a singular perspective “could prevent one from actively making decisions about whether an automatic perception or behavior actually fits the current context, just because it might have fit a similar context in the past” (Langer, 2004, p. 2). Mindfulness allows people to be sensitive to an environment that supports clearer thoughts and behaviors (Langer, 2004), thus supporting better decision-making and reducing stress. Similarly, the practice of Vipassana Meditation also cultivates nonjudgmental awareness of the environment to more clearly understand context and the ever-changing psychological world.

The basic framework of mindfulness theory is based on how “mindlessness is pervasive, mindlessness can be counterproductive, mindlessness can result from repetition as well as from exposures to information, and mindlessness can be overcome using appropriate interventions” (Langer, 2004, p. 2). Furthermore, the automatic behavior of mindlessness discourages an individual from responding with an open mind

and could impact the decision process (Langer, 2004). Mindlessness also closes the mind off to subtle information that could make a big difference in making decisions by expanding the context (Langer, 2004). On the other hand, mindfulness, will allow people to uncover new opportunities that could help them reevaluate old issues to support better decisions (Langer, 2004). Langer (2004) explained “When we make even small efforts to be more mindful, drawing new distinctions in our daily experiences, we become more interested in what we are doing and our performance improves,” and could affect our daily decisions (p. 3). Equally, Vipassana Meditation also supports the practice of being open to experiences, accepting alternative perspectives, and piquing interest to increase performance through the awareness of the present moment.

Mindfulness State and Trait

Alternative perspectives allows for a clearer picture of a situation, which adds context and helps to better understand that things are not always concrete (Langer, 2004). This open mindset would assist in making decisions and working within resolving cognitive dissonance. In contrast, a mindless person, with a single description or mindset stifles creativity and hinders the exchange of possible alternatives that could impinge on the ability to see solutions to decisions (Langer, 2004). Furthermore, in the psychological world “mindfulness can be considered both a state and a trait” (Langer, 2004, p. 4). Mindfulness the state, describes the “behavior in a particular situation” (Langer, 2004, p. 4), while mindfulness, the trait, is a tendency “to think and behave mindfully” (Langer, 2004, p. 4). These classifications are so closely related that a combination of both could be used to relate to decision-making and cognitive dissonance, as one side is to behave in

a situation while the other relates to the analytical personality of weighing options. As a result, mindfulness the state and more specifically the trait could aid in the generation of alternate perspectives or open mindsets to encourage better decisions, and reduce cognitive dissonance that generate stress and burnout.

Shifting into a mindful state occurs when certain conditions are present, such as when consequences differ from expected outcomes; one is likely to shift into a mindful state in order to process the new information because old, automatic behavior is no longer effective. When situational factors interrupt automatic behavior, the mindful individual creates a novel solution or begins a new set of behaviors that fit an otherwise mindless routine. In situations that require more effort to analyze and respond, one is more likely to attend to circumstances with attention to detail a concern for contextual cues. (Langer, 2004, p. 2)

Context and Mindfulness

Therefore, mindfulness has an impact on contextual awareness and social comparisons, which are tied to performance (Langer, Pirson, & Delizonna, 2010), self-acceptance (Carson & Langer, 2006), and stress (Demick, 2000). In general, when one is being more mindful about self and performance, that also reduces the impact of comparisons (Langer et al., 2010). Furthermore, Langer et al. (2010) found those who “did not make social comparisons” were also more positive about their performance than those who did make comparisons (p. 72). Thus, demonstrating that mindfulness can buffer the affects of social comparisons about performance (Langer et al., 2010), and give a clearer picture about self (Carson & Langer, 2006), thus also possibly reducing stress.

Comparably, the practice of Vipassana Meditation as the observation of mind and matter and the reactions of what is happening inside and out (Goenka, 2002), which is similar to the buffering affects of mindfulness on comparisons to impact performance. In addition, these observations of reactions take place through the practice of concentration and attention.

Cultivating the nature of mindfulness such as through concentration, being open to possibilities, and accepting ambiguity as part of not falling into old thought patterns can be helpful in supporting a lifetime of learning and enjoyment (Ritchhart & Perkins, 2000). In education, conditional instruction, or through mindful teaching, which expands regular presentation and extends exploration of ideas and possibilities, can aid “in constructing meaning and building understanding” (Ritchhart & Perkins, 2000, p. 45). Therefore, mindfulness expands narrow categorization, which cultivates the mindful decision of having more self-acceptance (Carson & Langer, 2006), clearer awareness of comparisons (Langer et al., 2010), that impacts well-being and stress (Demick, 2000). Identically, Vipassana Meditation also supports the expansion of categories by bringing attention to self-acceptance within the ever-changing world and environment.

Although, Carson, Shih, and Langer’s (2001) study about the use of creating multiple perspectives, while learning or looking at something for the first time of 55 traditional and nontraditional elementary students in the Boston area argued that the “sit still and pay attention” concept of traditional teaching is less effective than multiple perspective teaching, but the results were not statically significant to fully support their case (pp. 186-188). For example, the sample size is extremely small. Also, the results on

the shuffle group, the walking across the room while looking at a map, “could not identify as many landmarks or locations as the students moving” back and forth, and sitting still (p. 187-188). On the other hand, it did bring up a few concepts and practices that need to be researched more, specifically the concept of attention in regards to sitting still. Interestingly, the concept of mindfulness theory and awareness are also similar to the eastern concept of mindfulness that is practiced during meditation, which is done normally while sitting still, and has shown to reduce stress through the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction technique (MBSR) (Gold et al., 2008). Similarly, mindfulness is practiced within Vipassana Meditation and is normally done through sitting, but Falkenstrom’s (2010) quasi-experimental study about the relation of mindfulness to the feeling of well-being of 76 experienced meditators included all movement and action through bringing awareness to subtle changes in the body while in different contexts, movements, and situations, which need to be investigated within education.

Mindfulness Theory’s Connection to Meditation

In general, all four categories of trait mindfulness, such as novelty producing, flexibility, novelty seeking, and engagement, which are connected to self-acceptance, social comparisons tied to performance, and well-being are all concepts practiced within Vipassana Meditation. Moreover, the sitting practice of concentration and attention addressed within (Carson et al., 2001) is similar to meditation, but is different from the practice of Samadhi, which is the concentration, achieved through *anapana* within Vipassana Meditation that cultivates *panna*, the wisdom and awareness of the present moment (Goenka, 2005). Overall, there are many parallels to draw between mindfulness

as defined by Langer (1989; 2004) and the Eastern philosophies of mindfulness, which includes meditation, such as de-automatization, to see things as they really are with nonjudgment and being open to new categories to help break out of old thoughts, habitual patterns, and reduce stress.

The research on mindfulness such as Burgoon et al. (2000); Carson and Langer (2006); Demick (2000); Langer and Moldoveanu (2000); and Sternberg (2000) are all theoretical arguments that compared other empirical studies implemented by Langer, the founder of mindfulness theory. Nevertheless, Carson et al. (2001); Langer et al. (2010); and Ritchhart and Perkins (2000) do empirically measured mindfulness through the quantitative measurement tool LMS (Langer Mindfulness Scale) that assessed four categories of trait mindfulness such as novelty producing, flexibility, novelty seeking, and engagement (Langer, 2004). For example, Carson et al. (2001) uncovered that forcing students to use multiple physical perspectives and movement while learning new concepts enhanced cognitive perspectives to increase attention to memory. Langer et al.'s (2010) between-subjects experimental study about mindlessness and social comparisons used the LMS to compare mindfulness to performance and found that mindfulness training could lessen the negative effects of social comparisons. Ritchhart and Perkins (2000) used the LMS to compare an experimental study of conditional instruction about cultivating mindfulness as a trait to a qualitative study about thoughtful classrooms, which both support and provide instructional examples to support the traits of mindfulness.

Notwithstanding, more research is needed to uncover the process of how or why mindfulness, the trait, works and how the influence of the state of mindfulness works in the process, therefore uncovering the need for a qualitative method study with a grounded theory approach to discover the process of mindfulness. In addition, most mindfulness studies are also limited as they only used university undergraduate students in their populations. Therefore, demonstrating the need to expand the research population, and especially address the field of education and teachers, even though there is a whole book dedicated to mindful learning (Langer, 2000).

Mindfulness Meditation

The term mindfulness originated from the Eastern philosophies and meditation practices (Baer, 2003). In essence, it is the art and practice of paying attention to the present moment and experience with nonjudgment (Baer, 2003). Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy revolves around the concept “I am not my thoughts” (Baer, 2003, p. 127), which can help a person create a moment of clarity and reduce stress. The main focus of the therapy concentrates on cognitive change, self-management, relaxation, and acceptance (Baer, 2003). There are numerous quantitative tools to measure mindfulness, such as the Langer Mindfulness Scale (Langer, 2004), and many types of stress and depression therapies that use the mindfulness-based cognitive therapy adherents scale (Lee et al., 2008; Segal et al., 2002; Teasdale et al. 2002). Furthermore, meditation can also assist teaching and learning (Berard, Hallam, Geiwitz, & Kerzner, 2009), and assist with the coping of emotional feelings as to guide better decision-making skills (Grenard, 2008; Nielsen & Kaszniak, 2006).

Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy, based on the Buddhist tradition of meditation, has shown to lessen pain, anxiety, depression, stress, and improve body image (Collard, Avny, & Boniwell, 2008; Gold et al., 2010). In addition, Thompson, and Waltz (2008) found that mindfulness skills learned through cognitive therapy and meditation support positive self-acceptance, self-esteem, and self-worth, which could reduce stress. Furthermore, Van den Hurk et al., (2010) found that mindfulness meditation increased attentional processing and efficiency, which according to stress research (Chang, 2009; Margolis, 2008; Sonnentag et al., 2010; Tomic & Tomic, 2008) also could reduce stress and burnout. Moreover, Nielsen and Kaszniak (2006) also found mindfulness meditation to support emotional awareness to guide better decision-making skills that could affect emotional exhaustion and depersonalization connected to burnout. Therefore, mindfulness-based cognitive therapy and mindfulness meditation have many benefits and can be tied to stress and burnout.

There is considerable research on the general topic of meditation with most centering on mindfulness-based cognitive therapy, which is based on the Buddhist tradition and has shown to be effective for treating anxiety and depression (Collard et al. 2008; Gold et al. 2010). Regardless, there are also researchers doing comprehensive comparative literature reviews on the topic of mindfulness meditation such as Baer (2003) and Chang (2009), which outlined the growth and significance of meditation and adding to the psychological theories. Most meditation studies such as Collard et al. (2008), Gold et al. (2010), Lee et al. (2008), Nielsen and Kaszniak (2006), Segal et al. (2002), Sonnentag et al. (2010), Teasdale et al. (2002), Thompson and Waltz (2008), and

Van den Hurk et al. (2010) all used quantitative measurement tools to assess well-being, emotions, and awareness. For example, Gold et al. (2010) used the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale, the Global Problem Scale, and the Kentucky Inventory of Mindfulness, while Lee et al. (2008) used multiple tests such as Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL), Multidimensional Anxiety Scale for Children (MASC), State-Trait Anxiety Inventory for Children (STAIC), and the Reynolds Child Depression Scale (RCDS). Even so, some research such as Grenard (2008) used the phenomenology qualitative method to uncover the experiences of working with Koan meditation in relation to emotions, concentration, and habitual associations. Therefore, demonstrating the need for more research to be done on the work and experiences of people who meditate and how meditation affects their personal life or, more specifically, their professional life. The populations used in most meditation studies are as vast as the types of meditation, which do include a range of teachers from primary or elementary grades through college level teachers, students ranging from elementary to adolescent to college, and patients being treated for anxiety and depression having nothing to do with education, thus covering the various population well.

Although, these mindfulness meditation techniques offer many results as described above, the most historical, traditional, and universal practice of Vipassana Meditation might very well hold the most overlapping truths and philosophical connections to all of the theoretical frameworks described above thus far, and could allow for an even deeper understanding of the theoretical overlap that could address teacher stress and burnout.

Vipassana Meditation

According to the Vipassana Research Institute (2010) “Vipassana is one of India’s most ancient meditation techniques” that “was rediscovered 2500 years ago by Gotama the Buddha, and is the essence of what he practiced and taught during his forty-five year ministry” (Historical Background section, para. 1). Many people have been “freed from the bonds of suffering by practicing Vipassana, allowing them to attain high levels of achievement in all spheres of life” (Vipassana Research Institute, 2010, para. 1). The technique then spread to Myanmar (Burma), Sri Lanka, and Thailand where the same effect was experienced (Vipassana Research Institute, 2010, para. 1). Only after a few centuries after the Buddha, Vipassana Meditation had almost disappeared from India. However, it stayed preserved for over 2000 years in Myanmar by devoted teachers who passed it down from one generation to another by keeping the technique pure (Vipassana Research Institute, 2010, para. 2).

In the recent past, S.N. Goenka reintroduced Vipassana Meditation to India, as well as, “to citizens from more than eighty other countries” (Vipassana Research Institute, 2010, para. 3). S.N. Goenka “was authorized to teach Vipassana by the renowned Burmese Vipassana teacher, Sayagyi U Ba Khin” and helped Vipassana Meditation return to India and help it “spread throughout the world for the benefit of all mankind” (Vipassana Research Institute, 2010, para. 3). In 1969 S.N. Goenka began teaching Vipassana courses in India and in 10 years he started to teach in other countries and training “over 800 assistant teachers who have conducted many courses worldwide” (Vipassana Research Institute, 2010, para. 4). Today there are many centers in India and

around the world that were created especially for the practice of Vipassana where there are “ever-increasing numbers of people having the opportunity to learn this art of living, which brings lasting peace and happiness” (Vipassana Research Institute, 2010, para. 4).

Although, Vipassana is a part of Buddha's teaching, it contains nothing of a sectarian nature, and can be accepted and applied by people of any background.

The Buddha himself taught Dhamma (the way, the truth, the path). He did not call his followers "Buddhists"; he referred to them as "Dhammists" (those who follow the truth). The technique works on the basis that all human beings share the same problems, and a pragmatic method, which can eradicate these problems can be universally practiced. (Vipassana Research Institute, The Courses Section, 2010, para. 4)

Vipassana can be practiced by anyone regardless “of race, caste, faith or nationality” (Vipassana Research Institute, The Courses section, 2010, para. 5). Many people of all religions such as “Hindu, Jain, Muslim, Sikh, Buddhist, Christian, and Jewish” practice Vipassana (para. 5). Also, all courses “are run solely on the basis of freely-offered donations” (Vipassana Research Institute, The Courses Section, 2010, para. 3). There are no fees to learn this technique.

The courses are financed totally by donations from students who have completed a prior course and wish to share the benefits they themselves received by giving donation for the students who come after them. Neither the teacher nor the assistant teachers receive remuneration; they and those who serve the courses volunteer their time. This practice is consistent with the pure tradition, whereby

the teaching is to be offered freely, free from any taint of commercialism, and supported solely by donations stemming from the wholesome volitions of gratitude and generosity. (Vipassana Research Institute, The Courses Section, 2010, para. 3)

Goenka (2002) stated, “Vipassana is nothing but an art of living” (p. 35). It “can be translated as insight, a clear awareness of exactly what is happening as it happens” (Gunaratana, 2002, p. 3). It is “observing reality as it is, without any preconceptions, in order to disintegrate apparent truth and to reach ultimate truth” (Goenka, 2000, p. 90). In general, it is the process and practice of observing “impermanence, un-satisfactoriness, and selflessness of phenomena” within and without (Gunaratana, 2002, p. 31), which can help detachment and effect stress. Vipassana is a universal, scientific, rational, and nonsectarian practice (Goenka, 2002). It is an observation of mind and matter and the reactions of what is happening inside and out (Goenka, 2002). Similarly, Chiesa (2010) stated, “Vipassana Meditation is one of the most ancient and diffuse type of meditation practices belonging to the poll of mindfulness,” which as of late have been studied for its neurobiological and clinical benefits (p. 37). In addition, businesses and management companies have used it in numerous workshops to improve management practices, such as greater focus, more control over emotions, greater self-control, reducing conflict, fostering creativity, and greater sensitivity to the environment, “which would lead to more deliberate decisions and choices” (Marques & Dhiman, 2009, p. 81), and lessen stress.

The practice of Vipassana Meditation also increases awareness of the environment and a person's relation to that, thereby increasing flexibility and balance in context, while being open to alternative solutions, which could increase personal and professional excellence (Marques, 2008), and reduce stress. The mental health interventions, business, and management applications of Vipassana Meditation also apply to the counseling practice and profession, as nonjudgment of a situation with a patient could affect a treatment given by staying flexible and sensitive to all perspectives (Hall-Renn, 2006). Overall, Vipassana Meditation offers and increases concentration, observation, describing, awareness, and accepting (Falkenstrom, 2010), which affects an individual's ability to understand emotions, past experiences, and self-monitoring known as embodied self-reflexivity (Pagis, 2009). This deeper awareness of body sensations can increase a person's ability to deal with the present moment including stress through decision-making (Pagis, 2009).

Research on Vipassana Meditation that could be connected to decision-making and stress would include the intersubjectivity of silence in social situations (Pagis, 2010), self-reflexivity as a monitoring system (Pagis, 2009), and mindfulness (Falkenstrom, 2010). However, most research done on Vipassana Meditation is not directly connected to decision-making and stress, but are on related topics such as psychological and neurological studies about brain function (Holzel et al., 2008), mental disorders, substance abuse, and on death row prisoners' quality of life and well being (Bowen et al., 2006; Bowen, Witkiewitz, Dillworth, & Marlatt, 2007; Simpson et al., 2007). For example, the research on brain function showed an increase in "alpha, theta, and beta

activity in frontal and posterior regions, some gamma band effects, with theta activity strongly related” to treatment of “depression, anxiety, psychosis, borderline personality disorder and suicidal/self-harm behavior” (Ivanovski & Malhi, 2007, p. 76).

Vipassana Meditation “can decrease the amplitude of neurophysiologic processes” that assist the engagement of attention “elicited by unexpected and distracting stimuli,” which can “reduce cognitive and emotional reactivity,” and the measured time-locked events-related brain activity associated with “automated reactivity and evaluative processing of task irrelevant attention-demanding stimuli” (Cahn & Polich, 2009, p. 51). Moreover, these neurological studies about brain function also are similar to the findings of psychological studies on incarcerated populations quality of life, well-being, mental disorders, and substance abuse (Bowen et al., 2006; Bowen et al., 2007; Simpson et al., 2007). For example, Vipassana Meditation reduced “alcohol and substance abuse but not post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms in prisoners” (Chiesa, 2010, p. 37). Furthermore, Vipassana decreased “alcohol-related problems and psychiatric symptoms” while increasing “positive psychosocial outcomes” (Bowen et al., 2006, p. 343). Vipassana also decreased “avoidance of thoughts when compared to controls” (Bowen et al., 2007, p. 2324). Moreover, Vipassana Meditation supported a “more mature defense and coping strategies characterized by greater maturity and tolerance of common stressors” (Chiesa, 2010, p. 41). Hence, making the connection for using Vipassana Meditation as a tool for increasing tolerance to reduce teacher stress and burnout (Chiesa, 2010).

Consequently, this background, history, and research about Vipassana Meditation including mindfulness, awareness of the environment, sensitive to all perspectives,

increasing concentration, observation, describing, accepting, self-monitoring, connected to decision-making and stress founded on psychological and neurological studies could be expanded to include classroom management, which may help better understand the holistic problem of teacher burnout. In general, this literature and research also helps focus on how responding with more space in-between thoughts, when making decisions may aid in understanding how meditation and awareness can support reasoning and critical thinking skills that could reduce stress. Furthermore, the importance of better understand how mindfulness, Vipassana Meditation, and decision-making interrelate to each other show how they contribute to the teaching and learning process and influence relationships that address the problem of teacher stress and burnout.

Even so, research on Vipassana Meditation is limited due to the way it is taught as the practice is done in silence and discussions do not happen, especially about ulterior motives, such as research, even if they are about seeking truth or expanding the knowledge of meditation. Access to other people and information is prohibited. Also, upholding the sanctity, and purity, of the practice, and the confidentiality of participants are so important that information about participants held by the meditation centers are never given out, therefore, making it very difficult to acquire participants. Because of that, most Vipassana Meditation studies use the snowball sampling method such as Pagis, (2009, 2010) who used the ethnographic approach.

Additionally, the majority of research done on Vipassana Meditation such as Chiesa (2010), Hall-Renn, (2006), Ivanovski and Malhi (2007), and Marques and Dhiman (2009) is strongly theoretical and comprehensive comparative literature reviews.

Furthermore, most Vipassana research including those studies reviewed within the above are quantitative such as Bowen et al. (2006), Bowen et al. (2007), Cahn and Polich (2009), Falkenstrom (2010), and Holzel et al. (2008), which used experimental designs, and measurement tools such as an MRI brain image scan, EEG body measurement, personality assessment inventory tool, the Kentucky Inventory of Mindfulness Skills, and the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire. Therefore, demonstrating the need for more qualitative research about the how Vipassana Meditation can influence a person's personal life and more importantly their professional life. Nonetheless, Pagis (2009, and 2010) used the ethnographic methodology to get into the culture of those people who practice Vipassana Meditation and investigate the embodied self-reflexivity and intersubjectivity in silence. Similarly, a grounded theory approach could be used to uncover, explore, and generate a theory about the process of Vipassana Meditation and teacher decision-making related to stress, such as the effects of meditation on educational work demands and classroom management. In addition, most populations studied, due to the difficulty of acquiring a sample group, have been on general nonmeditating and meditating participants, as well as only including experienced meditators, thus, illustrating the need for studying other smaller and more specific populations, including teachers. Furthermore, Vipassana Meditation has not been studied within the context of education, making it an unexplored context, experience, and phenomenon needing to be studied.

Need for Grounded Theory Research

The teaching profession is a highly emotional, interpersonal career and lifestyle where stress and burnout is becoming a growing concern (Davidson, 2009; Otero et al., 2010). In addition, the activities such as choice, mindfulness, and meditation by themselves have been shown to be effective to reduce stress and burnout, but none have addressed the problem from a way of life perspective, which could be done by including the practice of Vipassana Meditation. Moreover, each concept has been studied using quantitative methodology, which has demonstrated the effectiveness of these single concepts, but not many, if any, have addressed the *how* question or uncovered the process of how they are used in being effective.

Stress Methodology

For example, Clunies-Ross et al. (2008), Klassen and Chiu (2010), Otero et al. (2010), Pas et al. (2010), Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2009, 2010), Sonnentag et al. (2010), Tomic and Tomic (2008), and Tsouloupas et al. (2010) are all quantitative studies that used the MBI (Maslach Burnout Inventory) or a similar scale to assess stress and burnout and compared participants or determined the cause and effect of various possible sources of stress therefore, not addressing how stress or burnout is created, as would a qualitative study or taking the holistic lifestyle of teaching into consideration. Nevertheless, there were a few qualitative studies on teacher stress and burnout. For example, Davidson's (2009) phenomenological qualitative study did uncover the role of excessive paper work and unfair workloads are related to teacher stress. Also, Margolis's (2008) phenomenological study found that the actions of the principal, relationships among

teachers, and personal beliefs about leadership contribute to stress and burnout.

Furthermore, theoretical teacher stress arguments are addressed by Jennings and Greenberg (2010) on the relationship of effective classroom management and Chang (2009) related to emotions. However, neither bring forth empirical evidence, thus supporting the need for more qualitative research to uncover a process about how to deal with stress or suggest some ways to lessen the effects of stress, just as the grounded theory methodology does.

Choice Theory, Decision-making, and Cognitive Dissonance Methodology

Notwithstanding, research on choice theory, decision-making, and cognitive dissonance such as Glasser (1985, 2010), Stone (2009), Wong (2009), and Wubbolding and Brickell (2007, 2008, 2009) are all primarily theoretically arguments, which do not produce empirical evidence toward resolving stress. Also, most studies about decision-making and cognitive dissonance are quantitative studies. For example, Eisenstadt and Leippe (2005), Elliot and Devine (1994), Festinger et al. (1954), Gosling et al. (2006), Koller and Salzberger (2007), Matz and Wood (2005), and Starzyk et al. (2009) all used an attitudinal or emotional measure such as an inventory, survey, or scale to compare populations, beliefs, actions, and behaviors. In addition, these studies only used university undergraduate students, therefore supporting the argument to include a wider population, including a study specifically on teachers. Consequently, exposing the gap and need for more research about choice theory, decision-making, and cognitive dissonance in general. This gap is also exposed in relation to education and teachers that

investigates an all-inclusive theoretical framework, focusing on the why or how a process works by using a qualitative design, such as the grounded theory method.

Mindfulness Theory Methodology

Burgoon et al. (2000), Carson and Langer (2006), Demick (2000), Langer and Moldoveanu (2000), and Sternberg (2000) are all theoretical arguments about mindfulness that compared other empirical studies to only give support for the workings of mindfulness theory. However, Carson et al. (2001), Langer et al. (2010), and Ritchhart and Perkins (2000) all empirically measured mindfulness by using the quantitative measurement tool LMS (Langer Mindfulness Scale). In addition, most of these studies about mindfulness only used university undergraduate students as their populations. This demonstrates the need to expand the research population, for example in education and teachers and highlights the need to uncover the process of how or why mindfulness works, therefore uncovering the need for a qualitative method study like grounded theory.

Meditation Methodology

Much of the research around meditation in general included the mindfulness-based cognitive therapy, which has been shown quantitatively to be effective for treating anxiety and depression (Collard et al. 2008; Gold et al. 2010). Also, Baer (2003) and Chang (2009) outlined the growth and significance of meditation in relation to psychological theories through a comprehensive comparative literature review. In addition, Collard et al. (2008), Gold et al. (2010), Lee et al. (2008), Nielsen and Kaszniak (2006), Segal et al. (2002), Sonnentag et al. (2010), Teasdale et al. (2002), Thompson and Waltz (2008), and Van den Hurk et al. (2010) all used quantitative measurement tools to

assess well-being, emotions, and awareness. Despite that, Grenard (2008) used the phenomenology qualitative method to uncover the experiences of working with Koan meditation in relation to emotions, concentration, and habitual associations. Therefore, demonstrating the need for more research to be done on the work and experiences of people who meditate and how meditation affects their personal and professional life. Moreover, this exposes the need for more research about a universal meditation practice such as Vipassana Meditation with overlapping philosophical connections to all of the theoretical frameworks and arguments that could allow for a deeper understanding of the decision-making process that relate to teacher stress and burnout.

Vipassana Methodology

Although, Chiesa (2010), Hall-Renn (2006), Ivanovski and Malhi (2007), and Marques and Dhiman (2009) all address Vipassana Meditation they are all theoretical and comprehensive comparative literature reviews, which do not produce empirical evidence. Furthermore, Bowen et al. (2006), Bowen et al. (2007), Cahn and Polich (2009), Falkenstrom (2010), and Holzel et al. (2008) all quantitatively addressed Vipassana Meditation by using experimental designs with measurement tools such as an MRI brain image scan, EEG body measurement, personality assessment inventory tool, the Kentucky Inventory of Mindfulness Skills, and the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire. In addition, most of these populations studied were on general nonmeditating or meditating participants, as well as, only including experienced meditators. Thus, illustrating the need for studying other smaller and more specific populations, including teachers and demonstrating the need for more qualitative research

about the how Vipassana Meditation can influence a person's personal life and more importantly their professional life. Nevertheless, Pagis's (2009, 2010) ethnographic study did look into the culture of those people who practice Vipassana Meditation and investigated the embodied self-reflexivity and intersubjectivity in silence. Furthermore, Vipassana Meditation has not been studied within the context of education making it an unexplored context, experience, and phenomenon needing to be studied.

As a result, a grounded theory approach could be used to uncover, explore, and generate a theory about the process of Vipassana Meditation and teacher decision-making related to choice theory, mindfulness theory, stress, and burnout such as the affects of meditation on educational work demands and classroom management. Therefore, a qualitative method, such as the grounded theory method, would address the phenomenon and experience that is needed to uncover the process happening in order to build a theory about how Vipassana Meditation, a holistic, lifestyle perspective, could help better understand teacher stress and burnout. Moreover, there is an insufficient amount of grounded theory research literature on cognitive dissonance, choice, mindfulness, meditation, stress, and burnout, within education, that connects an underlying theoretical framework, thus supporting the importance of doing this grounded theory study.

Grounded Theory Methodology

Glaser and Strauss developed the qualitative research method of grounded theory in the 1960s out of the need for more theories when doing research related to sociology (Creswell, 2007). It has grown and evolved in use since its creation to include research in the fields of psychology, health care, and education. Even though this exhaustive

literature review revealed very few grounded theory studies related to education and teachers, let alone any connecting to cognitive dissonance, decision-making, mindfulness, stress, burnout, or meditation, a few current grounded studies were found that address similar topics.

For example, in the field of psychology, Abba, Chadwick, and Stevenson (2008) conducted a grounded study about the process and practice of mindfulness on distressing psychosis, which revealed a three-stage process. In the same field of psychology, but on the subject of meditation and stress, Kerr, Josyula, and Littenberg (2011) conducted a grounded theory study about the process of self-observation by using a mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) technique. In the field of education, Gregory and Jones (2009) did a grounded theory study about the process university teachers go through to maintain competence. Similarly, Namaghi's (2010) grounded theory study explored the evaluation process of university teachers. In addition, Lindqvist and Nordanger's (2006) grounded theory study was about the process of using professional time and work conditions related to stress and performance. Volante and Cherubini (2010) conducted a grounded theory study about the decision-making process of administrators in regards to connecting large-scale assessment to school improvement. Although this list of examples is not extensive, these grounded theory studies demonstrate the different usages in the fields of psychology and education, but also relate to meditation, stress, and decision-making, which are topics relating to this study. Furthermore, the list demonstrates the use of grounded theory methodology as it explains and describes a process to generate a working theory.

In general, grounded theory methodology is a set of detailed, systematic guidelines and procedures about data collection and inductive analysis to generate a theory (Hatch, 2002). Those guidelines also help merge theoretical concepts and social phenomena through explanation and description to generate a new theory (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Grounded theory “investigates a practical activity,” and describes the process within a situation and context with a theory explanation (Buckley & Waring, 2009). Many changes and debates have taken place throughout the years about what grounded theory is and its philosophical foundation.

Philosophical views. Grounded theory, like all research methods, has a philosophical foundation, which some argue is a postpositivist view (Hatch, 2002), while others say it has evolved into a constructivist view (Charmaz, 2006) over the years. In its inception, perhaps the more systematic post-positivist view about reality and data only being approximate, an analysis process was established, consisting of induction with heavy comparisons of all data to point towards a theory about the self, mind, and action (Gilgun, 2011). Recently, a more constructivist view has evolved within grounded theory, which includes the construction of multiple realities through more flexible naturalistic data collection and connective and adaptable analysis about human situations (Gilgun, 2012). Charmaz (2006) viewed grounded theory as a “symbolic interactionist theoretical perspective,” with more of an accommodating set of principles and guidelines that adapt to the situation and context to generate a theory about a “studied world” (p. 10). In addition, the constructivist movement encourages researchers to move out of their own perspective and use a more interpretive analysis, while constructing stories through

connecting data to concepts that form new knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Thus, the growth of grounded theory research continues to be an important influence on the world and in different fields.

Advantages and disadvantages. Grounded theory is mostly known for its inductive and comparative analysis while making general statements about particular situations (Gilgun, 2012), although deductive analysis can be used (Gilgun, 2011). Therefore, a general advantage to using grounded theory methodology could be when significant literature or research about the area of study is insufficient, since grounded theory is a systematic procedure that generates knowledge and a theory (Buckley & Waring, 2009). Basic grounded theory analysis uses open, axial, comparative, selective, and theoretical coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). However, the use of generic coding procedures such as open, axial, and selective coding are not limited to theory-building (Gilgun, 2011, p. 4), as they are used in most qualitative research. In addition, although grounded theory is known as a qualitative method, it could also include quantitative data collection or documents (Buckley & Waring, 2009).

Grounded theory and most qualitative methods use interviews or observations to collect data, but the use of documents and pictures also can be used (Bowen, 2009). For example, a grounded theory study using document analysis could have the advantages of being more efficient, less-time consuming, wider availability, cost effective, less intrusive, more stable, and having precise details (Bowen, 2009). However, some disadvantages could include insufficient details, low retrievability and biased selectivity

(Bowen, 2009). Nonetheless, the advantages of grounded theory include the systemic procedures and the generation of a theory.

Creswell (2007) argued that the largest disadvantages or challenges to using the grounded theory method are the need to set aside research bias and theoretical ideas. However, Charmaz (2006) argued to keep the process more flexible and include the researcher as part of the data, which draws on the constructive theory. Furthermore, Gilgun (2011) explained that Denzin challenged researchers to promote the usage or collaboration of conscious and unconscious researcher biases with participant data to add to the depth and construction of local knowledge (Gilgun, 2011). Similarly, Konecki (2009) explained that the mind works creatively by comparing and sequencing action to a process that uncovers behaviors, which is the same function that takes place within grounded theory analysis, thus making the researcher an integral part of the methodological process. Regardless, documenting all researcher biases such as thoughts, ideas, and theoretical concepts is critical while using grounded theory methodology to increase objectivity and trustworthiness of the data and adding support toward generating new knowledge and theory.

Another main advantage or product of grounded theory is the process of generating of a theory. Gilgun (2011) stated that there is a difference “between grounded theory as methodology (GTM) and grounded theory (GT) as a product that is theory” (p. 4). The methodology is a set of strict procedures, while grounded theory is data that is grounded, saturated, and connected together to form a proposed theory. Similarly, Charmaz (2006) argued that the basic grounded theory method is too strict and rigid,

which needs to be brought up to date “with twenty-first century methodological assumptions and approaches” such as being more constructive, interruptive, and flexible (p. 9). Regardless, the generation of a theory is still a proposed product of the methodology.

Theory. The word theory is used so often that the meaning can be lost. Theory has three main interpretations when in the context of research (Reynolds, 2007). A theory can be a “conception of scientific knowledge as a set of well-supported empirical generalizations, such as a set of laws,” or “an interrelated set of definitions, axioms, and propositions,” or “a set of descriptions of causal process” (Reynolds, 2007, p. 8, 9). Therefore, grounded theory is the combination and connection of all three parts, as the data collected uncovers the knowledge, defines the context, and describes a process that ties together concepts to further expand knowledge. Similar to theory is synthesizing of concepts, which ties together concepts to help describe a process (Bowen, 2006).

Most research studies require a theoretical or conceptual framework, which is similar to synthesizing concepts, which “provides a starting point for building analysis to produce a grounded theory” (Bowen, 2006, p. 3). The synthesizing of concepts brings a focus to particular situations and interactions that lead to the research procedures and settings, which are normally brought up by the researcher, although they are not always aware of this (Bowen, 2006). Furthermore, synthesizing of concepts are “those background ideas that inform the overall research problem” (Bowen, 2006, p. 3). Moreover, these concepts can be used “in examining substantive codes with a view to developing thematic categories from the data (p.3). For example this will be helpful when

dealing with the concepts of cognitive dissonance, choice, mindfulness, meditation, stress, and burnout with regards to data collection and analysis. Another perspective on a theory's use in research is as a "spotlight" that "illuminates" or brings "attention to particular events or phenomena, and sheds light on relationships that might otherwise go unnoticed or misunderstood" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 43). This perspective combined with the explanation above was very helpful when dealing with multiple theories such as this study has done.

In general, the study populations addressed in the literature reviewed on cognitive dissonance, choice, mindfulness, and meditation research have been very limited and have not included the population of teachers except those studying stress and burnout, therefore, demonstrating the need to study teachers. Furthermore, grounded theory methodology calls for theoretical sampling, which is concept driven, and is "important when studying new or uncharted areas because it allows for discovery," (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 145), much like this study. Thus, a grounded theory study may help better understand how Vipassana Meditation, mindfulness, and decision-making interrelate to each other and contribute to the teaching and learning process that connects to the problem of teacher stress and burnout, which stems from how teachers react and deal with personal and professional issues through decision-making, which impacts a teacher's longevity in the profession, relationships in the work place, and within the community. This could bring about the possibility that Vipassana Meditation may have some contribution to help teachers deal with stress and burnout and address it from a holistic and multi perspective.

Summary and Conclusion

There is much research in and around teachers' stress, burnout, overall decision-making, cognitive dissonance, choice, mindfulness, and meditation that relate to the teaching and learning process. Nevertheless, much of that research is missing a holistic life style perspective, which the practice of Vipassana Meditation can bring. Moreover, most research on these topics is quantitative and does show that these topics are of great use by themselves, but none uncover the possibility of combining them, which could be investigated more deeply with qualitative research. In addition, not much, if any, research has been done in education and on teachers with regard to meditation in general, especially Vipassana Meditation. Even in the research done on mindfulness, decision-making, cognitive dissonance, and choice theory the study populations are very limited and do not include teachers. However, research about teacher stress and burnout has done much to uncover multiple sources of stress, but has neglected to suggest guidance of how to treat stress or what processes can be used to lessen it, therefore, demonstrating the gap in research about mindfulness, Vipassana Meditation, and decision-making that interrelate and contribute to the teaching and learning process. Furthermore, most studies do not uncover the process or lifestyle that can impact classroom management skills and perhaps address the problems of stress and burnout.

Questions not addressed in the literature and are the main research questions in this study include: How does Vipassana Meditation influence a teacher's daily routine? How, and under what daily situations or stress do teachers use the concepts practiced in Vipassana Meditation? And, how does the practice of meditation influence decision-

making, classroom management, procedures, and problems? Thus, further indicating the need to use grounded theory methodology as these questions refer to uncovering a process to develop a theory about how Vipassana Meditation influences a teacher's daily routine in regards to decision-making and classroom management, which impact levels of stress (see Figure 1 in Chapter 1).

Chapter 3 discusses my choice of methodology and rationale for the grounded theory methodology and research design chosen to investigate this problem. In addition, it explains the role of the researcher, setting, sample population, data collection, analysis, and measures taken to confirm the ethical protection of each participant.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Research Design and Approach

This qualitative grounded study explored and generated a theory about the process of Vipassana Meditation and teachers' decision-making related to classroom management and stress. Due to the goal of generating a theory about a process, a grounded theory study design fit best, although there are other possibilities. For example, there are many theories such as recognizing and resolving cognitive dissonance, using choice theory, mindfulness, and meditation that have shown on their own to be effective in reducing stress and burnout for teachers, but none have addressed the problem from a way of life perspective such as including the practice of Vipassana Meditation. In addition, each concept has been studied using mostly quantitative methodology, which has demonstrated the effectiveness of these single approaches, but not many studies have addressed the process of how those approaches are effectively being used. Therefore, a qualitative method could address the experience to uncover the process in order to build a theory about how Vipassana Meditation, a holistic lifestyle perspective, could help better understand teachers' stress and burnout. Furthermore, the research questions support the grounded qualitative approach.

Research Questions

The purpose of the research questions, derived from the conceptual framework, was to build a theory to understand better the function and process of Vipassana Meditation practice in regards to the stress and burnout that teachers experience in their professional lives and daily routines while dealing with decision-making and classroom

management issues. Maxwell (2005) explained that theory should help narrow the focus, support and generate a strategy, describe the context and problem, and guide the research questions. Building a theory can address the gap between the research about Vipassana Meditation and education. The research questions were:

1. How does Vipassana Meditation influence a teacher's daily routine in the classroom?
2. How, and under what daily school situations or stress, do teachers use the concepts practiced in Vipassana Meditation?
3. How does the practice of meditation influence classroom decision-making, classroom management, and procedures?

These questions support the grounded theory method in generating a cohesive theoretical background and framework to better understand and explore the meaning people construct around the effect of Vipassana Meditation on educational work demands. The research questions also focus on how responding to emotions may aid in understanding how meditation could support reasoning and critical thinking. These main questions frame the interview protocol questions about how Vipassana Meditation relates to an educator's function and work stress. In addition, these main research questions provide support to build a theory to address the problem of teachers' stress and burnout, which negatively impacts educators' overall effectiveness, longevity in the profession, and relationships in the work place and within the community.

Rationale and Justification of Grounded Theory Approach

There are many quantitative studies about the effects of stress related to mindfulness meditation (Collard et al., 2008; Gold et al., 2010), Vipassana Meditation (Chiesa, 2010; Falkenstrom, 2010; Marques & Dhiman, 2009), mindfulness (Langer et al., 2010), decision-making (Koller & Salzberger, 2007; Wong, 2009), and classroom management related to choice theory (Edens & Smryl, 1994; Parish & Parish, 1999). Therefore, the question of how or what happens within these processes, and when applying them in combination with each other, needs to be studied and can best be done so through using qualitative methodology, as the qualitative approaches address the general questions of how something happens through a detailed description of events. Nonetheless, qualitative designs such as phenomenology, case study, ethnographic, and narrative approaches are all viable possibilities, but each have particular reasons to why they do not fit best in this case.

The use of a phenomenological design could be a possible design method to understand an experience or describe and interpret the interaction (Creswell, 2007) such as meditation and teaching, however this method does not generate a theory, which is missing from the literature surrounding this topic. Also, the questions would have to change and address interpreting and describing an essence of that phenomenon (Creswell, 2007), but not outlining a process as grounded theory does. Another possible design would be a case study design, which would focus on developing a description of a specific case, activity, or event (Creswell, 2007), however, the designing and defining of a specific case would be difficult because finding a particular case to use would only

generate data pertaining to a specific case, eliminating any type of generalizability due to the possible misleading information from the context-dependent nature founded on a single case, which still might not address the process or creation of a theory. Although, a case study is very descriptive, an ethnographic study is more specific and thus a viable choice.

The ethnographic design describes and interprets specific patterns of a specific group or culture, especially in the historical context (Creswell, 2007), could work in this study, but the task of finding a population that fits an ethnographic study would be difficult. For example, that more specific participant sample defines a specific group or culture in an ethnographic study and would mean finding teachers who meet a certain criteria, such as teachers meditating the same number of years (history), and length each day, and have been teaching the same grade, subject, and in the same geographic area. Therefore, loosening the criteria was an option to allow greater feasibility and one that would work with grounded theory, on the other hand, maybe a narrative design with even narrower sample could be used. This study is not about a culture, but about a process that is intended to have no cultural bounds.

Finally, the narrative design could be used to detail and explore the life of one or several teachers who practice meditation and do so through telling the story of that individual's life (Creswell, 2007) while addressing psychological and sociological issues. Regardless, this study is about uncovering a process experienced by many teachers and not about an individual or dealing with any sociological issues. Therefore, the grounded theory method design would work best, which includes much of the above, such as,

addressing the overall questions of how and why a process is happening, focusing on that process through an experience or description and interpretation of a phenomena, and using a specific participant sample. But it is not so restricted as to have some generalization capabilities and it better combines data and literature into a theory to explain and understand a process, which is not the focal point of the other designs.

Participant Sample

Creswell (2007) stated, “in a grounded theory study, the researcher chooses participants who can contribute to the development of the theory” (p. 128). Corbin and Strauss (2008) explained grounded theory research as using theoretical sampling that is based on concepts, not people. Theoretical sampling therefore “is responsive to the data rather than established before the research begins” making it more open and flexible. Theoretical sampling also takes place until the point of “data saturation”, which is the point where “no new data is emerging” (p. 143). In addition, Creswell (2007) stated that a homogeneous sample made up of individuals sharing the same experience would help in developing a theory, “to confirm or disconfirm the conditions” (p. 128). Further, Charmaz (2006) stated that there is a logic that happens through theoretical sampling such as, “starting with the data, constructing tentative ideas about the data, and then examining these ideas to further empirical inquiry,” which directs sampling (p.102).

Therefore, the population for this grounded study was selected as described above by using a snowball, theoretical, homogeneous, and criterion-based purposeful sampling techniques and strategies to select participants. There are some disadvantages to using a snowball method, such as being inexact through supplying varied results as it depends on

the researcher to conduct and find a viable sample, which also relies on other people to continue the communication of who might fit the sample, possibly making it a weak sample of a target population. On the other hand, advantages of using the snowball method include locating participants easily and quickly that fit a specific population, such as “locating information-rich key informants” (Patton, 2002, p. 237) who could be difficult to access.

In the case of Vipassana Meditation, the sanctity, purity, and confidentiality issues around the meditation experience are so important that information about participants held by the meditation centers is never given out. Furthermore, the practice is done in silence and discussions in general do not happen, especially about ulterior motives, such as research, even if they are about seeking truth or expanding the knowledge of meditation. In general, access to other people and information is prohibited. Therefore, this sampling technique is similar to those used in the studies by Pagis (2009, 2010) on Vipassana Meditation, which used the method of snowball sampling. Second, the reason behind using theoretical sampling, which is based on concepts such as teaching and meditation here, and using a homogeneous sampling bases all participants in sharing the same experience of teaching and concept of practicing Vipassana Meditation. Finally, the sample also used the criterion-based purposeful sampling by requiring all participants to have teaching experience, still be currently teaching in the classroom, have participated in at least one 10-day Vipassana meditation training, and still meditate daily.

While, Creswell (2007) recommended that a grounded theory study should include 20 to 30 participants to cover a wide range of breadth, a smaller sample could be

used with various data collection tools, such as explained below, to gain a greater depth with fewer participants. Charmaz (2006) stated that sample size within grounded theory is not about the amount of data or large samples, but about uncovering process by "illuminating properties of a category and relations between categories" (p. 18). This grounded theory study reached data saturation, which happens when the sample reveals no new data including categories and connections that "supersedes sample size—which may be very small" (p. 114). Thus, the sample covered a wide enough breadth to cover the theories explored in the literature review, but at the same time get much deeper than other studies to discover the source of the process and phenomenon to uncover a theory. As a result, the goal number of participants in this study was a minimum of 7-10 based on saturation of the data, but if the data had not been exhaustive, another snowball sample could also have been done through other meditation centers, chat rooms, online forums, blogs, and networking sites such as facebook.com. For example, if the initial sample size had not reached saturation another set of participants could have been recruited through the creation of an online forum page about Vipassana Meditation and teaching on the networking site facebook.com as an alternative plan.

Gaining Participant Access

The procedures for gaining access to participants and methods of establishing a working relationship started at the end of both two 10-day meditation sessions attended in June 2009 and 2010. At the end of each session, I started very informal conversations with some of the other participants and found out that they also were teachers. They were briefly told about the ideas behind this study and were asked if they would be interested

in hearing more about it in the future. I exchanged information with them and contact was made a week later through email and phone calls outlining the study in general. The outline of the first communication and conversation included the explanation of the expectations, general procedures, consent, the voluntary aspect, background, nature of the study, risks, benefits, and confidentiality involved in the study. The demand on the participant was fully disclosed and most thought the benefit of being in this study could greatly impact education and teachers, which would also help share how this wonderful universal practice of Vipassana Meditation can be used. This communication was just to see if there was a viable and usable sample that could be used in this study. Five people expressed that they were interested in participating at this time and knew of others that might work as well. Furthermore, this early communication also stated that a more formal contact, information, and consent would follow after the proposal and approval is given to proceed.

Choosing a setting and site to use in this study was dependent upon the diverse participant sample including teaching position, subject taught, school community, grade level taught, and location. If possible, face-to-face interviews would have been conducted at the convenience of the participants at their place of employment or a place of their choosing to ensure some sense of formality and allow the participant to feel more comfortable and at ease. In most cases this meant the interviews would have taken place at the participants' school and classroom after normal school hours. If that did not work out, interviews would have been set-up to take place at the residence or another place of convenience of each participant. However, this study included all interviews being done

via Skype or by phone due to all of the participants living and teaching more than one hour away, even though face to face interaction would have been best so subtle nonverbal cues could also be added to the research notes and analysis.

Data Collection

The data collection was naturalistic inquiry with an inductive, deductive, and interpretive analysis with constant comparing of the data from a holistic perspective (Patton, 2002). Taking this into consideration, this study examined teachers in their natural settings by collecting data from sources highly dependent on the participants, not a researcher's influence, such as the participant reflective journals. Furthermore, I analyzed all the data by using inductive reasoning for emerging concepts and deductive reasoning by comparing that data to theoretical concepts from a holistic synthesis of perspectives and conceptual framework. The data I collected included participant daily journals, an open-ended questionnaire, and two one-hour Skype or phone interviews with each participant, with the first interview taking place at the beginning of the study and the second near the end, approximately 4-6 weeks later to ensure both the breadth and depth of the phenomenon and process are covered. Although, this data collection was rigorous and demanding, due to the reflective journal piece, participants were driven to comply with the demands because this study brings about more awareness toward how the practice and process of Vipassana Meditation expands into a whole life practice, which influences the stress and pressures of teaching and learning, helping all teachers in general.

The basic guidelines and questions for the reflective journal included: Describe a situation or experience during the day in which you used or could have used the concepts practiced in Vipassana Meditation. How did that happen? Describe in detail a classroom situation or experience. Reflect on the day or week's experience and decisions. An example of a journal entry, to help bring light to uncovering the process and expansion of how Vipassana Meditation practice expands into and influences teacher decision-making would be the ability to become more present by bringing more awareness to the breath and sensations within the body, before, while, and after a situation occurs. For instance, when a student is misbehaving in class, the meditation practice influence would take place through increasing the awareness of changing emotions through being sensitive to bodily sensations and picking up on subtle changes in breath to allow the teacher to better assess the discipline situation and better decide what action to take, such as words to use in addressing that student and what course of action that might be best suitable.

Other interview and questionnaire questions were generated from the daily journals, which also clarified and connected emerging concepts through specific participant examples. In addition, all data transcripts and notes were member validated for accuracy and member checked for correct and authentic interpretation, which allowed for triangulation to strengthen validity, reliability, and trustworthiness of the overall data and connection to theory (Patton, 2002).

Instrumentation and Materials

The main means of data collection consisted of two one-hour aural and video Skype or phone interviews due to all of the participants living and teaching more than

one hour away, taking place on an agreed date and time for the convenience of each participant. The first interview took place at the beginning of the study and the second near the end, approximately 4-6 weeks later. Handwritten field notes were taken to note and mark significant ideas. Each interview was also audio-recorded with the Zoom Handy Digital Recorder H4 and transcribed by the company Verbal Ink, Inc., which signed a confidentiality agreement to ensure accuracy. If a participant was uncomfortable or declined being audio recorded, researcher field notes alone would have been sufficient. Nonetheless, field notes and mp3 (a compressed audio file based on the MPEG format that stands for Moving Picture Experts Group) recordings were made into backup digital copies kept on my computer and external hard drive. A copy of each personal and nonedited interview transcription were sent to each participant for member validation to ensure accuracy of responses and later member checked such as sending participants drafts of chapter 4 and 5 for correct and authentic interpretation, summary, and connection to theory.

The data collection in the two Skype or phone interviews was based on a protocol using both structured and unstructured questions (Appendix A). Creswell (2007) stated that grounded theory data collection primarily uses interviews to uncover details surrounding a process or action. Maxwell (2005) further stated, in general, a structured approach is used for comparing data and asking questions regarding differences, whereas an unstructured approach deals with understanding a phenomenon and context that reveals a process or outcome. In addition, Maxwell (2005) also explained that it is

possible to prestructure a tentative plan and leave some of it flexible for emergent insights.

Although, this study used only Skype or phone interviews because of the participants living and working more than an hour away, face-to-face interviews would have been best. Patton (2002) explained that when an interview is face-to-face, the researcher could simultaneously observe context and the participant, while asking and recording responses, such as taking field notes. Similarly, Creswell (2007) stated that it depends on type of information you want to gather for answering your research questions, as to impact the type of interview that would work best. Therefore, my face-to-face interview protocol data collection tool was both structured and unstructured with the questions being based on theory. In addition, I had two interviews with each participant, however, the first one was be more conversational with a guide (Appendix A), as I formed the questions from the literature, theories, and conceptual framework, but wanted to allow room for discovery, while the second interview was derived from the emerging concepts from the first set of interviews and participant journals to help clarify, triangulate, and support the trustworthiness of all the data.

The interview protocol addresses general Vipassana Meditation philosophical and theoretical concepts, classroom situational stress sources as uncovered in the literature, decision-making, mindfulness, choice theory, and process questions. The interview protocol questions clarify the philosophical and theoretical practice of Vipassana Meditation, addresses stress and burnout with regards to classroom situational stress

sources, decision-making, mindfulness, choice, and the overall process and integration of Vipassana Meditation while teaching (Appendix A).

Overall, the first rounds interview questions were set-up to be semistructured to allow follow-up questions for clarification and to get deeper into emerging ideas, and concepts. A second interview was completed after I analyzed and compared the data from the first interviews using the interview protocol (Appendix A) and the participants reflective journals to focus more on the emergent concepts, which would most likely become more structured for comparison of the responses, but still have a conversational aspect as to keep flexibility open to the emergent concepts. The participant journals included guided questions, such as describing an event in detail about how meditation was used or could have been used that day. In addition, to clarify responses from the journals and interviews using both deductive and inductive analysis, a questionnaire derived out of those responses was used to synthesize the main concepts and ideas.

The Researcher's Role

The researcher's role in qualitative research is critical, as he or she collects data and implements analysis (Creswell, 2007); therefore, my role in this study was that of an observer-as-participant, as I was the primary instrument of data collection and analysis that collected, coded, and analyzed the data from interviews, participant journals, and questionnaire to uncover the emerging concepts and patterns. Thus, there is the potential for bias on my part, which could impact the outcome of the study, making this a very challenging balancing act of being objective and nonjudgmental in my thoughts, observations, and actions. That potential bias could be my experience with Vipassana

Meditation and teaching, as I have been practicing Vipassana Meditation for two years and have 14 years of teaching experience.

Nonetheless, this could also have aided me in my data collection, inductive analysis, and the understanding of the process and phenomena being studied, as it is something that needs to be truly experienced before having the ability to clearly write about. That is why the use of epoche, bracketing field notes, and memos were vital in reporting and analyzing the data. In addition, I kept a personal journal to document my own thoughts and feelings through the whole process, which was used to further document the relationship I had with the data and analysis. Furthermore, using the process of member checking also helped with controlling researcher bias.

Trustworthiness

Interview data were transcribed and member checked by sending each participant a copy of the nonedited transcripts to ensure the accuracy of responses. The multiple types of data such as the participant daily journals, an open-ended questionnaire, and two semistructured interviews increased the trustworthiness of the data and helped triangulation to strengthen trustworthiness of the overall data and connection to theory (Patton, 2002). Moreover, trustworthiness of the multiple types of data also typically increases through the long-term engagement with participants of collecting the data. Furthermore, my observational and reflective journal also documented the whole process of the research and personal experience to ensure trustworthiness of the data and analysis. My researcher reflective journal was the primary tool for documenting this process to help with bracketing and using memos, which is similar to epoche, that are used while

collecting and analyzing data. The process of noting personal experiences and thoughts helped to go beyond theoretical explanation (Creswell, 2007). Also, the use of two columned field notes allowed room for acknowledging and suspending personal thoughts while collecting and analyzing data in order to have clearer perceptions and observations of the phenomena being collecting or analyzed.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the data included epoche, bracketing, and synthesis through open, axial, and selective coding. Epoche is the action of suspending and setting aside experiences to take in a clear or different perspective (Creswell, 2007). The open coding was based on deductive and theoretical analysis with axial and selective coding coming from more an inductive perspective as the data dictates. I used the computer software program HyperResearch 3.0 for the analysis and coding of the data. HyperResearch is a qualitative research program that helps with coding and retrieval, building theories, conducting analyses of data, and testing hypotheses. Some of the program's strengths include the ability to use multimedia such as, text, graphics, audio, and video data. Furthermore, it has comprehensive code-and-retrieve functions, the ability to create code groups, flexible auto-coding, and create a code map. It also has the capabilities to assist with theory building, while having the ability and function to add memos with annotations and citing to sources or codes, as well as, serves as an effective database management system.

The overall analysis included a hybrid model of precoding and coding that used inductive and deductive analysis, which accounted for general domains that led to more

content specific concepts that connect to the conceptual framework (Miles & Huberman, 1994). For example, Miles and Huberman (1994) preferred creating a “starting list” or precoding derived from a conceptual framework, which is deductive, but also described two other useful methods of coding, which lead to the uncovering of questions that relate to a specific area of research (p. 58). Similarly, Charmaz (2006) said a conceptual framework “provides starting points” for looking at data but “do not offer automatic codes for analyzing these data” (p. 68).

For instance, this study’s precoding list sets the stage and the starting point for uncovering other deeper concepts from the data that were put into a coding map. Table 1 is an example of a coding map, as it lists the concepts possibly uncovered during the coding process. All types of codes including open, axial, and selective codes were mapped and tracked, which also highlight coded concepts, concept connections, and other emerging new theories. Furthermore, Charmaz (2006) stated “Grounded theory coding moves beyond the standard “way of sifting, sorting, and synthesizing data”, as it moves more towards “unifying ideas analytically” because of keeping “possible theoretical meanings” in mind while coding the data (p. 71). Open coding is the “breaking data apart and delineating concepts to stand for blocks of raw data” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 195). Therefore, I used the process of analysis that included open coding as the “breaking data apart and delineating concepts to stand for blocks of raw data,” and axial coding, which is the “crosscutting or relating concepts to each other,” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 195). “The process is interactive” as the researcher creates codes by defining what they see in the data (Charmaz, 2006, p. 46, 47).

The initial step or open coding is also called logic coding, which is the action of being open to theoretical possibilities and conceptual categories (Charmaz, 2006). Open coding “provided insight into specific coding categories” and “casual conditions that influence the central phenomenon” (Creswell, 2007, p. 161). The second step of coding, axial coding, involves "crosscutting or relating concepts to each other" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 195). It is also the action of organizing and categorizing codes to move towards synthesis and explaining larger segments of data (Charmaz, 2006). Axial coding is the action of relating categories to smaller specific subcategories and trying connections or relationships between categories to reassemble the data fractured during initial coding. Axial or focused coding is the action of organizing categories to smaller specific subcategories and tying connections or relationships between categories to reassemble the data fractured during initial coding to move towards synthesis and explaining larger segments of data. Theoretical coding is the last step of piecing together the codes to introduce new concepts or theories about possible relationships and phenomena uncovered in the data.

Table 1 also shows the list of the pre and post theoretical and conceptual codes derived from my question validity test, where the main theories of mindfulness, choice, and cognitive dissonance lead the way to uncovering concepts within meditation that are related to the context of stress and burnout. The main topics of mindfulness, perception, behavior, and awareness led the way through the first pass of open coding, which uncovered the axial codes of thinking, reflexivity, flexibility, action, concentration, emotion, connection, and reaction/response, which revealed the selective codes

engagement, control, belonging, nonjudgment, and depersonalization. The creation of the overall codes shown in Table 1 comes from a previous piloting and validity test of the interview questions from a required authorized graduate research methods course assignment. That pilot and validity test validated the generated questions within the Interview Protocol Data Collection Tool (Appendix A) and uncovered meaning through noting patterns and concepts, clustering, synthesizing metaphors, comparing results, subsuming particulars, relating and intervening concepts, trying to build a logical chain of events, and making conceptual and theoretical connections (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Table 1

Theoretical and Conceptual Pre and Post Codes List

Mindfulness

*Flexibility – openness

*Automatic behavior

Context

Novelty producing

Novelty seeking

Engagement

Cognitive Dissonance / Decision-Making**Perception**

Responsibility

Control

Cognitions / Knowledge / Elements

Action

Choice**Behavior** – Actions/Thinking/Emotions

Survival

Love

Belonging

Power

Freedom/Fun

Meditation**Awareness/Observation**

*Perception

*Concentration/Focus - Attention

*Space in between thoughts Reaction/Response

*Reflexivity

Nonjudgment

Morals

Vipassana – Wisdom – Mindfulness

Present moment

Stress/Burnout

*Emotional Exhaustion

Depersonalization

Accomplishment

Note. Bold type designates open codes, *designates axial codes with the reminders being selective codes.

The other methods are more inductive such as allowing the codes and analysis to be more open, flexible, and context-sensitive, which is done by collecting, writing up, and reviewing data word by word and line by line within a paragraph (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In addition, the uses of both inductive and deductive analysis support the comparing and contrasting of codes throughout the process to help sort differing data (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

In spite of this, there are advantages and disadvantages of precoding for deductive and inductive analysis. Precoding, and use of deductive analysis allows for pointing toward a purpose and direction, but also could lead to tunnel vision and bias. Precoding also allows the connection of the conceptual framework in the beginning, whereas, the inductive process connects it toward the end, which was tracked with a coding map. Nonetheless, coding in general should be compared with and connected to a conceptual framework throughout. An unstructured, open, and inductive coding process can allow for uncovering unbiased concepts. Therefore, the use of both deductive and inductive coding and analysis set the purpose and direction connected to the conceptual framework while allowing the growth of other concepts to emerge that are not tied to bias.

Because I did a grounded study and wanted to follow the data in an open and uninhibited structure, I also have an overlapping, multi-perspective, conceptual framework to work from. Hence, I used a hybrid model of precoding with deductive and inductive analysis with my data collection tool. My precoding structure and starting point for the coding map (Table 1) for my data collection tool was built on my conceptual framework, which includes the main theories of mindfulness, choice, cognitive

dissonance and my personal experiences (Table 1). Using that as my foundation for my coding map, questions were derived with potential connections to the conceptual framework, which included uncovering meanings, situations, settings, describing activities, and thoughts about actions and process.

Ethical Conduct and Participant Protection

Before data collection, this research study received approval from the Walden University IRB to ensure the participants' protection from harm, such as full disclosure of research intentions, confidentiality, and anonymity. Therefore, a signed consent form explaining the voluntary aspect, background, procedures, and nature of the study, risks, benefits, and confidentiality was given and required of all participants. In addition, informed consent was constantly acquired throughout the study each time communication was made. Before the interviews, the researcher again explained the purpose of the study to each participant. This ensured that all participants understood the expectations and procedures of the study.

All data collected was kept confidential. All personal information was coded to avoid individual identification with the participants' names being replaced with an alias. Each interview was also audio-recorded and transcribed to ensure accuracy. The data will be kept in fireproof safe in the researcher's home for 5 years, and will then be destroyed. Furthermore, no other parties had access to the data collected other than the researcher, participants (for member checking), and the dissertation committee members.

Dissemination of Findings

The dissemination of information and details within this study will be presented in many ways. The first opportunity will be to present at the Walden University summer research symposium poster session. A similar presentation could also be done at other professional teaching workshops, seminars, and conferences. In addition, this presentation could be given to schools or school districts interested in addressing teacher stress and burnout or implementing a meditation program. Furthermore, this presentation could be presented at meditation or wellness centers, and spiritual conferences or festivals. Lastly, details could be published in various scholarly journals addressing topics including education, teaching, mindfulness, meditation, religion, and spirituality.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative grounded study was to explore and generate a theory about the process of Vipassana Meditation and teacher decision-making related to classroom management and stress. This study consisted of a form of constructivism where there is not a single reality because what is to be discovered comes from a mixture and combination of concepts or ideas interpreted through multiple viewpoints and stories of the participants into knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Therefore, this chapter presents participant recruitment, participant profile information, the two-stage system used for generating and gathering data, and the findings as related to important Vipassana Meditation concepts on which to ground a theory about the anicca decision-making process.

I gathered the data from 10 teachers who met the determined criteria of having teaching experience, still currently teaching in the classroom, having participated in at least one 10-day Vipassana Meditation training, and meditating daily. The data included two one-hour interviews with each participant (19 total), 15 reflective journals, and 9 questionnaires. The 19 interview transcripts were member checked and validated. The data were collected and analyzed in two main stages, with the first stage consisting of the first round of interviews (10 total) and four weeks of reflective journals from each participant, and stage two consisting of another set of interviews (9 total), reflective journals, and a questionnaire from each participant. The coding done in both stages included open and axial coding analysis and comparisons of concepts and categories

based on the main research questions. To protect the participants' confidentiality names were reduced to participant numbers for identification and presentation.

Participant Recruitment and Profile Information

As discussed in Chapter 3 the snowball method of sampling was used to recruit five of the ten total participants. Due to the small size of the initial recruiting effort another five participants were recruited through the creation of an online forum page about Vipassana Meditation and teaching on the networking site facebook.com, which was part of the alternative plan outlined in previous chapters. People who were interested in hearing more or wanting to participate in my research then contacted me. I emailed a basic information recruitment letter (Appendix C) including participant criteria and the attached consent form (Appendix D) outlining the study details, demands, and Walden University's approval number for this study. The first five responding people who met the study requirements and agreed to the study procedures were then added as participants, making a total sample size of 10, which included variance of age, years of teaching experience, years of meditation experience, grade level and subject currently teaching, location, and demographic area as presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Participant Background Information:

Participant Identifier Number	Age	Location - State	Years of teaching experience:	Grade/Level and subject currently teaching:	School demographic and economic class:	Extra duties, committees, and activities beyond the normal school day:	Number of 10-day Vipassana courses attended and years of practice:
# 1	51	IL	7 years	Kk-5 -Physical Education	70% Hispanic, 25% African American, 5% Other Low socio-	After school fitness program, twice a week for 6 weeks twice a year, Emergency	6 courses / 7 years

# 2	45	WI	6	Masters and doctoral students - Counseling skills and philosophy	economic status; 100% students on free and reduced lunch Urban public university. Diverse racially and ethnically. Primarily working and middle class.	Committee, Various Teams of students on IEP's Advise masters' students and PhD. Students. Serve on various departmental committees. Conduct intervention research.	12 10-day, 3 Satipatthana, 1 20-day, 3 30-day / 15 years
# 3	28	WI	4.5	3rd Bilingual - All (Reading, Writing, Math, Science, Social Studies, Health, Antibullying Curriculum, Art, Music, Gym)	94% free or reduced lunch, 83% Hispanic, 11% African American, 2% White	Cafeteria Noon Supervision, School Bilingual Representative, PBIS Committee Facilitator, Sunshine Committee	1 / a few months
# 4	57	IL	12	11th - Physics, Earth & Space Science	30% white, 30% black, 30% Hispanic	Chess Club Coach, Varsity Tennis Coach, Science Fair Judging coordinator	1 / a few months
# 5 <i>(Dropped out after completion of first stage)</i>	45	IL	16 (5 as grad student)	<i>Graduate and undergraduate - Values ethics, literary theory, creative writing</i>	<i>Illinois State University.</i>	<i>Diversity Committee and Editorial Board of literary journal.</i>	<i>12 sitting, 11 serving - both full time / 7 years with discipline</i>
# 6	40	OR	10	Grades 5-8 - Special Education	Lower Socio-economic status	Positive Behavior Supports team (past) Site Council (past)	One retreat (5 days) One class (Basics of Mindfulness) 8 wks Two group sitting sessions weekly (6 months) / 6 months
# 7	64	GA	25	Adult Ed/GED	Rural southern working class, mostly dropouts	Intake, orientation and testing	4 / 3 years
# 8	38	OR	10	6-8 Middle School - Special Education - Self Contained Multiple Academics	75% Free/Reduced lunch and limited racial diversity	Takes 1-2.5 extra hours to fulfill normal duties	9-10 Day, 1-20 Day, served 5 times / 5 years and 9 months
# 9	55	NH	30	12th - English	Private school serving students with special education needs, financed by sending	Many interests outside of school: teach Kundalini yoga, help lead local "Transition Town" effort, teach Sunday	3 / 20 years

# 10	50	PA	9th year for children, had spent 1.5 years teaching adult tech school students	Grades 1-4 - English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)	school districts. Mixed economic backgrounds. 98-99 percent Latino, 100 percent poverty.	School, board member at my children's private high school. Job is brand new, so no co-curricular commitments as yet. Lunchtime meditation club, after school meditation club, Chess club teacher, and chess team coach	1 / 15 years
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At the end of the stage one data collection and analysis a request for a second interview was sent to all participants. At that time, one participant, Participant 5, dropped out of the study due to being overwhelmed with personal and professional responsibilities and not having enough time to fully dedicate to journaling, thus not participating in the second interview, or answering the questionnaire. Therefore, the sample for the first stage was 10 teachers, but only 9 teachers for the second stage.

Generating and Recording Data

The data were collected through two main stages. The first stage consisted of 10 total interviews (one with each participant) and 4 weeks of reflective journals from each participant. An open-ended interview protocol (Appendix A) was used to ensure all participants were asked the same questions. After 4 weeks into the study, participants sent their reflective journals for analysis and coding. After comparative analysis and coding of the first interview transcripts and reflective journals, general concepts and categories were uncovered. Based on those concepts, another set of refined, specific, and more probing questions for the second interview (Appendix F) and questionnaire

(Appendix G) were created to uncover a deeper meaning at the heart of the research questions and asked in the second interview and questionnaire.

The second stage was about going deeper into the concepts uncovered from the first stage of data and consisted of a second interview with each participant (totaling 9 after one dropped out), 4 more weeks of reflective journals, and a questionnaire from each participant. All interviews were done via Skype or by phone due to all of the participants living and teaching more than one hour away. Those interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed to ensure accuracy of the data and later member checked for authenticity. Before each interview, each participant gave permission to be audio recorded.

Grounded Theory Process and Concepts

Grounded theory is a specific methodology for the "purpose of building a theory from data" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 1), for which this study used interviews, participant journals, and a questionnaire. The following subsections of chapter 4 outline the main concepts uncovered at each stage of coding, which then moves toward the larger findings section that presents examples of data relating to answering the main research questions about the process of how Vipassana Meditation influences a teacher's daily routine, school situations or stress, and classroom decisions.

Initial Open Coding

The initial stage of open coding of the transcribed interviews started with the concepts from the theoretical framework, which include Vipassana Meditation, mindfulness, burnout, and cognitive dissonance. Those theories set the foundation of

possible emergent categories and concepts (see Table 1 in Chapter 3). In addition, the concepts within the theoretical framework were broken into smaller characteristics found from the definition and explanation of each theory within the framework and furthermore was used to uncover emergent concepts to later connect to categories with axial coding.

After the data were broken down into codes or concepts the significance was determined by frequency. Therefore, the stage one open coding process uncovered 60 general total open codes and concepts (Appendix E), with 21 being significant as they emerged with a frequency of 10 or more including body sensations, breath, organize and prepare, observation, focus clarity, time management, patience, novelty seeking perspective, listening and silence, material and lessons. More importantly, 11 major concepts emerging with a frequency of 20 or more from the first round of interview data and first weeks of reflective journals including:

1. Equanimity
2. Process
3. Compassion and Metta
4. Adding Space to Responses
5. Calmness
6. Detachment
7. Awareness
8. Mindfulness
9. Present Moment
10. Empathetic

11. Accepting

The participants stated that the most important overall states of mind connected to teaching are equanimity and a general awareness. Equanimity means balance and calmness of mind brought through experiencing and understanding the ebb and flow process of life as a journey, by being aware that all things change. The participants also felt that *metta*, the term for compassion, which is the extension or action of giving helpful and supportive thoughts or feelings supported the state of mind of equanimity.

Participants reported that they slowed down their response time and the adding of more space to thoughts helped induce a calmer state of mind, this being another aspect of equanimity that emerged during coding. The process of adding more time before a response also related to the ability to become more aware and mindful of the present moment and detach oneself from a stressful situation. In addition, the participants stated Vipassana allowed them to be more empathetic to others and more accepting of situations, similar to the practice of equanimity. The concepts of the open coding analysis revealed many emerging connections and interrelations of categories from the participants' responses.

Axial and Focused Coding

The next step in the analysis included axial coding of the open coded data from the transcribed interviews and participant reflective journals. This stage of coding related categories to smaller specific subcategories and tying connections or relationships between categories to reassemble the data fractured during initial coding (Charmaz, 2006). This stage of coding was also based on the definitions and explanations of the

theoretical and conceptual framework. For example, a larger concept of being present with regards to mindfulness theory, also relates to perspective and observation. Similarly, Vipassana uses those same concepts as they all relate to equanimity. Figure 2 is a coding map illustrating the connections of concepts.

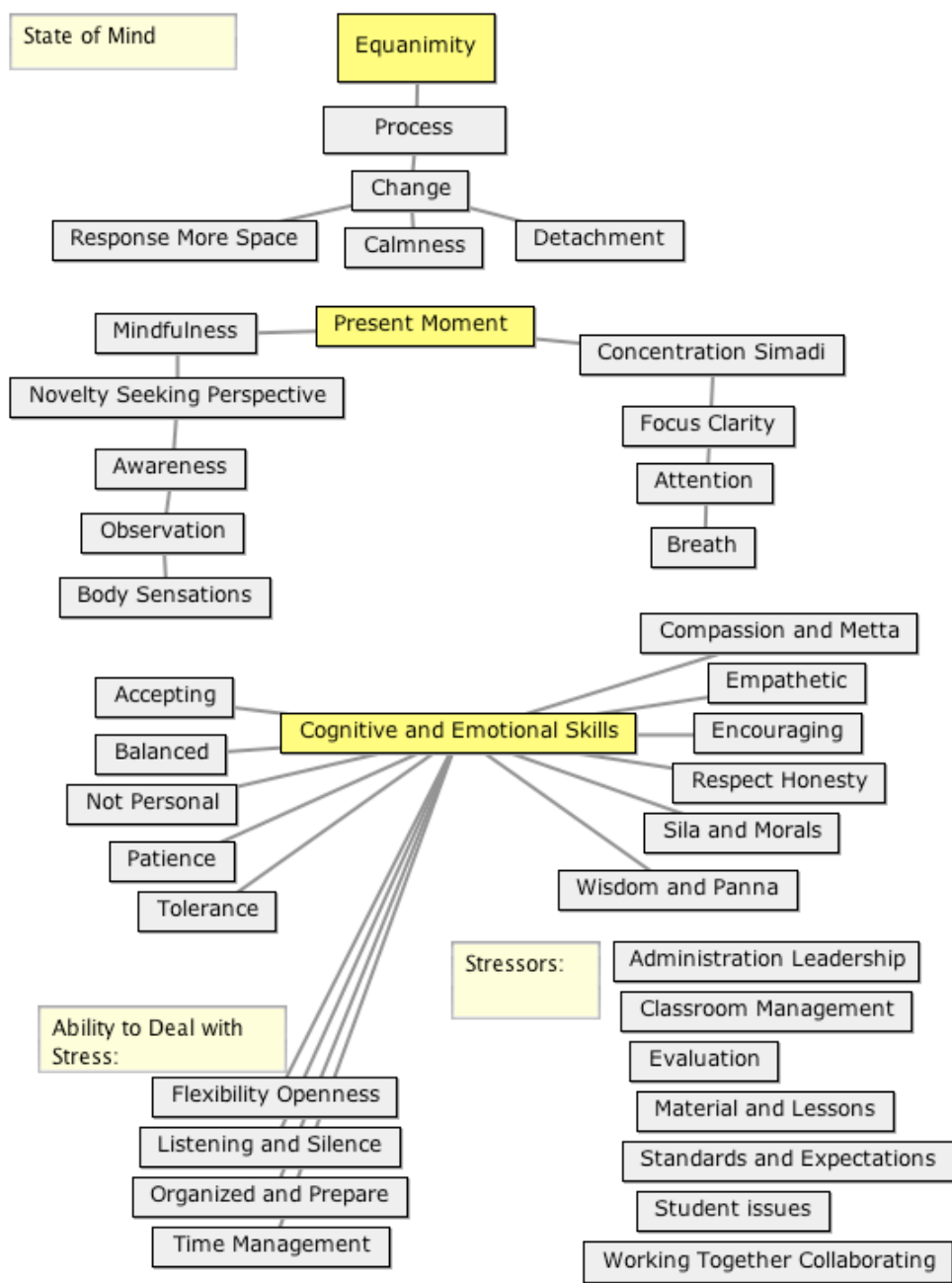


Figure 2. Vipassana Meditation Stage 1 coding map.

The focused coding process identified and connected emergent concepts that revealed four main categories.

1. Equanimity
2. Present Moment
 - Mindfulness
 - Concentration
3. Cognitive and Emotional Skills
4. Stressors and how to deal with those

The main category of equanimity included the primary characteristics of change, process, response, calmness, and detachment, which can be connected to many other concepts emerging from the data. These characteristics revealed the importance and process of being or bringing equanimity to every thought and action. The second major category of the present moment included the participants' responses relating to the spectrum of awareness with mindfulness, perspective, observation, and sensations being at one end, and at the other, concentration, focus, clarity, attention, and breath. The third major category emerging from the concepts were cognitive and emotional skills.

Cognitive skills included acceptance, balance, not taking things personally, patience, and tolerance with emotional skills, including compassion, empathy, encouragement, respect, honesty, morals, and wisdom, or truth. The fourth category uncovered what the participants thought of as stressors, which included administration, classroom management, evaluation, materials and lessons, standards and expectations, student

issues, and collaborating. Within that stressor category some concepts relate to the theoretical concepts that are influenced by Vipassana, which are ways of dealing with the stressors mentioned, including flexibility, openness, listening, silence, being organized and prepared, and time management. The findings section to follow will provide excerpts from the data to further illustrate these emergent themes.

Selective and Theoretical Coding

The last step of coding was theoretical coding, which is the piecing together of the focused and axial codes to introduce new concepts or theories about possible relationships and phenomena uncovered in all the data including the transcribed interviews, participant reflective journals, and questionnaire (Charmaz, 2006). The main categories from the axial coding such as equanimity, present moment, cognitive and emotional skills, in relationship to stress are pieced and connected together to anicca in Chapter 4, which means impermanence or change; suffering is from attachment or aversion, and removing or detaching from the ego or self, thus supporting the creation of the theory of anicca perspective decision-making and the connection between these are further discussed in Chapter 5.

Evidence of Quality

Verbal Ink, Inc., which signed a confidentiality agreement, transcribed all data and the data was member checked to ensure the accuracy of responses through email. The participant direct quotes used were member validated from the transcribed interviews, questionnaires and member checked through sending participants drafts of Chapter 4 and 5 for correct and authentic interpretation, summary, and connection to theory. The

multiple types of data, including the participant journals, questionnaire responses, and two interviews, increased the trustworthiness of the data through triangulation. The multiple types of data collection expanded the overall breadth and helped to increase the emergence and frequency of the concepts, thus clarifying the main concepts. The two stages of data collection also increased the long-term engagement with participants by collecting data over the course of a few months.

My observational and reflective journal also documented the whole process of the research and personal experience. The journal helped to epoche, bracket, note, and document thoughts and experiences while collecting and analyzing data to assist in distancing me from the data and analysis. Interestingly, my reflective journal uncovered a discrepant finding in relationship to the participant data of responses. Where the participants described a stronger compassionate and more empathic connection with students and co-workers, I have not felt that connection and have experienced just the opposite with more detachment over the last 3 years as documented in my reflective journal. I made efforts to carefully explore these findings through follow up questions while specifically collecting data in stage 2.

Findings

This study was done in two main stages to discover and uncover a process of “ongoing actions/interactions/emotion taken in response to situations, or problems, often with the purpose of reaching a goal or handling a problem” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 96-97). The 2 stages of data collection and analysis addressed each of the three research questions with stage one uncovering general concepts, while stage two was used to

deepen focus, clarify, connect, and summarize the findings. Also, the use of three different data collection tools (interviews, journals, and questionnaire) and the 2 stage data sample method allowed for data saturation where no new data was emerging even though there was a small population sample used as many, if not all participants reported the same main concepts.

Stage 1 - Research Question 1 - Teacher's Daily Routine

The main concepts discovered from the first 10 interviews and participant reflective journals relating to how Vipassana influences a teacher's daily routine include process, equanimity, compassion, response, calmness, present moment, awareness of body sensations, and empathy. The most frequent concept uncovered related to a teacher's daily routine was process. Participant 3 stated that Vipassana "helps me be less emotional towards the whole process, and it's less draining." Participant 1 said Vipassana "helps process daily feelings and emotions faster." Similarly, Participant 6 said it helps with "observing my thought process and ability to think in a positive way." Overall, the practice of Vipassana allowed teachers to be more equanimous toward the process of teaching and thinking.

Equanimity is the next most frequent concept mentioned by teachers that emerged from the coding in regards to a teacher's daily routine. For example, Participant 8 stated that most important is, "trying to remain balanced regardless of what happens... and having a holistic viewpoint of viewing all people, all issues, with a similar lens... and trying to be solution-based, or action-based." Participant 10 said Vipassana helps with "staying patient, balanced, and nonreactive." Participant 7 said, "I think preparing

yourself for the day, by being centered, equanimous; calm going into the classroom is a big part of it.” The influence of Vipassana on a teacher’s daily routine involves staying balanced and equanimous during the process of thinking and teaching.

The next most frequent concepts that were uncovered relating to a teacher’s daily routine were compassion, space in between thoughts of a response, and overall calmness. For example, Participant 5 said “it helps me understand better why students are asking questions, it helps me be more responsive and less reactive if students are having a bad day... more caring and responsive.” Participant 1 said:

I practice *metta* every day. I have thoughts of my students and family members... when I’m talking to them... or they’re surrounding me, I sometimes sense a feeling of metta, being a center of love and compassion and try to model that. They don’t know it, but I can sense it through feelings and sensations and the warmth in my heart.

Participant 7 stated meditation helps with “caring about those kids in a deeper way... and understand that whole thing of being selfless.” Participant 2 said Vipassana “helps me maintain my goodwill.” For most participants compassion comes out of the ability to think and respond in a calm manner.

Participant 10 said, “My meditation practice has actually made me find that space between something happening and me responding, which I did not have for a really long time so that I’m able to respond in a more skillful way.” Participant 1 said, “I’m a better listener and [that] comes from a place of not reacting to [a] parent, but more of

responding.” Participant 5 similarly said, “I find that I’m able to be more nurturing.”

Likewise, the concept of calmness is explained by Participant 6 when he said:

I think it helps me again to be at a place of calm and when I do feel anxious, to recognize it more readily so that I have an awareness of my emotional responses when interacting with others and to really help my responses to be helpful.

Participant 4 said, “Calmness and peacefulness is a main concept... I've always tried to let the students know that they're coming into a place that's more like a library or a spiritual place in a way and that's always helped.” This suggests that Vipassana supports a teacher’s ability to make a calm response of compassion within an equanimous state of mind about the process of thinking and teaching.

The ability to do so could come from being aware of the present moment through the use of sensations and furthering empathetic responses. For example,

Participant 6 stated:

I feel much more connected to my inner joy and playfulness and really it’s just that again being present with them so that I’m not caught up in thoughts about the past or the future or anything other than kind of that present moment. And it’s helped me tremendously to listen to them more effectively and to hear them and have a better understanding of what’s going on with them.

Participant 9 said:

That the concept of being in the present moment, of trying to enter into the moment of teaching with the students, so that I’m fully present with them, and

I'm trying to reflect back to them, I think, what needs to happen at that moment is really what informs my teaching practice more than anything else.

It seems that being present can enhance the daily routine by influencing relationships and supporting compassion and empathy. Participant 6 also said:

I noticed how much being present in the moment helps my relationships and connections with students. I genuinely feel more enjoyment from our interactions. It seems that giving my students my full attention is the greatest gift I can give them. Also, observing my responses or observing kind of my body sensations and the way thoughts and feelings as they come up in order to be mindful of my actual verbal responses and even nonverbal.

Similarly, Participant 5 said Vipassana “helps me to be grounded, if I'm waiting for answers or if I'm listening to students, to be steadily aware of my own sensations and emotions has been very helpful to me on a daily basis.” This suggests that when teachers are aware of their body sensations to become more present in the moment the option to compassionately or empathically respond is supported.

Participant 8 stated, Vipassana allows me “to understand things from their perspective.” Similarly, Participant 7 said:

Try to remember that your students want the same thing you do. They want to be happy. They want to be enlightened, and they don't have any idea how to get there.... To see them as just like we are... which is that essentially good nature or good inner self or whatever that just has to be discovered.

Participant 5 said, “aside from being able to kind of understand a little bit more about who they are and what their concerns are, I think I’m able to, I think I have a friendlier relationship with students.”

As a result, this suggests the importance of empathy within a teacher’s daily routine, which participants perceived as cultivated within the practice of compassion that grows out of calm responses of being equanimous in the present moment and aware of the whole process. Similarly, the concepts of process, equanimity, compassion, response, calmness, present moment, awareness of body sensations, and empathy do carry over to most situations and stress, but also point to the importance of mindfulness and ability to organize and be prepared. Therefore, before looking into answering the second main research question about stress, it is first necessary to discuss what main situations emerged as being most stressful to teachers in this study.

Stage 1 - Research Question 2 – School Situations and Stress

The main causes of stress that emerged from the first 10 interviews and participant reflective journals are administration leadership, classroom management, evaluation, materials, lesson planning, standards, expectations, student issues or backgrounds, collaboration, organization, and time management ranked in order of importance. For example, Participant 10 stated that the most stressful thing in teaching is “the administration... all the grownups are the most stressful. The people downtown who don't really understand what teaching is like and, and who really, basically control our every move.” Participant 6 said:

The most stressful thing is definitely the classroom management and the... state standards. I teach Special Ed and there's a lot of pressure for kids to meet standards. Kids with learning disabilities and the kids that we teach are complicated these days. Some of them their parents are in jail. They live in foster care and all sorts of horrific life experiences a lot of these kids face every day.

Participant 9 said, "I think the most stressful about teaching is the inevitable comparisons that one makes to one's ideal version of a teacher or to the teacher that's teaching in the room next door or those idealistic ideas." Similarly, Participant 3 said:

I think a level of stress that is unlike any other that I experience throughout the year is when we are observed by the administration. It's not because I'm not doing what I need to or because I don't maybe have things prepared, but it's usually because someone is literally just sitting there watching and not judging but evaluating. So I feel a different level of nervousness and stress.

Participant 8 explained stress comes from:

1) Preparing to have creative lessons is stressful and then 2) my "self" or my perceived evaluation of myself, or the students' evaluation of what I do when I do a lesson is stressful like 'did I do a good job?' then, I guess, 3) the issues kids bring with them is stressful. So I work with kids who might be in foster care, have abuse issues, don't have food at home, those things tend to stress me out.

Participant 9 said stress comes from changing curriculum and working with others:

Moving forward on the writing curriculum whether my colleague is ready or not. Management expects me to lead in this situation and I intend to go ahead and set

up my own writing curriculum if he doesn't want to help. Also decided that I should tell him I think he is making a mistake by not embracing the "regrouping" idea of setting up our two classes in "levels."

Participant 2 said, "time management and staying abreast of the material that I'm sharing with them on a weekly basis is somewhat of a challenge."

Research question two deals directly with how and under what situations or stress teachers use Vipassana Meditation. The main Vipassana concepts to emerge include equanimity, process, compassion, mindfulness, organization/preparedness, and calmness. For example, to demonstrate the importance of equanimity, Participant 8 said, "I use the practice to maintain mental well being that allows me to continue to do what I'm doing." Participant 5 said, "Vipassana helps with the "ability to chill out and just wait to see what happens, and not to get kind of too uptight while waiting for other people's responses." Furthermore, to emphasize process, compassion, and calmness Participant 1 stated the most important Vipassana concepts used are "compassion, process instead of outcome, calmness and acceptance. Everyone's doing the best they can even in their worst moments." Participant 1 further explained when in a student discipline situation:

I try to be compassionate knowing that that's the best that they can be in the moment and that it's an opportunity for me to bring them awareness and to give them an opportunity to change their behavior. So if I come from that premise and that place in my heart, then it's easier for me not to be angry when I try to discipline them.

Participant 6 said Vipassana helps me “to be more mindful of what a student needs in that moment to move forward with whatever skills.” Furthermore, Participant 8 explained that:

There were several times that I incorporated mindfulness: 1) when a student declined to participate in academics, I didn't take it personally, and realized that that student wasn't ready to begin work for that day. With my population of students the amount of trust that's needed is exponentially more than what's need for a general population, so for change to happen, it has to happen in a very gradual timeframe and 2) when a student was off task during an academic period, instead of getting angry or getting stern, I realized that the student was engaged in a preferred activity (picking the seeds from a sunflower) and that resistance would likely be met with resistance -so instead I calmly asked her to clean up her desk and placed the garbage can next to her and walked away and 3) finally I was able to allow a staff member to help me out when I was interacting with an oppositional student. Instead of fixating or power struggling, I realized that other people can help me out - the student eventually followed the original request.

This suggests that mindfulness can support calmness while in a stressful situation.

Similarly, Vipassana can help support being more organized or able to prioritize in order to decrease stress. Participant 3 stated it helps with getting things done by:

sitting down, doing it, and getting it done quickly. It's the process of not thinking, or over thinking. I just think about the present and what I need to get done right now. Not thinking about the past or what we had just done that day, or what had

happened that day, and not necessarily worrying about the future as far as things I need to get done later, but just worrying about what I needed to get done, priority wise, right now.

Participant 3 continued and said Vipassana “helps me prioritize and do other things more efficiently.” Likewise, Participant 5 said Vipassana helps with tasks such as:

Making the syllabus, putting together the course calendar, is just the sheer kind of stick-to-itiveness that Vipassana is really good at, like when you wake up at 4:00 or 4:30 in the morning, you have a day’s meditation in front of you, and it’s sometimes a grueling, moment-by-moment thing, and that’s, for me, the way a semester appears at the beginning, especially if I’ve got a lot of books to synthesize and to put together and read and construct a course around it. So, just the sheer stick-to-itiveness and the kind of concentrative abilities that I think what cultivates after doing Vipassana for a while is really important to me.

Generally, the ability to be organized and prepared is supported by being concentrated, mindful, and calm. For example, Participant 6 said, “It just helps me to remain calm and to think clearly in those more stressful situations.” Vipassana is about the practice of being more calm and accepting in any situation. For example, Participant 1 stated:

I have been able to see how calm and calmer I’ve gotten, as I became a meditator. So it appears to me that if I’m able to become calm and calmer through a practice that doesn’t care about outcome, then my students will be better learners if they are not so fixated on, “I can’t do this.... I’m not good at it.” I go, “Well, it’s

practice and that's why you're here, to practice." So meditation is a practice of applying and practicing to teaching that goes hand in hand as far as I'm concerned. So we focus on practice.

Vipassana is the practice of being calm in any given situation, whether that is while in a discipline situation or one which is supported by being prepared and organized, and in both situations mindfulness and equanimity were seen as playing significant roles. In addition, the same concepts were also found to be important in influencing classroom decision-making, classroom management, and classroom procedures covered in Research Question 3.

Stage 1 - Research Question 3 – Teacher Decision-making

Equanimity, response, calmness, compassion, empathy, process, and mindfulness were also found to be important concepts from the first 10 interviews and participant reflective journals that relate to how Vipassana influences classroom decision-making, classroom management, and classroom procedures. However, other concepts also emerged such as detachment, awareness, and focus. To reiterate the importance of equanimity in the present moment and demonstrate the emergence of awareness in relation to classroom decision-making and classroom management, Participant 2 stated:

Vipassana helps me with being more vibrant because I'm much more, I think, present, attentive, aware. I'm much more equanimous with what's going on. So I can afford to be much more present. And I think that that also helps my classroom management, or at the very least it helps me set the tone for the class.

Also, Participant 10 said “it has really helped me respond to things in a more equanimous way; giving me a lot more equanimity. It's given me a lot more sensitivity.” Participant 7 said the practice of equanimity and awareness brings on the reminder of “impermanence or the changing nature of things.” Participant 6 also said Vipassana helps “to be more mindful and choose responses that are helpful versus ones that may not be helpful for students.”

Participant 6 gave an example of how Vipassana influences classroom management and decision-making:

I think before I would often react a lot more to student's misbehavior. And now my responses are so much different that for one thing there isn't as much misbehavior. And again it's just the decision making piece I think is more efficient and fluid for me somehow with the meditation and the mindfulness practice.

Similarly, Participant 8 explained how Vipassana Meditation has:

decreased negative comments I might have had toward students. I never really had that but it's definitely decreased negative thoughts toward students for sure. I don't look down on my students at all or use any kind of negative talk. I don't like I don't gossip about my students at all. That's just totally impossible; it can't happen.

In addition, Participant 8 said, “I'm definitely a lot more calm and patient with responses.” Participant 2 outlined that Vipassana:

influences the way in which I interact with my students, so I cultivate, or so I think or I try to cultivate an atmosphere of respect and goodwill. If there are conflicts that arise, interpersonal conflicts that arise in the classroom, I think I'm able to handle those pretty swiftly and pretty subtly. Like, I don't have to necessarily be heavy handed; introduce any sort of authoritarian sorts of interventions.

Participant 5 said Vipassana has "made me more, on the one hand, kind of intellectually insightful, but also more empathic." When being empathic and insightful one becomes more aware of the process. Participant 1 said, "The best teachers are the ones focused on process, not the outcomes." Participant 6 stated that teachers are more effective when "honoring each student's own process as it is." This suggests that good teachers are also able to stay positive and create a positive classroom climate. Participant 10 said Vipassana has "made me able to, basically stay mindful and remember what I planned to do in a specific situation and to create a real positive class. I try for a very positive classroom atmosphere."

In order to create a positive classroom climate, the concepts of detachment, awareness, and focus also were discovered to influence a teacher's classroom decision-making, management, and procedures. For example, Participant 6 stated:

Vipassana gives me an awareness of being attached to outcomes so that I'm not so caught up into being attached to a certain outcome. It's given me flexibility as well to adapt and be with students where they're at, to move them forward in a way that works for them. It's a detachment from preconceptions and from kind of

a basic view on how each lesson should go because we don't really always know how it's going to go when our kids walk through the door and there are all kinds of things going on. And being present for that seems to be the key to effectively teaching kids.

Participant 5 said Vipassana is

kind of removing as much as possible one's own kind of self-centered concerns, whether they're cravings or aversions, and trying to help others. I mean that's like a basic orientation that I think Vipassana instills in people over time, so I guess I can see that working in the kinds of decisions that I have to make from time to time.

From the participants' perspective, to be detached from an outcome, one must be in a state of awareness. For example, Participant 4 said, "I try to stay present.... I'm just sort of kind of aware of my own emotions." Participant 7 said it is about "awareness of my own doings, my own reactions, being able to pay close attention to that." In other words, much of it comes from the ability to choose what to think or focus on.

Participant 3 stated:

I feel like it's decreased a lot of the decisions, the questions I need to ask. They're more focused decisions. They're more focused questions that I ask myself, and I go straight to the point and not in a blunt way but more in a focused, again, priority kind of way. Before, I really felt like my thoughts were all over the place. So, I definitely feel more focused.

Similarly, Participant 5 said:

I think it helps me... refine the issues and throw away extraneous concerns. I'm less interested in, although I'm not entirely uninterested in this, but I'm less interested in making myself look good in front of students... I think I'm more able to really be genuinely interested in their intellectual development in a way that I don't think I was before, or as much. I think it's made me... care more about my students than I did.

Participant 2 said, Vipassana allows me to be “more engaged in the material, and I think I'm more clear minded.”

Taken together, their responses demonstrate the interconnections of equanimity, response, calmness, compassion, empathy, process, mindfulness, detachment, awareness, and focus to how Vipassana influences classroom decision-making, classroom management, and classroom procedures. Many of these concepts were also found to be important in addressing more than one research question and so lend themselves to being formed into larger categories.

Interconnection of Emerging Concepts and Need for More Data

When addressing the three main research questions, many concepts emerged such as equanimity, response, calmness, compassion, and empathy, which can be linked together to form larger categories (Figure 2). For example, equanimity can become a category on its own because of its connections to the characteristics of change, process, response, calmness, and detachment. The concept of the present moment can be divided into two major parts, mindfulness and concentration, with the themes of awareness, perspective, observation, and sensations being linked to mindfulness and the themes of

focus, clarity, attention, and breath being linked to concentration. More data are needed to clarify these connections. Another category that emerged and could be pursued further are cognitive and emotional skills. Acceptance, balance, not taking things personally, patience, and tolerance seem to be related to cognitive skills and compassion, empathy, encouragement, respect, honesty, morals, and wisdom, or truth, to emotional skills. The common stressors that call on the cognitive and emotional skills are administration, classroom management, evaluation, materials and lessons, standards and expectations, student issues, and collaborating.

Through the emerging interconnection of the above concepts into categories by open and axial coding, a deeper clarification and understanding was warranted for developing more insights and creating a theory about how Vipassana Meditation influences a teacher daily routine, situation or stress, and decision-making. This then uncovered the need to generate more questions to ask in stage two of data collection.

Stage 2 - Second Interview, Journals, and Questionnaire

The stage two questions were derived from the stage one open and axial coding concepts. For example, by trying to go deeper into understanding equanimity in Stage 1, new questions emerged about how the concepts of calmness and balance are used by the teachers. I developed more probing interview questions to uncover the techniques used by teachers to stay mindful and present. Also, some new interview questions were geared toward investigating the difference between concentration and mindfulness. Furthermore, a question was developed to uncover more details of how teachers perceived Vipassana adds space in between thoughts. In addition, questions asking for descriptions and the

steps of how Vipassana influences the ability to be compassionate and empathetic were added. Overall, the stage two interview and questionnaire questions addressed each major concept that emerged from the stage one analysis with the intent of uncovering more details and connecting those concepts. The main reason for putting some questions in the questionnaire (Appendix G) was due to considering the richness of data by giving participants more reflective response time for potential thoroughness of addressing the questions, while others were put in the second interview protocol (Appendix F) to probe for more spontaneous responses. Therefore, the second interview was designed to investigate and compare emerging themes uncovered in stage one between participants, whereas the questionnaire was designed to connect concepts more and summarize overall main themes in stage two of the data collection and analysis.

The main concepts discovered in the stage two coding of interview, journal, and questionnaire data appeared 13 or more times, such as nonreactive detachment appearing 39 times, awareness 26 times, body sensations 26 times, flexibility 22 times, focus and clarity 18 times, breath 16 times, concentration and mindfulness 16 times, being positive 13 times, aversion and attachment 13 times, equanimity 12 times, with empathy, ego, and questioning things appearing 11 times (Appendix H). When looking deeper at how the second interview, journal, and questionnaire data specifically addressed the three main research questions, these main concepts also appear frequently to show where they are more significant. The repetition of these ideas also demonstrates data saturation.

Stage 2 - Research Question 1 - Teacher's Daily Routine

The most frequently appearing concepts discovered in the stage two coding of the 9 interviews, 6 journals, and 9 questionnaires relating to how Vipassana influences a teacher's daily routine in regards to equanimity and present moment included body sensations, awareness, and nonreactive detachment. In addition to those three concepts, focus and clarity, and self-observation appeared frequently in questions relating to equanimity within a teacher's daily routine (Appendix I). The frequent appearance of these concepts within the analysis also suggests data saturation was obtained. Furthermore, the last few interviews did not bring to the surface any additional concepts even though there was a small population sample used.

Equanimity. Most participants stated that the practice of Vipassana allowed them to be more equanimous, which often happened for them through observing body sensations. Participant 1 said:

I try to be aware of body sensations so I don't swim in my mind only, so I'm aware of my body and aware of my presence, and that I won't get ivory tower-like mind thoughts that I've disconnected from the students and from my body.

Similarly, Participant 7 stated in a journal:

Noticing my own reactions such as shorter breaths, abdominal tension, increased heart rate and volume, a general feeling of pressure rising up the torso, pulse increasing in my ears, flushing feeling in face, etc. and then focusing on them helps to disconnect from the object of irritation or anger, [helping me] realize that

it's not the other person causing the distress, but my ideas and fears and needs to protect myself that's the real cause.

Participant 10 said:

I can feel it in my body. If my body is tense or contracted, then I'm not going to be able to focus calmly and what I'm supposed to be focusing on. There's a feeling of being in this body and being on the right wavelength with the kids that feels very relaxed and energetic.

Participant 8 explained awareness is important when "I feel an elevated heart rate or a tension in the stomach or sweaty palms or fear." Likewise, Participant 6 stated:

I feel like my heart rate is slow, my breath is slow, it's steady and I have more clear thinking. So sometimes I think of it also as the opposite of being escalated, which is rapid heartbeat and more difficulty with clear thinking.

One of the concepts strongly related and connected to observing body sensations in order to be more equanimous and which influences a teacher's daily routine is overall awareness. For example, Participant 2 said, "I'm aware of my sensations, I'm aware of my emotions, I'm aware of my breath, I'm aware of my thoughts and I can do that relatively easily or quickly." Similarly, Participant 7 said:

Being aware of my own feelings and sensations helps me be in control of myself in difficult situations in class, helps me keep my own issues out of the way as I decide how to respond to students. Also [this] allows me to see and understand how emotional factors influence student behavior and performance.

All this being said, Participant 8 explained, “just being aware after something happens is easier for me than being, oh, I’m about to do this, I should do it this way.” Participant 7 further explained the connection of equanimity to teacher’s daily routine through sensations, awareness, and emotion related to decision-making. Participant 7 also wrote in the questionnaire, “equanimity allows one to be aware of the emotions and feelings that are going on without being controlled by them so clear thinking and decisions are more likely.”

Vipassana encourages equanimity through the observation and awareness of sensations, which can also be described as the practice of nonreactive detachment. The concept of reactive responses to a situation as opposed to just responding as a more constructive and effective means becomes apparent in the participants’ explanation of how Vipassana influenced their decisions. For example, Participant 6 wrote in the questionnaire:

Equanimity, in my understanding, is a neutral place, a place without judgment. Without equanimity, I believe one responds to conditioning like a robot, always chasing desires and sensory comforts. I think having equanimity helps one to maintain a balance and respond to the world without judgment, or excessive aversion or desire. With equanimity, one’s decision can become more balanced, objective, and less influenced by aversion or desire, or emotional states.

Similarly, Participant 8 wrote in a questionnaire:

I try not to be attached to things too much. I try to be fair, calm, and balanced in my approach and application to the things I choose to do. I attempt to continue to try, without lamentation, when I don't succeed.

Furthermore, Participant 10 wrote in a questionnaire, "I am less reactive when equanimous. This helps with on-the-spot decision-making in terms of my verbal response to a specific situation." Likewise, Participant 7 wrote, "equanimity allows one to be aware of the emotions and feelings that are going on without being controlled by them so clear thinking and decisions are more likely." Participant 4 tied detachment and decision-making together and wrote:

In recognizing that there is no one best decision [in a given situation] and that successive decisions without undue attachments to [the] outcomes [of the situation] can be a natural way of proceeding in life, there is a sense of ease, which results from detachment from specific outcomes.

The practice of Vipassana, for these participants, seeks to support equanimity through awareness of body sensations, awareness, and nonreactive detachment, which also must include focus and clarity.

For example, Participant 10 said, "my mind is focused on the task at hand or the question at hand rather than racing. There's a feeling of clarity and an absence of an underlying tension or exhaustion." When a mind calms, clarity can follow. Participant 6 stated, "being more calm and present means having a certain level of relaxation and clarity." This helped in the classroom to influence a teacher's daily routine in the case of as Participant 2 writing in a questionnaire: "I don't become too agitated with my

students' idiosyncrasies, so I can stay focused on supporting their development.”

Therefore, the combination of focus and clarity allows for self-observation and encourages overall balance.

Participant 2 focused more on the practice of balance when talking about equanimity:

Well, I just sort of engage in this, kind of, self-reflective activity so I turn on a switch whereby my attention rather than being outwardly focused is a little bit more internally focused. So, I think it's a simple sort of flip of the switch. I turn my attention inward and, target or direct my attention to various targets such as sensations, breath, emotions, and thoughts.

Participant 10 simply said, “I monitor myself.” In the experience of these participants balance is about the intellect and emotions, or feelings. For instance Participant 9 said, “I think of a balance of feelings, of feeling that I'm not going to, you know, fully commit to one particular emotion over another.”

Participant 6 wrote in a questionnaire:

I think having equanimity helps one to maintain a balance and respond to the world without judgment, or excessive aversion or desire. With equanimity, one's decision can become more balanced, objective and less influenced by aversion or desire, or emotional states.

Overall, Participant 8 said, “I try to be fair, calm, and balanced in my approach and application to the things I choose to do.” Overall, for these participants, a teacher's daily routine when influenced by Vipassana Meditation includes the benefits of balance or

equanimity, which is practiced through body sensations, awareness, nonreactive detachment, and focus and clarity all of which are part of being present.

The present moment. Concentration and mindfulness are the main concepts used in Vipassana that emerged from the data in regards to the present moment that connect to a teacher's daily routine. Also, similar to the concepts that relate to equanimity and teacher routine such as body sensations, awareness, and focus and clarity also play a large role in being present, but additionally include the importance of concentration, mindfulness, breath, and flexibility (Appendix H). For example, three participants referred to focusing on body sensations to help them be more present. Participant 1 said, "I focus on breath and feel sensations underneath my nose so I'm always focusing on my body, even when I'm teaching." Participant 6 said:

Generally, it's focusing on my breath or focusing on body sensations. Sometimes I walk in my classroom and observe the sensations of heel, toe, and heel, toe. I'll focus on my feet. That's another way to stay present in the moment.

Observing body sensations allowed the teachers to be more present and is also tied to awareness for them, which includes sensations, but also more. For example, Participant 2 wrote in a questionnaire, "Awareness may have a focused mental target (breath, thoughts, sensations); I check in with my perceptions, and my awareness, and myself on how things are going." Similarly, Participant 4 said:

I have awareness just like 360 degrees around the room. I really do pick up on what students are doing, especially during labs and so on. It's very important

because they'll be doing things without their safety glasses on or it's just really all over the place.

Likewise, Participant 8 wrote in a questionnaire, "Awareness is increased attention to what one is doing." More specifically in the questionnaire, Participant 2 defines awareness as "a mind-moment, whereas mindfulness defines a more enduring mind-state. Awareness may have a focused mental target (breath, thoughts, sensations); in contrast, mindfulness connotes an openness that includes multiple mental contents." Also, Participant 3 wrote in a questionnaire, that "awareness [is] to be broadly conscious of something and mindfulness is to be fully immersed in that something." Participant 7 also wrote about awareness but emphasized using the senses and attention:

I think awareness is the bigger, wider sense of taking in (receiving) everything that is going on around one, and includes all the senses. Mindfulness is more pointed, narrower, and implies some degree of control of attention, focusing very intensely and carefully on whatever action one is engaged in. Both are a function of attention, and both are improved by meditation.

Being present through awareness and mindfulness both included focus and clarity for many of the participants.

For example, Participant 2 said:

Concentration is being a little bit more one-pointed, where I'm actually being more directive and I'm focusing on, one, sort of, cutting through the noise of my mind or the anxiety in my emotions and focusing on my breath and sensations and

it tends to, sort of, soften or it tends to, sort of, quiet the mind a little bit. When I facilitate discussion, I am more focused and mentally organized.

Participant 8 wrote in a questionnaire that the practice of Vipassana helps one stay calm and focused:

My calm and focus are increased through sitting courses and my daily practice. I make better decisions more frequently. They create fewer difficulties for all involved. When I prepare for class or grade papers, I also tend to maintain my singularity of focus better now which I suspect enhances the quality of my lesson plans and student feedback.

Similarly, Participant 6 wrote, “concentration helps me to keep my focus and attention on the present moment, to recognize when my attention has strayed, and to gently return my attention to the present moment.”

Both concentration and mindfulness, although different, were seen as influencing a teacher’s daily routine and both are cultivated with the practice of Vipassana. For example, Participant 2 explained:

I focus my attention on some target of awareness and that can also concentrate the mind or I simply focus my attention on awareness itself and that can also help enhance or help me better understand what my state of mind is at any one time. Concentration to me means the ability to actually direct awareness and if I can’t direct awareness back inside, toward the content of my mind, then I can’t be mindful. So I definitely think concentration is a prerequisite for mindfulness at least as I experience it.

More specifically regarding sensations and breath, Participant 1 said, “Sensations and concentration of breath leads to understanding mindfulness and being more open and observant.” Participant 7 went so far as to say that Vipassana “helps with both by giving me more control of my mind, more experience with how my mind works, as well as helping release me from old conditioning.” In comparing concentration to mindfulness as being supported through Vipassana, Participant 8 stated:

I see those two as being really related to one another. I think by meditating you give yourself a gift of time that allows healthy habit patterns to grow. So for example, if I go into a meditation session concentrated or focused on one item (like being upset about a lesson I taught), it is almost a given that at the end of that session I will be thinking about something completely different and my mind, as a result of the meditation, will have gone through a process of vetting out, “Okay, here’s the issue, okay, here’s how I’ll deal with it, here’s the solution...I’m not going deal with this now.” My mind will go through this process of organization, restructuring, processing, dissolving, dissecting, as my mind goes from one thing to the other. So that helps concentration by eliminating external factors and creating a space to think about things, which I can’t do in the everyday world.

Techniques that are used to be more present whether it is toward building awareness, concentration, or mindfulness include observation of body sensations and most importantly breath to remain open and flexible to the present moment. For example, Participant 4 said, “I do breathing. That’s I guess the main one that I do.” To stay present

Participant 10 said, “I will go directly to taking a few breaths. So I’ll take a breath sometimes or a couple or I’ll sit for a minute, wish myself a lot of love and kindness.”

Similarly, Participant 6 said, “Generally it’s focusing on my breath or focusing on body sensations.” Likewise, Participant 9 stated:

I use a slow; long, deep breathing... It's all about long, deep, inhale and an even longer exhale. The most important part of the breath is the exhale.

The Vipassana practice as experienced by most participants suggests the following of the breath supports being more present, staying flexible, and open, which was evident for several of the interviewees. For example, Participant 4 said, “I think navigating, if you’re really navigating you are in the present moment. The term just means how do you steer around the rocks and how do you make sure you’re not up on the sandbar or something.” Similarly, Participant 1 said, “I focus on kids and look for feedback from them. They enable me to make those changes and adjustments so the flow of the lesson will go real[ly] well.” Therefore, the influence of the practice of Vipassana Meditation on the teachers’ routines include being more equanimous, present, aware, concentrative, and mindful through self-observation of sensations, and breath to support nonreactive detachment, and encourage flexibility and openness. Consequently, a teacher’s daily routine and practice of the above concepts also emerge during normal school situations and while experiencing stress.

Stage 2 - Research Question 2 – School Situations and Stress

Specific interview and questionnaire questions related to school situations and stress can be found in Appendix I. The most frequently appearing concepts discovered in

the stage two coding of the 9 interviews, 6 journals, and 9 questionnaires relating to how Vipassana influences school situations and stress included nonreactive detachment, aversion or attachment, absolving responsibility, flexibility and openness, not needing control, and engagement (Appendix H). For example, the concept that the practice of Vipassana Meditation encourages nonreactive detachment when an individual is faced with stress, is illustrated by the experience of Participant 2:

[I] would argue that Vipassana actually enhances one's detachment. It tends to dissolve attachments, and limit aversion so one is able to be more engaged in life without fear and aversion and... less pain that is born from creating an aversion and attachments. So, I think Vipassana enhances detachment and dissolves and reduces disengagement... I think detachment has a positive connotation. I think detachment is a very positive approach to one's self and life.

Participant 1 agreed and moves further toward explaining detachment as a process of learning and said:

detachment means taking yourself out of the picture and being able to witness and observe things without consequences of what happens to you or someone else... Detachment is a learning process of not reacting to sensations. I know we learn by our experiences, and we use our feelings and sensations to help make those decisions, so learning how to detach and to observe and not react to those sensations at the cellular level, is very difficult when we've been living a life based upon doing the opposite, which is going by our feelings. So, it's a process

of sensation, which is letting go and learning to have enough experiences internally.

Participant 8 explained that detachment also moves through the positive learning process by removing the ego and self-concept said:

I've found as I've grown in my professional development as a teacher I can become detached from an expectation of a lesson. It goes well - great. It doesn't go well - how can I improve? But I don't let it impact my self-concept.

Detachment, it influences that by teaching one to dissolve their ego in a lot of ways. By separating oneself from one's personality and by paying attention to the actuality of life.

Participant 2 also added within the questionnaire, "[meditation] enhances my mental organization, reduces anxiety, improves insight into class material and student capability, strengthens my concentration and ability to work, helps me depersonalize the class experience, and ultimately supports my confidence." Therefore, Vipassana Meditation supports balance and equanimity by reducing aversion or attachment regardless of the situation for many of the participants.

Aversion and attachment can be argued to also support disengagement, but Participant 2 stated, "I find [disengagement] to be a reflection of fear, negative self-appraisal, [and] immaturity." Basically disengagement is a reaction, but Participant 7 defined disengagement as:

not being caught by what's happening externally, which can be good or bad, depending on the circumstances, disengaging from difficulties, from reality, is

escapist and weak. Disengaging from one's own preoccupation with self and desire is the path to liberation.

Participant 10 said, "If you take Vipassana to its logical by-product, you would see less disengagement."

Also, some of the participants explained that detachment can be similar to denying responsibility, but Participant 7 stated the "Denial of responsibility is the ignoring reality, the illusion of freedom and negative consequences." Moreover, Participant 8 said, the:

Denial of responsibility is somehow related to ignorance. If a human operates a certain way and doesn't think too deeply about what they're doing, then they don't have to be responsible for anything that comes as a result. So, I think it's related to ignorance. If I'm not aware of what I'm doing, then I don't have to take responsibility for any negative effects that come.

Furthermore, denial of responsibility is connected to freedom and not being accountable for other peoples behaviors, for example Participant 9 said, that "Denial of responsibility has to do with allowing other people their rights and power to do what they need to do for themselves and to say, I'm not responsible for their behavior or actions." In addition, Participant 6 said the denial of responsibility:

I think it manifests often with my students displacing blame, blaming things or people, placing blame outside of one's self for various things, whether it be receiving a poor grade, failing a class, it's the teacher's fault. I think sometimes

for teachers, teachers don't own responsibility for [the] things that we do. We blame circumstances or other things for difficulties with students.

Nonetheless, detachment and denial of responsibility is the allowing others to make choices and not letting those impact you personally, which is connected to flexibility and openness.

Lesson preparation and time management also connects both detachment and flexibility and openness. For example, Participant 10 stated:

The more you plan the more you prepare for a lesson, the more you can be in the present moment and at ease and in comfort. It helps everything flow for me. If I want to have a hard day, then I won't plan. If I want to have a smooth day, then I plan. That doesn't mean that you're locked into whatever you plan because sometimes your plan doesn't work out so well, but you've got something there.

You can proceed from something that has a stronger foundation.

Similarly, the relationship between time management with flexibility was explained as Participant 8 said:

If I get this structure and this framework of prep planned out ahead of time, when it comes to the instruction I'm a lot more flexible and spontaneous and I think a lot more dynamic teaching actually happens as a result.

Moreover, the concepts of time management and flexibility also relate to mindfulness and engagement as Participant 6 said:

I've noticed things haven't gone well in the past when I haven't been very flexible when I wanted to have a plan and stick to it and darn it, this is the plan. So I think

that the planning doesn't go away with mindfulness and awareness of the present moment. I still need to have tools in place and materials in place, but I need that awareness. I need that being present. I need to be present with my students to effectively engage them and to teach them.

Nonetheless, the ability to be flexible and open within the present moment as connected to detachment and parts of the denial of responsibility by the virtue of the data can be tied to not needing to control others and the situation as a whole. Needing control or wanting control over others was found to cause stress, in the literature (Festinger et al., 1954; Glasser, 1985; Cosgrove, 2002; and Covell, McNeil, Howe, 2009) and Vipassana Meditation seems to lessen that effect for several participants. For example, Participant 2 said, "I have no interest in controlling others." Participant 9 said, "I'm not as interested in controlling others as I used to be." Participant 10 said:

I can't control others. I never really thought being heavy handed with classroom management was effective. So, I would say my attitude toward controlling students was there and Vipassana has helped me be more skillful about how I try to do that. I don't try to control. Obviously, I won't tolerate unacceptable behavior, but honestly, there isn't too much of that to the extent that you hear about in many schools. I don't think it's changed as much as enhanced my view of being not authoritarian, but more authoritative.

Similarly, the universal connection between people, such as the one between teacher and student in regards to control is also influenced through meditation as Participant 6 said:

That there's no controller and no other to be controlled either. It's more being connected, maintaining a connection I think is more of how I see it. I feel like when things are going well, when the lessons are going well and what others might consider to be effective classroom management, as stated in educational lingo, I think what's going on is that students and I have a connection going on and that there's effective communication and for me there's a level of consciousness, a level of awareness of that that helps me to be a part of that.

Furthermore, this connection and awareness of control also deepens as a result of Vipassana Meditation as Participant 3 said:

you cannot control the students; however, in giving choices, they can make their own choices and hopefully, they are good ones, as long as, you know, there's no problems being caused. But, it doesn't necessarily detach me from them; it does feel more of a process that should be experienced by them. So I feel less responsible for their reactions, which kind of goes hand-in-hand with controlling. I couldn't control them before and now I let them choose. I mean, as far as controlling a person goes, so now it's more decision-making for them as well as mine.

This stronger connection and partnership moves beyond detachment and denial of responsibly and becomes more engaging for the teacher and students.

Participant 1 said, "Engagement is being present in the moment and not in the future or the past." Participant 10 said, Vipassana "makes me more engaged. It seems like there's less space between me and the activity or me and the person. It was almost like

this was a film. It's when I'm really tired especially or feel kind of overstressed.”

Similarly, Participant 8 said:

If I'm more engaged, then people are going to see that I walk the walk and talk the talk so they're going to be more interested and come to me for issues and collaboration. If I'm more responsible... people will want to interact with me more because I'm more respectful. If I'm detached, then I take myself less seriously and people respect that and students as well, especially the kids I work with, kids with behavioral disorders, respect the fact that I'm not so rigid.

Furthermore, engagement is also connected to being more trustworthy and authentic, but is done so through being more present and aware as Participant 6 said that Vipassana:

keeps me engaged. I think in the past I was very disengaged during lessons. All parts of my day I would be caught up in thoughts about this or that or something else, daydreams or worries about the future or reviewing something that happened in the past and getting stuck on that. [It]... has been very liberating for me and it means that I'm fully engaged in activities that I do, whether it be brushing my teeth or sharpening a pencil at school or walking from one part of the building to the next. I think that's what the practice is about for me, is to maintain that engagement and notice when my engagement has strayed... I just have more consciousness of being engaged and when I'm not engaged and gently bringing my attention back in the present moment when I can.

Thus, due to no data conflicting, a heightened urgency of engagement was created for most participants due to the practice of nonreactive detachment, the lessening of aversion

or attachment, absolving responsibility, while staying flexible and open and not control others in most classroom situations. This engagement coupled with an attitude of balance or equanimity within the present moment limits stressful situations by approaching decisions with greater depth.

Stage 2 - Research Question 3 – Teacher Decision-making

Specific interview and questionnaire questions related to teacher decision-making can be found in Appendix I. The most frequently appearing concepts discovered in the stage two coding of the 9 interviews, 6 journals, and 9 questionnaires relating to how Vipassana influences teacher decision-making in regards to cognitive and emotional skills included both speeding up and slowing down the decision-making process, nonreactive detachment, removal of ego, being more empathetic and accepting, and having greater depth (Appendix H). For example, Vipassana Meditation was found to both speed-up and slow down the decision-making process. Participant 2 said:

I feel like Vipassana definitely does slow down my thought processes. It slows the game of life down but then, at the same time; it can enhance my decision-making process and even in terms of speed because my thoughts are just more lucid. So it's sort of like a good athlete. A good athlete will tell you that I think it works. I think it does both and, on the inside, it slows it down to some degree. A good athlete will tell you that the more competition they feel in whatever craft they're expressing, the slower the game becomes for them so I do think that, in some ways, my practice slows life down. It slows my racing mind down but, at the same time, in this ironic way, these thoughts that emerge, they're more poignant,

right, I don't have to labor so much to come to some sort of decision or to find a solution. It's a little bit more available to me and this is relative to myself, previously.

Conversely, Participant 8 stated, "I can make decisions a lot quicker if I feel that it's a nongenuine or inauthentic thing. Then on the other hand, if it is genuine and authentic, I might slow things down to let that grow and develop." Consequently, demonstrating that Vipassana Meditation influences both slowing down and speeding up the thought process, as stated by Participant 6:

I think it can do both. I find that I can make quick response decisions more effectively when needed and I can stop and reflect when needed as well. So I think it does both. I'm more connected to my mind. I'm more aware of my thinking processes and I feel like my decision-making skills are improved by that awareness, simply by that awareness of my decision-making. I think in the past I made decisions unconsciously a lot based on unconscious conditioned responses, which isn't always helpful or effective. So having less conditioned responses. So basically it does both by slowing down or allowing you to notice more or break away from the conditioned response and also help you in reflecting back on a decision, but more or less it does the speeding up. It gives you more effective connection to what needs to be done.

Moreover, Participant 3 said:

I feel like it slows down certain parts of decision-making and speeds up other parts. For example, it'll slow down my observing of an issue and then once the

observation comes in, the decision-making, the almost like choices that come up, come up quicker, more efficiently, less options and so it's more effective, the way the decision is made. And then once I implement it and I tend to do it more in the moment, and it calls for it, I can just kind of let it simmer and let it marinade and then I'm just kind of letting things go at that point, and so that might take a little longer as far as observing after and also knowing that things will change and things will come and go and so just kind of letting that take its toll. That may take a little longer.

Therefore, Vipassana meditation can be interpreted as both speeding-up and slowing down the decision-making process similar to an athlete performing a skill within a competition, having more clarity, being more authentic and less conditioned, while letting things just unfold and happen based on understanding everything changes.

Participants also reported that the decision-making process is much influenced by the practice of nonreactive detachment to create a gap between thoughts and reduce reactions. For example, Participant 10 said:

it can reduce your knee-jerk reactions so that say a child is getting up and walking across the room. Rather than say, "Why are you standing up? You know no one's allowed to stand up in a classroom without asking permission." You might just say, "Where are you going?" And it might be that they have a good reason for what they're doing and if it isn't they'll just sit right down and there's no real problem. There's no real bad energy or negativity.

Similarly, Participant 6 wrote in the questionnaire, “in this practice, I aim to remain present with reality as it is, instead of engaging in the suffering that is caused by a desire things to be different than they are, or attempts to make things become different.”

Participant 2 wrote, “I’m just happier and more detached, so I can accept people as they are and I can share my merits with my students more easily.” Nonreactive detachments influence the ability to speed-up and slow down the decision-making process, which is related to removing the ego.

Taking the ego out of a situation or decision or at least decreasing the concepts of attachment and aversion as practiced in Vipassana was found to be important. For example, Participant 8 said:

Well, as my ego becomes dissolved, I’m more able to ask for help and more able to hear other people’s opinions. Then in situations, I’m able to realize after the fact that I made a mistake just based on what’s happening within myself on a physiological level and feel the sensations that don’t feel right.

The connection between teachers and students are also influenced by attachment and aversion as Participant 6 said:

I think when we’re very much ego oriented, we lose. So I think detaching out of ego and feeling from myself in the process, it helps me to connect to other students and their process as well and to see that and experience that and to have a greater connection and understanding of their experience...The teachings of annata or self-as-process have helped me to become more compassionate and empathic with others as I see that my ego structure is impermanent and not the

true nature of reality. I can come to teaching with my students in a perspective that is not about self-glorification (ego) but rather from an understanding of how all things and beings are connected. I aim to understand my students' suffering with compassion and empathy, and this helps me to effectively support them.

Likewise, Vipassana opens a person to be more aware of how to interact with others as

Participant 9 wrote in the questionnaire:

Without Vipassana, I think I would be the teacher I started out as a bit vain, blind to the realities my students were showing me, thinking that I knew the answers to all the questions, and insistent in my own methods. I may not be the most compassionate, empathic and accepting teacher the students ever experienced, but they should have met me before!

Participant 7 summarized how the practice of Vipassana influences decisions by limiting the ego and is connected to empathy and acceptance stating:

Compassion, empathy, and acceptance of others all depend absolutely on being able to see beyond or around self-interest. The practice of Vipassana is, in my experience, the best meditation practice for developing clear insight into the reality that 'the self' is a constructed notion with no abiding existence, thus allowing true compassion to arise.

The Vipassana philosophy of impermanence and change is supported through making decisions while being more empathetic to others and accepting of situations. For example, Participant 3 said:

Change is inevitable and in that idea, myself, and others included, will go through changes. This can be positive, negative, or neutral. Knowing this fact about myself and others can many times lend Vipassana to influence my ability to be compassionate, empathic, and accepting.

Participant 1 added, “I’m able to be empathetic, understanding, and compassionate when things are not perfect, when kids act out, or when things go awry.” Participant 6 wrote in a questionnaire, “I have greatly benefited from the practice of Vipassana of acceptance of things as they are. I aim to understand my students’ suffering with compassion and empathy, and this helps me to effectively support them.” In addition, Participant 10 wrote:

I practice because I wanted to be more compassionate, empathetic and accepting. Vipassana helps me become more accepting and compassionate to myself, especially when combined with *metta*. That helps me open more compassionately to others. Interestingly enough, the more *metta* I offer myself, the more attention, concern and sensitivity I’m able to give others. It’s made me less “me”- centered.

Moreover, Participant 2 wrote, “I’m just happier and more detached, so I can accept people as they are and I can share my merits with my students more easily.”

A greater depth and connection can be made with others and your feelings about a decision by removing the ego from decisions and being more compassionate, empathetic, and accepting. For example, Participant 2 said:

My mind isn’t sustaining as much and because my mind isn’t spinning as much the thoughts that do emerge are oftentimes thoughts that have a greater depth than

if I were forcing the thought process solely on my own willfulness so, to me, it definitely has a quality of stillness and silence to my thoughts.

Participant 6 said, “I feel like my decision-making skills are improved.” Similarly, Participant 8 said, “It makes the flow or the decision-making process more genuine and authentic because I’m actually trying to assess what is actually happening. It improves the quality of the decision-making process.” Therefore, due to no conflicting evidence and the experience of all participants, Vipassana Meditation supports some cognitive and emotional skills such as, speeding up and slowing down the decision-making process by supporting nonreactive detachment, removing the ego, and being more empathetic and accepting to create greater depth, which are also connected to *sila*, *metta*, and *panna*.

Important Vipassana Meditation Practice Concepts Supported by Findings

Important Vipassana Meditation concepts uncovered in both stage one and two include: *sila*, *metta*, and *panna*. *Sila* is moral conduct; *Metta* is the practice of sending out love, peace, and kindness; and *panna* is wisdom and truth. The practice of *metta* with Vipassana supports a universal, positive, and caring connected consciousness attitude that influences decision-making. For example, Participant 6 wrote in a questionnaire:

When I practice *metta*, I hold others and myself in compassion. In this state of consciousness, I can see beneath other people’s actions, even when these actions may seem harmful to others or myself. Maintaining compassion helps me, as a teacher, to respond in positive ways to students. I am remembering a quote from a behavior specialist who said, “A student needs positive attention the most when he or she deserves it the least.” Keeping this in mind and engaging in *metta* has

helped me to be present with students and compassionately help them in ways that are effective and meaningful for them.

Similarly, Participant 8 wrote, “I am more happy and motivated to generate goodness in the world. I have more motivation to be at and do my job well at work. It removes obstacles to reaction that involve personal or selfish motives.” Participant 9 wrote:

Metta brings out my best self. When I am experiencing *metta*, I feel that I am a true role model. It is beyond thinking and decision-making I seek to experience it and when I am feeling it I don’t question my actions or decisions.

Participant 4 wrote in the questionnaire about more authentically caring for others:

Truly caring about students and their achievement requires going beyond a teacher’s self interest (e.g., improved test scores or personal recognition). I believe *metta* allows a teacher to keep day-to-day difficulties in perspective, allowing a teacher to continue to see a bigger picture. *Metta* is also contagious, and classrooms infused with it are noticeably more effective.

Similarly, Participant 2 wrote about how caring also influences expectations, “I think of my students with fondness. I interact with them considering their development at all times. I hold them to standards but primarily try to facilitate their interest, engagement, and personal/professional development. Furthermore, *metta* can also be connected to how impermanence and attitude influence a decision as Participant 7 wrote in a questionnaire:

Vipassana practice allows one to go into the classroom and all other life situations with an attitude of *sampajanna* constant and thorough understanding of impermanence. This understanding lifts every decision, every action, every

interaction to a higher plane where the concerns for self become secondary and thus the right course is clear. Even though this ideal state is difficult to attain and requires many years of practice, even a tiny amount of insight improves one greatly in these ways.

Together the participants demonstrate that for them Vipassana Meditation has many influences on their decision-making process, as well as, situations, stress, and daily routine with nonreactive detachment, awareness, body sensations, flexibility, focus and clarity, breath, concentration, mindfulness, being positive, reducing aversion and attachment, supporting equanimity, empathy, and dissolving the ego being the main concepts uncovered (Figure 3). Nonetheless, there were a few cases and concepts that did not point in the same direction during the analysis.

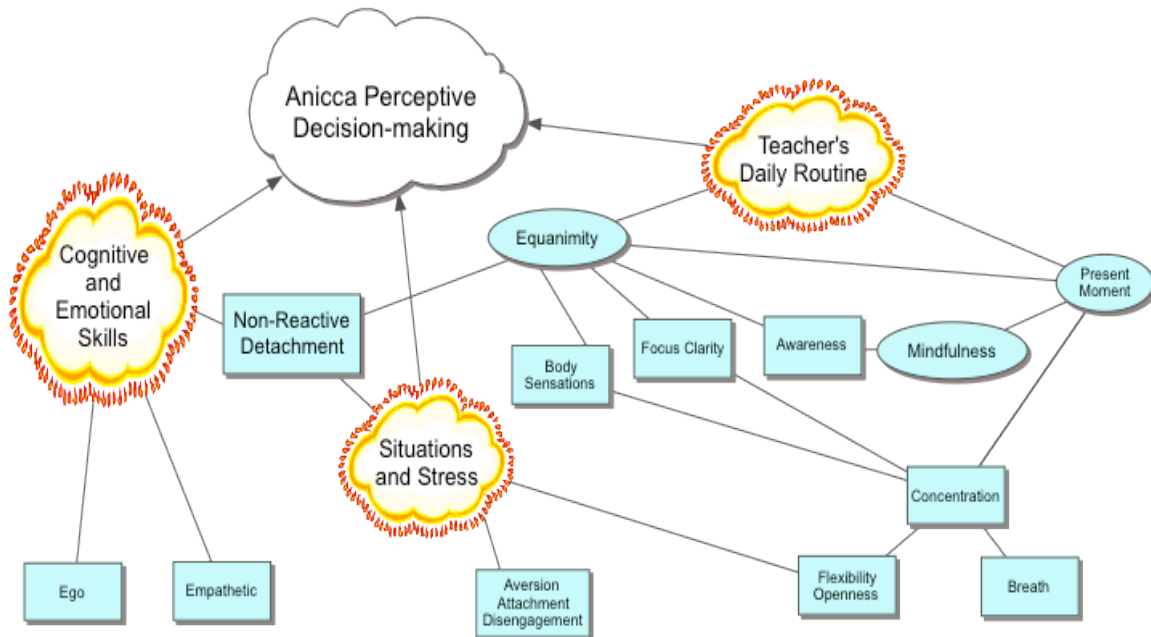


Figure 3

Vipassana Meditation Stage 2 Research Question and Concept Coding Map.

Discrepant Cases

One main discrepant point uncovered during the collection and analysis of the data emerged in participants' responses to the question "How does Vipassana Meditation influence the decision-making process?" Half of the participants replied, "It slows it down," while the rest claimed, "It speeds it up." Because this discrepancy was found during the stage one data collection and analysis it was further investigated in the stage two data collection and analysis by asking participants to further explain how it slows it down or speeds it up during the second interview. Clarifying and resolving this difference led to what I have called the anicca perspective decision-making process.

Theoretical Connections and Revealing Grounded Theory

Based on the analysis from the stage two data thematic findings such as nonreactive detachment, awareness, body sensations, flexibility, focus and clarity, breath, concentration and mindfulness, being positive, aversion and attachment, equanimity, with empathy, ego, and questioning all point toward the answering the three main questions and point to new possible explanations and theories about stress and decision-making (Figure 3). For example, the concept of understanding self as Participant 2 wrote in a questionnaire, “Know thyself” is a connective and all-encompassing attitude, thought, and concept about applying Vipassana Meditation to ones life. Similarly, Participant 3 wrote the most important summary quote, that described the application of Vipassana Meditation was “This too shall pass” as it, relates to knowing yourself and everything is always in a state of change or flux. Moreover, both Participant 8 and Participant 7 wrote the best summary quote about applying Vipassana Meditation to ones life is “Anicca, anicca, anicca,” which means impermanence or change; suffering is from attachment or aversion, and removing the ego or self. Therefore, these summary quotes by the participants matched to all the data collected and analyzed, supports the grounded theory of anicca perspective decision-making process, as when one comes from a perspective of change, having no attachment, aversion, or connection to self all influence the decision-making process (Figure 4).

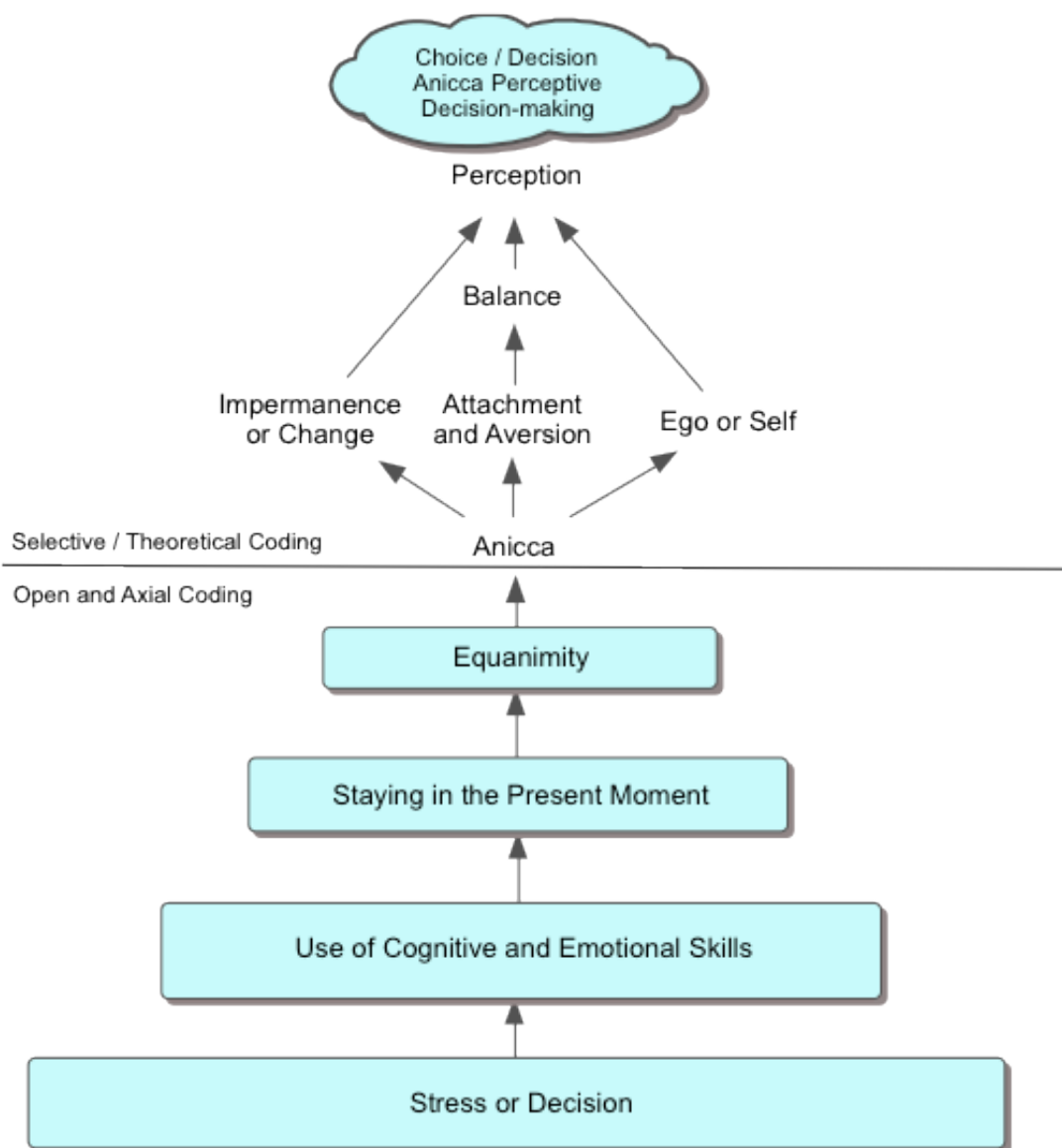


Figure 4

Emerging Vipassana Theoretical Connections.

When most participants faced a stressful or decision-making situation they began a process of using various cognitive and emotional skills such as concentrating on or being aware and mindful of body sensations and breath. Those skills of observation,

awareness, and focus then moved participants toward being in the present moment. Within that stage of the process, participants then spoke and wrote of how they navigated and used those cognitive and emotional skills to create an attitude of equanimity by being nonreactive and detached in order to respond to the situation or make a decision. The stage of equanimity can be further broken down into smaller steps such as acceptance, calmness, and detachment, as understood in the word *anicca*, meaning change, having no attachment, aversion, or connection to self. When navigating thoughts and emotions at this stage the participants were balancing and adjusting their perceptions based on earlier observations and navigation. Therefore, grounded in the data, based on open codes and concepts (Figure 2), and axial category coding (Figure 3), and pieced together forms a theory of *anicca* perspective decision-making (Figure 4).

Summary

This chapter presented participant recruitment, participant profile information, the two-stage system used for generating and gathering data, the analysis of data, the findings with evidence connected to Vipassana concepts, and revealing the *anicca* perspective decision-making process as a grounded theory. The nine participants in this study ranged in age, background, subject and grade taught, and teaching and meditation experience. The first stage of data collection took 6 weeks and included the first interview and participant reflective journals. The second stage of data collection and analysis went deeper into the concepts uncovered from the first stage of data and consisted of a second interview, four more weeks of reflective journals, and a questionnaire.

The first stage of open coding relating to Research Question 1 about how Vipassana influences a teacher's daily routine included concepts of process, equanimity, compassion, response, calmness, present moment, awareness of body sensations, and empathy. The main concepts discovered relating to Research Question 2 about how and under what situations or stress do teachers use Vipassana Mediation included equanimity, process, compassion, mindfulness, organization/preparedness, and calmness. The main concepts uncovered relating to Research Question 3 about how Vipassana influences classroom decision-making, classroom management, and classroom procedures also included equanimity, response, calmness, compassion, empathy, process, and mindfulness, however, new concepts also emerged, such as detachment, awareness, and focus. Those main concepts from open coding above were connected together through axial coding to form four larger categories including equanimity, present moment, cognitive and emotional skills, and stressors (Figure 2), thus setting the direction needed for stage two.

The stage two questions were derived from the stage one open and axial coding concepts and categories. The second interview was designed to be more investigative and comparative, whereas the questionnaire was designed to be more of a connective and summative tool. The main concepts discovered in the stage two coding included nonreactive detachment appearing, awareness, body sensations, flexibility, focus and clarity, breath, concentration and mindfulness, being positive, aversion and attachment, equanimity, empathy, ego, and questioning (Appendix H) all point toward the answering

the three main questions and new possible explanations and theories about stress and decision-making (Figure 3).

All data collected and analyzed supports the grounded theory of anicca perspective decision-making, as supporting a perspective of change, having no attachment, aversion, or connection to self while going through the decision-making process (Figure 4). The process of anicca perspective decision-making includes starting with being in a stressful or decision-making situation, then using various cognitive and emotional skills, being in the present moment, navigating thoughts and emotions to create an attitude of equanimity out of a balanced perspective of anicca, then adjusting that perception based on observations to make a decision of action and how to engage (Figure 4). Chapter 5 provides an interpretation of the findings, connections to current literature and other theories, a discussion of the implications for social change, recommendations for action, future research, researcher reflection, and final statement.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction and Overview

The purpose of this qualitative grounded study was to explore and generate a theory about the process of Vipassana Meditation and teacher decision-making related to classroom management and stress. Thus, the contribution of this study is the generation of the anicca perspective decision-making process as a grounded theory that fills the gap between literature about meditation, mindfulness, cognitive dissonance, stress, and burnout. The theory is derived from answering the three research questions: How does Vipassana Meditation influence a teacher's daily routine in the classroom? How and under what daily school situations or stress do teachers use the concepts practiced in Vipassana Meditation? And, how does the practice of meditation influence classroom decision-making, classroom management, and procedures? This chapter answers those research questions, which drive the generation of the anicca perspective decision-making process while integrating and connecting the results and answers to current literature. An explanation and outline of the linear relationships within the anicca perspective decision-making process follows. Built on the findings and outline of the anicca perspective decision-making process, a stress reducing, decision-making tool and technique is also discussed that would be available to the teaching community. Discussion follows about the connection of the theory to the conceptual framework, its implications for social change, recommendations for further action and research, researcher reflection, and concluding comments.

Summary and Interpretation of the Findings

The interpretation of the findings based on all data collected and analyzed, including both stage one and two interviews, participant reflective journals, and stage two questionnaires, is discussed through addressing each research question in succession to outline and explain the generation of the anicca perspective decision-making process and use of a stress reducing, decision-making tool and technique teachers can use. The findings outlined in chapter 4 suggest data saturation was obtained even though there was a small population sample used as many, and often all, participants reported the same main concepts.

Research Question 1 - How does Vipassana Meditation influence a teacher's daily routine in the classroom?

In the context and environment of the classroom, the participants in this study indicated that the practice of Vipassana Meditation most importantly builds and supports equanimity, which is the ability to calmly balance emotions and thoughts through a detached acceptance of the present moment. One of the main qualities of equanimity is acceptance, including the acceptance of self, others, and one's surroundings. Teachers in this study, within the context of the classroom explained that acceptance meant balancing emotions and preparedness with student issues and the lesson delivery. This balance was monitored through awareness and observation of body sensations and breath in relation to emotional reactions to student issues and classroom situations. Balance and acceptance was also connected to a feeling of clear mindedness, confidence, and self-esteem. Similarly, although not in the context of the classroom or about teachers practicing

Vipassana, Thompson and Waltz (2008) found the concept of accepting self, others, and a situation to be positively correlated to self-esteem of university students who practiced general mindful meditation. In this study, participants reported that a clearer and balanced mind supported focused organization, concentration, and awareness to support self-acceptance and esteem. Similarly, Margolis (2008) found the concept of accepting self through self-knowledge to be significantly related to professional development activities of teachers, which would also lessen stress through motivating and inspiring personal and professional growth, although not directly connected to meditation.

Another main quality of equanimity is calmness as suggested by the data. In this study participants found when they were able to be calmer, the students also gained a feeling of safety and security, and were thus more willing to participate and engage in learning activities, which also allowed the teacher to clearly focus on the present moment. Van den Hurk et al. (2010) also found that calmness directly correlated to attentional processing and efficiency for the population of general mindfulness meditators, but was not specifically linked to teachers or the classroom. In this study, calmness was related to detachment, in the sense of not being attached to thoughts, feelings (body sensations), or emotions (not being constrained, defined, or controlled by emotions), which is a significant concept within equanimity and allows a person to be calmer and thus think more clearly.

Detachment is another main quality of equanimity that also connects acceptance to calmness as revealed by the participants in this study. For example, they reported that separating oneself from one's emotional feelings, by not taking things personally, while

dealing with student issues and delivering a lesson helped support a clear and calm response. Sonnentag et al. (2010) found psychological self-distance to be conversely related to burnout and stress levels within pastors, who I might assume have a spiritual practice—a finding that has parallel implications for teachers dealing with stress.

Overall, the main components of equanimity, including acceptance, calmness, and detachment, were all connected to the action and process of observing body sensations and breath that allowed the teachers interviewed to be more aware of the present moment, which supports the ability to remain calm and detached in the classroom. In this study, the observation of body sensations and breath were found to be tools used to monitor and balance equanimity, which are directly related to emotions and thoughts, thus influencing a teacher's daily routine within the classroom. Similarly, Nielsen and Kaszniak (2006) found that using emotional feelings helped guide mindful meditators to make better decisions. However, Chang (2009) did find emotional reactions within teachers to be correlated to and influence stress and burnout, thus calling for the use of meditation as related to the teaching profession. Even so, this study still supports the monitoring of emotions as being an important factor when making decisions, which is part of equanimity and related to stress and burnout. Furthermore, this action of observation within equanimity also supports a general balanced personal and professional philosophy. Tomic and Tomic (2008) found that a positive teaching philosophy and outlook about teaching and life correlated inversely to stress and burnout levels of teachers and principals, even without the formal practice of meditation. This suggests that Vipassana Meditation could influence a teacher's daily routine within the classroom by using

equanimity through a balanced acceptance, calmness, detachment, and philosophy, while dealing with emotions by observing body sensations and monitoring breath to be more accepting, detached, and calm, and ultimately decrease stress.

Research Question 2 - How, and under what daily school situations or stress, do teachers use the concepts practiced in Vipassana Meditation?

This study uncovered a wide array of stressors on teachers, particularly classroom management in dealing with difficult students and unexpected situations, demands by school administrators, requests from students and school authorities, paperwork, dealing with students variable skills and abilities especially in light of the standards of the state, district, and school, expectations of high performance, the availability of and access to materials and technology, the evaluation process, collaboration with other teachers and staff, and preparations such as time to plan and organize classroom and materials. The main concepts practiced in Vipassana Meditation by the teachers in dealing with stress included many of the same main concepts with regards to answering question one such as equanimity, calmness, and detachment, but also included organization such as keeping track of paperwork, students, and other elements within a situation, preparedness especially in making time to plan, flexibility or being able to change plans as a situation required, openness to accepting and receiving help, and not needing to control but giving students more choice in activities.

For example, when the teachers in this study are in a stressful situation, they address that situation by first using cognitive and emotional skills such as openness, flexibility, and acceptance. They then move toward applying equanimity within the

present moment with concentration and mindfulness, meaning observation of breath and body sensations to create balance, calmness, and detachment to decrease stress. This is similar to the findings of Chang (2009) who found that awareness of the arising and passing of emotions within the psychological process of dealing with stress helped decrease burnout of teachers, even without formal meditation, and Cahn and Polich (2009) who found Vipassana Meditators in a variety of situations decreased emotional and cognitive reactivity, which is related to reducing stress.

The qualities of flexibility and openness reported by the participants in this study are closely related to the qualities identified by mindfulness theory such as novelty producing--the ability to uncover new opportunities and distinctions, flexibility--working with and openness to information and the context, and novelty seeking--the ability to perceive every situation as new (Langer, 2004), although Langer did not connect these qualities to any type of meditation practice or the teaching situation specifically. For example, the participants in this study reported that being more aware and observant of body sensations, thoughts, and emotions, in relationship to others and their surroundings allowed them to be more open and flexible while delivering lessons. Hall-Renn (2006) also found that staying flexible and sensitive to all perspectives increased nonjudgmental awareness, although she did not examine this in the context of teaching and teacher stress. Furthermore, the participants in this study stated that general organization and preparedness skills allow a teacher to clearly address a situation, although he or she can never be prepared for everything. Therefore, when teachers are organized, prepared,

open, and flexible they are more able to deal with a stressful situation, even without any connection to meditation.

In this study, mindfulness, as cultivated through Vipassana Meditation, was shown to allow a teacher to be more aware of self within a situation, and thus supports a calmer, helpful situation. Also, Carson and Langer (2006) found that a more mindful perspective and awareness increased cognitive and behavioral flexibility and the ability to adapt to one's current environment in a meaningful manner, thus helping to reduce stress. Carson et al., (2001) also found that for college students concentrating and taking multiple perspectives, qualities of mindfulness helped them learn more by being open to more information. Although not directly related to teachers, but related to control or choice, this study supports the open, nonconstricted, and nonbiased presentation of information to support awareness of multiple perspectives.

The participants in this study about Vipassana Meditation also found that the concept of not needing control of every aspect of every situation supported acceptance, flexibly, openness, and detachment, which are connected to mindfulness theory and control theory. Glasser (2010) found that freedom and choice are the main motivations that relate to supporting and creating an accepting, trusting, respecting, and fun atmosphere, which also can reduce stress. Taken together, this suggests that the practice of Vipassana Meditation can influence school situations and stress through the combination of a balanced philosophy, observing body sensations, and monitoring breath, while being accepting, detached, calm, organized, prepared, flexible, open, and not needing control.

Research Question 3 - How does the practice of Vipassana Meditation influence classroom decision-making, classroom management, and procedures?

This study found that the practice of Vipassana Meditation influences teachers' decision-making, classroom management, and procedures through the use of compassion and empathy. It was also found that it supports the removal of ego (the separating of self from experiences and situation) and being more accepting to gain a greater understanding and depth of a problem and situation. For example, the participants in this study reported that being more compassionate and empathic helped them connect with students and to what was presently going on by not allowing their emotions to dictate reactions and allowing them to move toward inclusive beneficial responses. Similarly, Langer et al., (2010) found awareness, the relationship of oneself to their surroundings and social comparisons, examining the differences and similarities between the self and others, affects performance and decision-making of college students, thus supporting the use of compassion and empathy in the classroom. According to Glasser (2010), choice is highly correlated with empathy, because seeing a situation from another person's or multiple persons' perspective allows for a better understanding of a situation, which is connected to acceptance and obtaining a greater depth of insight into a problem. Thus, if Vipassana Meditation increases compassion and empathy it also helps one gain greater insight into a situation. The participants in this study also reported that being more compassionate helped them add more space to their thoughts that led to not giving into impulsive reactions and not engaging in negative behaviors and so they were able to better understand the present moment. Similarly, Wubbolding and Brickell (2009) found that

taking context into account in terms of the environment, circumstances, and other people, with perception such as including multiple perspectives also supports the ability to be more compassionate and empathetic.

Within this study, the concept of detachment was significant in the answers to all research questions. Together with helping in decision-making, it was also found to support removal of ego through acceptance. For example, the participants stated that going beyond self-interest, the ego, and being able to share more personal information allowed them to connect with the students and feel more relaxed. Falkenstrom (2010) also found psychological detachment and acceptance to positively correlate to feelings of well-being among Vipassana meditators and Chang (2009) found detachment of emotion to be significant with regards to decreasing teacher stress and burnout. Putting these two together, an effective way to manage a classroom and make decisions takes place through the removal of ego by using psychological detachment and acceptance to support compassion and empathy, thus increasing a greater connection to others and gaining depth of insight in a situation.

In this study, the nine teachers reported a greater understanding of a situation or problem is ultimately attained through acceptance, compassion, empathy, and a detached ego. Therefore, detachment of the ego and acceptance of the moment allows the emotions of compassion and empathy to surface. Coming from a place of acceptance, compassion, and empathy with a detached ego translates into greater depth in understanding a situation and the people within it in order to then become more engaged and responsive.

The qualities of compassion and empathy are both supported in the practice of *metta*, significant in Vipassana Meditation practice.

The main part of Vipassana Meditation that was found to be important for these teacher participants with supporting greater depth and understanding is *metta*. *Metta* is the practice of sending out love, peace, and kindness. The participants in this study reported the practice of *metta* within Vipassana supported a universal, positive, and caring connected consciousness attitude that influenced decision-making. For example, they reported Vipassana Meditation increased awareness to sensations and an observation of a situation and allowed oneself not to be drawn in or engaged in negative or suffering situations, thus supporting positive decision-making. Chiesa (2010) found Vipassana Meditation to be connected to neurobiological and clinical benefits such as increasing focus, more control over emotions, greater self-control, creativity, well being, reduction of conflict, and a greater sensitivity to the environment in other situations, a finding that was borne out in the experience of the teachers in this study. Marques and Dhiman (2009) found similar results when teaching business people how to meditate, and reported that some people had gained the ability to be more kind and deliberate while making decisions and choices, supporting the use of *metta* and compassion.

Demonstrating the importance of *metta* and compassion in the decision-making process and its connection to engagement with others, this practice of sending out love, peace, and kindness are the main teachings of Vipassana Meditation and is one of the three main concepts that were found to influence teachers' decisions as explained by the participants. Also, *metta* was found to influence a teacher's performance, making *metta*

one of the most powerful perspectives, actions, and steps in the process of fostering better decision-making and dealing with stress. Overall, the combination of qualities such as equanimity, calmness, observation of sensations, detachment, organization, preparedness, flexibility, openness, control, the removal of ego, acceptance, compassion, and empathy have been shown in this study to have an influence on teachers' daily routine, how they handle stressful situations, and their decision-making processes to generate the grounded theory represented by the anicca perspective decision-making process (see Figure 4 in Chapter 4).

Anicca Perspective Decision-making Process Grounded Theory

This anicca perspective decision-making process was generated and grounded in the analysis of the data that found the most stressful situations in teaching included demands from administration or leadership, student issues and skills, organization and preparing lessons, evaluations, collaboration, materials, standards or expectations, and classroom management. Whatever the situation, each involves a decision of some type. This study found that Vipassana meditators move through a process of decision-making in three phases.

Phase 1

According to Festinger's (1962) cognitive dissonance theory most people work through stress or a decision by rationalizing and weighing dissonance between personal beliefs, thoughts, values, emotions, and actions including context and perspective. While doing so, a person works through that rationalization using both cognitive and emotional skills, which is Phase 1 of the anicca perspective decision-making process. The cognitive

skills reported by the participants within this study involved acceptance, not taking things personally, tolerance, and flexibility. The emotional skills of the participants involved being encouraging, respectful, open, compassionate, and empathic. Festinger (1962) stated that most people primarily work through the above, thus demonstrating the simple process of resolving dissonance, which moves toward making a decision, taking action, or decreasing stress. Many times, however, this alone does not work to reduce stress and may increase mindlessness and unwanted habitual behaviors. As a result, a Vipassana meditator moves further beyond and through the average decision-making process by adding subtle elements found within the present moment, as demonstrated in the following phases.

Phase 2

The participants in this study reported that the ability to be more present includes being able to concentrate and be mindful of the environment, others, and self. The concentration aspect is cultivated through focusing on the action of breathing and paying attention to the natural unaltered sensations of breath coming out of the nose against the upper lip, thus focusing attention. This concentration and focus is on the subtle and minor natural changes that happen moment to moment in relation to context and a situation, thus bringing awareness to another aspect to rationalize within the decision-making process. For example, the natural changes in breath, such as being more shallow or rushed, could be a signal of stress, therefore, bringing more awareness to taking bigger breaths and slowing down. The mindfulness aspect is cultivated through observing and being aware of subtle or blatant body sensations such as heat, coolness, pain, and tension

throughout the body also including the awareness of heart rate and blood pressure, thus giving yet another element to consider within the decision-making process. For instance, the participants in this study reported that when feeling muscle tension or noticing an increased heart rate while interacting with a student or situation helped make them aware of stress and brought to mind ways of dealing with that student or situation, thus giving a signal to change something, including giving positive feedback to an action, decision, or engagement. Overall, merging Phase 2, the present moment, with the cognitive and emotional skills of Phase 1 increases input, feedback, and monitoring of a situation, people, and self, and therefore contributing to more effective stress management and decision-making.

Phase 3

The Vipassana meditators in this study moved beyond the addition of subtle elements found within the present moment when progressing through the decision-making process in Phase 1 and 2 by adding yet another phase, which includes equanimity and anicca, which means understanding the law of impermanence, change, and that suffering comes from attachment or aversion. The addition of equanimity in the decision-making process adds an element of balance, calmness, and detachment to the rationalization of the present moment while using cognitive and emotional skills. This was reported to add an ability to remove oneself from a situation and become more nonjudgmental. For example, when faced with a stressful situation or person, the study participants described how equanimity allows them to be less reactive by taking pause

through removing themselves from the immediate situation and becoming calmer. This then allows for movement to anicca within the process of Phase 3.

The Vipassana meditators in this study further extend the process of rationalization through the usage of the present moment and of cognitive and emotional skills by adding equanimity and pause to the process through a final perception of anicca. They reported moving through Phases 1 and 2 with a lens and perspective of anicca that added more clarity and space to the decision-making process by incorporating a view of impermanence, and dissolving attachment, aversion, ego, and self. For example, this phase seems to elongate and add space to the thought process by accepting things as they are, by being more flexible and not simply adhering to personal opinions and thoughts. Simultaneously this phase can be interpreted as speeding up the process of decision-making by allowing a person to have a clearer focus due to the understanding of impermanence, the dissolving of attachment, aversion, and ego by accepting things as they are. Finally, as reported by the participants, when the perspective of anicca is used, a more compassionate and empathic response is then supported and easier to practice. For example, when in a stressful situation or when dealing with a difficult person they are more able to look at things from the other person's point of view and give or send to that person selfless love and kindness regardless of the situation, thus helping serve others and make a better decision about how to engage with them.

The three phases of the anicca perspective decision-making process starts with a stressful situation or decision then moves initially through the more typical cognitive and emotional skills. These Vipassana meditators then add a phase of staying more present

with concentration and mindfulness techniques. This progresses to adding equanimity, a sense of balance and calmness, and sets up the ability to add the perspective of anicca including a sense of impermanence, and detachment of ego. When being free of attachment or aversion then a movement toward compassion can be made in making a choice, response, or decision about how to engage. This final all-inclusive perspective coupled with a compassionate and empathic clear direction or decision can help support the best course of action or how to engage, adding up to the process of anicca perspective decision-making in decreasing stress (Figure 5).

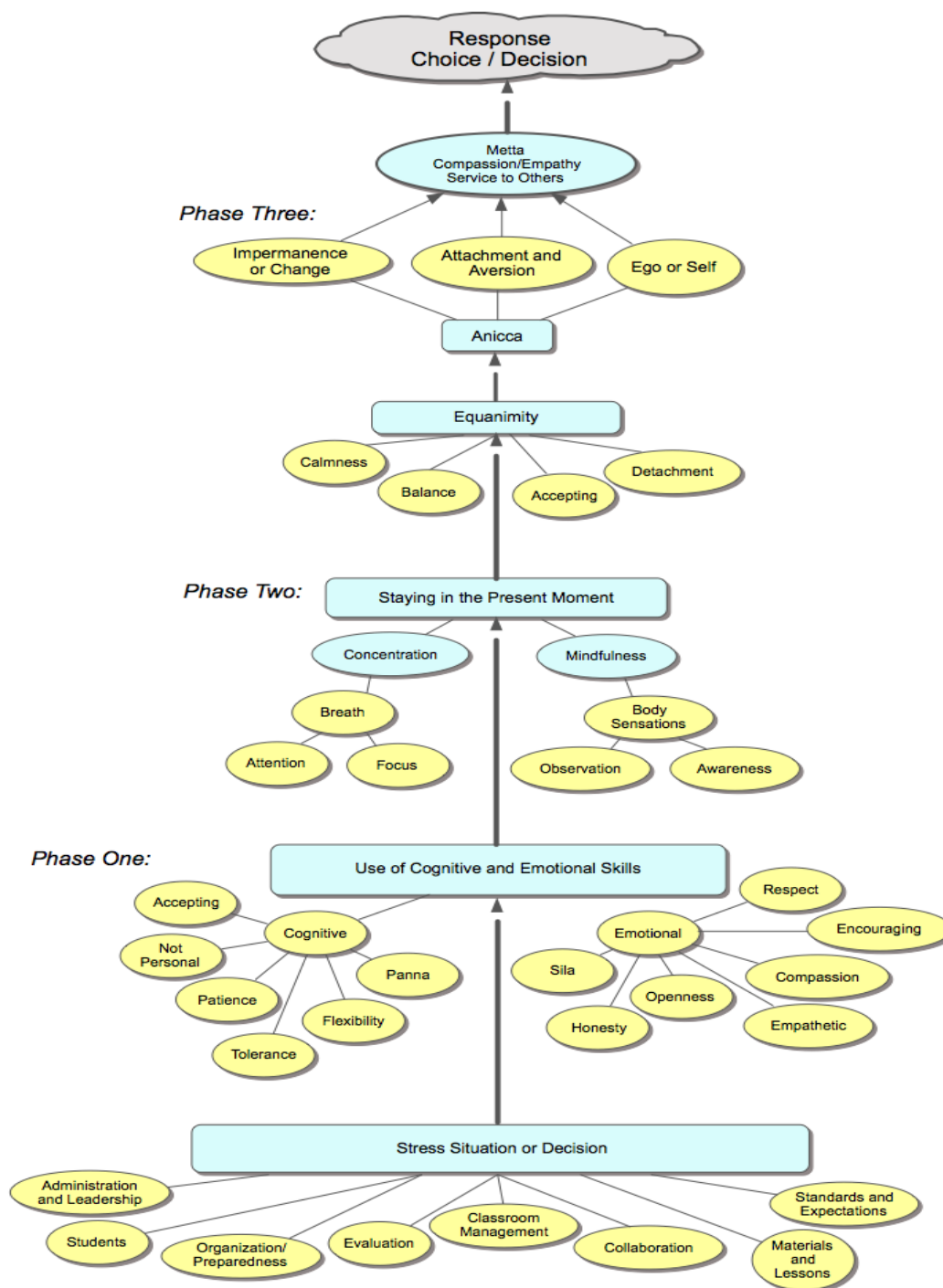


Figure 5

Anicca Perspective Decision-making Process.

Stress Reducing and Decision-making Tool

A potential decision-making tool I created is based on the findings and the ensuing grounded theory of the anicca perspective decision-making process. The main concepts from the theory serve as a reminder to move through the steps of the anicca perspective process rather than skip a step. I have called it the PAUSE technique, which could be used by a novice meditator or even possibly by a nonmeditator. The word PAUSE is an acronym. The “P” stands for pause literally. It reminds one to slow down, take time, think, and feel. The “A” stands for awareness and anicca. Awareness includes using all senses to take in the surroundings, situation, people, and self against a backdrop of impermanence. The “U” stands for understand, which means working through equanimity and balancing all the elements brought in through awareness with an objective of detachment and nonjudgment. The “S” stands for sensations and self, which is a reminder to include monitoring the breath and body sensations while working through the earlier stage of equanimity. The “E” stands for empathic engagement, which is the reminder to connect and help other people through decisive action and engagement. The data analyzed in this study and the resultant grounded theory suggests that the use of this PAUSE technique could help decrease stress. It supports decision-making by helping remind people to pause, be aware, understand, and be clear and equanimous through sensations to engage with empathic action. The PAUSE technique is also connected and supported by the conceptual framework of this study.

Connection to conceptual framework. Combined with the data results from this

study and approaching from the crux, or overlapping point of this conceptual framework including Vipassana Meditation, mindfulness theory, choice theory, cognitive dissonance theory, and the relationship of all to stress and burnout, a decision-making process was uncovered that supports a teachers daily routine and response to stress (see Figure 1 in Chapter 1). The conceptual framework presented in chapter 1 and 2 started with teacher stress and burnout as the backdrop topic and problem to be addressed in this study, for which solutions and approaches have been suggested drawing on cognitive dissonance theory, choice theory, mindfulness theory, and the perspective of Vipassana Meditation philosophy that together shed new light on the problem of how teachers react to stress (see Figure 1 in Chapter 1). This section works back from outlining the main connections of the data to concepts about Vipassana Meditation and then explaining how it relates, overlaps, and addresses concepts pertinent to mindfulness theory, choice theory, cognitive dissonance, and teacher stress and burnout, which connect to positive social change, recommendations for action, and future research.

As explained by the 9 participants in this study the main concepts within Vipassana Meditation include *sila*--morals and ethics, *samadhi*--concentration, *mindfulness*--awareness and observation, *metta*--compassion and selfless love, and *panna*--wisdom or truth, as well as, equanimity and nonreactive detachment. Overall, the results explain that Vipassana Meditation is the practice of seeing things as they really are by using these main characteristics and concepts, which are further clarified in the theories discussed below.

Mindfulness theory. Mindfulness theory is made up of four parts as discussed in

chapter 2 including novelty seeking, novelty producing, flexibility, and engagement, developed in contrast to mindlessness, which is the psychological unawareness of habits. Novelty seeking is the creation and awareness of perspective on a situation, people, and self. Similarly, as explained by the participants, equanimity or psychological and emotional balance and nonreactive detachment or nonjudgment support the ability to be flexible and open to all contexts, situations, people, and self, thus supporting novelty seeking. Most participants also described Vipassana as being connected to novelty seeking through *sila*, concentration, mindfulness, *metta*, and *panna*. For example, most participants explained that a clear understanding of a situation, person, and self starts with a pure state of mind and body based on a foundation of clean moral conduct including abstaining from killing any being, stealing, sexual misconduct, telling lies, and intoxicants. This supports the PAUSE technique as the data also suggested a concentrated mind, one that does so through *anapana* or by observing breath, also supports being more empathetic, as to see things from another's perspective and therefore seeking multiple perspectives on a situation.

Mindfulness, from the Vipassana perspective explained by most participants, was the ability to be aware, observe, and monitor body sensations and self in order to gain a clear picture of a situation, person, and relationship of self to that situation, which also supports the PAUSE technique. Also, most participants explained the three parts of *panna* include wisdom gained by listening to others, intellectual or analytical understanding, and wisdom based on direct experience, which all contribute to gaining a deeper understanding of all perspectives and thus helps novelty seeking as part of

mindfulness theory.

Moreover, most participants described novelty producing as being influenced by equanimity through *panna* by listening to others and direct experience through *metta*, which is sending out thoughts of selfless love and kindness by creating positive situations out of responses to situation of distress, also supported through the PAUSE technique. The use of nonreactive detachment supports novelty producing through flexibility and not holding on to single failing or negative thoughts by using concentration and awareness of what is, not on what one wants it to be. Understanding impermanence and change helps people ride out uncomfortable or bad situations and supports looking for other alternatives to influence novelty producing as a part of mindfulness theory.

Flexibility as outlined and discussed in the results section was rather extensive as it was a main concept and category tied to awareness. Most participants explained flexibility of mind coming out of observing body sensations and being aware of impermanence, which is also the direct experience of *panna*. With the ability to let things pass through practicing nonreactive detachment a more flexible state of mind is obtained and is also used in the PAUSE technique. Also, with the use of nonreactive detachment a person is more likely to send out selfless love and therefore be more supportive to all situations and thus be more flexible.

Most participants also explained engagement in regards to mindfulness theory to be a main concept connected to all main research questions, as an open mind is more willing to produce and seek alternative perspectives supporting more flexibility and thus allowing a person to make a better-informed decision. Concentration influences

engagement as giving a person more control over specific tasks that need to be engaged in, which is part of the PAUSE technique. The data results also point toward an equanimous mind as more able to decrease mindlessness habitual reactions and increase positive thoughtful responses, thus support engagement. The ability to observe direct experience of body sensations as part of *panna* and concentration are connected to weighing options and therefore support the engagement part of mindfulness theory and the last part of the PAUSE technique.

Choice theory. The results discussed in chapter 4 connect and overlap all principles covered in choice theory. For example, all seven caring principles are connected to the practice of *metta* or selfless love, such as supporting, encouraging, listening, accepting, trusting, respecting, and negotiating differences, which are all concepts that came out of the findings of this study. Also, the data suggest that Vipassana Meditation limited or reduced the deadly habits of choice theory such as criticizing, blaming, complaining, nagging, threatening, punishing, and bribing, through being more compassionate, empathic, and following *sila*, the moral code. Furthermore, Vipassana Meditation also addresses the ten axioms of choice theory, which are embedded in the PAUSE technique.

For example, the first axiom of choice theory is that the only person whose behavior we can control is our own, and most participants explained Vipassana Meditation is a reflection and observation of self. Also the data suggest nonreactive detachment is the practice of self-separation from the environment and others, which supports the axiom of self-control being one's only control, but it also addresses the

second axiom, which is that all we can give another person is information and this too is reflected in the PAUSE technique. The data suggest that *Panna* is the practice of observing breath and sensations to gain wisdom through direct experience by listening to others, and using analytical understanding, just like step 2 and 3 in the PAUSE technique. The third axiom that all long-lasting psychological problems are relationship problems was supported through the explanations of the participants that Vipassana perceptions of others highly impact relationships, and the practice of sending out selfless love with *metta* supports the communication between others, thus influencing relationships.

The data indicate the most connected axiom of choice theory is the fourth, the problem relationship is always part of our present life, because the practice of Vipassana Meditation is about seeing things as they really are and being more mindful of the present moment. It was reported by most participants that equanimity and concentration both connect to being more balanced, clear minded, and rooted in the present moment, which is what the PAUSE technique is all about. Similarly, the fifth axiom, what happened in the past has everything to do with what we are today, but we can only satisfy our basic needs right now and plan to continue satisfying them in the future, is also connected to the data explained by the participants that the principles of concentration, mindfulness, equanimity, and nonreactive detachment help one better understand the present moment, relationships of needs, and the nature of impermanence and change. Finally, the sixth axiom, that one can satisfy only one's needs by satisfying the pictures in our quality world are related to the participants' explanation of Vipassana mainly through *sila*, *panna*, and *metta*. The data indicate our quality world is our perception or pictures of our

life such as our basic needs, values, accomplishments, and people, just as *sila* is moral conduct or values, *panna* is truth and connection to people, and *metta* is sending out selfless love, thus outlining the same concepts connected to choice theory and the PAUSE technique.

The seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth axioms all deal with behavior, stating all one does is behave, including acting, thinking, feeling, and physiology. This behavior is chosen, as we not only have direct control over the acting and thinking components, but also control our feelings and physiology indirectly through the way we act and think. The data uncovered suggest that the ability to be mindful, present, equanimous, and practice nonreactive detachment all connect to observing thoughts, which lead to engaging in a positive action as promoted by the steps outlined in the PAUSE technique. Overall, there is a strong correlation between Vipassana Meditation and choice theory.

Cognitive dissonance theory. Cognitive dissonance theory has to do with the cognitive activity of sifting and balancing between thoughts, beliefs, feelings, and actions. The main concept of the theory says we are always in a constant state of trying to decrease the feelings of dissonance arising from conflict between our thoughts, beliefs, feelings, and actions by changing or altering one of those, including a change of perspective or perception. Most participants explained that Vipassana Meditation is a practice of equanimity and nonreactive detachment, which reduces these cognitive conflicts through not being attached or having aversion to any thought, belief, feeling, action, or situation. The data suggest the action of observing breath and sensations regardless of the situation leads to gaining more insight or knowledge about a person or

situation, thus connecting together *panna*, concentration, and mindfulness to reduce dissonance and support the use of the PAUSE technique. However, a goal of Vipassana is not to reduce dissonance or increase consonance, as most participants explained, but they saw it rather as being more like a middle way philosophy, that is to be more accepting of what is by not being having any attachment or aversion to any thing or situation. The data indicate the concepts of equanimity and nonreactive detachment combined with mindfulness, *panna*, and *metta* do decrease dissonance through the main concept of no attachment and aversion to everything, but more so through accepting the moment as it is, without judgment.

Stress and burnout. The three main parts of burnout include emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lack of accomplishment. The data explained by the participants imply equanimity and nonreactive detachment decrease emotional exhaustion through removing self and judgments from others and situations. Also, the data suggest awareness of observing breath and body sensations within mindfulness and concentration give a person the ability to be more equanimous when confronted with stress or difficult people just as the steps in the PAUSE technique also imply.

Moreover, most participants described that same awareness also allows one to be detached from emotional situations or having feelings of aversion to others, however, coupled with the practice of *metta*, a personal connection can be made to others while still being detached from the outcome. Similarly, they stated that by sending out love and kindness (*metta*), and by listening to others (*panna*), depersonalization could decrease through fostering and supporting relationships with other staff and students. The data also

indicated that the use of equanimity, nonreactive detachment, concentration, mindfulness, *panna*, and *metta* diminished the need for a sense of accomplishment. It was explained by some the participants that Vipassana is about sending out *metta* or giving service to others to create a more universal connection to self and others for a deeper understanding of impermanence that supports the accomplishment of others and over personal gain.

Therefore, the PAUSE technique is supported by the findings and based on the grounded theory of the anicca perspective decision-making process that includes the overlapping theories from the conceptual framework including Vipassana Meditation, mindfulness theory, choice theory, cognitive dissonance theory, and the relationship to stress and burnout. This also demonstrates that the practice of Vipassana Meditation can improve teacher longevity within the profession by supporting compassionate connections and decreasing stress through influencing decision-making, all of which has larger implications for social change.

Implications for Social Change

This study addressed the problem of how teachers react, respond, and deal with work stress and demands within the school day with regards to decision-making through resolving cognitive dissonance, using choice theory, mindfulness theory, and Vipassana Meditation that generated a theory about the decision-making process. One of the main results of this study is that it provides a process that addresses the problem of teacher stress and burnout, which negatively impacts an educator's longevity in the profession. Furthermore, this study contributes to changing the teaching and learning process and pedagogy through bringing a deeper awareness of self, others, and a situation to influence

relationships by approaching others with compassion and empathy. It addresses the problem of stress and burnout by promoting more calmness and acceptance. This study has found that the use of Vipassana Meditation can increase awareness of the present moment, which supports responsive decision-making.

The centering, equanimous nature of Vipassana Meditation allows a teacher to be more connected to the students, confident, and more relaxed while delivering a lesson. It also impacts student learning by leading the teacher to be more responsive and positive, and it supports better decision-making. When teachers practice Vipassana Meditation this study found they are calmer, more centered, equanimous, confident, and able to deal with work stress and demands within the school day. The teachers in this study perceived that this influences the students within those classrooms by creating a calm place of instruction where they would feel more secure and comfortable in participating and hopefully learning more and behaving inappropriately less, outcomes administrators would likely welcome. The results found in this study support the use of Vipassana Meditation by a teacher in making better decisions. If a calmer, equanimous, detached, but compassionate and empathetic teacher is less stressed, and therefore possibly more effective, and continues in the profession longer, then teachers might profitably be prepared in these kinds of practices. This could happen in educator preparation programs, and put into resources and in-service training. The practice of the anicca perspective decision-making process could also be shared at professional conferences and seminars, thus affecting continuing professional educational development programs for veteran teachers giving them new perspectives on how to deal with the stress of the classroom

and profession. The findings of this study have the potential to create positive social change within an individual, a school, and teacher community by increasing teachers' ability to handle stress and burnout and enhance their effectiveness as classroom instructors.

Recommendations for Action

The results, information, and details within this study could be shared with teachers and administrators and can be presented in many ways. Displaying and publicizing at a poster session of an educational or research conference and symposium would be a great start in reaching teachers and administrators. Also, presenting at other professional teaching workshops, seminars, and conferences could reach many teachers searching for ideas on reducing stress. In addition, these results could be presented or sent to schools or school districts interested in addressing teacher stress and burnout or in implementing a meditation program. Furthermore, this presentation could be given at meditation or wellness centers, and spiritual conferences or festivals. Lastly, details could be published in various scholarly journals including those focusing on education, teaching, mindfulness, meditation, religion, and spirituality. Overall, bringing awareness to the anicca perspective decision-making process can reduce stress and influence teaching and learning.

The main goal for bringing awareness and sharing the results as stated above would be to outline the process of anicca perspective decision-making, which starts with a stressful or decision-making situation. Then by using various cognitive and emotional skills such as navigating thoughts and emotions through an awareness of breath and body

sensations can increase the connection to the present moment. While going through that navigation an attitude of equanimity would be created and lead to a balanced perspective of anicca, thus supporting a decision to act and how to engage in that moment (Figure 5).

In order to go through this process and increase the chance of similar results with those who did not directly participate in this study, one should take a 10-day Vipassana Meditation course with a certified teacher. Also, those who want to learn more about Vipassana Meditation practices could seek information on how to find a center and take a Vipassana course or other similar meditation programs such as Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), Transcendental, Mantra, Chakra, Concentration, or Mindfulness Meditation.

Interestingly, in most Illinois schools, including mine, each day, before or after the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance there is a required daily moment of silence. In October 2007, The Silent Reflection and Student Prayer Act was approved by the Illinois legislature, which requires a daily moment of silence, not a religious act, but an opportunity to reflect on the day's activities. An injunction was put into law in January 2009 when parents started to question the constitutionality of the law, however, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit, ruled it constitutional in October 2009 because it does not specify religious prayer. As a result, this daily act suggests that others understand the importance and benefits of silence and reflection, so much so that it is a mandatory part of the day even though only a brief moment. This is one opportunity for a moment of personal reflection to bring awareness to breath and body sensations and a

possible opportunity to even share or teach mindfulness and concentration activities to students along the lines of using the anicca perspective decision-making process.

Recommendations for Further Study

This grounded study uncovered many concepts that bridge the gap among the literatures on Vipassana, meditation, mindfulness, cognitive dissonance, stress, and burnout, but generates new questions that need closer examination. First, more investigation could be done on the results found here, such as testing the anicca perspective decision-making process uncovered through a different qualitative study by focusing more on a specific classroom stressor or situation, a quantitative study by focusing on a larger random sample population, or using a mindfulness measurement tool, or a mixed method study which could accomplish both. Furthermore, another study could use qualitative interviews and add other quantitative measurement tools such as the Langer Mindfulness Scale (LMS), and/or Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) to make it a mixed method study.

Even though this study gathered data over 12 weeks, a longer time period, such as a whole school year, could confirm or not these initial findings. Also, while this study found the participant reflective journals were helpful, much greater detail and clarity came from the questionnaire and interviews. Therefore, another study suggestion would be to not use the participant reflective journal as a data source at all and use multiple interviews and questionnaires of the same participants to better probe and address the research questions and topic. In addition, another study could add a control group to measure outcomes to specifically look at participant responses made in relation to

particular stressors. Another study could also investigate or compare these results to a larger population sample or even attempt to make the sample more random, such as creating a large general pool of meditating teachers and chose participants randomly. A case study approach could investigate or compare these findings to data gathered also from students, co-workers, and administrators to gain a wider or deeper perspective of the perceived effects when teachers engage in the anicca perspective decision-making process. Similar studies on the perspectives of others who engage in the process, such as administrators and students, might also be informative.

This current study did not consider the teachers' gender, meditation experience, teaching experience, educational background, age, personality, or religion practiced, but other studies could explore the way these differences may effect the results of the anicca perspective decision-making process. Similarly, this study did not take into account differences in demographics, school background, grade level, or subject taught by the teachers, whereas another study could address those areas. Other differences that might affect the impact of the anicca perspective decision-making process that could be studied include the amount of time each participant spent meditating daily, or the specific meditation practice used, or whether the meditator was a novice or veteran meditator or a novice or veteran teacher.

Another study could also compare nonmeditators to any of the sample populations described and outlined above such as varying levels of meditation experience. In addition, a study could also compare the influence of Vipassana Meditation to other types of meditation such as transcendental meditation (TM) to see if the results are similar

across other techniques and disciplines. Lastly, another suggestion for future research would be to include a neutral data auditor or analyst to assist with and validate the results to ensure and increase data trustworthiness.

Researcher Reflection

This research process and study has helped me grow both personally and professionally. The reason behind studying Vipassana Meditation in education is based on my personal experience of being a teacher for 15 years. Within the first 10 years I received five major teaching awards including the Master Teacher and Golden Apple. Also, through those years I did much reflection on why and how I did what I did. Finding out my outlook on life, personality, and views of the human spirit in conjunction to self-efficacy and achievement were different from other teachers. Much of my classroom atmosphere and antics were unconventional in comparison to my colleagues. I found, for instance, that putting quotes on the board and reading them to students every day before class would begin to stir up the class into an infectious roaring applause or even direct it toward a quiet and reflective mood of silence.

Through that self-reflection, I stumbled onto and through many different types and practices of meditation and saw in the literature a connection to things I have done. Furthermore, most meditation practices had a hook or catching point that I did not agree with, such as being connected to religion, costing money to learn the technique, no clear explanation of what it was, and getting mixed experiences. Then 3 years ago, I stumbled onto Vipassana Meditation. This practice is not religious, is free to learn, and seemed very basic. After learning the technique, I had no qualms or problems about the technique

and found it connects and explains to me why I am who I am and what I do. This prompted me to seek to understand it more deeply and study its effects in teaching.

The story and personal connection described above could lead to researcher bias. However, I believe it has helped me in the data collection, inductive analysis, and understanding the process and phenomena since they are things that need to be experienced before having the ability to clearly write about them. However, it could be argued that it also limited the objectivity of the data collection and analysis. Nonetheless, I did attempt to control bias through member checking, the use of epoche, bracketing field notes, memos, and a personal journal to document the relationship I had with the data and analysis. Therefore, I looked forward to collecting and analyzing the data. Once I was into the study, I was glad to hear similar, but also different opinions and experiences, thus opening my perspective and mind to even more. In particular, all participants in this study were agreed that the concepts of compassion and empathy did influence their daily routine, stress levels, and decision-making process, which did not align with my perspective and personal experience. These kinds of differences support the trustworthiness of the data and process.

I designed the conceptual framework and visual chart, which brings attention to the crux of these overlapping concepts and theories as the foundation point for this grounded theory study (see Figure 1 in Chapter 1). Some main concepts at that overlapping crux point include awareness, observation, context, detachment, nonjudgment, flexibility, the present, emotions, relationships, choice, and action. This was the starting point for concepts and precoding. However, the data alone in both stages

reflect numerous examples of these same concepts, which are also thoroughly described and covered within current literature from multiple perspectives and theories including cognitive dissonance theory, choice theory, mindfulness theory, and the practice of Vipassana Meditation, where each overlap increases the validity of the conclusions in this study.

This study challenged me to be more active in all that I do and be more socially engaged, especially during the recruitment part of the study with gaining participants through networking. I had to introduce myself to others both face-to-face at the end of two 10-day courses, and through email. Hence, I knew some participants better than the others. For example, through coincidence, one participant ended up taking the same 10-day course in June with me three times during the past 3 years. However, in the end I reached out to most participants through email and Facebook, contacting people with whom I had no prior contact, and had not met them or discovered anything about them except that they were involved in VM. This may have helped me stay true to the questions regardless of whom I was interviewing especially during the first round. I do not believe that my relationship or nonrelationship with any of the participants had any effect on the questionnaire or analysis.

Overall, this research process has encouraged me to continue taking 10-day courses yearly and helped me reach out to others. It has also helped deepen my sitting meditation practice by doing it more often and making it a major life priority. It helps me to look for more connections with feelings, emotions, and accomplishments in my own personal practice and teaching and then to share with others, with the hope of helping

them learn this meditation technique, and gain the many personal and professional benefits.

Summary and Conclusion

The purpose of this grounded theory study was to build a theory about the process, function, and meaning teachers construct around the effect that Vipassana Meditation has on stress related to the demands of teaching and specifically decision-making. This study addressed how teachers may be stressed by responding to daily tasks and demands with the result that teacher longevity has been negatively impacted in the profession. A main starting point began at the hub of the conceptual framework, which includes understanding teacher stress and burnout through resolving cognitive dissonance, choice theory, mindfulness, and the perspective of Vipassana Meditation. The research questions address how Vipassana Meditation influences a teacher's daily routine, decision-making, classroom management, general procedures, and problems within daily situations and stress.

The data collection was done in two stages and included triangulation through two interviews, participant reflective journals, and an open-ended questionnaire with each of the 9 participants. The analysis used was a hybrid of pre, open, axial, and selective coding using both inductive and deductive processes all of which were connected back to the concepts of the conceptual framework. For example, the data uncovered concepts similar to concepts discussed in the conceptual framework such as awareness, observation, context, detachment, nonjudgment, flexibility, the present, emotions, relationships, choice, and action. All of these concepts are grounded in the data and

literature, and appeared in the experiences of the teachers in the study, giving rise to the emerging larger concept of equanimity and its connection with the process of anicca perspective decision-making process. This decision-making process can have many social change implications that include its support and use in education that effect relationships, teaching pedagogy, and classroom management. This process may be considered in teacher-training programs and professional development options to decrease stress and help prolong teachers' careers.

In conclusion, the anicca perspective decision-making process has many benefits. The purpose of meditating each day is to experience and understand anicca, including concepts such as impermanence and change. Through objectively observing reality as it is, and being in a state of equanimity within the present moment, the action of making a decision and engaging in a situation becomes clearer. Regardless of a situation or decision, *metta* can always be sent to yourself and others, thus reducing stress. "May all beings be happy, peaceful, and liberated" (Goenka, 2005, p. 1).

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol Data Collection Tool

Date:
Place:
Name:
Position:

Overall Research Questions: (not be asked)

How does Vipassana Meditation influence a teacher's daily routine in the classroom?

How, and under what daily school situations or stress do teachers use Vipassana Meditation?

How does the practice of Vipassana Meditation influence classroom decision-making, classroom management, and procedures?

General Meditation:

1. What do you think are the main teachings and concepts practiced in meditation that connects to your daily teaching and classroom management?

General Situation:

2. Explain in detail a situation in which you used the practice or concepts of meditation in the classroom. For example, what happens when you are faced with a classroom management situation, such as students talking or not listening?

Follow-up:

3. What happened, when, how, and with what action did you respond?

4. Explain the process or steps taken to address the above?

5. What did you think? How did that happen? What influenced your thoughts or actions? What did you feel?

Stress:

6. What is most stressful about teaching?

7. How does Vipassana influence that situation?

Burnout:

8. Explain the role of emotions have on your teaching.

9. Describe an emotional situation that would be stressful.

10. Explain how the practice of meditation influences your relationships with others such as students, teachers, and administration.

11. Does the practice of Vipassana influence your perception on professional accomplishment? If so, explain.

Decision-making:

12. Can you tell me if your meditation practice influences your decision-making process, specifically in regards to classroom management? If so, how?

Mindfulness:

13. How does your meditation practice influence your habits, reaction, and responses?

Choice:

14. Explain how the practice of meditation influences your ability to relate to students.

15. List and explain some adjectives you think your students might use to describe your teaching and classroom.

16. What has the practice of meditation allow you to change in your teaching?

17. Has the practice of Vipassana allowed you to increase any teaching or decision behaviors? If so, how?

18. Has the practice of Vipassana allowed you to decrease any teaching or decision behaviors? If so, how?

Summary:

19. What aspects and concepts of the practice help you to manage students?

20. What are the most important concepts or ways to use meditation in the classroom?

21. Tell me how your views on teaching have changed because of the practice of meditation.

22. Tell me any other ways you go about using meditation in your classroom.

23. Is there anything you would like to ask me?

Appendix B: Schedule of Activities

	Participant recruitment and data collection steps	Duration
Step 1	Make contact with potential participants for recruitment mainly through the snowball method from Vipassana Meditation centers. Explain the basic study requirements, if they would be interested in hearing more details, willing to participate, and if they know others who would fit the sample population, such as teachers who practice Vipassana meditation.	A week
Step 2	Contact the individuals who expressed interest and others who might be interested and fit the sample population to further give more details and expectations.	A week
Step 3	Send potential participants the informed consent form	A few days (3)
Step 4	Implement Interview phase one	2 weeks
Step 5	Transcribe interviews	A week
Step 6	Member validate and check interview transcripts	A week
Step 7	Analyze and code interview data	2 weeks
Step 8	Journal data collection one	A week
Step 9	Analyze and code journal data	2 weeks
Step 10	Member validate and check all coded data and interpretation	2 weeks
Step 11	Generate questionnaire from emerging themes	A week

Step 12	Seek IRB approval for questionnaire questions	2-4 weeks
Step 13	Administer Questionnaire	2 weeks
Step 14	Analyze and code questionnaire data	2 weeks
Step 15	Member check and validate questionnaire data	A week
Step 16	Journal data collection two (if needed)	A Week
Step 17	Analyze and code journal data	2 weeks
Step 18	Generate questions for interview two from merging themes from all the above (interview 1, journals, and questionnaire).	A week
Step 19	Seek IRB approval for interview two questions	2-4 weeks
Step 20	Implement Interviews phase two	2 weeks
Step 21	Transcribe interviews	A week
Step 22	Member check and validate interview transcripts	A week
Step 23	Analyze and code interview data	A week
Step 24	Member validate and check all coded data and interpretation	2 weeks
Step 25	Analyze and compare all data	A week
Step 26	Member validate and check ALL coded data and interpretation	2 weeks

Step 27 Share data results with participants through emailing a report and holding a debriefing and review session of the study for participants who are interested. A week

Appendix C: Basic Information Recruitment Letter

Vipassana Research Study Needs Participants

I am searching for public or private educators and schoolteachers who practice Vipassana Meditation to participate in a research study about Vipassana Meditation, mindfulness, and decision-making.

The purpose of this study is to discover and build a theory to better understand how Vipassana Meditation, mindfulness, and decision-making interrelate and contribute to the teaching and learning process and how that process influences and addresses teacher stress and burnout, specifically in regards to decision-making.

The main research questions are:

1. How does Vipassana Meditation influence a teacher's daily routine in the classroom?
2. How, and under what daily school situations or stress do teachers use Vipassana Meditation?
3. How does the practice of Vipassana Meditation influence classroom decision-making, classroom management, and procedures?

This study could improve the teaching and learning process, and influence relationships that address the problem of stress and burnout. Furthermore, it could also support the use of Vipassana Meditation within education, which can impact teaching and student learning through decreasing stress and prolonging teachers careers by increasing awareness and the space between thoughts to support responsive decision-making. Therefore, this study can create a positive social change within an individual, a school, and community that could affect a future generation of students and people through bringing awareness of how the affects of Vipassana Meditation on teacher stress and decision-making could influence teaching and learning.

More details including procedures, requirements, demands, risks, benefits, and confidentiality can be shared with anyone wanting more information or willing to participate.

Please contact:
Jeffrey Glogowski

Appendix D: Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

You are invited to take part in a research study of Vipassana Meditation and teacher decision-making. You were chosen for the study because you have teaching experience and are still currently teaching in the classroom, have participated in at least one 10-day Vipassana Meditation training, and meditate daily. This form is part of a process called “informed consent” to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Jeffrey Glogowski, who is a doctoral student at Walden University.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to discover and build a theory to better understand the process and function of Vipassana Meditation practiced by educators. It will focus on perceived effects educators experience in their professional lives in regards to mindfulness, communication, and decision-making within classroom management procedures. It will explore the meaning teachers construct around the essence and experience of Vipassana Meditation and mindfulness on educational work demands related to stress and decision-making.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Participate in two, one hour recorded interviews. One in the beginning and the other at the end of the study
- Use and keep a reflection journal about teaching and meditation for the whole 9 week study
- Answer a short questionnaire
- Review personal responses for accuracy
- The duration of the study will be approximately 6-9 weeks. Total participation time including the interviews (an hour each) and journaling (10-15 minutes daily or an hour a week) will be approximately 11-15 hours (taking place within the 2011/2012 first quarter school year, September-November)
- If you can, please give names and contact information about other teachers that practice Vipassana Meditation to assist with participant recruitment.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Your participation in this study is voluntary. This means that everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you want to be in the study. No one at your school/district will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind during the study. If you feel stressed during the study you may stop or discontinue participation without penalty at any time. You may skip any questions that you feel are too personal.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

The risks involved are very minimal with participating in this study because talking about and reflecting on the phenomenon, practice, and influence of Vipassana Meditation will have minimal unwanted consequences financially, professionally, and personally, but may actually enhance professional understandings. The time commitment, as outlined above (11-15 hours, over 6-9

weeks) may be a consideration, but given the professional enhancement it may be worth the time involved. Benefits of being in this study will include a debriefing and review session of the study that will be explained at the end. This research could also provide personal insights on how to better teach, as well as, provided administrators and other teachers information about how meditation can enhance effectiveness, pedagogy, teaching and learning, and curriculum.

Compensation:

There will be no compensation provided for your participation in this study.

Confidentiality:

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. In any report of this study that might be published, the researcher will not use your information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in any reports of the study. Research records will be kept in a locked file, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via phone: (XXX) 555-XXXX or email XXX@waldenu.edu if you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 1-800-925-3368, extension 1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is **06-20-11-0070635** and it expires on **June 19, 2012**.

The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By signing below, I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Printed Name of Participant	
Date of consent	
Participant's Written or Electronic* Signature	
Researcher's Written or Electronic* Signature	Jeffrey Glogowski

Electronic signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Legally, an "electronic signature" can be the person's typed name, their email address, or any other identifying marker. An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically.

Appendix E: Stage 1 Code Frequency

<u>Code</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Equanimity	59
Process	41
Compassion and Metta	35
Response More Space	34
Calmness	29
Detachment	25
Awareness	22
Mindfulness	22
Present Moment	22
Empathetic	22
Accepting	21
Body Sensations	18
Breath	16
Organized and Prepare	16
Observation	15
Focus Clarity	15
Time management	15
Patience	13
Novelty Seeking Perspective	11
Listening and Silence	10
Material and Lessons	10
Flexibility Openness	9
Tolerance	9
Not Personal	8
Standards and Expectations	8
Concentration Simadi	7
Wisdom and Panna	7
Respect Honesty	7
Fun	7
Cognitive and Emotional Skills	7
Sila and Morals	6
Evaluation	5
Student issues	5
Working Together Collaborating	5
Faster	5
Balanced	5
Change	5
Encouraging	4

Positive	4
Persistent	4
Administration leadership	3
Enthusiasm	3
Slow Down	3
Meaningful	3
Reflection	3
Classroom Management	2
Soft voice	2
Judgments	2
Less argumentative confrontational	2
Control	2
Attention	1
Self-reliance	1
Creative	1
Ego	1
Yoga Movement	1
Paper work	1
No breath	1
Peace	1
Practice	1
Engagement	1

Appendix F: Second Interview Protocol Questions

1. Explain how observation or mindfulness influence your teaching and decisions?
2. Explain the techniques you use to stay present and mindful.
3. Explain what being more calm and present means and how you do that.
4. How do you trigger or control awareness?
5. Explain how meditation may help with concentration or mindfulness and does it help with one more than the other?
6. What does the denial of responsibility, disengagement, and detachment mean to you?
7. How is denial of responsibility, disengagement, and detachment similar or different?
8. How does Vipassana influence denial of responsibility, disengagement, and detachment?
9. How does denial of responsibility, disengagement, and detachment relate to equanimity?
10. How does the denial of responsibility, disengagement, and detachment influence your relationships with others?
11. How does planning and prep play into being in the present moment?
12. How do you navigate class flow and be in the present moment?
13. Explain how Vipassana may add space to your responses?
14. How does Vipassana change your view on controlling others, such as students?
15. How does Vipassana influence the context of a situation?
16. How does Vipassana influence seeing alternative perceptions or perspectives?
17. How does Vipassana influence engagement or the ability to be active in situations?
18. Does Vipassana slow down or speed up the decision-making process? Explain?

Appendix G: Questionnaire Questions

1. What are some cliché sayings, phrases, or great known quotes that would summarize the main important concepts within Vipassana that impact teaching?
2. How does sila influence teaching and decisions?
3. How does metta influence teaching and decisions?
4. Compare and contrast awareness and mindfulness?
5. How does concentration or smiadi influence your teaching and decisions?
6. What role does panna (wisdom) have on influencing your teaching and decisions?
7. How is Vipassana connected to self-efficacy?
8. What mostly impacts your decision-making ability? Why?
9. How does equanimity influence decision-making?
10. How does Vipassana influence the ability to be compassionate, empathic, and accepting?

Appendix H: Stage 2 Code Frequency

<u>Code</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Nonreactive Detachment	39
Awareness	26
Body Sensations	26
Flexibility Openness	22
Focus Clarity	18
Breath	16
Both Concentration and Mindfulness	16
Positive	13
Aversion attachment disengagement	13
Equanimity	12
Empathetic	11
Ego	11
Question	11
Observation	10
Engagement	10
Absolving Denial of Responsibility	10
Both Slow and Speed up	10
Confident	10
Self Observation	9
Mindfulness	8
Calmness	8
Compassion and Metta	8
Balanced	8
Connected consciousness	8
Reflection	7
No Control of Others	7
Without Judgment	7
Slow Down	6
Creative	6
Accepting	6
Greater Depth	6
Change	5
Quotes	5
Concentration Simadi	4
Time Management	4
Novelty Seeking Perspective	4
Patience	4
Slow	4

Relaxation	4
Emotional	4
Present Moment	3
Attention	3
Encouraging	3
Peace	3
Practice	3
Relationships	3
Gain Insight	3
Less Attached	3
Not Afraid No Fear	3
Attachment	3
Easier clear	3
Blame	3
Similar	3
Conditioned	3
Respect Honesty	2
Material and Lessons	2
Organized and Prepare	2
Self-reliance	2
Faster	2
Judgments	2
Process	2
Prepare	2
Silence	2
Unconcerned of other judgments	2
Detachment and Engagement	
discrepant	2
Time explanation	2
Mindful	2
Productive	2
Reduce Anxiety	2
Helpful	2
Look at watch time	2
Opposite	2
Responsible	2
Maintain compassion	2
Prioritizing	2
Moral Conduct	2
Wisdom and Panna	1
Listening and Silence	1

Enthusiasm	1
Tolerance	1
Persistent	1
Agitated racing mind	1
Receptive	1
Empty mind	1
Speed up Enhance	1
Not Accepting	1
Hiding	1
Trust	1
Space	1
Passive	1
Pause	1
Reminder	1
Intention	1
Withdraw	1
Choice	1
Ignoring	1
Deliberate	1
All negative	1
Large Picture	1
Forgive	1
Inspire	1
Efficient	1
Economical	1
Free Mind	1
Exchange	1
Impermanence	1
Foundation	1
Support	1
Honest	1
Giving	1
Motivation	1
Fairness	1

Appendix I: Stage 2 Interview and Questionnaire Questions as
Related to Study Research Questions

** 2I. = Second Round Interview Question, Q. = Questionnaire Question*

Research Question 1, Teacher's Routine - Equanimity

- 2I. Explain how observation or mindfulness influence your teaching and decisions.
- 2I. Explain what being more calm and present means and how you do that.
- 2I. How do you trigger or control awareness?
- 2I. How does denial of responsibility, disengagement, and detachment relate to equanimity?
- Q. How does equanimity influence decision-making?

Research Question 1, Teacher's Routine - Present Moment

- 2I. Explain the techniques you use to stay present and mindful.
- 2I. Explain how meditation may help with concentration or mindfulness and does it help with one more than the other?
- 2I. How do you navigate class flow and be in the present moment?
- Q. Compare and contrast awareness and mindfulness.
- Q. How does concentration or smiadi influence your teaching and decisions?

Research Question 2, Situations and Stress

- 2I. What does the denial of responsibility, disengagement, and detachment mean to you?
- 2I. How is denial of responsibility, disengagement, and detachment similar or different?
- 2I. How does Vipassana influence denial of responsibility, disengagement, and detachment?
- 2I. How does the denial of responsibility, disengagement, and detachment influence your relationships with others?
- 2I. How does planning and prep play into being in the present moment?
- 2I. How does Vipassana change your view on controlling others, such as students?

2I. How does Vipassana influence engagement or the ability to be active in situations?

Q. How is Vipassana connected to self-efficacy?

Research Question 3, Decision-making – Cognitive and Emotional Skills

2I. Explain how Vipassana may add space to your responses.

2I. Does Vipassana slow down or speed-up the decision-making process? Explain.

2I. How does Vipassana influence the context of a situation?

2I. How does Vipassana influence seeing alternative perceptions or perspectives?

Q. How does Vipassana influence the ability to be compassionate, empathic, and accepting?

Summary and Connections

Q. What are some cliché sayings, phrases, or great known quotes that would summarize the main important concepts within Vipassana that impact teaching?

Q. How does sila influence teaching and decisions?

Q. How does metta influence teaching and decisions?

Q. How does concentration or smiadi influence your teaching and decisions?

Q. What role does panna (wisdom) have on influencing your teaching and decisions?

Q. What mostly impacts your decision-making ability? Why?

Curriculum Vitae

JEFFREY GLOGOWSKI**Professional Profile**

I want to communicate to everyone what their self worth and potential is so clearly that they come to see it in themselves. Create, guide, and encourage an individual and group paradigm shift using meditation and awareness of thoughts by helping people put their attention on their thoughts and intention toward lifelong learning and happiness. I am eager to empower all people to learn, experience life, and reach their full potential by using meditation and self-reflection.

Education

PhD in Education - Walden University, Minneapolis, Minnesota (June 2012)
 Master of Arts in Educational Leadership - Aurora University, Aurora, Illinois 2007
 Bachelor of Music in Education - Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois 1997

Certifications

Illinois Type 10: Choral - General – Vocal, Music K-12
 Illinois Type 75: General Administrative, K-12

Teaching Experience

Music Teacher/Choral Director at Robert L. Herget Middle School
 Aurora, Illinois 6/2005 – present

7th – 12th Grade Music Teacher /Choral Director at Sherrard Jr./Sr. High School
 Sherrard, Illinois 1998 – 5/2005

5th & 6th Grade General Music Teacher at Matherville Elementary School
 Matherville, Illinois 1998 – 2003

Employment, Professional Activities, and Committees

- Exploratory department chair 2008-present
- Organized and ran music festivals and contests 1998-present
- Worked on and researching student motivation and intention by creating a educational system/curriculum to help all students succeed and achieve 2009-present
- Mentored, helped and guided new and first years teachers 2005-2009
- Encouraged and taught senior high school students how to teach, prepare, rehearse, and conduct a song that is then performed at the spring concert (end of the year) 2000-2005

- Directed and assisted variety/talent shows and musicals 1998-present
- Organized and supervised school sponsored choir trips, 1999 - present including many trips to Chicago, New York City, and New Orleans
- Participated in and hosted the olympic high school conference and prairieland junior high school conference choral festivals 1998-2005
- Participated in and hosted IHSA solo and ensemble/organizational contests and IGSMA district solo and ensemble/organizational contests 2000-present
- Created and established a Jr. High/High School music theory curriculum that was incorporated into the vocal music program
- Served on the NCA school improvement committee, 2002 & 2003

Awards

- Received the “Golden Apple Award” for outstanding teaching in the West Aurora School District 129 only the second year of teaching in the district November 2006
- Received the Dispatch/Rock Island Argues 2004 "Master Teacher Award", April 2004
- Received the WHBF Channel 4 eyewitness news "Quad Cities Best Teacher Award", November 2003
- Received a "Celebration of Excellence", The Bend Over Backwards for Sherrard award from the Superintendent of Sherrard Schools, November 2002
- Received the "Tenacious Tiger Award" for outstanding service and dedication from the staff at Sherrard, May 2003
- Honored in the “Who's Who Among America's Teachers” 2004 & 2005
- Honored in the Diamond Edition of “Who's Who in America” 2006
- Honored in the “Who's Who of Emerging Leaders” 2006
- Honored in the “Who's Who in American Education” 2007-2008

Research and Interests

- Meditation and education
- Meditation and teacher decision-making and communication skills
- Meditation and teacher or principal self-efficacy and efficiency
- ADHD student's time on task
- Meditation and leadership
- Metaphysical and Noetic science

Written Works

- Teacher Burnout and Meditation - Learning Institutions
 - Chaos Theory and Educational Leadership - Systems Theory
 - Protestant and Buddhist Religions Affect on Social Change
 - Yoga and Meditation in Education / Mindfulness Education – Human Development
 - The Power of Intention and Education – Human Motivation
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Music Skills

- Composes and writes a graduation song each year for students to perform at the graduation ceremonies (one every year) 2001-2009
- Composed/wrote numerous songs for various occasions for the Sherrard Jr. and Sr. High School choirs and Herget Middle School choirs to perform (7 total not including graduation songs) 2001-2005
- Directed the Olympic Conference Choral Festival choir that performed "America, Our Land!" Written by Jeffrey Glogowski, November 4, 2002
- Directed, conducted, and wrote the Junior/Senior High School Madrigal Dinner scripts and music. (1998-2005)
- Employed as the Music Director for the Quad Cities music Guild Theatre production of "Big River", July 1999
- Taught private voice, piano, music theory, and conducting technique 1997-2005
- Recorded, copied and produced music CD's of concerts and shows

Professional and Service Organizations

IMEA (Illinois Music Educators Association) member

MENC (Music Educators National Convention) member

ACDA (American Choral Directors Association) member

IGSMA (Illinois Grade School Music Association) member

IEA/NEA (Illinois Educators Association / National Education Association)