

Mindfulness for Wellbeing and Peak Performance

A/P Craig Hassed OAM

Dr. Richard Chambers



Background

- What is mindfulness?
- Why mindfulness in the workplace?
- History of Mindfulness @ Monash

Craig Hassed

Falling attention spans

- According to a Microsoft Canada report, the average human's attention span is below that of a goldfish (8 sec vs. 9 sec)
 - <http://time.com/3858309/attention-spans-goldfish/>
- “We are moving from a world where computing power was scarce to a place where it now is almost limitless, and where the true scarce commodity is increasingly human attention”
 - Satya Nadella – CEO Microsoft
 - <https://qz.com/232884/microsofts-new-worldview-marks-a-complete-change-from-what-made-it-huge-in-the-first-place/>

What is mindfulness?

- “The faculty of voluntarily bringing back a wandering attention over and over again, is the very root of judgment, character, and will. No one is compos sui if he have it not. An education which should improve this faculty would be the education par excellence. But it is easier to define this ideal than to give practical instructions for bringing it about.”
 - William James, Principles of Psychology, 1890

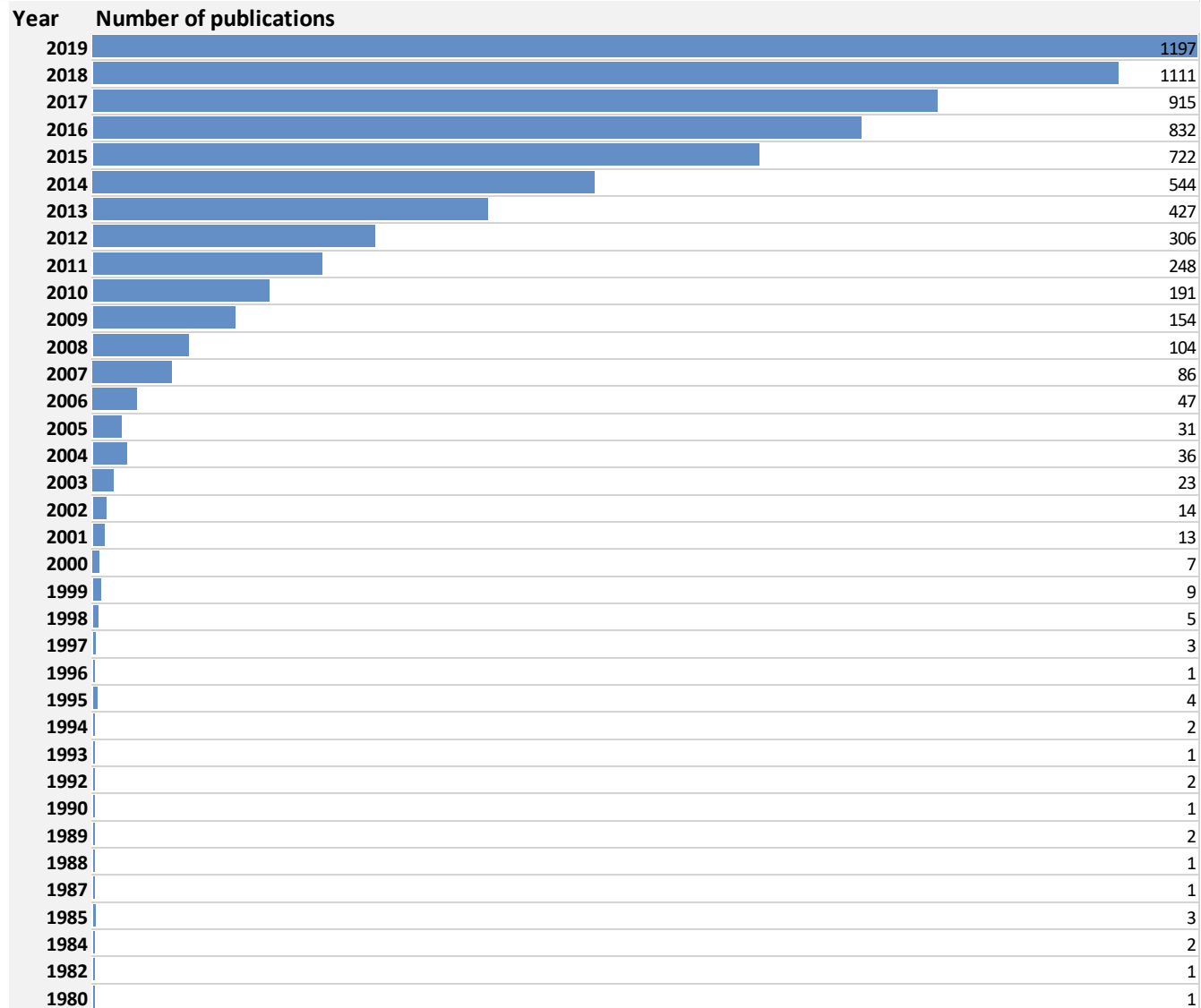
What is mindfulness?

- Fully present, engaged, aware in each moment
 - Aware of self
 - Aware of others / environment
 - Focus / on-task
- Associated with enhanced wellbeing, performance, leadership, creativity, decision-making, education...

Practicing mindfulness

- **Formal practice**
 - Mindfulness meditation
- **Informal practice**
 - Mindful while engaged in daily activities and work

- Number of mindfulness journal publications by year: 1980 – October 21, 2019



Why mindfulness in the workplace?

1. Workplace stress
2. Mental health
3. Workload
4. Time management
5. Inattention
6. Distraction and technology
7. Productivity
8. Creativity, innovation and problem solving

Mindfulness, stress and the workplace

- Review of the effects of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) on the mental health of employees.
- Strongest outcomes were reduced levels of:
 - emotional exhaustion (a dimension of burnout)
 - stress
 - psychological distress
 - depression
 - anxiety
 - occupational stress
- Improvements were found in terms of mindfulness, personal accomplishment (a dimension of burnout), (occupational) self-compassion, quality of sleep, and relaxation.
 - Janssen M, Heerkens Y, Kuijer W et al. Effects of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction on employees' mental health: A systematic review. PLoS One. 2018 Jan 24;13(1):e0191332. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0191332.

Mindfulness and the workplace

- 8 week mindfulness program for ANU staff
- Key findings include:
 - Increased self-rated performance (ECDP)
 - Improved wellbeing (PANAS)
 - Improved eudaimonic wellbeing (meaningfulness) (PWB)
 - Increase in work engagement (vigour and dedication) (UWES)
 - Increased authenticity (self-awareness, authentic behaviour, open relationships) (AI3)
 - Increased satisfaction with life (SWLS)
- Improvements sustained at 6 month f/up
 - Atkins PWB, Hassed C, Fogliati VJ. (2015) Mindfulness Improves Work Engagement, Wellbeing and Performance in a University Setting. In Burke, RJ, Cooper, CL & Page, KM. Flourishing in Life, Work, and Careers, pp 193-209. Elgar, Cheltenham.

Mindfulness at Monash – a brief history

- Origins – Craig began teaching at Monash in 1989
- MBBS – world first core medical curriculum 1991, larger scale since 2002
- Staff programs, train-the-trainer, presentations... support of CCD, OHS...
- Other degree courses e.g. Physiotherapy, dietetics...
- Elective student programs e.g. MAS
- Meeting with Vice-Chancellor re staff wellbeing

Mindfulness at Monash – a brief history

- Mental Health Working Party – CCD, OHS, MRS, Vice Chancellor's Office...
- Mindfulness coordinator position created (Craig)
- Then mindfulness consultant position created (Richard)
- Curriculum-based: now 20 units e.g. health disciplines, IT, Business, MADA, Dietetics... (creative, flexible approach)
- Evaluation & qualitative feedback
- Research – over a dozen different studies / evaluations

Mindfulness at Monash – a brief history

- Journalism student inquiring about Mindfulness @ Monash
- Meeting with Vice-Provost of Education – MOOC and CEED
- Provision of resources and a great team
 - MUOLT, course mentors, FutureLearn
 - Class Central ratings – Top 30 MOOCS of all time
 - <https://www.class-central.com/mooc/3714/futurelearn-mindfulness-for-wellbeing-and-peak-performance>



Teaching Mindfulness At Monash

Richard Chambers

Scale Of Mindfulness Training At Monash

4830 students and **1634 staff** received training in 2018

4210 of these students received mindfulness training as part of their **core curriculum**

Mindfulness now **embedded** into **20 academic units** in **10 faculties**

MGRO-accredited PD unit for postgraduate students

Getting Traction In A Tertiary Setting

Provide **rationale**

Make it **relevant** (contextualised)

Keep it **simple & practical**

Facilitate **collaborative learning**

Make **assessable** where possible

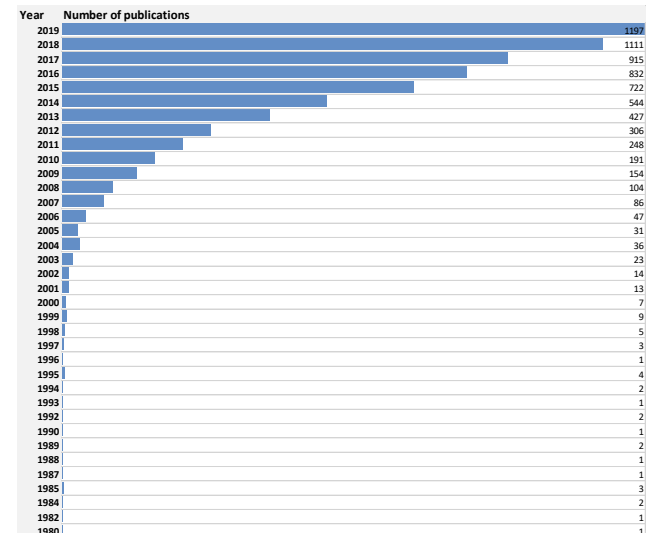
Providing a Rationale

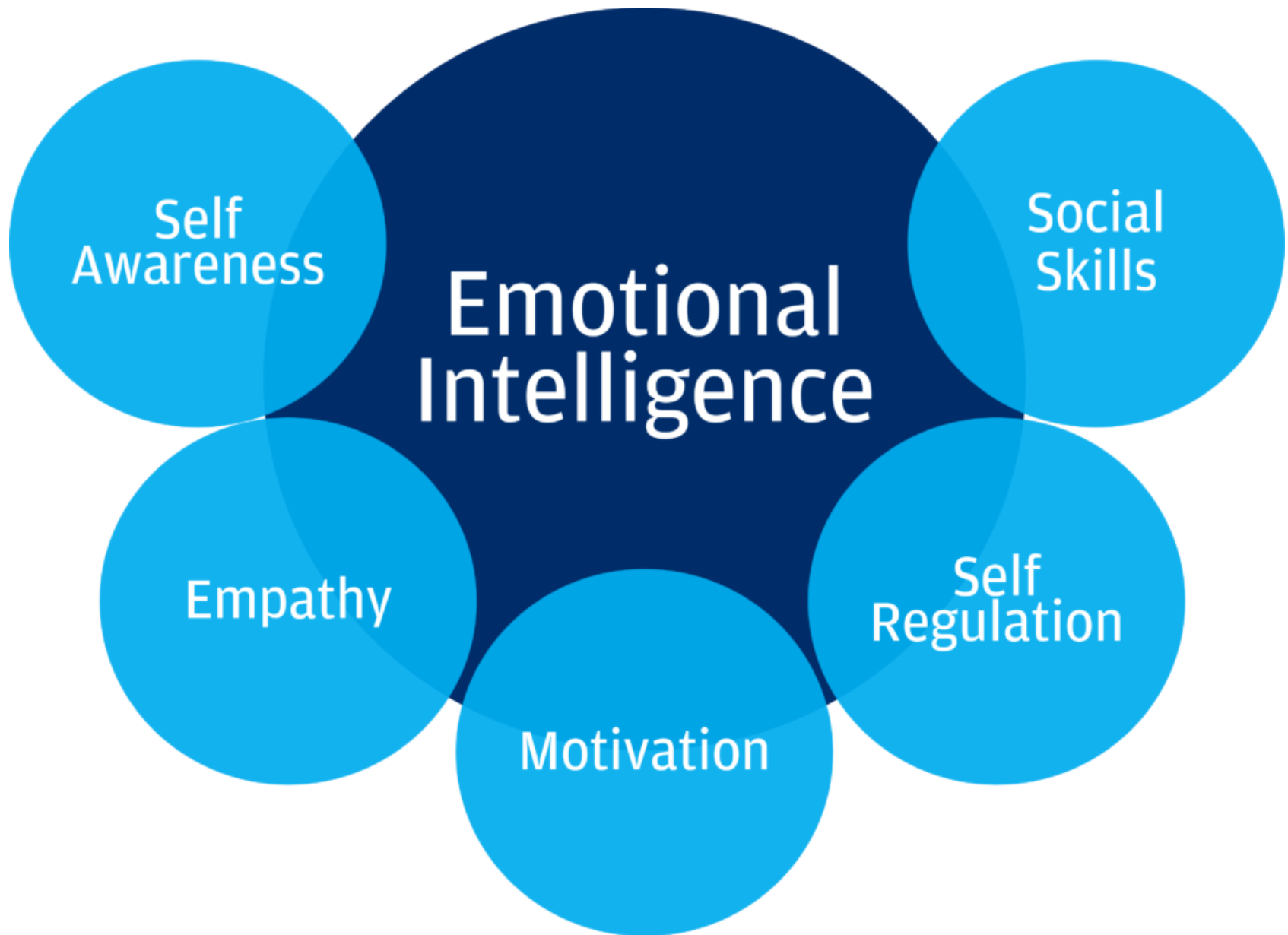
Start with Why

- Costs of unmindfulness
- Everyday experiences of being mindful
- Mindfulness as a trainable skill

Research

- Mental health e.g. stress, anxiety & depression
- Performance e.g. prefrontal cortex, executive function, memory
- Learning e.g. exam performance, creativity, problem solving





Smartphones and cognitive performance

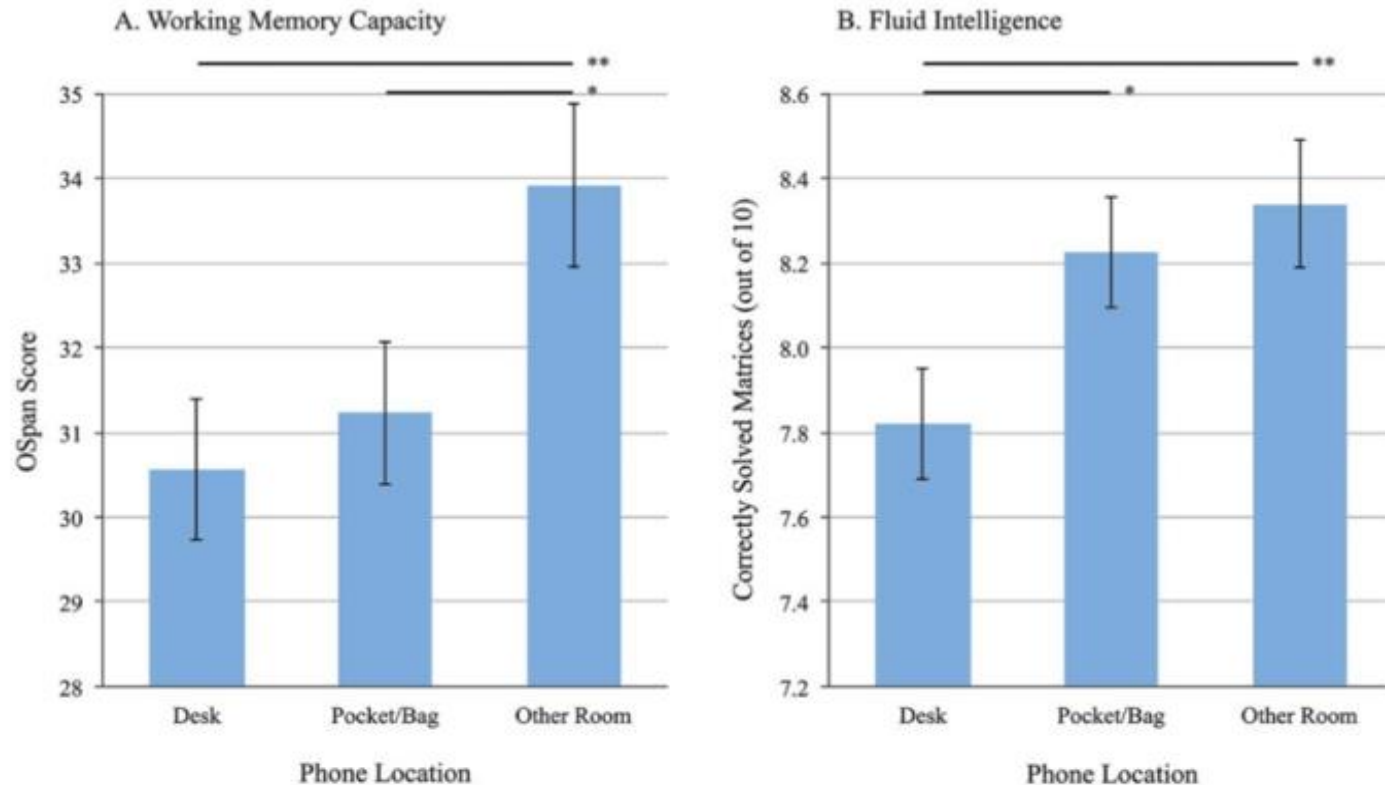


Figure 1. Experiment 1: effect of randomly assigned phone location condition on available WMC (OSpan Score, panel A) and functional Gf (Correctly Solved Raven's Matrices, panel B). Participants in the "desk" condition (high salience) displayed the lowest available cognitive capacity; those in the "other room" condition (low salience) displayed the highest available cognitive capacity. Error bars represent standard errors of the means. Asterisks indicate significant differences between conditions, with $*p < .05$ and $**p < .01$.

Keeping It Simple & Practical

Experiments to highlight basic principles

- E.g. A1 to Z26

Home practices to apply in real-world settings

- E.g. unitasking & efficient attention switching

Facilitate Collaborative Learning

Draw out learning/insights from participants

Mindful inquiry

- Asking vs telling
- Spirit of curiosity

Educare (“train” or “mold”) and *educere* (“lead out”)

Making It Assessable (Where Possible)

Formative assessment

- E.g. journals / forum posts

Summative assessment

- E.g. reflective essays, MCQs, practical exams (OSCEs)

Ensures engagement with principles

- 91% then start to personally apply (Hassed et al., 2009)

Mindfulness for Wellbeing & Peak Performance & Maintaining A Mindful Life

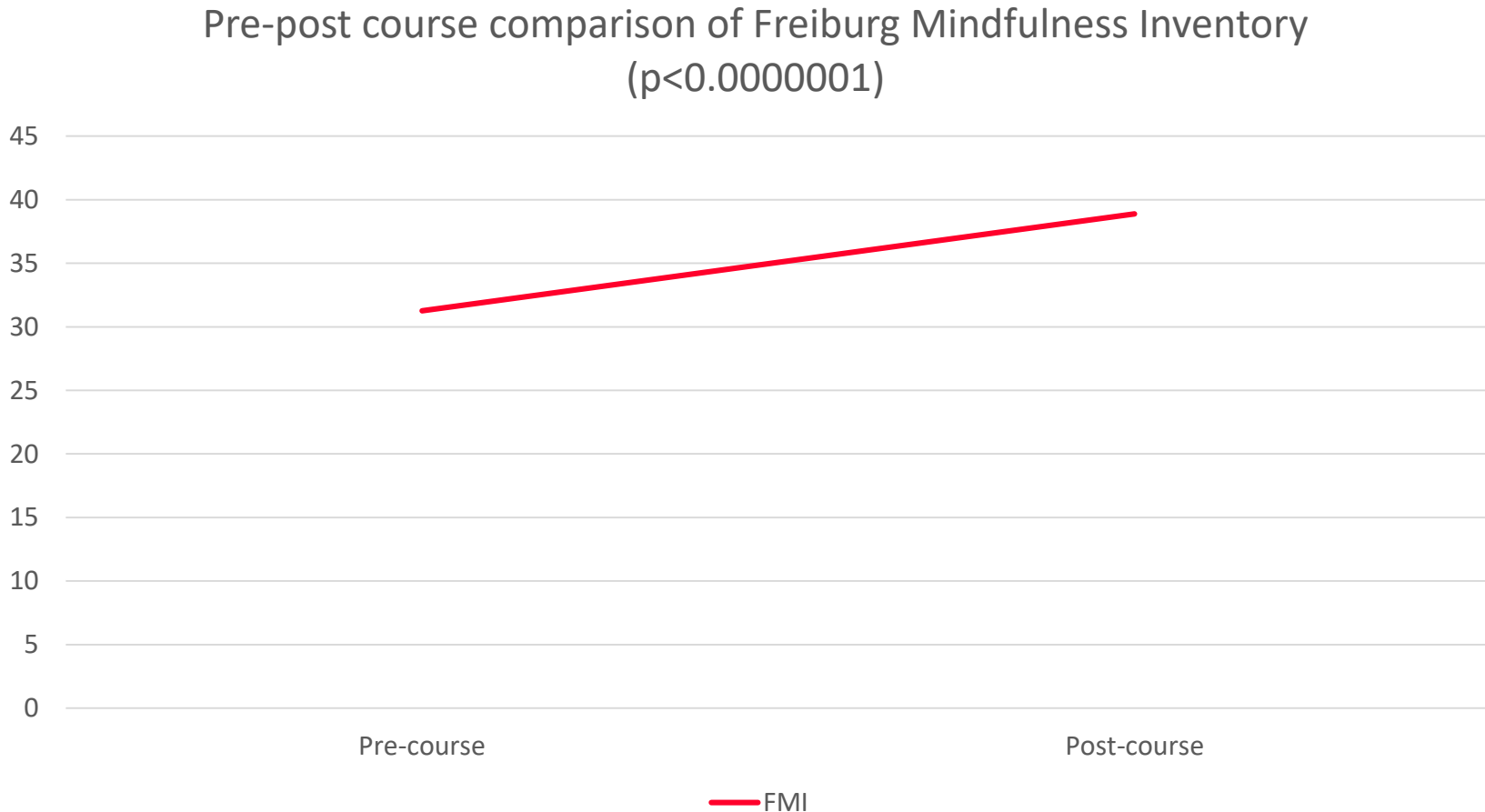
Both in Class Central's "Top 50 Online Courses Of All Time".

FutureLearn CEO named *MWPP* the **flagship program** of their platform

365,000 people have completed them since they first ran in 2015.

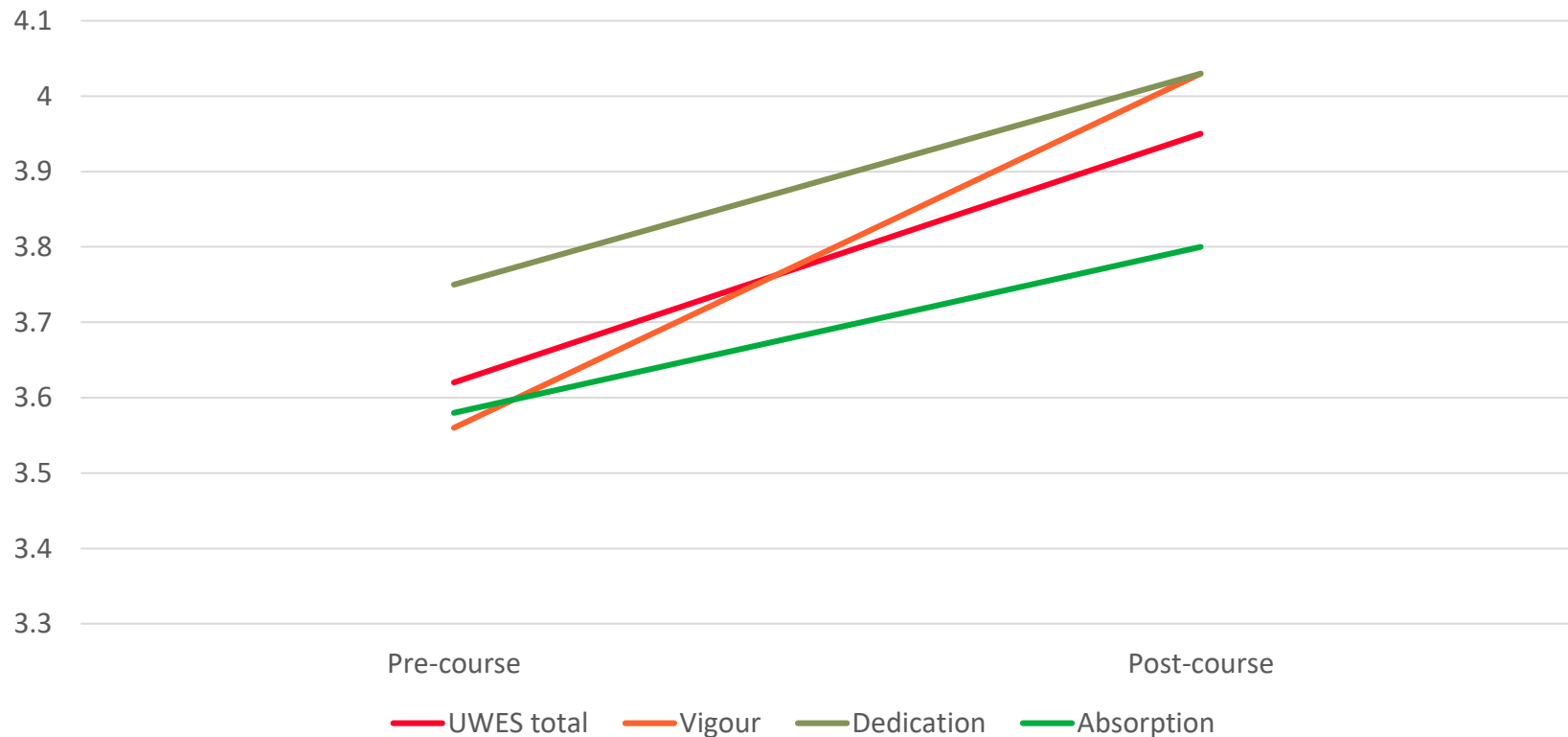
- 70,476 people in 2018
- 37,642 so far in 2019

Quantitative findings – FMI



Quantitative findings – UWES

Pre-post course comparison of work / study engagement
(all p-values <0.0000001)



Quantitative findings – PSS

