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Wrt 205

WRT 205: Synthesis Heuristic

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Use the worksheet below to help you take notes and see connections between sources for your literature review.

Step 1: Establish relationships between concepts from sources. Compare and contrast ideas and arguments in your texts. How are they similar or different? Does one explicate or extend another? Does one provide an example for the other? Is there a cause-effect relationship between ideas?

The first four of our sources talk about the benefits of mindfulness and meditation and their application to numerous aspects of our society, especially the military. They reference studies and professionals in the field to defend their argument that these practices have been implemented successfully in some branches of the military, and that they can be applied further in other branches of the military, but also to other aspects of society. The last three of our sources talk about how these practices have become more of a fad in recent years, with people participating in them more for the popularity aspect instead of for actual healing purposes. They claim that these practices have grown to be very misconstrued and misinterpreted, and that they are being applied to too many aspects of our society where they do not really work. I think there is a middle ground between these two sides; a sort of compromise that will satisfy both stances. I agree that these practices are misconstrued by some, and they do not need to be applied to every aspect of our lives. However, I think that the evidence for these practices' success, in numerous facets of society, is more than convincing that they help people in a multitude of ways. I think that so long as the practices are kept true to their origins and are not misconstrued, they can be applied to any aspect of society. Furthermore, they must effectively benefit people who utilize them, and also minimize the number of individuals who experience negative effects.

Step 2: Explain the meaning of those connections. Clarify what the relationships between the texts mean to you and what they might mean to your readers.

The relationships between the texts represent the different sides of the argument over the implementation of mindfulness and meditation to numerous aspects of our society. Where, how, why, and to what extents of success these practices are implemented are all different focal points in the argument. The connection between meditation and mindfulness, and successful treatment for numerous ailments is undeniable. The evidence is there to prove that these practices can help individuals cope with and treat many ailments successfully. However, there are certain cases where these practices do not work for individuals, or in even rarer cases, yield negative effects for the individual. Even though this can occur, these cases are few and far between. No practice will work for absolutely everybody. Furthermore, while sometimes these practices are taken too far and misinterpreted by forcing their application into facets of society where they are not welcome, or which are not suitable for such practices, that is not the case for the vast majority of their applications. Consequently, these practices can

be applied any place where they will be successful, not misinterpreted, and where they minimize the cases where people are negatively affected by their implementation.

Name of Author and Source	Gist of Argument	Examples/ Illustrations	Counter-arguments	What I Think
"Improving Military Resilience through Mindfulness Training." – Melissa Myers	Mindfulness and meditation practices have been successfully implemented into the military and they have worked in improving the soldiers' performance in a myriad of ways.	The U.S. Military has implemented the <i>STRONG Project</i> to "positively support active-duty soldiers in protecting and training their own minds and helping better prepare soldiers for high-stress combat situations while also improving overall cognitive resilience and performance."	This is one case in which these practices have been successfully implemented into the military. It cannot be said that all implementations of the practices within the military are successful.	Although the evidence in this case is convincing, I do not think that it is enough on its own to show that these practices can always be implemented successfully into any aspect of the military.
"Mindfulness in the Military" – Ella Xiong	Meditation and mindfulness can be used to benefit those in the armed forces in a multitude of ways.	The Naval Medical Center in San Diego, CA uses the <i>Mind Body Medicine Program</i> (MBM), headed by Commander Jeffrey Millegan, MD, to study the effects that mindfulness and meditation have on military personnel.	Once again, this case on its own is not enough to support the argument for the use of these practices in the military; however, compounded with the first source, it does add strength to the argument.	Just like the first source, I do not think that this source alone is enough, but with both sources, and their evidence, it does become more convincing.

“Mindfulness and the Military” – Line Goguen-Hughes	Mindfulness and meditation can be very useful in treating veterans with PTSD and other similar disorders that plague many retired military personnel.	Anthony King, assistant professor of psychiatry and research at the University of Michigan Medical School, discussed the neuroscience behind trying to use mindfulness and meditation to help veterans cope with PTSD.	The use of these practices may help certain veterans, but it cannot be concluded that they work for all veterans with all severities of PTSD and other similar disorders. This method may not be the most efficient or work the best.	I think that the use of these practices to help veterans cope with PTSD and other similar disorders is more believable, for it is focused on relaxing and connecting body and mind, things that directly oppose PTSD.
“Mindfulness in the Military” – Judson Brewer	The use of mindfulness and meditation in the military is growing and is very successful. Also, further study can be conducted to find new methods and places for these practices to be implemented, with potentially more success.	“In a study, Johnson and colleagues have brought mindfulness to the military. Johnson et al. provided mindfulness training to healthy individuals to help them develop resilience.”	Although a journal such as this can collect a lot of information and sources to back up the success of these applications in the military, the same can be done for the opposing argument.	I think that this journal is very thorough in its argument for the use of these practices in the military. It gives plenty of evidence and references numerous conclusive and valid studies to support its argument, which is now much more believable.
“The Mindfulness Backlash” – Anna North	People claim that mindfulness and meditation can cure practically every ailment. They may have become too popular and misconstrued in our society, and people should	“In <i>The Atlantic</i> , Tomas Rocha write about the little-discussed possibility that, for some people, meditation could actually be dangerous. He talks to Dr. Willoughby Britton, a professor of	It can’t be expected that mediation and mindfulness practices will work for everyone. Perhaps these practices are being applied to all aspects of our society because simply because they can be and we	I do agree that meditation and like practices have grown too popular and have been misconstrued in our society to point where they have become a type of fad. However, obviously, these practices

	reconsider their stance on the application of these practices to so many aspects of our lives.	psychiatry and human behavior who works with people who feel they've been harmed by meditation."	do not know if they will work or not.	cannot be expected to work for everybody, and it is unfortunate if make some individuals' cases worse.
"What Mindfulness Gurus Won't Tell You: Meditation Has a Dark Side." – Miguel Farias	All we seem to hear about mindfulness and meditation is the good that it does for people. We cannot neglect those individuals for whom meditation does not work much or at all. We should be more aware of meditation and mindfulness and their effectiveness.	An individual named "Gareth tried out a mindfulness course because he was having some trouble falling asleep. While doing the course he became aware of negative thoughts, which wouldn't disappear no matter how much he accepted and tried to 'let them go.' After eight weeks his anxiety levels had increased from something barely noticeable to an everyday problem which he found hard to manage."	This is an isolated case, and negative effects from meditation and mindfulness are very rare. This one case cannot be used to draw any credible conclusions about these practices.	I think that it is unfortunate for someone to be negatively affected by these practices, but also, this is rare and does not take much if at all away from the success of these practices. This goes for basically anything in our world – we cannot expect everything to work for everyone, so I think it is inevitable that some people may be affected negatively.
"Can Meditation Cause Harm in the Wrong Hands?" – Bethany Eanes	There are numerous stances that people take on mindfulness and meditation. Also, the use of these practices can	This article actually refers to the article by the <i>New York Times</i> that talks about the controversy over using mindfulness and meditation practices in	There is no limit to how far we can extend these practices into our society. Even if there were, we have not found it yet. Yes, there are some cases where these	As with any argument, there are numerous opposing sides. In this case, it's people who support the widespread use of these

	have negative effects.	“increasingly large” populations and applying them to too many aspects of our society.	practices do not work or cause negative effects, but the same can be said for any practice.	practices and implementing them in new aspects of our society, and those who oppose it. Neither is wrong, but I think that the answer is somewhere in between these stances. It is fine to expand and apply these practices to many facets of our society, so long as they are not misconstrued or misinterpreted.
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Step 3: Ascertain the main idea that brings together concepts from at least three texts. Next, write a paragraph in which you synthesize the points each rhetor makes around that main idea, demonstrating your efforts to think more deeply and critically about the connections between the two texts. (See the example synthesis essay on page 168 in *From Inquiry to Academic Writing*. Note that each paragraph synthesizes ideas from at least two sources. Employ this strategy into your own composition process, as it can help you write an effective synthesis.)

Each of our four sources discuss the benefits that mindfulness and meditation could bring to those suffering from PTSD or other conditions within the military. In every source, they use all different types of research and studies to support their opinion of whether or not these practices are beneficial to those in the military. In addition to the sources that support the use of mindfulness in the military, there were also sources that seemed to believe that these practices are more of a fad than anything else. They claimed that mindfulness may help certain veterans, but it cannot be concluded that they work for all veterans with all severities of PTSD and other similar disorders. This method may not be the most efficient or work the best. Personally, I think that the use of these practices to help veterans cope with PTSD and other similar disorders is more believable, for it is focused on relaxing and connecting body and mind, things that directly correlate to PTSD.