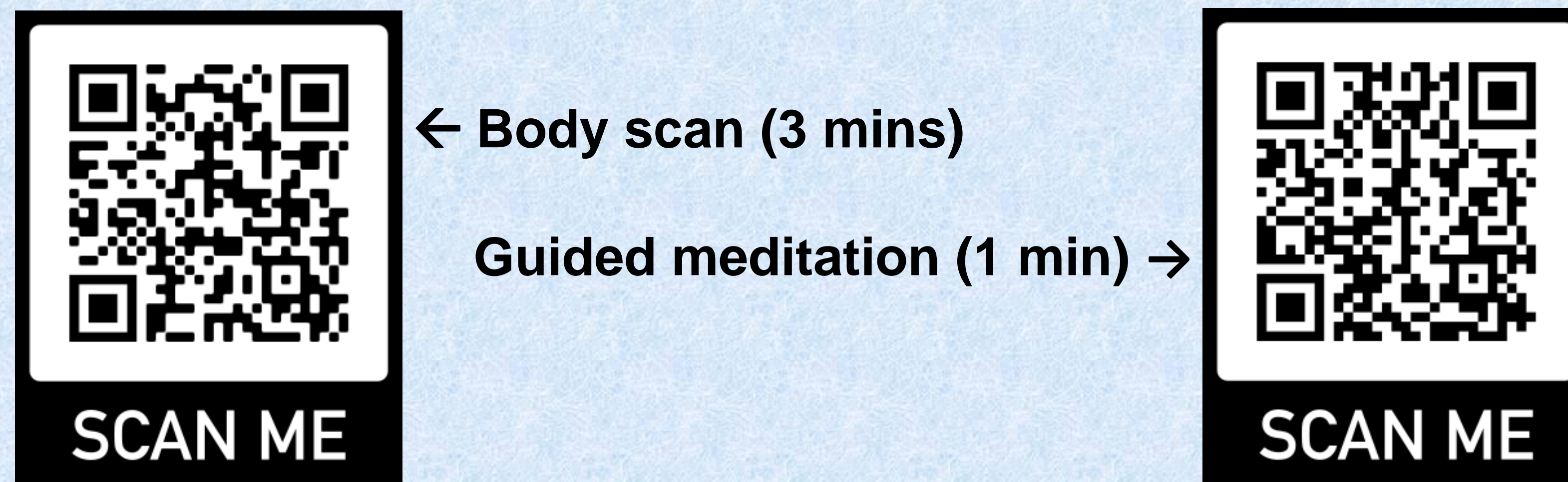


FEELING STRESSED OUT OR ANXIOUS LATELY?

A mindful approach to dealing with (language) anxiety

You are certainly not alone as such feelings are very common amongst people from all age groups and backgrounds. Even if you haven't experienced stress or anxiety recently, please feel free to participate in **one** of the following short **mindfulness activities**. Ideally head somewhere quiet and come back to this poster once you've finished the activity.

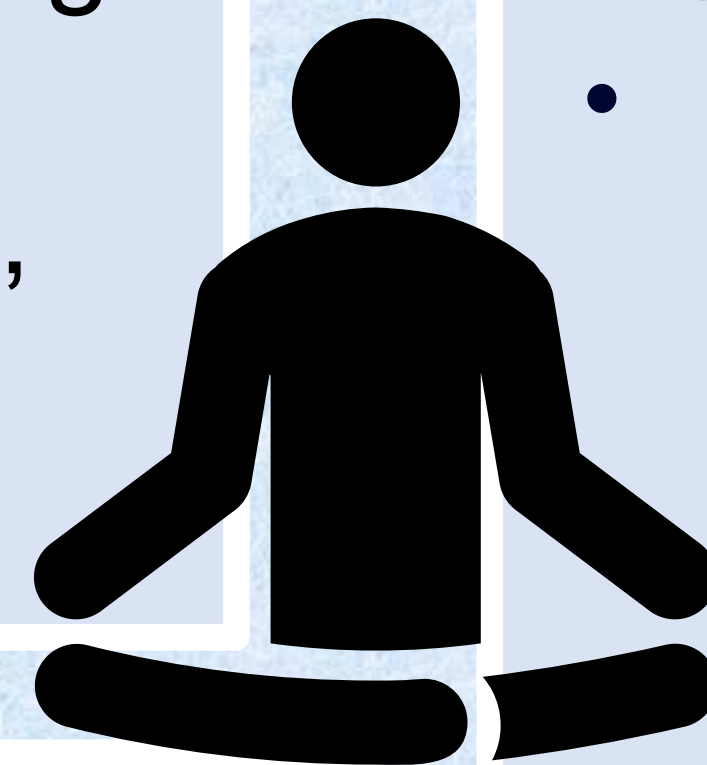


Please rate the effect these activities had on your general feeling of well-being.



1) WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

- **Mindfulness is defined as “paying attention on purpose to the present moment, with an attitude of kindness and nonreactivity”**
 - contemplative practice that originated in the Buddhist tradition
 - popularized and secularized by Jon Kabat-Zinn, who developed a mindfulness-based program to help patients with chronic illnesses
- Mindfulness can be practiced in a wide range of settings and multiple ways: **meditation, body scan/body awareness activities, mindful movement/stretching, journaling...**



2) HOW CAN I BENEFIT FROM MINDFULNESS?



- Research suggests that even **short-term mindfulness training may lead to changes in brain functioning and neuroanatomy**
- Studies which measured the brains of experienced and inexperienced meditators found that **mindfulness practice can be responsible for structural changes in areas of the brain associated with a reduction of stress, anxiety, pain, depression and insomnia**
- In general, it can be stated that mindfulness:
 - fosters brain growth
 - leads to **greater cognitive focus**
 - **reduces stress effects**
 - **provides mental and physical health prevention**

4) CONCLUSION

- If you tried out one of the mindfulness exercises above, it is likely that you felt (slightly) more relaxed afterwards. Scientific research proves that there is a **strong link between the practice of mindfulness and the reduction of stress and anxiety**
- This makes mindfulness a **convincing concept in a pedagogical and didactical context**
- **Mindfulness can be implemented in a personal or classroom setting through training exercises like breath meditation or ‘imaginary journeys’** (see Böttger, 2018)



3) MINDFULNESS AND LANGUAGE ANXIETY

- **Language anxiety** describes the abnormal and **exaggerated fear of foreign languages**. It is categorized as a situation-specific anxiety, associated with a particular **context - that of learning and using a second language**
- **Introducing mindfulness practices** to the language learning classroom can **reduce stress and provide a background conducive to learning** → promising approach to helping students with anxiety
- A study (Scida & Jones, 2017) found that **regular mindfulness exercises (5-10 minutes) in class can lead to a significant improvement in classroom interaction norms and emotional climate**

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