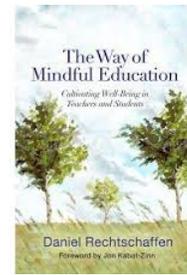


St. Mark School
February 9, 2017
Mindfulness



"All of our thoughts – ideas – are traceable to a sensation, an encounter with the world that leaves an impression upon the mind." — Kilroy J. Oldster

Appreciations

Thank you Charley Allen and Tara Thomas for connecting me with this beautiful school.

Thank you Mary Ann McQueen for our ongoing communication on how to bring these practices to the staff, students, and families at St. Mark School.

Thank you teachers for opening up your classrooms and sharing your students with me! I thoroughly enjoyed my time in each of your classrooms.

What is Mindfulness?

We started with an inquiry question, "What is Mindfulness?" There was no right or wrong answer. Here are some of their words...

TK

When people love you
Good stuff
Share
Caring with other people
Being calm, slowing down

K

Calm
Being kind
Being loving
Relaxing
Visualizing
Peace, relaxing
Meditating, peaceful, quiet

1st Grade

Relaxed and calm, chase away your blues
When you're frustrated or sad, calm yourself down
Relaxing and being calm
Calm down

Meditate
Calm and relaxed
Calm and knowing what's inside

2nd Grade

Relaxing
Calm
Thinking about stuff
Brain full
Full mind
Very smart

3rd Grade

What's going on inside your body
Peaceful and calm
Quiet, no one bothering you
Relax and stay calm
Brain more powerful
Calming down
Comfortable position
Relaxing your mind

4th Grade

Meditation, breath and current moment
Not thinking about what's going on in your mind
Shut everything down, breathe and relax
Focusing on your breath, calm
Calm, no stress
Relax, focus on your breathing

5th Grade

Think about one thing, picture it
Mindful of your surroundings
Relax, picture something you like
Taking a moment out of the day, breathe
Peaceful inside
Keeping calm

6th Grade

Calm and relaxed
Paying attention to what's going on in your own mind
Relaxation, no interruptions
Clearing your mind, peaceful
Aware of everything around you

Zone out, get into a better place
Mind at peace, no disturbance, happiness

Our first experience of mindfulness was playing the shake still game. Shake, shake, shake...STILL! (Similar to dance and freeze). We sat down and put on our mindfulness bodies by sitting up tall and proud while feeling relaxed at the same time. We explored what happens when we get totally still and totally quiet (10-30 seconds depending on the class). What did you notice?

"My breath, my heartbeat, I feel tired, the other classroom, people talking, the crows, a car, the notification on a phone"

*Mindfulness is something that shows us what is happening right here, right now.

Embodiment Lessons

Embodiment lessons help students feel safe and secure in their own bodies. Students need to feel safe and secure before they can learn, work together, and gain emotional regulation. We start by creating a safe space where students feel comfortable and relaxed in their bodies.

Language of the Body

The language of sensation in the body is the foundation of mindfulness. Students learn the language of the body by exploring their own bodies. Students learn how to identify physical sensations and feelings. We can experience pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral sensations, and learn to approach these sensations with a calm curiosity. To cultivate impulse control, emotional regulation, and attention, we need to learn the language of our bodies.

Sensation Exploration

Our second experience of mindfulness was going on a sensation exploration. We talked about how if we go to another country, we need to learn the language to get around. If we go to the country of our bodies, we need to learn the language to get around. We need to learn the language of sensations and feelings. When we are more aware of our bodies, we will be better at anything we use our bodies for (sports, dancing, skateboarding, biking, hiking, etc.)

Let's start with our hand. Hold up your hand, look at it like you've never looked at it before. Look at the color of it, the shape of it, the lines running through it. Close your eyes. How do you know it's still there?

"Because I can feel it"

Let's create more sensations with our hand. Blow on your hand, shake your hand, massage your hand. What sensations do you feel?

"Cold, warm, hot, sweaty, tingling, tickling, fizzing, soft, hard, squishy"

Body Scan (6th grade)

There is no homework for mindfulness. There is only how you carry the lessons into your life and into the world. When you walk outside, when you play a game, when you go to sleep at night...notice what sensations you feel.

Next week we are going to "play mindfulness" by connecting our breath to movement.

With gratitude,
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