Mindfulness in the Classroom & Beyond

Agenda

- Starter Task
- Classroom Meeting
  - Introductions & Greetings
  - Training Expectations
  - Mindfulness
  - Learning Intentions
- The Why
- Implementation
- Mindfulness Activities
- Community Circle
Objectives

- To begin your own mindfulness journey as an educator to help reduce teacher stress, increase resiliency, and reduce burn-out.
- Develop a positive and safe culture in the classroom through mindfulness practices.

Check-in

How am I feeling before?  
How am I feeling after?

What Happened?

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

My commitment to today's workshop is:

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

I am going to accomplish this by:

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
Positive Greetings at the Door
Proactive Classroom Management Procedure
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Some teachers report difficulties getting their class period off to a good start. These teachers often have students who come into the class from less structured or monitored settings talking loudly, misbehaving, and taking too much time to get their materials out and be ready to learn. The troubling part is that many times when the class gets off to a poor start, the rest of the period or day is likely to be more of the same. As a result, teachers are constantly interested and looking for easy strategies they can use to guide and motivate their students to 1) transition quickly, 2) be prepared and ready to learn and 3) behave well by avoiding inappropriate behaviors that detract from learning.

The general climate or atmosphere of a classroom, whether it is positive or negative, can have a tremendous impact on how well teachers begin their class and students behave throughout the period or day. Research and practical experience tells us that students are more engaged and better behaved in classrooms in which there is an upbeat climate and students feel that they have a positive relationship with their teacher. One easy and effective way to address this problem is to greet students at the door in a positive, intentional, and strategic way.

DESCRIPTION AND FEATURES
The Positive Greetings at the Door (PGD) procedure was developed as an easy and effective method that teachers can implement to get their class period off to a good start by minimizing problem behavior and improving students’ readiness to learn. The main features of the PGD procedure are (1) positive verbal or non-verbal interactions with students as they enter the classroom to establish a positive climate and provide behavior specific praise, (2) pre-corrective statements to prevent student misbehavior, and (3) prompts delivered to the entire class to attend to the class activity schedule and remind them of the time when learning will begin.

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS
STEP 1: Stand at or around the door
• The goal is to be at or around the door (slightly outside or inside the class).
• This will allow you to monitor students’ behavior as they come into your class, as well as carry out the next step in the PGD procedure.
• Remember you are not there to be a hall monitor—your focus is on greeting students coming into your classroom.

STEP 2: Positively interact with students as they come into the class
• Positive interactions can consist of verbal (e.g., praising a student for walking in quietly, saying “hello, how’s it going”) or non-verbal behavior (e.g., patting the student on the back, giving the student a thumbs up).
  • Verbal positive interactions
    ▪ Behavior-specific praise statements
      • “Thanks for walking in quietly, Tom.”
    ▪ Salutations
      • Saying “hello, how’s it going”
    ▪ Asking the student a relationship-based question
• “Did you win that soccer game?”
  o Non-verbal positive interactions
    ▪ High 5
    ▪ Thumbs up
    ▪ Fist pound
    ▪ Pat on the back
    ▪ Wink
    ▪ Head nod with eye contact
• Your goal will be to initiate at least 5 positive interactions with students as they make their way into the classroom. If you can initiate more positive interactions, do so as it will only help to set the positive classroom climate.
• Be sure to scan the room to catch students behaving consistent with your expectations. Often times we don’t need to address the inappropriate behavior of a particular student. Instead, we can praise and recognize another student who is engaging in the appropriate behavior that we want other students to engage in too.

**STEP 3: Provide pre-corrective statements to individual student or entire class**
• Pre-corrective statements are statements delivered to students before you have seen any problem behaviors. These statements are about telling the student(s) about the behaviors they need to exhibit in order to have a good day. Essentially, you are giving them the answer about how to be successful.
• Pre-corrective statements delivered to individual students who had a bad day yesterday to remind them of the behavioral expectations (e.g., safe, respectful, and responsible) and give them a few words of encouragement that they can have a good day.
  o **Important:** the intent is not to bring up old business with the student by reminding them of how they had a bad day yesterday. Instead, the purpose is to tell the student that today is a new day and that he can have a great day in class by being safe, respectful to others, and responsible by being ready to learn.
    ▪ Although you may want to address incorrect behaviors, it’s important instead to name the behavior you would like to see, rather than focusing on the misbehavior. This contributes to the positive classroom climate. Later, if you see the child engaging in the correct behavior, be sure to give praise to reinforce it.
• Pre-corrective statements to the entire class are intended to be the same as above but are issued to the entire class. This is if the class had a rough day yesterday or you want to emphasize class-wide behavioral expectations, so that every student knows what you expect of them for the class or day.

**STEP 4: Remind the students to look at the class schedule and of the time when class will begin**
• An aspect of the PGD procedure is to get the class off to a good start and engaged in the learning process as soon as possible.
• While students are entering the room, issue a statement to the entire class to look at the class schedule and remind them of when instruction will begin.
  o For example, “thank you for coming in quietly and safely, take a look at the class schedule to see what to expect for today. Also, remember that we will start class promptly at 12:45, so please be in your seat and ready to learn.”
Setting Up A Mindful Practice

#SelfCare

- What is the minimum time you are committing to sitting each day and which times of the day will you practice?

- Where will your mindful sitting spots be, and how will you set them up?

- What sitting posture will work best for you and what cushion or chair will you use? Will you practice mindfulness standing, laying down, or walking?

- What is your intension and hope for committing to this practice?

- What are some obstacles that may get in the way of your meeting your goal, such as getting bored or people interrupting you?

- What do you need to navigate through these obstacles?

- Who are some allies for you in your practice? (These may be colleagues that practice mindfulness, friends to sit with in person, and/or others may be mentors to picture mentally.)
Who Are My Students?

When we know about the possible stressors and traumas in our students’ lives, it is easier to cultivate empathy and understanding for their behaviors. Instead of just being frustrated by the students who are dysregulated and distracting everyone else, we can learn about what these students are struggling with and how we can help.

- What are some basic human needs your students may not be getting met?

- What are some of the particular stressors your students face because of the community they live in?

- What stressors may your students face because of their race, class, or gender?

- What stressors do your students face at their particular age?

- What academic stressors do your students facing?

- In what ways are your students’ stressors affecting their social, emotional, and academic capacities?

- In what ways do you imagine mindfulness could help your students with these stressors?

- In what ways could you be more mindful of your students’ stressors?
Mindfulness Activities
Adopted from:

Sensory Awareness, Focus, & Calming

SOUND SIGNAL
Purpose: Mindfulness of sounds and surroundings, focus, & calm
This activity helps children to sharpen their focus and calm down. It’s fun to do as well. Mindful listening can be very helpful at school and when friends and family need our full attention. This mindfulness activity involves listening to a sound. Many children naturally gravitate toward visual information, so this is a great way to help them become more aware of the auditory information that surrounds them.

What you need: a bell, chimes, phone with sounds, spoon and a glass, or any other item that makes a lingering sound

To begin, ask your students to sit or lie comfortably. Ask them to close their eyes and breathe deeply for three or four breaths. Next explain that you’re going to make a sound, and that they should try to focus on the sound until they can’t hear it anymore. When they can no longer hear the sound, they will give a signal of their choice. For a younger student, this part of the activity can be made especially engaging or fun. When the sound disappears, they can signal by opening their eye, raising their hand, or snapping their fingers or through a different signal of their own invention. Tell your student that they should listen very hard for the sound for as long as they can and only signal when it is completely inaudible. Repeat the activity as many times as you like, perhaps changing the “sound’s end” signal with each trail.

Ask questions about how the activity made them feel. Did they hear the sound longer than expected? What happened to the sound as time progressed?

THE RAISIN MEDITATION
Purpose: Sensory awareness, focus, & calm
This activity is a great way to practice mindfulness through the process of eating. You will need to verbally guide your students through this meditation. At first, it’s probably a good idea to model the process yourself to show the students exactly what to do; you can “think aloud” when you model the process, but when it’s the child’s turn, they won’t need to narrate in the same way.

What you need: One raisin (or other dried fruit) per child

To begin, ask your students to pick up her raisin and look at it. Ask her to imagine that this is the first time she has ever seen something like it. Ask them to silently observe its size, color, and texture.

Next, ask them to feel the raisin between their finger. Does it have bumps and ridges? What does the weight of the raisin feel like in their palm?

Have them bring the raisin to their nose. Does its smell remind them of anything? How does it smell different from other foods? Does this make them want to eat it?
Ask them to bring the raisin close to her hear and squish the raisin gently. Is there a sound to be heard?

Ask them to bring the raisin to their tongue...but tell her not to take a bite just yet! Does the texture feel different when it’s in their mouth compared to when they held it in their hand?

After they bite into the raisin, ask them to think about its flavor. Is there more than one flavor? Sweet? Sour? Salty? Spicy? How does the raisin feel in their mouth now? Is it soft or hard? Is it crunchy? Wet or dry?

Finally, once they have swallowed the raisin, ask them to determine what flavors are lingering in their mouth.

To wrap up the exercise, ask the students what they learned from eating slowly and mindfully. Was it different to the way their used to eating? Could focusing attention like this help in other activities?

**FACE BATH**
*Purpose: Body awareness, focus, & calm*

This is a simple activity that teaches your child to pay attention to sensations in their body.

Ask student/s to rub their hands together to warm up through friction. After 10 to 20 seconds, tell them to lift their hands to their face. Tell them to move their hands slowly over their face like when drying their face with a towel. Ask if they can feel the warmth of their hands. How does it feel? Talk about how it felt. Was it nice? Was it calming to focus on the sensations?

**SQUISH & LET GO**
*Purpose: Body awareness, focus, calm, relaxation*

This is a great exercise to help your child let go of tension and become more aware of their body. Tell your students that you will see if you can feel the difference between when their muscles are tensed and when they’re relaxed. You can use the following script with your child. You can sit, stand, or lie down. If you lie down, you’ll need to alter the script a little bit.

Guided Script:
Take 3 deep breaths. Now we’ll start tensing and relaxing each part of the body starting with the toes.

  o **Toes**
  Imagine you are an ape in a tree. Apes hold on to branches with their feet. Clench your toes. Curl them like grabbing a branch with them really hard. One. Two. Relax the toes. Let them go limp. Notice how nice it feels.

  o **Legs**
  Let’s try our legs. Clench your legs. One. Two. And release. Notice how nice it feels. See if you can feel the difference between when the muscles are tensed, and they’re relaxed

  o **Stomach**
  Next, imagine someone throws a basketball at your stomach. So, make your stomach hard. Tighten your stomach muscles. One. Two. And release.
o Hands
Now pretend you are squeezing lemons in your hands. Squeeze really hard. One. Two. And release.

o Arms
Now stretch your arms high above your head. Feel the full in your shoulders. One. Two. And let your arms drop down. (Ifc lying down, be careful to lower arms gently). Let your arms dangle at your sides. Like cooked spaghetti noodles. Notice how relaxed they feel.

o Head and shoulders
Imagine you are a turtle pulling his head inside his house. Pull your shoulders up to your ears and push your head down. One. Two. And relax.

o Face
Now clench your face. Make a silly face with many wrinkles as you can. Scrunch your nose. Clench your jaw. One. Two. And relax. Good.

Take three deep breaths and notice how your body feels now.

When done, ask your students how their body feels. How did it feel to tense up? How did it feel to let go? Now that you have visited each muscle of your body, tensed, and let go, are you more relaxed or more tense?

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**Emotional Intelligence & Regulation**

**THE QUIET PLACE**

*Purpose: Calm, relaxation, prevention*

*What you need: a space devoted to quiet, calm, and comfort*

We all need a space to go where we can be alone with our thoughts, especially when we are upset or troubled. Children are no different. Have a designated area in your house that is a quiet place. Do not confuse this with a time out punishment place.

The quiet place be an area created specifically for mindfulness or just a place where your student feels the most comfortable. If possible, fill the space with items that promote mindfulness. For example, add soft blankets and pillows if your student wants to sit or relax while calming themselves. A music player with ear buds for relaxing music, calming glitter jar, stuffed animal, fidgets, and or positive affirmation cards. Fill the area with calming colors and textures and anything that your student/s have indicated that is calming to them. You may also utilize a sand timer at the quiet place so your student can quietly return back to their task when the timer is up.
**CALMING GLITTER JAR**

*Purpose: Emotional regulation, focus, calm*

The Calming Glitter Jar is a proven mindfulness tool which can help to relax both kids and adults of all ages. Also, it offers a practical way to “meditate” with a student who doesn’t want to sit still.

Materials:
- Small jar (make sure it will hold liquid without leaking)
- Clear glue
- Glitter (any colors you like)
- A few drops of food coloring
- Hot water
- Whisk or a stick

Directions:
This is a great tool for calming down, and it’s simple to make. Depending on the sort of glue you use, you may have to experiment to get the consistency just right for you. That’s part of the fun. You can experiment with about 20% glue, 80% water, and add as much glitter as you feel comfortable with. The more glue you use, the longer it will take for the glitter to settle after you have shaken the jar. You can use clear school glue and glitter, or glitter glue with added glitter to get the effect you want.

1. Pour glue and hot water (tap water is ok) into the jar and mix with a whisk. The glue makes the liquid thicker and makes impressive swirls of glitter.
2. Add some glitter. You can start with 1-2 tablespoons of glitter.
3. Add a drop or two of food coloring to make it more exciting.
4. When everything is blended, put the lid on and give it a good shake so the glitter is dispersed throughout.
5. Then let it cool without the lid.
6. You can secure the lid with super glue.
7. Shake it and try it out!

When you’ve completed the jar with the glitter, you can explain the purpose of the jar. Shake it and tell your students that sometimes our minds are full of thoughts, swirling around like the glitter in the jar. Sometimes we experience angry thoughts. Sometimes sad thoughts. Tell them that it’s okay to have strong feelings but that we can calm those thoughts and our bodies as well. One way to do this is to let your thoughts settle like the glitter in the jar. When our minds are calm, it’s easier to work out problems and to talk about whatever it is that is causing us to be upset. Shake the jar up until the glitter is spinning wildly. Then set it on a table or the floor and calmly watch it until the glitter and your mind are all settled down.

The idea is that your students can learn to use the jar on their own with they are experiencing difficulty with emotions.
**Joy, Gratitude, & Kindness**

**CONNECT**

*Purpose:* Kindness, compassion, connection

Explain to your students that it’s easy to spend time with the people you know. But today, they can try to come out of their comfort zone and connect with a person or people that they have not met or talked with before. Ask them to be kind and say hi and reflect on how it made them feel. This can be turned into a reflective writing assignment.

**GRATITUDE FLOWERS**

*Purpose:* Gratitude, positivity, connection

*What you need:* Colored paper to cut the flower parts, glue, scissors

*Directions:*
1. Find fun colored paper for your gratitude flowers.
2. Start by cutting out a circle for the center of the flower and student will write their name. Make it big enough so that they have ample space to write.
3. Next, cut out big petals for the flower. Be creative and experiment with colors. A template for the center and petals will help for younger students.
4. Write down or draw the things that they are grateful for on the petals.
5. Glue the petals to the flower center and you have your first gratitude flower!

You can do a whole garden of flowers! You place the flowers on a wall for an awesome “indoor garden” to which your students can return to get a gratitude boost.

**GRATITUDE & KINDNESS JAR**

*Purpose:* Gratitude, positivity, connection, self-esteem

*What you need:* Jar, pieces of paper, writing utensil (pen, colored pencil, etc.)

Discuss the meaning of gratitude with your students. Give students examples and refrain from monetary examples (i.e. vacationing in Hawaii). Also, have the discussion of “kind wishes” to self and others. Students may write or draw pictures on what they are grateful for or kind wishes they have. When ready fill the jar with gratitude and kind wishes. You can read a few on Monday’s to brighten up the week. For older students, encourage them to visit and add to the jar independently during the week.

Example prompts:
- What is one thing you’re grateful for this morning?
- What is one thing you LOVE about yourself today?
- What is one act of kindness you can do for our classroom community?

**GRATITUDE JOURNAL**

*Purpose:* Gratitude, positivity, connection

*What you need:* Notebook or electronic devise, writing utensil (pen, pencil, colored pencil, etc.)

Try this out yourself for a few days and then explain it to your students. It’s simple and fun and great for older students. Instruct students to try to add 1 to 5 things they are grateful for daily. It can be filled with text or pictures. This activity can be done beginning, middle, or end of the day.
Resources

**Books**


**Online**

mindfulschools.org

https://mindfulkindfulyouniversity.com/wellbeing-and-mindfulness-for-educators/