

Using Zentangle to Enhance Mindfulness in the Classroom

MSM conference – 1/9/16

Please note that this outline is the presenter's notes!

Welcome!

- What brought us here...
 - Certain children in mind
 - Mindfulness schools curriculum training - 6wks online course
- Resources will be posted on the MSM website – has links & easier to click that retype!

What is Mindfulness?

“Mindfulness is paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally.” ~Jon Kabat Zinn

Mindfulness is a state of active, open attention on the present. When you're mindful, you observe your thoughts and feelings from a distance, without judging them good or bad. Instead of letting your life pass you by, mindfulness means living in the moment and awakening to experience.

For the student: - *Noticing what's happening right now*

What's associated with Mindfulness

- Sensory experience and self-control
- Awareness training
- Being non-judgmental
- Goals:
 - Self-awareness
 - Emotional balance
 - Impulse control
 - Focus

Mindfulness is **not**...

- About being calm - *by product*
- Absence of thought
- About discipline
- The magic answer
- Religious

We can be clear as possible about the **distinction between "mindfulness" and "meditation,"** explaining that the latter is an "umbrella" term referring to a range of activities that include prayer, chanting, contemplation, as well as mindfulness. While mindfulness and awareness practices come out of a range of cultures, traditions and religions, mindfulness itself is not a religion. Some tend to understand or think of it as a form of meditation, but it can be more **broadly understood as a life skill or a training of attention.**

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Mindfulness is not about quieting all of our thoughts or making the mind go silent any more than it is about stopping the ears from hearing or the eyes from seeing! **The mind thinks.** It's not even about always feeling peaceful, calm, and relaxed.

Mindfulness is about **bringing awareness to our experience** just as it is in order to LEARN. In terms of thoughts, our job is to be aware of them, to learn from them,

Mindfulness & Heartfulness :

“Mindfulness without heartfulness is not complete – heartfulness without mindfulness is not complete”

Heartfulness:

Heartfulness is the caring quality we bring along with mindfulness to our experience. On the other hand, we use the tool of mindfulness to strengthen these very qualities by being mindful of them in our lives.

Heartfulness refers to a range of qualities in the heart like kindness, generosity, gratitude.

In the classroom: *why bring to the classroom*

The **growing body of research on mindfulness in schools** reveals the core benefits:

- Better Focus and Concentration
- Increased Sense of Calm
- Decreased Stress and Anxiety
- Improved Impulse Control
- Increased Self Awareness
- Skillful Responses to Difficult Emotions
- Increased Empathy and Understanding of Others
- Development of Natural Conflict Resolution Skills

Mindfulness practice provides concrete tools for bringing the cortical regions of the brain (the area of the brain that is associated with higher brain function) back online -

- **Labeling** strong emotional states (“name it to tame it.”)
- Orienting and “**anchoring**” to sound, sight and the external environment -*anchor breath*
- Working with the breathing sense in various ways to **promote grounding and centering**

Montessori – **Connections** from the MS training...

- Prepared environment – “*building a container*”
- Preparation of the teacher -*you can't “teach them” unless you “practice.”*
- Silence game - *mindful listening*
- Peace curriculum

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Mindful **breathing** – *anchor breaths* -spent a lot of time on this

For the student: *An anchor helps keep the boat where it is. If the boat starts to drift away, the anchor pulls it back in*

Taking our time – emphasizing that mindfulness can be a tool

Use of the journal – *show* - it's a choice

DO a sample – like I would do with the class...

Heartfulness:

Ring bell

“Today we are going to learn about Heartfulness or sending kind thoughts to ourselves and others.

Let's get our mindful bodies on. Raise your hand and instead of putting it on your belly, today we're going to put it on our heart. Now, let your eyes close and imagine/visualize/picture someone who you see almost everyday who makes you very happy every time you see them.

Imagine that person is healthy and strong.

Imagine they are very happy, with a smile on their face. Maybe they are doing something they really enjoy.

Imagine that they are surrounded by calm and peaceful things, and that their heart is calm and peaceful.

Now, we are going to send kind thoughts to that person. First, let your heart fill up with kindness, so full that it's about to burst. Now, take all that kindness and let's send the thoughts together - you can repeat after me.

Pausing between each one:

- May you be healthy and strong.
- May you be happy.
- May you be peaceful.

Now, I am going to be quiet for a few seconds and you can continue to let those kind thoughts flow from your heart to theirs.

Breathing – if your mind wanders – that's ok – find your anchor breath

You can also send kind thoughts to yourself!

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Let your eyes close and let's send those same thoughts to ourselves. You can repeat after me again.

Pausing between each one:

- May I be healthy and strong.
- May I be happy.
- May I be peaceful.

Just like you can be mindful of sounds or your breathing anytime, you can send these kind thoughts anytime. Some people noticed that kind thoughts made them feel good. So, you can send kind thoughts when you want to feel good, or when you are not feeling great, you can use this tool."

Ring bell

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What is Zentangle

Zentangle is an easy to learn and relaxing method of creating beautiful images from repetitive patterns. Zentangle provides artistic satisfaction and an increased sense of personal well-being.

“Like a Japanese Tea Ceremony, when you create Zentangle art you also create a personal environment. You can use our Zentangle approach as a tool to deliberately focus your thoughts.”

History of ZT – popular now

Rick Roberts (a former monk and maker of native American flutes), was watching a woman, Maria Thomas (a tremendously talented calligrapher), putting details into an illuminated manuscript she was working on.

“Maria described her feelings of timelessness, freedom and well-being and complete focus on what she was doing with no thought or worry about anything else.

“You’re describing meditation,” Rick said.

Rick and Maria wondered if they could create a simple system so others might enjoy a similar experience. And so began the journey towards discovering this simple and elegant system called Zentangle.”

Do a quick Google or Pinterest search for ‘Zentangle patterns’, you’ll be amazed!

What I particularly appreciate

- Individualized
- No right or wrong *-no eraser* – no up or down *-good for certain friends*
- The ceremony of the practice
- Quality materials – *the sensorial experience*
- Portable – *used at competition*
- A mindfulness tool – being in the moment – *process not product*

Similar goals of Mindfulness that I mentioned earlier:

- *Sensory experience and self-control*
- *Awareness*
- *Being non-judgmental*
- *Goals:*
 - *Self-awareness*
 - *Emotional balance*
 - *Impulse control*
 - *Focus*

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Use in Education

At all age levels, whether in public, private or home school environments, creating Zentangle art has been associated with improved:

- Handwriting
- Eye/hand coordination
- Creativity and personal expression
- Problem solving
- Cross-cultural understanding, using various cultural symbols such as Indian henna patterns, Celtic knotting, Zuni pottery, Maori tattoos or Islamic tiling.
- Relaxation and focus
- Confidence

The Zentangle can be particularly successful & useful in the multi-age classroom.

Therapeutic setting & Motivational Training

With its metaphor-rich philosophical base, the Zentangle Method can improve self-esteem and support individual confidence, creativity and cooperation in team efforts. Zentangle exercises can focus on areas such as:

- Individual self-worth
- Problem solving
- Individual's role within a team
- Intentionally directing focus under stress
- Accessing inner knowledge and guidance

How I begin

Preparing the environment...

Give examples....

Show samples....

Start activity

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