



Mindfulness in the 21st Century Classroom Site-based Participant Syllabus

Course Description

This course is designed to give educators at all levels an overview of recent research on mindfulness practices and to provide step-by-step guidance on how to integrate these practices into the classroom. Participants in this course will learn what mindfulness is, why it is important, and how to creatively apply research-based mindfulness techniques in meeting the diverse learning needs of students. Attention will also be given to ways educators can use mindfulness to enhance their own professional and personal experience as teachers.

Course Prerequisites

Participants enrolled in this course are required to hold a baccalaureate degree. This course is recommended for K-12 educators and administrators. No prerequisites are required for this course.

System Requirements

- Computer with word processing software
- Internet access connection
- Online video viewing capabilities/Adobe flash player
- Software capable of reading PDF files
- Software capable of viewing and creating PowerPoint presentations

Text Books/Supplemental Reading

There is not a required textbook for this class.

Global Goals of the Course

Upon completion of the course, the learner will be able to:

1. Develop an understanding of key concepts in the theory and research of mindfulness in general, and classroom mindfulness in particular.
2. Analyze how current findings in fields as diverse as neuroplasticity, meditation, social and emotional learning (SEL) and the psychology of gratitude can be incorporated into classroom mindfulness paradigms.
3. Become conversant in ways teachers are using mindfulness and subsidiary concepts to lessen the effects of stress and improve the quality and atmosphere of the classroom. Be able to summarize these insights to those who are unfamiliar with mindfulness.
4. Learn to creatively adapt and develop mindfulness practices in the classroom, both in the context of group activities as well as one-to-one interaction, in order

better to meet the behavioral and academic challenges facing students. Also learn the role that mindfulness can play in enhancing the professional and personal experience of educators themselves.

Instructional Objectives

The learner will deepen existing knowledge of content and apply professional expertise to the skills and strategies contained in this course by meeting the following instructional objectives:

What is Mindfulness?

1. Explore, define and discuss key concepts of mindfulness, including:
 - 1.1. Understand what mindfulness is;
 - 1.2. Analyze the benefits of mindfulness;
 - 1.2.1. Understand the role that attentiveness plays in student success;
 - 1.3. Show an awareness of the general history of mindfulness;
 - 1.4. Understand how mindfulness concepts such as “being all there” and “paying attention to the moment” can literally make the difference between success and failure for a student, not only in the classroom, but also in later life.

Becoming Mindful

2. Learn how to develop different types of mindfulness in your own life, to enhance your experience as a teacher;
 - 2.1. Continue learning about different types of mindfulness and the common themes that unite them;
 - 2.1.1. Be able to articulate the main aspects and benefits of mindful breathing;
 - 2.1.2. Be able to articulate the main aspects and benefits of body-focused mindfulness;
 - 2.1.3. Be able to articulate the main aspects and benefits of brain-focused mindfulness;
 - 2.2. Learn how to begin, sustain and value your own mindfulness practice;
 - 2.3. Begin developing the skills of metacognition, being able to work with whatever arises in the moment;
 - 2.4. Become comfortable experimenting with a variety of mindfulness modalities in your own life;
 - 2.5. Learn how to document your own progress as you grow in the skills of mindfulness.

Developing a Mindful Classroom

3. Learn how to begin, sustain and value mindfulness practices in your students.
 - 3.1. Become familiar with the application of different mindfulness practices in the classroom;
 - 3.2. Learn an array of mindfulness techniques that teachers are using to bring calmness, focus and moment-by-moment awareness to their students.

- 3.3. Be able to identify the mistakes that inexperienced teachers sometimes make when trying to teach mindfulness, and how to avoid those mistakes.

Mindfulness and Science

4. Understand the science of mindfulness:
 - 4.1. Become conversant in the neurophysiological dimensions of mindfulness meditation;
 - 4.2. Understand what science is discovering about the benefits of mindful breathing;
 - 4.3. Grasp the implication of neuroplasticity on mindfulness training;
 - 4.4. Reflect on the impact of the science of mindfulness for educators.
 - 4.4.1. Be able to articulate the scientific dimensions of mindfulness to students, parents and school administrators.

Mindfulness and SEL

5. Be conversant on the emotional benefits of mindfulness, as well as key areas where the skills of mindfulness and social and emotional learning (SEL) overlap and are mutually reinforcing;
 - 5.1. Emotional Intelligence
 - 5.1.1. Understand why emotional intelligence is important for students;
 - 5.1.2. Understand how mindfulness practices can increase students' emotional intelligence;
 - 5.2. Mindfulness and emotional maturity
 - 5.2.1. Understand the relationship between mindfulness and emotional self-management, and the relationship between mindfulness and impulse control;
 - 5.3. Understand the relationship between mindfulness and SEL:
 - 5.3.1. Demonstrate knowledge of SEL
 - 5.3.2. Demonstrate knowledge of the similarities between mindfulness and SEL;
 - 5.3.3. Demonstrate knowledge of the differences between mindfulness and SEL;
 - 5.3.4. Demonstrate knowledge of ways mindfulness can assist in the development of core SEL competencies;

Mindfulness and Student Behavior

6. Be conversant on the behavioral dimensions of student mindfulness:
 - 6.1. Understand how mindfulness is or might be effective in addressing the problem of bullying in schools;
 - 6.2. Understand how mindfulness is or might be effective in helping to increase kindness and compassion among students.
 - 6.3. Understand how mindfulness is or might be effective in helping to produce or increase empathy among students.
 - 6.4. Understand how mindfulness is or might be effective in helping to produce gratitude in students.
 - 6.5. Understand how mindfulness is or might be effective in helping students to have better impulse control.

Mindfulness, Academic Achievement and Technology

7. Be familiar with the impact of mindfulness on academic achievement as well as current discussions about the role of technology plays in developing a mindful classroom;
 - 7.1. Be able to identify areas where mindfulness is having a positive impact on academic achievement;
 - 7.1.1. Be familiar with how mindfulness is being used to boost math scores;
 - 7.1.2. Be familiar with how mindfulness is being used to reduce or relieve test anxiety;
 - 7.1.3. Be familiar with the way mindfulness can increase a students' attention, and how this relates to academic achievement.
 - 7.2. Be conversant with both sides of the technology debate;
 - 7.2.1. Be familiar with arguments and research suggesting that technology may either be a tool in promoting mindfulness or at least that it does not have a negative effect in the development of mindfulness;
 - 7.2.2. Be familiar with arguments and research suggesting that technology may often hinder students from developing the skill-sets associated with mindfulness;

Mindfulness and Teaching

8. Be able to identify the benefits that mindfulness brings to teachers;
 - 8.1. Understand the relationship between mindfulness and teacher wellbeing;
 - 8.2. Understand how mindfulness can help teachers develop resiliency in the face of common challenges like stress and burnout;
 - 8.3. Assess areas that you have been helped through mindfulness and what your goals are if you continue to cultivate a mindfulness practice.

Teaching Methodology and Delivery Model

Teaching methodologies of this course are designed to support intensive, graduate-level course work in an interactive setting. Instructional plans support the content of this course, which focuses on the improvement of professional teaching expertise in any or all of the following categories: assessment, collaboration, communication, diverse learners, educational reform, instructional strategies, planning instruction, productivity, reflection of practice, student learning, subject matter, and/or technology.

- Methodologies include instructor presentations, specific skill practice, discussions, audio-visual presentations, self-evaluation, project development, course readings, research/inquiry exercises, and the synthesis of new knowledge and skills with previously acquired skills/expertise in relation to transition knowledge and content.
- The course is taught with instructor-participant and participant-participant feedback. Course content, activities, and assessments are organized into 10 modules totaling 45 seat hours. Assessments are due two-weeks following the end of the course.

- Research-based content, presentations, educator resources in print and on the Internet, notes from instructor presentations, class activity work pages, references, and assessments are supported by content designed specifically for educators.
- Daily activities include a variety of research-based instructional approaches appropriate for adult learners. Class participants actively construct their own learning and make it personally relevant by acquiring and applying course knowledge/skills during hands-on practice and problem-solving activities, personal reflection, in-class presentations, whole-class and small group discussions and activities, assigned readings, research/inquiry, projects, and collaborative work in various group formats. All are designed to make it possible for educators and other school-related personnel to learn the same basic content and skills with an emphasis on application to their own specific content area or grade level.

Learning Assessment

Formative assessment of learning objectives for this course is conducted informally throughout the course via discussion, critiques, peer- and self-evaluations, journal entries, instructor feedback, small-group sharing and activities requiring participants to make sense of new knowledge and/or skills within their realm of teaching. Additionally, three formative assessments are embedded within the course. Summative assessment for the course occurs in the form of a final project which requires each participant to synthesize class content and apply it within the teacher's specific teaching environment. Copies of the course performance assessment rubrics are included in Appendices A-C.

Final Projects

Assignments/ assessments should reflect that each participant is accountable for a high degree of learning appropriate for graduate level credit. Therefore, instructors will assign 3 formative assignments which can be completed throughout the course. These assignments will correlate to the instructional learning objectives. All courses will also include a final summative project which requires critical thinking, analysis, synthesis, evaluation or application. Assessment of the assignments should not be limited to the quantity of work submitted but should carefully consider the quality and intellectual value of the work.

Final projects are due within two weeks of the end of class. Projects submitted during the third week "grace period" will have their grade reduced one full letter grade. No papers will be accepted past the grace period, and participants will, consequently, forfeit credit for the course. Papers are expected to be properly formatted and submitted to the instructor either in person or via mail or an email attachment.

Participants taking professional development unit (not-for-credit) courses must attend all scheduled class sessions and complete all formative assignments. However, they will be exempt from completing the final summative project unless otherwise noted. Proof of seat hours will be presented to the participants after completing course reflection via the student portal and all hours are met.

Assessments and Grading

Throughout the course, participants will engage in both formal and informal formative and summative assessments. Points are assigned based on a four-point criterion rubric specifically delineated for each assessment that can be further defined as follows:

Distinguished: The assessment is highly imaginative; demonstrates critical thought; is unique; shows substantial application to one's own teaching or professional position; *goes above and beyond requirements*; is creative; demonstrates both breadth and depth of knowledge of transition-related subject matter; shows individual's personality; is professional in presentation and appearance; and demonstrates considerable effort. The assessment is exceptionally completed and demonstrates clear understanding of the tasks, gives explanations, and shows how the assessment applies to a teaching/learning situation. The assessment meets the specific criteria delineated in "Distinguished" on the course rubric.

Proficient: The assessment is well-organized and complete; is effectively and clearly presented; demonstrates clear understandings; applies what has been learned to the author's own classroom situation; clearly shows connections; is detailed; and is thoughtful and supported with ideas. A thoroughly completed assessment demonstrates that the participant shows awareness of the tasks, gives explanations, and shows how the assessment applies to a teaching/learning situation. The assessment meets the specific criteria delineated in "Proficient" on the course rubric.

Basic: This is the lowest passing grade. The assessment meets minimum requirements; includes general information but lacks descriptive detail; shows limited application to teaching/learning; and lacks originality. This denotes work that does not meet **all** aspects of standards for academic performance in a graduate-level course. The assessment meets the specific criteria delineated in "Basic" on the course rubric.

Unsatisfactory: The assessment is missing evidence or information; is sloppy and poorly organized; demonstrates only surface understandings; shows no evidence of application to the author's own teaching situation; is poorly written; and does not meet minimum standards for academic performance in a graduate-level course. The assessment meets the specific criteria delineated in "Unsatisfactory" on the course rubric.

The assessments for this course are weighted as follows:

Participation and Reflection	30%
Formative Assessments	30%
Summative Assessments	40%

Academic Honesty and Integrity

All participants are expected to maintain academic honesty and integrity by doing their own work to the best of their ability. Academic dishonesty (cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, etc.) will result in the participant receiving a zero for that assignment or paper.

Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and The Americans with Disabilities Act, participants who have any condition, either permanent or temporary, which might affect their ability to perform in this class are encouraged to inform the instructor at the beginning of the first session. Reasonable academic accommodations, aids, and adjustments may be made as needed to provide for equitable participation.

Attendance

Participants are required to attend all classes as well as participate in class discussions, small group activities, and projects. Absence from any part of the class will require that you withdraw from the class. You will need to contact The Connecting Link at (888) 550-5465 in the event this occurs.

Late Work and Make-Up Policy

Participants are expected to keep pace with in-class assignments and evening at-home assignments. If a situation arises in which an assignment cannot be completed, the participant is expected to make arrangements with the instructor for the timely submission of such work. All work is due not later than two weeks after the class ends. Failure to complete all work in this time frame will result in an **incomplete** or a grade of **F** for the work, depending on the reason for the delay.

University Compliance

Course content and instruction are bound by policies associated with the university granting academic credit for the course. Such policies include, but are not limited to: academic integrity and honor codes, institutional objectives and grade grievance procedures. These policies are located within the official academic catalogs which can be accessed through the university's official website.