



## **Mindfulness in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Classroom Online 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. However, refer to weekly reading assignments and additional materials within each milestone.

### **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:

#### **Milestone 1: 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.

#### **Milestone 2: 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.

### **Milestone 3: 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.

### **Milestone 4: 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.

### **Milestone 5: 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;

### **Milestone 6: 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.

### **Milestone 7: 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;

### **Milestone 8: 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 used in this course are specifically designed to maximize learning in a guided, graduate-level, online distance-learning model. Each course facilitator is trained and/or experienced in facilitating graduate-level online courses as well as the specific content and skills of this course.

1. Online methodologies include instructor/expert presentations, directed skill practice, asynchronous class and group discussions using threaded discussion questions, peer evaluation, self-evaluation, portfolio development, and the synthesis of new knowledge and skills in designing grade-specific lesson plans or other educational applications of knowledge and skills.
2. The course is taught in a supportive learning environment with teacher-participant interaction and feedback. Class participants interact with other professionals via the Forum by replying to existing posts as well as creating new threads on topics of their choice.
3. Content focuses on the presentation of advanced concepts linked to instructional strategies which accommodate learning needs of a diverse student population.
4. Course content, activities, and assignments are organized into "milestones" that participants complete during the 8-week span of the course. Course content is intended to cover material equal to 45 seat hours of instructional time.
5. Class participants actively construct their own learning and make it personally relevant by acquiring and applying course knowledge/skills to their own teaching situation.

### 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

In keeping with best instructional and assessment practices, this course requires participants to demonstrate synthesis and application of course knowledge in an applied final project linked to the instructional objectives of this course. Assessment of the project 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 and will be submitted to the instructor within the allotted class time. Unless the instructor states otherwise, all papers are expected to be properly formatted electronically.

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.

## 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 will have 8 weeks from the time of their first date of login to complete the course. It is the expectation that participants will post initial responses to Forum discussion questions by Thursdays. In addition, participants are to respond to at least two other participant posts by Sundays. Projects are only due in specific Milestones. Forum postings, assignments, and assessments must be completed by due dates specified within the course.

### Late Work and Make-Up Policy

Participants are expected to keep pace with assignments and expectations. 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. 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.