"Meditation in the Classroom: Helping Your Students Find Peace in Anxious Times"

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Definitions

• Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally.
  • Anything can be done with mindfulness

• Meditation is a practice to develop relaxation, open awareness, and focused attention.
  • These are practices and require discipline
Meditation

Goals?
Meditation

Objections?

Ours

Students
Meditation

Classroom Methods

What are the constraints?

What are the possibilities?
Meditation

Minute methods

Breath
Cleansing (in = positive, out = negative)
Sounds (e.g. singing bowl)
Phrase (mantra, or meaningful phrase re topic)
Music (classical)
Story (i.e. guided)
Mandala (coloring)
Tapping/Acupressure
Benefits

Why meditate?

Physical – relaxation response, cardioprotective, longevity, immune benefits

Mental – greater awareness, focused attention, strengthened will power, pain reduction

Emotional – reduced reactivity, increased resilience, courage

Relational – relaxation, empathy, acceptance, compassion, peace with others
Methods

How to meditate?

Two components: Motivational and Practical

1st Pick a reason why to meditate.
Commit 100% (100% is easy; 99% is hard).
Do it in a SMART way.
Seek support.
Methods

Practicalities:

Posture - dignified
Space – quiet, undisturbed, dedicated
Time – repeated and realistic, ideally early a.m.

Anchor – breath, mantra, mudra, posture, object, question - almost anything as long as it is simple

Patience! “Oh, well”

Observe results….realistically

Sense of Humor!!
Practice

Singing bowl exercise

What did you notice right when the sound faded away? What did you notice in the intervals between ringing of the bowl?

Self-Reflection:

What did you learn about yourself?

Why would you want to practice?
Challenges

What are the barriers to regular practice?

Conviction

Time

Turmoil

Ego – wants instant gratification and to be the expert

Frustration at seeing negative patterns = Discomferies….fear, anger, shame, grief, etc.
I'm meditating on my inability to meditate due to the fact that when I meditate I can't stop thinking about how I can't meditate because I'm thinking about my inability to meditate. Is that correct?
Promise

“Freedom from thoughts that create suffering”
Autonomic Nervous System

Feign and Freeze

Fight or Flight

Rest and Digest

Tend and Befriend

Sickness behavior

Sexual Behavior
In five experiments, participants (n = 701) were shown two silhouettes of bodies alongside emotional words, stories, movies, or facial expressions.

**Fig. 1.** The *emBODY* tool. Participants colored the initially blank body regions (A) whose activity they felt increasing (left body) and decreasing (right body) during emotions. Subjectwise activation-deactivation data (B) were stored as integers, with the whole body being represented by 50,364 data points. Activation and deactivation maps were subsequently combined (C) for statistical analysis.
Universal emotion somatotopic maps

Fig. 2. Bodily topography of basic (Upper) and nonbasic (Lower) emotions associated with words. The body maps show regions whose activation increased (warm colors) or decreased (cool colors) when feeling each emotion. ($P < 0.05$ FDR corrected; $t > 1.94$). The colorbar indicates the $t$-statistic range.

Crescentini C, Capurso V. Mindfulness meditation and explicit and implicit indicators of personality and self-concept changes. Front Psychol. 2015, 6:44.


