



How can teachers bring mindfulness into the school day?

See Full Article -Cultivating Mindfulness for Educators Using Resources From The New York Times

Below are a few different strategies for practicing mindfulness during the work day:

Practice two feet one breath: A hectic school day might seem like an unlikely place for meditation, but a few seconds of purposeful awareness before each class can help set the tone for the rest of the period — or the entire day. Before starting class, try “two feet one breath,” an evidence-based awareness and burnout prevention practice described in this Well article about doctors. For five seconds, feel your feet on the ground and take one conscious breath, feeling the sensations of breathing. To stay focused on the exercise, you might even say to yourself, “two feet one breath.”

Set intentions: Setting intentions — in a word or a sentence — can also be helpful in mindfulness practice. For example, how do you want to show up, from the minute students begin arriving at your door? Perhaps you decide your intention is to welcome each student as they enter with eye contact and a smile, and then to continue to recognize their individual strengths and needs throughout the class period. Or, it may be that you’re dealing with a personal challenge outside of school. Your intention might be to acknowledge thoughts and feelings about it throughout the day, as a way of being self-compassionate and ensuring difficult emotions do not negatively affect your interactions. Setting an intention can increase the likelihood that you will engage with students in ways aligned with your values.

Use the “I am aware” sentence starter: During the school day, pause briefly and finish the sentence “I am aware ...,” tuning in to what’s happening in your experience. For example:

“I am aware I need to go to the bathroom and there are four minutes before class starts.” Decision time: Make a run for it? Or, wait until after class and in the meantime do my best to focus on the task at hand?

“I am aware I’m feeling surprised by how well the guided practice part of the lesson went.” Great! Later today I can reflect on why it worked so well.

“I am aware I’m anxious about seeing Jenna next period, since yesterday we had a tough moment in class. I’ve let go of it, but what if she hasn’t?” In this case, before class has even begun I recognize how I feel and am therefore less likely to think Jenna’s presence is the cause of my anxiety. I might opt to say something to her at the door to clear the air before class begins, or I may choose to wait and see if she even remembers yesterday’s interaction and only check in with her later in the period if need be. My awareness of the anxiety and its cause creates space. Now I have a choice about next steps.

Make one activity a day a mindfulness priority: Choose one daily activity during work you commit to doing with mindful awareness. For example, when eating lunch or drinking coffee, focus on the experience of eating or drinking, actually tasting each bite or sip, and not grading or lesson planning while doing so.