



Mindfulness in the Music Classroom

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My Experience

In the 2023-2024 school year I noticed I was overwhelmed by the talking, overwhelmed by the change in student behavior, overwhelmed by the constant “noise.”

Finally I thought, “What’s wrong with me?!”

We are always doing. Our students are always doing.
We are constantly being asked to do more, to “GO!”
Who’s asking us to slow down and stop?

Sometimes slowing down helps us to go faster



Prioritizing Mindfulness & Slowing Down

2008

Started at WES.
My students seem to be louder than most!

But life happened and fixing it was not a priority.

2020

COVID happened!

And it aligned with a shift in my personal life.

2021-2022

Noticed that student behavior had changed (due to COVID?) and was not improving...

2023

I had time to fill & a desire for healing, personal growth. Classes added to schedule. No longer teaching SEL at school

2024-2025

Meditation & yoga practices

Reiki attuned

Breathe for Change

Here I am!

Bottom Line

How can we expect students to be regulated if we aren't?

Dictionary

Definitions from [Oxford Languages](#) · [Learn more](#)

mind·ful·ness

/ˈmɪn(d)f(ə)lnəs/

noun

1.

the quality or state of being conscious or aware of something.

"their mindfulness of the wider cinematic tradition"

2.

a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations, used as a therapeutic technique.

Direct Benefits of Mindfulness

- Creates space for conscious choice of & response to sensations, emotions, & thoughts
- Allows for release of unhelpful sensations, emotions, & thoughts
- Develops present moment awareness of sensations, emotions, & thoughts
- Calms the mind & body
- Strengthens mind-body connection
- Increases focus & attention
- Activates the parasympathetic nervous system & decreases stress
- Increases social & emotional awareness
- Cultivates sense of compassion & self-acceptance
- Creates space & freedom to grow

Long-term Outcomes of Mindfulness

- Increases overall health & well-being
- Increases social, emotional, & academic intelligence
- Improves behavioral, emotional, & mental regulation
- Enhances mental, physical, social, & academic performance
- Increases ability to respond vs. react
- Reduces overall stress, anxiety, & burnout
- Enhances spatial perception, coordination, & ability to learn new movements
- Reduces tension & risk of injury
- Helps maintain posture & balance
- Increases happiness & feelings of satisfaction

Connecting Mindfulness to Music

Based on your own philosophy of music, what might these connections look like?

I use music as a way to connect with students in order to help them evolve as humans. I value process over product.

Body & Breath Awareness

Supports mind-body connection,
Enhances spatial awareness,
Reduces tension,
Helps with posture, balance, & coordination

Individual & Ensemble Work

Helps students to be more present & focused,
Supports social awareness,
Builds compassion, self-awareness, & confidence

Musicianship & Expression

Encourages appropriate response to and present moment awareness of sensations, emotions & thoughts,
Supports a response vs reaction



Mindful Movement



Body Awareness:

Grounding into the floor

Breath Awareness:

Breathing exercises (box, counting)

Spatial Awareness:

Walking meditation

Community Building:

Tree Pose → Community tree pose

Tension Release:

Neck rotations (clock visualization)

Posture:

Cactus arms or touching opposite ears

Mindful Listening

Resonant Sounds:

Sound Source Ideas:
Gong, Chime or Bell, Bowl,
Sustained Piano

With closed eyes, students...

raise their hands when they hear the sound begin & lower their hands when they can no longer hear it.

take a collective inhale. On your cue, exhale as the gong gently sounds.



Student Created Sounds:

Rubbing Hands Together:
Good for wiggly students
Creates a calming sound

Humming:

Vibrations stimulate vagus nerve & activate parasympathetic nervous system.

Ask students to notice where they feel the vibrations.

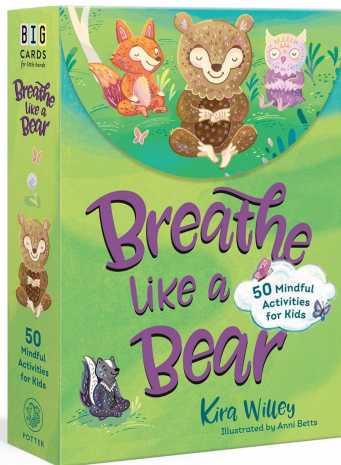
Enhances focus & attention

Helps beginning instrument students with style & phrasing

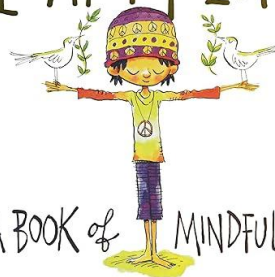
Silence is also an option...

Books & Cards to Support Mindfulness

*Breathe
like a Bear*



I AM PEACE



A BOOK of MINDFULNESS

BY SUSAN VERDE · ART BY PETER H. REYNOLDS

Also in the
series:
I am Yoga
I am We
and more!

Alphabreaths



Consistency is Key

Mindfulness is a Practice.

Doing it every day makes it less “weird”.

Students come to expect (& LOVE) it!

Benefits students who are overwhelmed by settling them in.

Benefits students who are easily overwhelmed by initially creating a calm environment.



Based on your
schedule, what can you
commit to?

Thank you!

Let me know how it's going!

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