**Bringing *Mindfulness* and *Oneness* into the Classroom: Dissolve Anxiety**

**to Enhance Learning** by Manisha Ranade & Linda Cirulli-Burton  
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**Part1: Mindfulness in the classroom**

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**Stress = response to a demanding situation**

* Fight/ flight/ freeze response impedes learning

Sympathetic nervous system 🡪 fight or flight

Parasympathetic nervous system 🡪 rest and digest

* Eustress and distress; beneficial vs chronic stress

What is mindfulness?

* Being present fully
* Meditation – concentration/awareness
* Awareness without judgement
* Compassion

Benefits

* Reduce stress
* Remove distracting negative talk
* Improve wellbeing and health (autonomous nervous system and immune system)
* Rewire the brain - Current brain research indicates that mindfulness helps create new neural pathways

**From Yoga therapy**  
\* Origin of disease – psychosomatic, stressful lifestyle-based ailments

***Mind is restless, busy with thoughts, emotions, worries***

***↓***

***Disturbance in Prana – disturbed breath rate, sleep, heart rate up, digestion disturbed***

***↓***

***Affects Body level – lower immunity, weakest organ gets disease***

For dealing with restless mind, one can practice mindfulness or meditation.

Many colleges and universities have weblinks to mindfulness or guided meditations, that are easily accessible. Counseling centers also offer meditation.

**Mindfulness module for extra credit: Assignments include short meditations, long meditations, Mindful/mindless activity journaling and reflections**

Student reflection responses

*What helped:*

* *Reduced my stress level*
* *Felt like I could fall asleep*
* *Breathing in and out helped calmed me*

*What didn't help:*

* *Made me feel relaxed but also kind of on edge*

*At the beginning of the meditation, I was somewhat skeptical that I’d feel any sort of affects during the meditation. About five minutes in, I found myself becoming more relaxed, and I could finally stop fidgeting. I could feel my breathing slowing considerably, as I focused on the voice in the recording.*

**Mindfulness in the classroom exercises**

* Guided meditation using relaxation yoga methods
  + Breath counting or long exhalations - 1:1.5 or 1:2 ratio of inhalation: exhalation
  + 1 minute silent and 5 minutes guided instructions practice
* Cell phone attendance – removing distractions
  + Three-week trial with bonus for punctual cell phone sign-ins
* UCLA mindful awareness center (at home)

<https://www.uclahealth.org/marc/mindful-meditations> - 3min, 5min, 19 mi, sleep specific

* Student suggestions – headspace app, abdominal breathing, books on meditation, deep work

**Tips for educators**

* Create a class community, earn trust prior to mindful exercises
* Model mindful teaching
* Not all classes are favorable
* Provide options– eyes open or closed, breathing rates or times
* Before tests is a good time

**Reference readings**

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