

## Creating a Mindful Classroom - Tips for Educators

Even if your school has not yet caught on to the mindfulness movement, you can create moments of mindfulness in the classroom. Consider this famous quote by William James, one of the fathers of modern psychology: *"The faculty of voluntarily bringing back a wandering attention, over and over again, is the very root of judgment, character, and will. . . An education which should improve this faculty would be the education par excellence"*

Try these simple ideas for cultivating mindfulness with your students. They will create moments of calm that will foster a learning atmosphere, and at the same time help you become a more resilient educator.

1. **Before the students arrive** - breathe. Reset your nervous system by taking a few deep breaths, focusing on the exhale. Set the tone for the class by letting your students see a calm teacher as they enter the room. If you are new to this practice, it may seem like a tall order at first. Trust in the fact the mindfulness practices have a cumulative effect. Over time you will feel the benefits.
2. **Teach your students a little bit about the nervous system** - This can be achieved whether you teach science or art, high school students or first graders. **Try This:** With younger students simply explain that taking deep breaths calms fears and is like wrapping a warm blanket around the body. With older students go into a little more depth about the brain stem, the mid-brain and amygdala (our ancient alarm system), and the "neo-brain." For more information on the brain and the nervous system go to [mindfulhub.com](http://mindfulhub.com) and check out our free articles.
3. **Set up a reward system** - for students who exhibit mindfulness.
4. **Make a poster for your class room with Hebb's axiom** - "Neurons that fire together wire together" to remind students that they are shaping habits of thought every day.
5. **As much as possible, face problematic behavior with equanimity** - Equanimity is defined as mental calmness, composure. It is the ability to react evenly to ALL situations, good and bad.
6. **Bring nature into the class room** - No matter what your teaching discipline strive to help your students reconnect with nature. We are all suffering from a deficit of connection with nature. Teach your students that this is an easy way to calm the nervous system.
7. **Take a breath when the bell rings to signal the end of a class** - End each period as you began, with a few deep breaths. Imagine you are a monk or a nun in a monastery. The purpose of the bells are not only to remind you to go to move on to the next task, but also to bring you back to the present moment.
8. **Ask students to recall a happy memory - Try this visualization with your students:** If you are a math or science teacher, make the memory about counting or nature. If you are a language arts or fine arts teacher, the memory could be about anything. Students will start to have positive associations with your classroom!
9. **Become a mindfulness crusader** - Tell your administrator about mindfulness trainings for teachers.
10. **Be mindful of mother Teresa's philosophy:** "If you can't feed 100 people, feed only one" and "You can do no great things, only small things with great love." Keep in mind that you may not be able to single-handedly fix the education system, but you can plant small seeds, one student at a time. This mindset will help you prevent burn-out.

***We wish you twenty minutes of mindfulness every day!***

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