

**PROJECT SMART PARTICIPANT TEAM REPORTS FOR FALL & SPRING SEMESTERS
FOR OSWEGO MIDDLE SCHOOL WITH IHE CHRISTINE WALSH
EDU 525 CREATING COLLABORATIVE SPACES FOR LEARNING**

Participant's Names: **Beth Stevens & Carrie Ackerman**

ACTION: Describe specifically how the Creating Collaborative Spaces for Learning themes are incorporated into your project to cultivate and support student learning.

We are looking to apply for grants and get materials to create a mindful space that students can use as a scheduled time throughout their day when we know they need a few minutes to get themselves back together before going onto the next class. Currently these students don't have a calming place that they can go to as part of their day and we are lacking the supplies necessary to create one.

RATIONALE: Fully state your **rationale** for the project. Why is this work important?

Some of the students that we have currently with IEP's (as well as non iep students) need time built into their day to regroup so to speak, in a calm place that isn't as stale as a typical classroom. They would benefit from calming lights and things in the room as well as items to help them be mindful of themselves and their space. We would look at getting grants to provide the funding for the materials knowing that getting money through the district to do this would be a huge challenge.

RESPONSIBILITIES/TIMELINE: Identify a series of **action steps** you will take to complete your project. Next to each step, identify person(s) **responsible** for carrying out that task. For each step also identify your **timeline** (during what month(s) you plan to complete each step).

1. Develop a tentative list of desired materials to include in the room in order to get an idea of how much money would be needed (Carrie and Beth- October and November)
2. Seek out permission from administration and teacher (Carrie and Beth- September and October)
3. Identify and work on possible road blocks with the mindful room: discuss with Chris to problem solve (Carrie and Beth- November and December)
4. Identify at least 2 possible grants to apply for in order to get materials for this (Carrie and Beth- November and December)
5. Apply for the grants (Beth and Carrie- January)
6. If approved purchase materials for the room and work to set up room (Carrie and Beth- Spring 2018)

EVALUATION: What **data** will you collect that shows the impact of your project on teacher and student learning? How will you document student learning? Teacher learning?

We will collect data before and after with the students. Some we will take note if there is a reduction in behavior issues with some. We will take note if grades improv with others.

RESOURCES: What resources will you need for this project? What costs, if any, will be incurred? What are possible sources of funding for needed resources?

Resources we will need:

Amazon for research of possible items and costs. Also, Ideas and websites for possible grants

Costs: We shouldn't incur any additional costs to the program to do this or from either of us.

Sources of funding- grants

UPDATE: Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan.

We originally had thought about applying for 2 grants only. We have changed our plan to include 2 grants and a donorschoose.org page. We also had thought about going in a certain direction with some plants in the room however after research of plants/greenery we have decided to go in a different direction with plants if we receive funding. Another change that we made was that we took ideas for the mindful room as far as fidgets, flexible seating as well as animals and tried to start applying them in our own classrooms in order to see the effects on students. We felt this would allow us to gather data as far as what would really be beneficial in our room.

ANALYSIS OF DATA ON TEACHER LEARNING: We examined our reflections/student and teacher assessment and found the following: (Support each claim with examples/evidence).

1. Grant writing can be challenging as well as time consuming.
 - A. Researching and sorting through available grants is hard (there are many grants available however the project that we had in mind struggled to meet the criteria set forth by most of the grants.
 - B. We applied for one grant and were denied within a month of filing.
 - C. A second grant that we applied for took more than 3 hours to complete the appropriate form online for it and we will not find out the results of that until at least June 30, 2018.
 - D. We ended up setting up a donorschoose.org page and that is a struggle due to needing a picture, so we had to make sure all students included were allowed to be in the picture and we felt very strange about posting this to Facebook due to the fact it lists our students as special needs and includes a picture (however you cannot see student faces in the picture).
2. Teachers and students did agree on some aspects of a mindful moments room.
 - A. Teachers and students both agreed that a mindful moments room would be beneficial. 86% of teachers surveyed felt it would be helpful and 100% of students surveyed said it would be helpful.
 - B. Teachers felt that students needed flexible seating in this room with over 92% saying it was important. Students felt this was important with a percentage of 71%.
 - C. Teachers and student both felt it should be a scheduled time in their day with 85% of teachers saying it should and 72% of students agreeing.
3. Teachers and students did not always agree on certain aspects of the room.
 - A. Teachers felt that plants would be beneficial in the room with 71% agreeing however students did not feel this would be important with 0% selecting this option.
 - B. Teacher felt calming music should be available in the room with 78% saying it was important and 57% of the students surveyed saying it was important to have it in the room.
 - C. Teachers felt that a sand table would be beneficial in the room however the students felt that food was more important in the room.

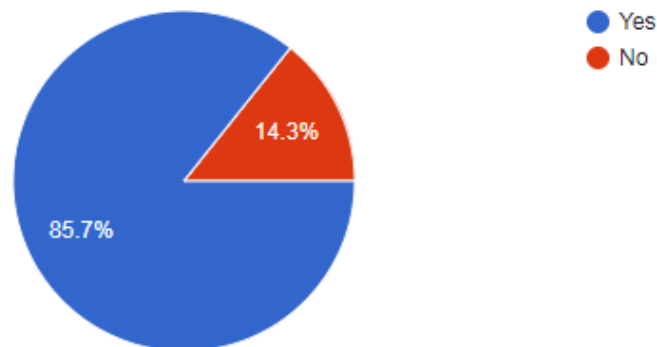
ANALYSIS OF DATA ON STUDENT LEARNING: We examined student behaviors and reactions and found the following: (Give examples/evidence for each claim).

1. Animals seem to have a calming effect on all students in the room.
 - A. Gerbils were purchased for one of the two classrooms (with one specific student in mind). All students gravitated to them and would watch them quietly for several minutes before calmly starting work. Before the gerbils were in the room all students entered the room in a more elevated state of energy.
 - B. Students are quieter in the room knowing that the gerbils are sensitive to sound. Teaching students' strategies to help select seating/fidget options to help them self-regulate
2. Feet fidgets were purchased for both classrooms (bands with noodles on legs of chairs).
 - A. Each teacher did 5-6 desks in their room providing students with choice about seating when they felt escalated.
 - B. We have found that some students find this to be a calming tool during times when they are at an elevated or anxious state or during independent seat work writing time.
 - C. Some students refuse to sit at a desk with a feet fidget no matter what state they are in.
 - D. We have observed that some students cannot handle having this on the desk they are at (cause a classroom disruption intentionally by snapping it with their feet repeatedly or by moving the band up and down on the leg of the desk repeatedly).
3. One classroom has a ball chair and weighted blankets and one has a bean bag chair.
 - A. Students enjoy sitting in the bean bag chair during lessons involving the smart board but not when doing independent work.
 - B. Students using the ball chair seem to be similar in needs/behaviors and always select to sit in the ball chair during all activities.
 - C. Students seem to be able to identify their needs at this age without being directed by the teacher.
 - D. One specific student selects to use the weighted blanket during math class and in resource. He does not fidget with it but chooses to wear it on his head as he feels this is calming.

Teacher responses

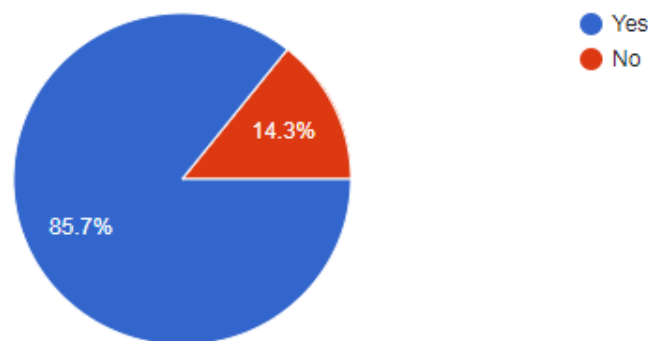
Do you think a Mindful Moment Room would be good for our students?

14 responses



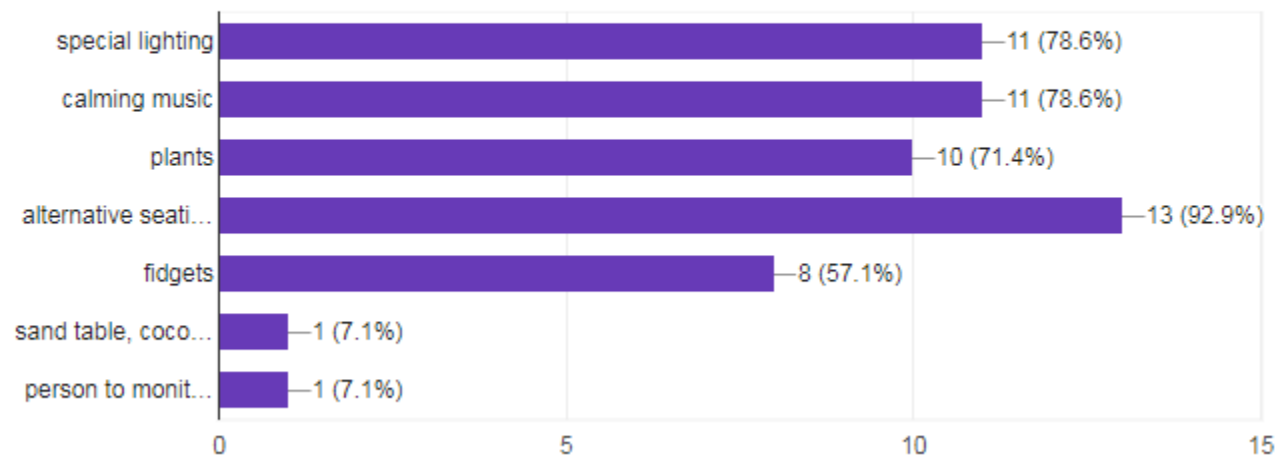
Do you think it is a good idea to make it scheduled into a student's day so it is pre-planned and a preventative measure?

14 responses



In your opinion, what would be a good use of this space?

14 responses



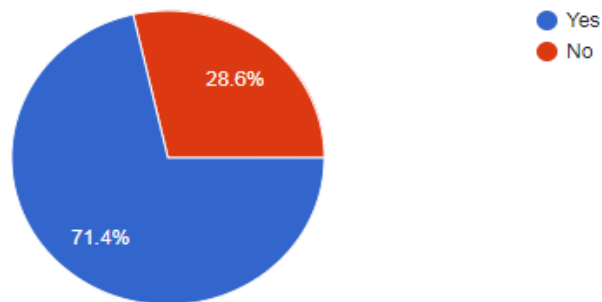
Student Responses

Do you think it is a good idea for school to have a room you could go to that would help get your body feeling back to normal after being somewhere that is high energy?



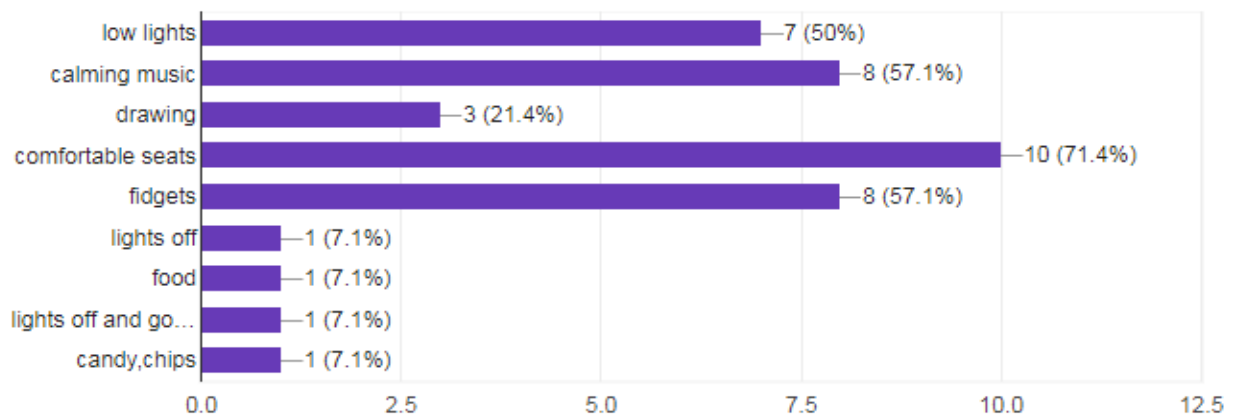
Do you think this should be a set time in a students schedule so they can count on being able to go there?

14 responses



If you went to a room like this what would help you?

14 responses



Participant's Name: Carole A Lloyd

ACTION: Describe specifically how the Creating Collaborative Spaces for Learning themes are incorporated into your project to cultivate and support student learning.

I am incorporating Course Objective #1 (Examine research related to communication, collaboration and change, and draw implications for one's own teaching and student learning).

I am incorporating Course Objective #3 (Choose a path for deeper exploration by examining one field of study, curricular program or instructional practice (e.g., Calm Classroom; Non-Violent Communication; Restorative Justice; Flexible seating; Deep Listening; Trauma-Sensitive Teaching; Reading/Writing Workshop; Behavior Management, Parent and Community engagement, Responsive Classroom).

I am incorporating Course Objective #4 (Collect /analyze and report data on impacts of this project on teaching and learning).

New technologies can be a valuable addition to student work, but students don't necessarily adapt to them immediately. Having faced the challenge of offering a technology that went largely unused, we have a few recommendations for institutions designing collaborative study spaces.

1. Make it obvious.
2. Market it.
3. Model it.
4. Modify as needed

Not sure about this technology piece that SUNY put into the action plan like they want us to incorporate technology. May remove.

RATIONALE: Fully state your **rationale** for the project. Why is this work important?

I would like to explore the obfuscation of education, how it is my hypothesis that technology, which was infused into education to aid student learning has instead obfuscated the problem with extraneous information. Computers cannot become glorified pencils. Children that are constantly connected with phones and computers are distracted and it interrupts the way we teach, and the way they learn. It is imperative that we must empower students and equip them with skills to learn rather than rely on others to engage them.

Additionally, I would like to delve into the feasibility of "No Child Left Behind" and the peril it has placed our students in educationally. We are not teaching students to think and problem solve and take responsibility for their own education. Students seem to know or expect that they will be passed on whether they know the material or not. They in turn, choose to drop out of school rather than take on the monumental task of learning the material that they have failed to become proficient at throughout their elementary/beginning secondary years (K-8).

RESPONSIBILITIES/TIMELINE: Identify a series of **action steps** you will take to complete your project. Next to each step, identify person(s) **responsible** for carrying out that task. For each step also identify your **timeline** (during what month(s) you plan to complete each step).

Focus Activity on a Daily Basis in class – Students check in using an entry ticket assessment (data will be collected and analyzed for growth)

Collect student data on assessments and analyze for improvement (growth/retardation)

Have students keep track of time spent on studying and/or practicing material. Collect data on the amount of time students studied and practiced to become proficient in the material and make a comparison based on data. Have students reflect on the amount of time they have studied/practiced at the end of each week

Teacher reflection on a weekly basis (observations) journal to record how focus activity is being employed by students and results.

Weekly collaboration time with other educators to discuss what we have observed from our journal entries.

EVALUATION: What **data** will you collect that shows the impact of your project on teacher and student learning? How will you document student learning? Teacher learning?

1. Teacher observations will be recorded in a journal to help reflect on whether this was a successful study. Did I see any relevant issues that would show the need to re-evaluate district policy and law of the “No Child Left Behind Act?”
2. Teacher collaboration, sharing of journal entries, student data, and ideas once a week (or as much as possible).
3. Evaluate students’ knowledge of material for growth and understanding of their ownership of their education. Determine whether the obfuscation of education is relevant based on data analysis.

RESOURCES: What resources will you need for this project? What costs, if any, will be incurred? What are possible sources of funding for needed resources?

1. Reading Fostering Resilient Learners, Several Authors, Edited by Ellen Oh
2. Reading The Innovator’s Mindset by George Couros
3. Reading the Article “How the edTPA Disrupts Relationships: Reclaiming our visions and integrity” by Mara Sapon-Shevin and Sue Novinger Robb
4. Everything is Miscellaneous: the power of the new digital disorder by David Weinberger
5. “The Impact of No Child Left Behind on Students, Teachers, and Schools” by Thomas S. Dee and Brian A. Jacob
6. “10 Ways to Promote Student Engagement” by Maryellen Weimer, PhD
7. “6 Metacognitive Strategies for Middle and High School Classrooms” by Thomas Armstrong
8. “Student Engagement: Is It Authentic or Compliant?” by Peter DeWitt

UPDATE: Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan.

One change that I made from the original action plan was to also include a piece about building significant relationships with my students by sharing more of myself with them. Over the months, I have shared my life with them at different times where it seemed important to the class, or to an individual, that day. I also have invited students to my room for lunch as an alternative to the chaotic lunchroom environment. Students come to my classroom and eat their lunch and work on their math assignments, getting input from me where necessary. I think this has deepened relationships with several students. They can talk to me about their lives, I can ask students questions about their past learning experiences, and it all helps me figure out how to get my content through to them.

I have also taken opportunities to have mindful moments in my classroom as well. There are days when students are feeling anxious and agitated. Doing a breathing activity or mindful imagery exercise helps students calm down, and in turn, they are more amenable to focusing on math class.

These changes that I made involved expanding my project of self (and student)-regulation of stress levels and mindful thinking to include using focus activities with my students when I felt it would benefit their ability to focus and reduce stress levels. I chose to practice mindful activities, breathing exercises, and story-telling into my class activities. If I could reduce their stress levels to help them better focus on my curriculum, I would likewise benefit from that personally and professionally.

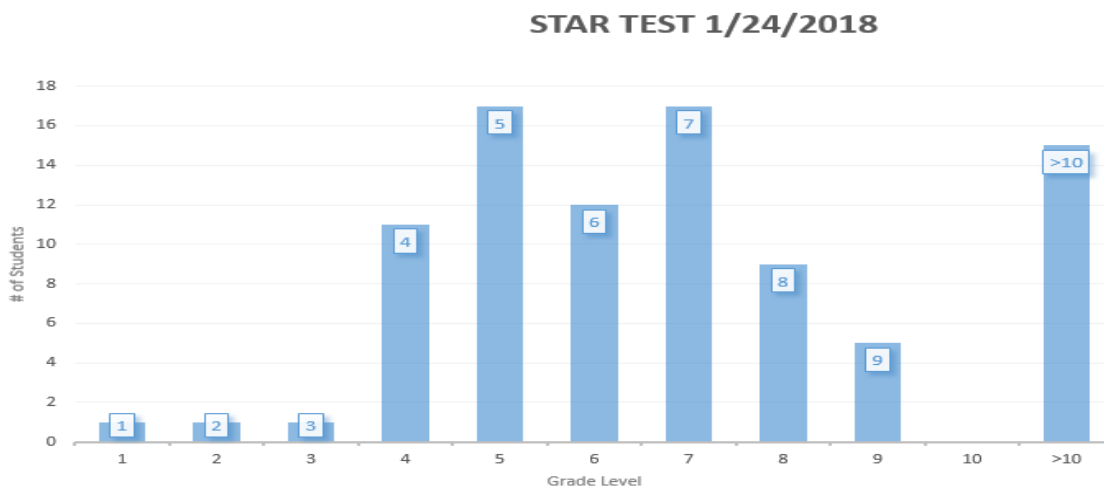
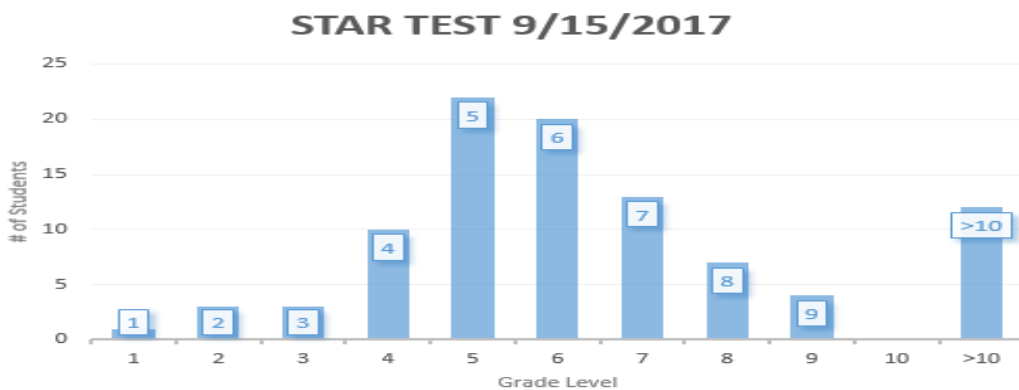
Finally, I initially proposed investigating the educational law No Child Left Behind and what I felt was the demise of student learning because of it. As I have been doing my research, I found out that the No Child Left Behind Act has been reformed and is now called Every Student Succeeds Act. I was also under the impression that the growing percentages of students that fall far short of understanding content in their grade levels but are still passed on to the next grade was due to this educational law. I have found that although it may be due to the law, I cannot blame the law for the growing number of students that are not ready for the next grade level each year.

ANALYSIS OF DATA ON TEACHER LEARNING:

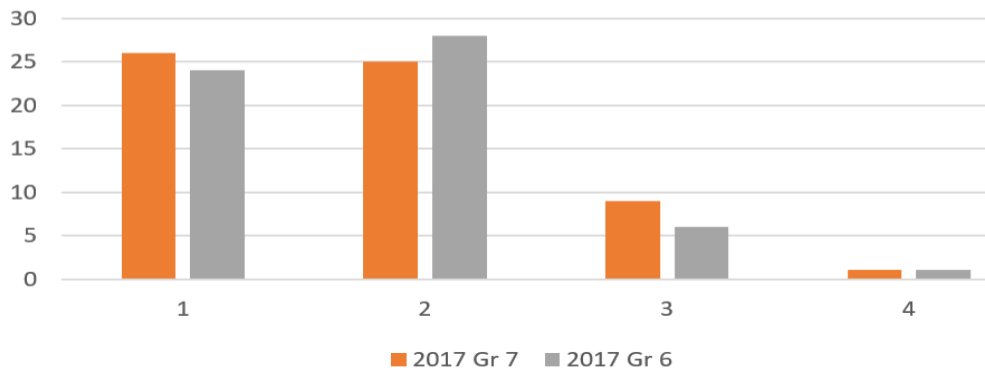
I examined my reflections and found the following: (Support each claim with examples/evidence)

- 1) I have taken on the role of encourager to students as they learn new concepts. My students come into 7th grade math with varying levels of success, from a first-grade level all the way through to high school level of math aptitude. It is challenging to reach and teach all students at all levels of expertise. I feel that as I share my life with them at opportune times, and I allow students to share their lives and experiences with me and/or the class, it will make them more comfortable to be able to work with me, ask questions about difficult concepts, make mistakes, and try again, until they get it right.
- 2) I have been observing the downward spiral of student ability since teaching my first year in 2007-08. In that first year, a 9th grade male student worked with me after school frequently. He worked hard and had a difficult time with math. He broke down crying one day after school and shared with me that he had not understood math since 6th grade. However, despite his wish to be retained, he continued to progress through the grades anyway with little understanding of the growing difficult math theories. I have seen this pattern of low ability levels and have wondered what is going on.

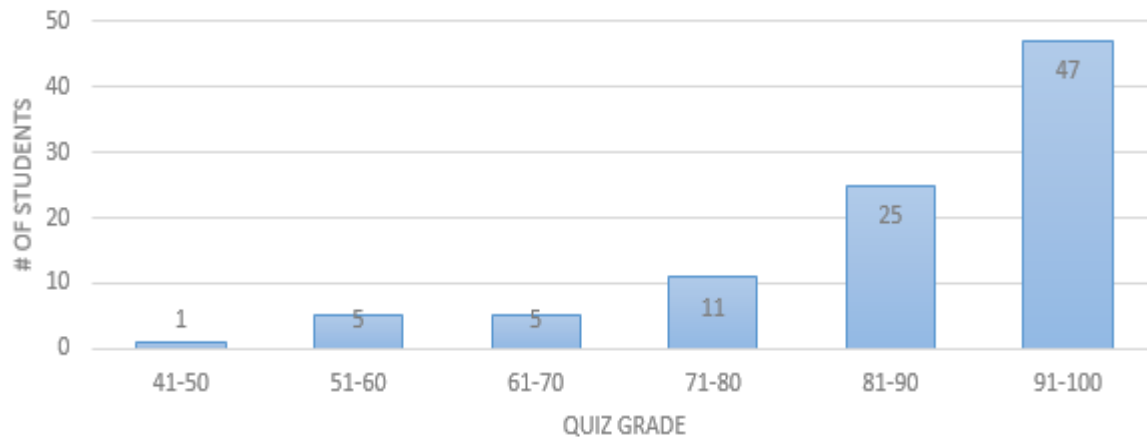
I have gathered assessment results from Star Tests, State Tests, and my math assessments to try and understand my students' abilities better. The results of the current year's students as follows:



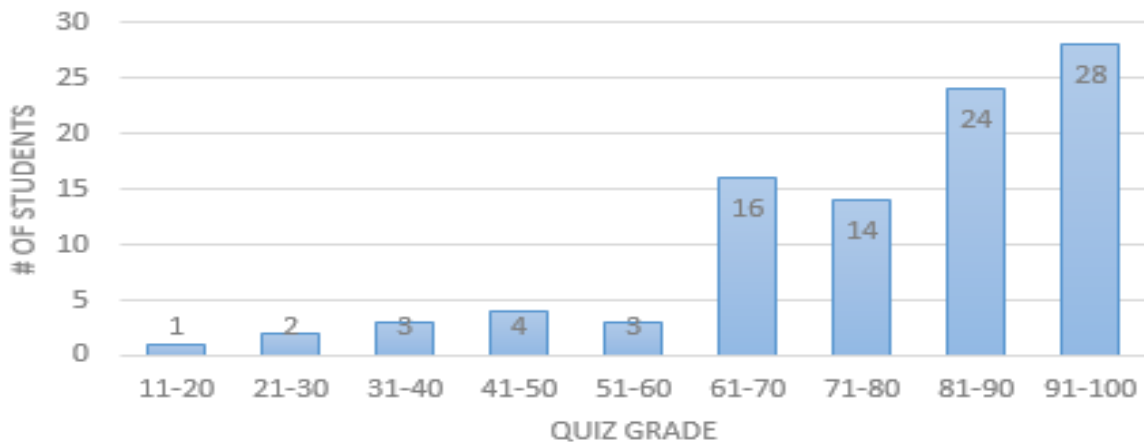
State Test Math Results
Incoming Students Grades 7 & 6
 1 (lowest proficiency) to 4 (highest proficiency)



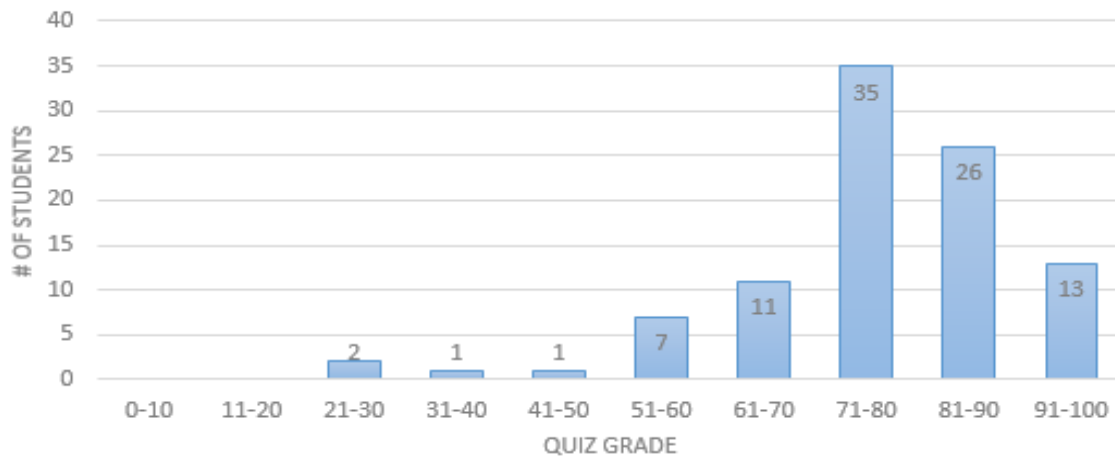
QUIZ SCORES QTR 1



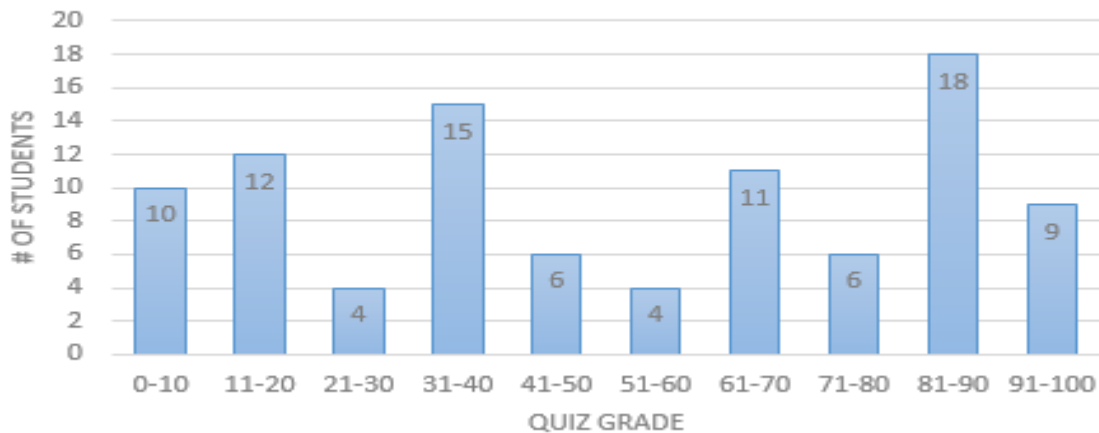
Quiz SCORES Qtr 2



QUIZ SCORES QTR 3



QUIZ SCORES QTR 4



- 3) I have noticed through data collection and analysis of my focus activity, student assessment analysis (growth/retardation), data collection on the amount of time students are devoting to studying and practicing math concepts, that many students are very inconsistent in completing my assignments accurately, inconsistent with their study habits, and have yet to understand that it is a continuing effort to regularly complete homework to the best of their ability, and study notes, AND study all their work to be successful on assessments.
- 4) The majority of my students entered 7th grade at a 5th grade level. I have observed growth by January which is good. However, I have noticed an increasing number of students that are not consistent with their work ethic. They do not put forth the necessary efforts to maintain, or indicate growth, in their math understanding. Possible conclusions may be that many students are facing some type of trauma that is making them avoid hard work, be anxious, or even clingy. They are impulsive, hyperactive, tired, and inattentive, have difficulty solving problems, whether social or intellectual. Also, there is a reduced ability to focus, organize, and process information, and a loss of recent academic achievements or skills.

I have explored the field of study of “flexible seating” to see if students are better focused after alternative seating/or movement around the classroom. I group my students in assigned seats by academic levels, mixing all the students so that strong students sit with weaker students. They work in groups frequently. This seating arrangement gives students the cooperative learning help that they all can be supported by as well as allows them to have a space of ownership where they belong, every day that does not change. I have a standing desk in my classroom that students may stand at during class. I have one student who frequently makes all kinds of noises. I have consulted with a fellow teacher about this issue. That student

now uses a weighted pillow and the frequency of his disturbances has lessened. He wears the pillow either on his head or around his shoulders. I use a yoga ball chair for students to sit on. Certain students like sitting there and it helps them stay focused and attentive to the lesson(s).

I have told students that they can do anything academically. They need to believe in their abilities, believe they can learn, including that they can overcome and learn from failure.

And... if a teacher is perceived as approachable, well prepared, and sensitive to student needs, students are committed to work harder, get more out of the session, and are more willing to express their opinion.

Further, I have been teaching students to be independent of adults, not more dependent on adults. The students have come into 7th grade with the expectation that they do not need to do the work. If they ask enough times, someone is going to do the work for them. Getting students to stop taking all my materials is something else I am working on with them to help them to become more independent. I have given away HUNDREDS of pencils over the year. Students eat the erasers off them, take them instead of returning them, break them, and do not respect the fact that this is not their property. It seems menial to bring this up. However, it is a growing result of more and more students (both students living in poverty as well as entitled students), abusing the hand that freely gives materials to enable student success.

I continue to have a very predictable classroom. We check for preparedness every morning, do a warm-up in the same format every day (I show students how to do a problem, then give them their own problem to complete). We then progress to the lesson, practice, homework, and students are released for the day. It is a fast-paced class in which the students know what to expect every part of the class.

I have taken many surveys this year to help my students understand how successful they are. One survey I took with the students in the fall of 2017 asked the students why they could not perform a simple subtraction procedure. The responses I received from my classes were that students are:

- 1) Lazy
- 2) Stubborn
- 3) Not paying attention
- 4) Certain students do not want to learn
- 5) Some students talk all the time
- 6) Some students keep distracting others by singing, making noises

Another survey I took assessed how many students spent at least fifteen minutes on math work the night before. I asked for a show of hands and I wrote a fraction on the board in which the students had to convert it to a decimal and then a percent. The results follow:

Period 1: 45%
Period 3: 35%
Period 5: 50%
Period 6: 72%
Period 9: 63%

I assessed them again a week later, again asking how many students spent at least fifteen minutes on mark work the night before. The results were:

Period 1: 60%
Period 3: 48%
Period 5: 66%
Period 6: 58%
Period 9: 72%

All but one class spent more time studying than the previous week.

Assessed a 3rd time on the same topic showed:

Period 1: 61%

Period 3: 53%

Period 5: 66%

Period 6: 56%

Period 9: 66%

Students are exhausted, not studying, not reading books, not listening, and are highly distracted. It seems to be a common theme that students are tired when they come to school in the mornings. Upon inquiring with the students, I found yet another issue that was causing exhaustion is the result of a highly popular game currently, Fortnite. Upgrades for the game are released at 4AM every morning and students are getting up to start playing the latest changes.

ANALYSIS OF DATA ON STUDENT LEARNING:

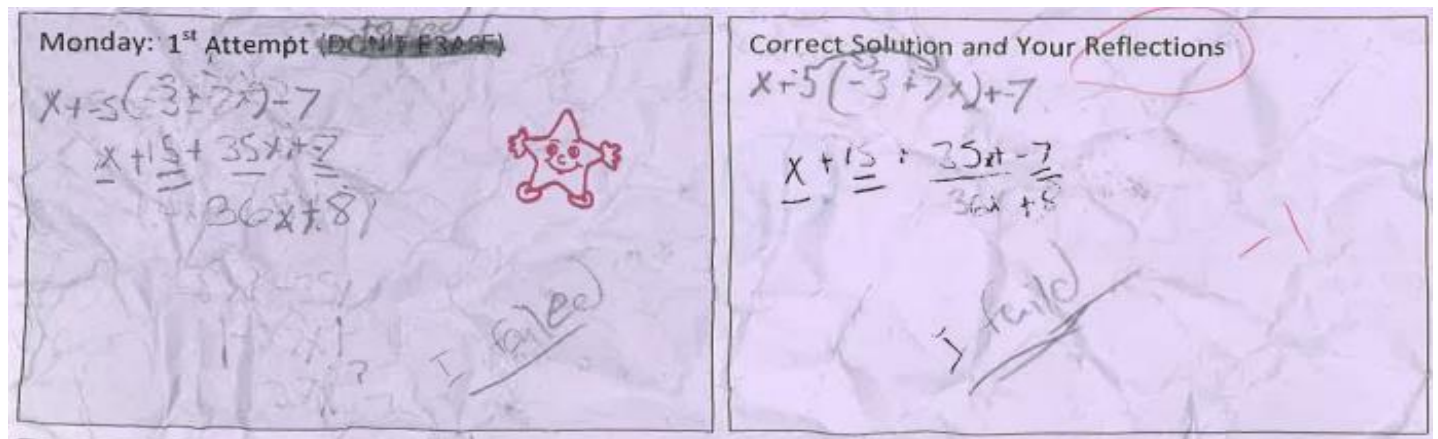
I examined 1) my student reflections on their daily math warm-ups, 2) data collection on the amount of time students are devoting to studying, practicing math concepts, reading, 3) attendance records, and 4) other pertinent pieces of data that seem to hinder student learning.

My findings are listed as follows: (Give examples/evidence for each claim).

Many of my students have not grasped the meaning of reflecting on their work. Some of them have a difficult time figuring out where they went wrong when solving the problem. When I look over their work, I follow their train of thought and explain to them what they could have reflected. Other students have the tendency of complaining to me that they did it my way (the teacher's way) and they got the problem wrong. They further reflect that if they had done it their way, it would have been right. I have explained to students more than once that I am teaching them the 7th grade method of solving the problem and they are still doing it the elementary way. As problems increase in difficulty, they are going to have difficulty solving problems if they do not advance in their learning. I am completely amenable to them thinking outside the box. However, there are some things they absolutely need to be able to do to be successful in their current math year as well as the years to come.

Examples of student work reflecting the various interruptions to learning that I have experienced this year:

Student crossed off "DON'T ERASE" and wrote "to bad." Grammar is not of good quality either, should have been "too bad." Student also crumpled up the paper after I handed it back graded and called him to my desk to discuss what he did. He seemed stunned that I was addressing this with him. I found the paper crumpled up in the recycle bin. That is why it is a crumpled scan.



This second example on the left is the grade of a student who was failing my class during Quarter 2. After the class dismissed, I found this paper under the student's chair. This may be what he was focusing on instead of the math. There are so many cultural and social issues that these 12 and 13-year olds are facing.

Math

Ms. Lloyd, per 9

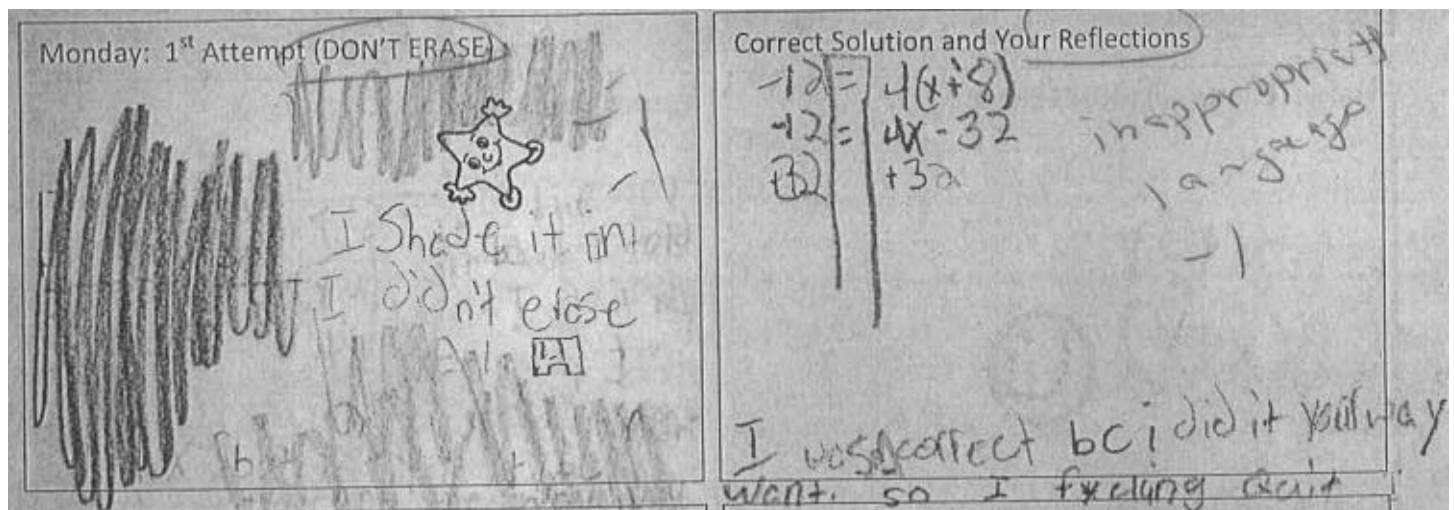
48.0% F

2nd ten weeks

Due 12/22 Homework #21: Distributing, Equations, Fractions *missing*



This is an example of a student who "did not erase" but shaded in his work instead so he (or I) could not see his work. Further, he reflected inappropriately and used the f-bomb in his reflection because he wanted me to know that he did it my way. Regrettably, I needed to call his mother and discuss his inappropriateness.



This student let me know that he “did not reflect.” He loses a point when he does not reflect appropriately.

Correct Solution and Your Reflections

$$\frac{4}{9} \div \frac{1}{3}$$
$$\frac{4}{9} \cdot \frac{3}{1} = \frac{4}{3}$$
$$= 1\frac{1}{3}$$

I didn't do it

inappropriate reflection

The same student then wrote later in the week, “I didn’t understand.” He is a very bright student but has an arrogance about him that prevents him from reaching his full capabilities.

Correct Solution and Your Reflections

$$\frac{120-500}{500} = \frac{-380}{500}$$
$$= -0.76$$
$$\times 100$$
$$= -76$$

76% dec

I didn't understand

Look at and study your notes; effort is necessary

Finally, after writing that he did not do a reflection, then writing that he did not understand what he was doing on a second day's reflection, his weekly reflection said he had a “good week.” Baffling...

Weekly Reflection: Tell me how you did this week. Are there any topics we covered this week that you need more practice with?

good week

This student is doing very poorly socially and academically. My suggestions are jotted on the bottom, listing some possible strategies to be implemented to help motivate this student to better learn by performing an ALSUP report and/or taking computer privileges away from the student with the hopes that it will motivate him to change his behaviors and be able to earn back computer privileges when he is not interrupting class.

		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Life Science	Mr. Platten	0	0	2-	
PE 7B EAST	Mr. Bond	A-	C-	C	
Social Studies 7	Mrs. Sterio				
English 7	Mr. Livingston	C-	F	F	
CFM section 9	Mr. Bradish	C+			
CFM section 8	Mr. Bradish		B		
Health	Mrs. Rector				
Tech 7	Mr. McCrobie	A			
7th Grade Technology	Mr. Meaney				
Home and Career Skills 7	Ms. Crossman				A
Math	Ms. Lloyd	F	F	F	

Attendance					
Absent	5 days this year	2	3	0	
Tardy	1 periods this year	0	1	0	

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Math F 40.7%

3 assignments are missing

		Score	Worth
1/29	Homework #25: Inequalities	3 / 14	F x 14
1/31	HW #28: Inequalities	4 / 14	F x 14
2/2	Participation	2 / 5	F x 5
2/2	Weekly Warm-Up #16 (purple)	3 / 15	F x 15
2/2	HW #27: Percent Proportions stayed after school to complete	2 / 3	D x 3
2/2	Percent Proportion/Percent Equation	22%	F x 18
2/7	HW #28: Percent	6 / 14	F x 14
2/9	Homework #29 (Percents)	8 / 12	D x 12
2/9	Participation	4 / 4	A+ x 4
2/9	Weekly Warm-up #17 (blue)	9 / 12	C x 12
2/14	Homework #30 (Percent) did not turn in assignment, points deducted for late work, unless absent	3 / 14	F x 14
2/16	HW #31: Percent/Decimal did not turn in when due	missing / 3	F x 3
2/16	Participation	3 / 5	F x 5
2/16	Weekly Warm-Up #18 (yellow)	2 / 15	F x 15
2/16	Quiz 4-4: Percent Increase & Decrease, Simple Interest	55%	F x 20
2/28	Homework #32: Sales Tax stayed after school to complete	15 / 15	A+ x 15
3/2	Homework #33: Percent of Change did not turn in assignment, points deducted unless absent	missing / 14	F x 14
3/2	Participation	2 / 4	F x 4
3/2	Weekly Warm-Up #19: (lavender) did not turn in	missing / 12	F x 12
3/7	Homework #34: Cumulative Review	12 / 12	A+ x 12

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ALSUP Resources
 Computer Privileges Taken Away,
 Earn ⁱⁿ privileges back
 when not interrupting
 class
 Next Year?
 ↑

All strategies have been unsuccessful to date.

Goal 1: Do what the teacher asks- Follow Directions

Goal 2: Stay quiet while the teacher is talking

	Goal 1	Goal 2	Teacher Initials
Science:	X	cl	
Literacy:	X	CH	
Phys. Ed:			
Social Studies:	MS	MS	MS
English:	X	AD	
Health:			Goal day
Home/Careers:			
Math Enrichment:			
Study Hall:			
Math :			

We then tried implementing a goal sheet. The student needed to achieve the two goals written on the sheet and each teacher initialed if he could do it. By the afternoon, student could not adhere to the goals. That also has not been a successful intervention.

CFM section 1 Mr. Bradish, per 1	82.3% B- 2nd ten weeks
Physical Education--7 Mrs. Shannon, per 2 Due 12/21 GYM orSWIM absent	16.7% F 2nd ten weeks
Social Studies 7 Mrs. Sterio, per 3 Due 11/28 4.3 Slavery in the Colonies absent	47.8% 2nd ten weeks
Life Science Mr. Platten, per 5	83.4% 3- 2nd ten weeks
Math Ms. Lloyd, per 6 Due Fri Participation Due Fri Weekly Warm-Up #13 (lavender) Due 12/20 Homework #20 (Fractions,Equations,Distributing) missing	38.7% F 2nd ten weeks
7th Grade Technology Mr. Meaney, per 7 Due 12/15 CAD Project 4 Choice missing	52.9% 2nd ten weeks
7th Grade Band Mr. Peer, per 8 Due Lesson week of 11-13-17 missing	80.0% B- 2nd ten weeks
English 7	53.7% F

Finally, this last student that I am going to show data on is an attendance issue. Per the guidance counselor, the student said that his mom works until 2:00AM at a restaurant in Syracuse and sometimes they oversleep. He also told her that he has been a bit sick and also taken some "mental health" days. At the start of school, he was out because he did not have the proper shots. He is a very intelligent young man, respectful, and could be very successful if he could consistently come to school.

Type	Date	Reason	
Late Arrival	12/22/2017 7:53 AM	Late - Excused	
Absent	12/21/2017		ch.
Late Arrival	12/19/2017 8:10 AM	Late - Unexcused	
Late Arrival	12/18/2017 11:19 AM	Late - Unexcused	
Absent	12/15/2017		= -134
Late Arrival	12/11/2017 10:13 AM	Late - Unexcused	= +34
Absent	12/8/2017		
Late Arrival	12/7/2017 10:55 AM	Late - Unexcused	
Absent	12/6/2017		+3
Late Arrival	11/30/2017 8:46 AM	Late - Unexcused	
Absent	11/29/2017		
Late Arrival	11/28/2017 11:13 AM	Late - Unexcused	
Absent	11/21/2017		
Late Arrival	11/17/2017 8:30 AM	Late - Unexcused	0
Late Arrival	11/15/2017 10:10 AM	Late - Excused	+3
Late Arrival	11/14/2017 7:58 AM	Late - Unexcused	
Absent	11/9/2017		
Absent	11/8/2017	Unexcused Absence	
Late Arrival	11/7/2017 11:04 AM	Late - Unexcused	
Absent	11/3/2017		
Late Arrival	11/2/2017 9:17 AM	Late - Unexcused	
Late Arrival	10/31/2017 9:42 AM	Late - Unexcused	
Late Arrival	10/30/2017 9:46 AM	Late - Unexcused	+3
Absent	10/25/2017		
Early Dismissal	10/24/2017 12:57 PM	Early Dismissal	
Late Arrival	10/13/2017 7:35 AM	Late - Unexcused	
Late Arrival	10/12/2017 9:10 AM	Late - Unexcused	
Absent	10/3/2017		
Absent	10/2/2017		+3
Absent	9/29/2017		
Absent	9/28/2017		
Absent	9/18/2017		7) $2n - 15 = 33$
Late Arrival	9/15/2017 7:35 AM	Late - Unexcused	
Early Dismissal	9/13/2017 12:55 PM	Early Dismissal - Unexcused	
Late Arrival	9/11/2017 7:37 AM	Late - Unexcused	

6) $-3y + 9 = 45$

Check:

8) $\frac{-7 \pm \sqrt{49 - 4(1)(-2)}}{2(1)} = \frac{-7 \pm \sqrt{41}}{2}$

Check:

9) $\frac{x}{4} - 3 = 7$

Check:

Conclusion:

This has been a tough year to teach. I have tried to be an encourager, told students to be strong and courageous, taught them how to quiz almost weekly for better results, and while I have tried being encouraging to them, I have also needed to personally fill my reserves for energy, stamina, ideas to teach something better, and just get through another day. John Quincy Adams said, "If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader." Attitude is an important attribute for teaching and learning. Not being afraid to do something different, to call students out to work harder, to teach them what to do with the notes that are to help them succeed with their homework questions, and to just be there for them to encourage them to finish an assignment are all steps I take to try to help them understand that they are powerful, smart, and important to our community.

I have faced many interesting barriers this year, as you can see by the pieces of data that I have collected. I truly think that the majority of our students have no idea what it means to learn, put an effort into memorizing math facts, word definitions, passages from a book, etc. How can they understand what it means to succeed or fail when many of them have lacked the skills to progress to the next grade, but advance anyway? Many of them are up half the night on their phones or play stations, getting the latest 4AM release of updates so they can start playing the virtual reality games, then come into school exhausted. Kindergarteners are getting themselves up for school, getting

themselves dressed, feeding themselves breakfast (if there is any food), because their parents are “not available” to them. Our students feel like they will do things their way, or fight me, the teacher, when I teach them how to do it in the natural progression of learning way. There are many students that have defiant attitudes and just want to make trouble. These attitudes are across the board, throughout the school, the school district, the state, and the United States. I have seen data where students are being advanced to the next grade in Arizona, Texas, California, and I am sure other states as well. High School Counselors are being told that they have to get more creative to try and make the graduation rates higher. If the students do not have the skills, how does it make any sense to put it on the counselors to try and squeak out a couple more graduates by changing the rules and making it easier for the student to do, even less?

So, I am performing mindfulness activities with my students, taking advantage of every flexible tool, gadget, desk, for my restless students to work at, and am making myself very available to them for any questions they may ask me to help one or two more become more successful. I know it is helping some of them.

I will end for now by sharing the starfish story of the man walking down the beach:

‘Once a man was walking along a beach. The sun was shining, and it was a beautiful day. Off in the distance, he could see a person going back and forth between the surf’s edge and the beach. Back and forth this person went. As the man approached, he could see that there were hundreds of starfish stranded on the sand as the result of the natural action of the tide. The man was stuck by the apparent futility of the task. There were far too many starfish. Many of them were sure to perish. As he approached, the person continued the task of picking up starfish, one by one, and throwing them into the surf. As he came up to the person he said, "You must be crazy. There are thousands of miles of beach covered with starfish. You can't possibly make a difference." The person looked at the man. He then stooped down and picked up one more starfish and threw it back into the ocean. He turned back to the man and said, "It sure made a difference to that one!"

I continue to know that I am an educator for a reason, to keep on searching for ways to touch students, to reach them mathematically, empathically, emotionally... I hope I am making a difference, one life at a time.

Participant’s Name: **Danielle Clemens**

ACTION: Describe specifically how the Creating Collaborative Spaces for Learning themes are incorporated into your project to cultivate and support student learning.

My intention for this action plan is to: (a) incorporate mindfulness practices into the classroom routine of my 7th period Spanish class in order to create a classroom climate that is productive and more conducive to learning; and (b) reflect upon how mindfulness practices have benefitted myself as a teacher, my students, and the climate of 7th period Spanish class in general. I may choose, at a later date, to incorporate the mindfulness practices into my other classes.

RATIONALE: Fully state your **rationale** for the project. Why is this work important?

This work is important for the overall success of this class (both academically and socially). I’m hoping that the mindfulness practices these students learn will help, in the short term, to make the classroom climate more productive and conducive to learning. I believe It will help to create more positive interactions between the students as well as their interactions with me. In the long term, it is my hope that these students see the benefits of these mindfulness practices and use them to get through the stressors/trauma/relationships of everyday life in a more productive and positive manner.

A synopsis of 7th Period Spanish class: This class is comprised of 21 students (12 boys and 9 girls). These students come directly from lunch are wound up and unfocused. I spend 10 minutes (almost) daily trying to get class

started. Often times, multiple students come late to class or go to the guidance office because of things that have occurred in the lunchroom. Multiple students are disruptive during class, making inappropriate comments toward one another, or using inappropriate language. Many are often unkind to other students in the class. They are quick to make a rude remark or chastise another student. Some of these disruptive students also struggle to complete tasks/assignments in a timely manner. This is also the class that gives substitutes a very difficult time. During my last absence from class, 7th period was the only negative report with multiple student names left for disruptive/rude behavior. All of these things make it very difficult to create a learning community where all students can be successful.

RESPONSIBILITIES/TIMELINE: Identify a series of **action steps** you will take to complete your project. Next to each step, identify person(s) **responsible** for carrying out that task. For each step also identify your **timeline** (during what month(s) you plan to complete each step).

My timeline for this project is as follows:

- **Student survey** (January): In order to gauge the overall feeling of the classroom environment, a student survey will be taken to establish a baseline for the class.
- **Mindfulness Exercises** (beginning in January with Chris Walsh and continuing to May)
- **Student journal entries** (ongoing from January to May)
- **Teacher journal entries** (ongoing from January to May)
- **Class discussions** (ongoing from January to May)

EVALUATION: What **data** will you collect that shows the impact of your project on teacher and student learning? How will you document student learning? Teacher learning?

The data that I will collect from the student survey, student reflections/journal entries, teacher reflections/journal entries, and class discussions will be qualitative in nature. I'm looking to see that the students experience positive changes in the classroom dynamic, their interactions with one other, and their interactions with myself, etc.

RESOURCES: What resources will you need for this project? What costs, if any, will be incurred? What are possible sources of funding for needed resources?

I do not believe that this project will require any expenses at this time as I will be able to borrow materials from others, purchase my own materials for little/no cost, or print articles/view videos from the internet. This may change, however, as I start to collect my data.

UPDATE: Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan.

My goal for this project was to incorporate mindful practices into the classroom routine with my 7th period class in order to create a classroom environment that was more productive and conducive to learning. I quickly found out that if I wasn't established in my own mindfulness practice, I would struggle to lead mindful moments for my 8th graders. After Chris Walsh came in to model the first mindful activity in January, I tried to do the same in the subsequent weeks. I had a hard time blocking out the disruptions from my students (especially those who were "not on board" with the activities), maintaining focus on my breath, and staying in the moment. And, I thought "how I can expect 8th grade students, who just came back from lunch, to get focused if I can't do it myself and model it for them?"

After writing an email to Chris to vent my frustrations, and getting her response, it was obvious that I was out of my "mindfulness routine" and needed to re-group. I completed a project similar to this when Chris introduced us to mindfulness in our graduate course "Attention and Intention: Empowering Learners" in 2014-2015. At that point in my life, I was a full-time working mom with only one child, and although I was busy, it was not anywhere near that level of stress, pressure, and busy lifestyle that I have experienced since having a second child. At

that time, I practiced mindfulness and journaled about the positive changes I was seeing. My plan was to continue with the mindful way of life. Fast forward a couple of years, another child, and there I was, back in the “rut”. All of these things combined with a very long winter season made it tough to get out of the funk. I thought to myself, “Why did I stop practicing mindfulness when I was able to see the positive changes back then (when life was not as stressful as it is today)?” It’s simple-I was not invested in a mindful way of life!

So, my project took a turn--**from trying to change the behaviors of my students in 7th period class** (reactive)--**to focusing on my own practice and self-care**, establishing a daily mindfulness regimen, and journaling on the experiences I was having (proactive). I have finally realized that this is way of life--not just a “fad” that you do here and there. For it to truly work, you need to do it each and every day--and you WANT to do it each and every day because you see and feel the results!

ANALYSIS OF DATA ON TEACHER LEARNING: We examined our reflections and found the following: (Support each claim with examples/evidence).

Prior to starting the mindfulness practices on a daily basis, I wrote some journal entries that reflected how I was feeling in mind, body, and spirit (both personally and professionally).

Some excerpts from journal entries prior to establishing a mindfulness routine:

- *“I had a very hard time counting and maintaining my focus.... I have realized that sitting in front of the room makes it hard for me to focus. And, if the kids see that I’m having a hard time, then they are less likely to buy in.” (regarding a counting meditation that I tried with my 7th period class-journal 1/24)*
- *“I’m feeling a bit unsettled right now both at home and in school.... I can feel the stress in my body but haven’t really done anything about it--and I know better!” (journal 1/29)*
- *“I have a two-year-old and five-year-old who keep life busy...that combined with some personal struggles and a long winter are weighing me down.” (journal 1/29)*
- *“I’m feeling frustrated...” (email to Chris 1/29)*
- *“The next couple of weeks in class will be challenging as the kids will be working, in an unstructured setting, on their projects.... I will need to be my best to give my best.” (journal 1/29)*
- *“I feel as if life is like a hamster wheel--each day is the same routine--and I’m rushing to get to the end of the day.” (journal 2/11)*

It was quite obvious that I was in a rut. I was very stressed both at home and here at school. I couldn’t get out of the funk that I was in. I was quick tempered in most situations and often raised my voice with my students who were frustrating me. I did the same with my children and spouse at home. And, although I knew that I needed a change, it was hard to find time for mindfulness in my daily routine. I had a “light bulb” moment when I grew frustrated on a Friday in February with a high-needs student. I wrote in my journal... “I lost my cool and immediately thought that if I had meditated during lunch that day, things would not have escalated with this student” (Journal 2/11). There was a substitute (retired teacher) who was working in the library, and after the bell had rang, she came over and reminded me that winter recess was only a week away. It was a (another) wake-up call that I needed to make a change.

In order to start the process of re-establishing a mindfulness routine, I decided to practice 1-2 times per day (or more when needed). Once I was ready to start the school day, I practiced for 10 minutes prior to the students entering school. I also tried to find time to practice it during my lunch period for about 10 minutes. Some days I used the guided meditations from Sharon Salzberg, some that were available on YouTube, and other days I just did some breathing with some instrumental music. There were days when I was only able to do a formal mindful practice one time per day (due to a state testing schedule, lunch with students and co-workers, etc.) but even then, when I wasn’t able to find the time during lunch, I would just do 3 deep breaths and a stretch as often as possible (before 7th period class began). On a weekly or bi-weekly basis, I journaled about the changes I was seeing and feeling as well as how I was handling stressful situations when they occurred. I also attended a conference offered at CITI BOCES with Liane Benedict titled “Mindfulness In Education”. It was WONDERFUL and was exactly what I needed to get into a mindful routine. I attended this conference with 5 of my colleagues

and we all walked out of there so refreshed and renewed! Because it is so important to me (and in raising my children), I also attended weekly religious services as often as possible. There is just something about going to Sunday service that always centers me for the week ahead. I also tried to incorporate an exercise practice, but I was unable to do it on a consistent basis. I'm hoping to establish one over the summer that will carry on into the new school year. And, for those nights when it was hard to decompress, I did some breathing exercises to help me to calm down and fall asleep.

Following the implementation of various mindfulness practices, these were the results that I started to experience:

Excerpts from journal entries after establishing a mindfulness routine:

- *“This has been a great week.” (journal entry 2/16 regarding project work week)*
- *“So, the last week has had its ups and downs.... I had to ask a couple students to leave the class on various days for rude/disruptive behavior.... sadly, I checked the attendance list in the mornings to see if any of my “key players” were absent for the day.” (journal 3/20)*
- *“The conference at CITI was just what I needed—a battery recharge—to jump start the last quarter of the school year.” (journal entry 3/30)*
- *“I just have realized that if I'm not truly invested in my own self-care and mindful practices, the pieces tend to fall apart. I have to start with myself first and then it will have a trickle-down effect from there. And, I can feel it and I can see it working—both personally and professionally.” (email 4/4)*
- *“I can now truly appreciate the mindfulness lifestyle and see all of its benefits.” (journal 4/10)*
- *“I'm truly blessed and try to find positives in each stressful situation.” (journal 4/18)*
- *“Today was tough!! I had a nightmare that something happened to my son and it sent me into a tailspin for the day (and work week). I arrived at work, organized myself for the day ahead, and needed to do some mindfulness to try to turn things around. I could feel it all over—in my body—in my brain—I was down in the dumps and was having a hard time pulling myself out of it. I had been working on my final report and asked Chris to take a look to see how I was progressing. She wanted me to add more so that bummed me out as I was hoping to be finished (and have one less thing on my plate) and, instead, had to go back and take another look. I did a lot of breathing throughout the day, quickly at the beginning of most of my classes but it was still just a tough day today....” (journal 5/15)*
- *“I woke this morning feeling better than yesterday. I was still a bit down but not anywhere near how I was feeling to start the day yesterday. Plus, we ended the evening last night at the playground with the kids. My mom told me that my daughter had mentioned that we had a “great night” together last night--” mommy was happy and smiling”. They were having so much fun that it really just made me appreciate that time even more. I find that when I'm down in the dumps something always comes through to remind me of how good I have it. Today's news was about a little boy (about the same age as my son) who was beaten by his mother and step-father. Again, this just helped me to appreciate what I have, and that no matter how bad the day is going, someone else is having a worse day than me. My husband had a prior engagement today, so I had the kids to myself this evening—there is no better therapy for a rough day than cuddling up with your kids to read a book or tickle them and hear them giggle—to have a great evening with them and put them to bed with a kiss good night. I've come to realize that this, in and of itself, is mindfulness to me. Not every night is going to end like this with them—there will be temper tantrums and bickering like young siblings do—but a great night with the kids is the best “mindfulness” that I can ask for.” (journal 5/16)*
- *“Tonight's class was another perfect example of where I was able to take a step back and really think about all that I have in my life and how beautiful it is. One of our tasks for the class was to write a letter to ourselves of the past or in the future. It sounded like it would be hard at first, but once I started writing, it was a breeze (and I could've continued writing for a while). I wrote to myself at age 80 and then shared some parts of it with the class.*
 - *“Did you make the time with your kids count? More reading with her or more playing trucks with him? Less washing dishes and folding clothes? Did you tell everyone who mattered most that*

you loved them? Because as you know now, many of them are gone and you didn't have that extra moment to do so."

I teared up while I was writing this in class. It's so easy to get caught up in the day to day routine, the running on automatic, that we don't "stop to smell the roses". I think it is just human nature to look at the negative and not the positive. But, practicing mindfulness reminds us to take that time, to step back, and think. To step back and breath. It forces you to be quiet in your mind and body, to push all the "noise" out of your way, and to appreciate that moment in time. (journal 5/17)

- *"This week started off on a rough foot, but I was able to bring it back around. Each day, I practiced mindfulness and took time to breath-in some cases I did this multiple times' a day. That along with journaling helped me to reflect and gain control of the stress that was bringing me down. It's comforting to know that even when things are not going as planned, or I'm having an off day, this mindful practice that I'm developing helps to center me, bring me back to square one, and continue on to have a better day (and to be more tolerant of stress when it occurs). (journal 5/18)*

With respect to the changes I'm experiencing in school after incorporating a mindfulness regimen, with 7th period in particular, I still have days where the students misbehave, and the situation becomes stressful. My tolerance for their behavior, though, is higher and I am not as tense when they enter the room (almost as if I'm just waiting for something to happen like before). I find that I am more proactive in my approach to the behaviors that I experience in 7th period rather than reactive. I made a decision back in March to place a study carrel in my class. The purpose of this was to give the kids a place to "take a break" when things are starting to escalate with behavior. My hope has been for kids to go back to the carrel, out of the view of the other students, and take the time to get their act together. I'm considering making this study carrel a "mindfulness corner" for next school year and start off introducing it to students on day 1 (a tactic that I learned about during my 1-day conference at CITI BOCES).

And, it's not to say that there won't be bumps in the road or more stressful times (as that is just a part of life), but I can recognize when I need to take a moment to pause, think, and breath (both at home and at school). Practicing mindfulness has proven to help me when I'm down both personally and professionally. As is often the case, if you are struggling with one aspect of your life, you tend to struggle with others. When I'm struggling at home, I don't have the energy for teaching at school, and if I have had a bad day at school, I bring it home with me and my family suffers for it. When I'm healthy in mind, body, and spirit, I am able to be a better teacher, better mother, better spouse, a better human being overall.

ANALYSIS OF DATA ON STUDENT LEARNING: We examined _____ and found the following: (Give examples/evidence for each claim).

As previously mentioned, my project took a turn from focusing on the behaviors of my students to focusing on my reactions to stressful situations. I have found, though, that when I am calm, centered, and in a good place, things do not escalate as quickly with my students. If I am calm and maintain control, the students are more likely to react the same way in stressful situations. There is no doubt from looking at my journal reflections that when I was able to practice mindfulness multiple times during the day, I was able to better manage stressful situations and students were able to follow my lead.

Participant's Names: Amy Leopold, Alison Anderson, Cathy Celeste

ACTION: Describe specifically how the Creating Collaborative Spaces for Learning themes are incorporated into your project to cultivate and support student learning.

We intend to strengthen the connection between the practice of mindfulness and teaching by creating a segment that will air on the WBUC monthly district show. We would like to highlight the success, challenges, and practices of mindful instruction. This would help spread awareness and give other classroom teachers ideas to use in the

classroom. This would be a way to collaborate intentionally with colleagues to support academic learning and creating supportive emotional spaces for the school at large.

We would also like to incorporate some of the stories of our ENL students with a segment highlighting where they come from. We hope to use mindfulness techniques to build their confidence in speaking both English and their native language on tape. This will help them to share their stories and build awareness of the ever growing ENL program. These activities for ENL students will promote awareness of patterns of communication, specifically communicating needs through advocacy.

We feel that following our journey of mindfulness in the classroom and sharing with our colleagues will help support not only ourselves, but each other through these changes.

RATIONALE: Fully state your **rationale** for the project. Why is this work important?

The practice of mindfulness is research based and proven to help with anxiety and stressful situations. However, it can be highly underrated. We would like to show through video the strategies that work and the impact it has had on students. We would like to make video segments so that it can be shared district-wide and help to bring awareness on the use of mindfulness in the classroom.

RESPONSIBILITIES/TIMELINE: Identify a series of **action steps** you will take to complete your project. Next to each step, identify person(s) **responsible** for carrying out that task. For each step also identify your **timeline** (during what month(s) you plan to complete each step).

1. We will have to check to make sure all students participating in videos have district approval to be filmed. (December/January) All three teachers will be responsible for their own students.
2. Alison and Cathy both use mindfulness strategies in their classroom. Alison does 'Mindful Mondays' and Cathy does periodic mindful activities and regularly uses a 'Mood Meter' to help students assess their own emotional state. Both teachers started doing these activities in the beginning of the year. The results and student reactions to these techniques have been journaled and will continue to be journaled throughout this activity. (October-April).
3. Alison and Cathy will begin videotaping mindful activities done in the classroom as well as videotaping student participation and reactions to those activities. (January-April)
4. Amy has shown ENL students clips of high school ENL students on the morning announcements and has recorded their reactions to it and how they would feel about doing something similar. (December/January)
5. Amy will work with ENL students to create short segments. They will work in a safe environment that fosters confidence and learning. The process of creating these segments will be documented in journals, through student interviews, and the overall segment. (January-April)
6. Alison and Cathy will provide surveys to assess student attitudes towards mindful activities and Amy will assess student attitudes by verbally questioning ENL students and recording their responses. (January and April)
7. The team will edit films and create a segment that will air on WBUC YouTube and the local access channel in May or June. (Amy, Alison & Cathy)

EVALUATION: What **data** will you collect that shows the impact of your project on teacher and student learning? How will you document student learning? Teacher learning?

1. Journals: Teachers will all keep a journal which will show the journey and steps of using these practices in the classroom, including what worked well and areas in need of improvement.
2. Student Interviews/ Surveys: Teachers will help to assess students' reactions to these practices by videotaping random interviews from participating students. Teachers will also have written survey responses from all participating students.
3. Final Video Segment: Teachers will produce the final video that will document the practices as a whole to be used as a means of encouraging colleagues to practice mindfulness.

By doing this project, we will be able to show how students and teachers can practice mindfulness in the classroom and to document the journey some teachers have taken to incorporate mindfulness in the classroom. By working with each other and the students we are creating collaborative spaces for learning and by sharing it with other teachers in the district we are communicating the need to practice mindfulness more consistently. This reflective piece will show the impact that our practices have on students and our own teaching and learning.

RESOURCES: What resources will you need for this project? What costs, if any, will be incurred? What are possible sources of funding for needed resources?

We will use video cameras, journals and computers. Candid video can be shot from cell phones. There are no immediate needs for funding but we would like to keep the possibility of getting funding for mindful tools available.

UPDATE.

Originally, in the video, we were going to have English Language Learners speak about their lives in their native countries and their exposure to mindfulness. However, it did not work well with the video that we made. We still orally interviewed these students and spoke to them about those experiences. Two of the five students also spoke in the video.

ANALYSIS OF DATA ON TEACHER LEARNING:

In our effort to create the video, we spent time learning the practices of mindfulness. Through our implementation of different mindful strategies in the classroom, we learned that if we, as individuals, are not completely invested in mindfulness and its practices, mindfulness seems 'put on' to our students. In order for us to get them to 'buy-in' to the strategies we used in class, they need to see us use those strategies to deal with our own stresses, not just in the structured time given over to classroom practice of mindfulness. Each time we became frustrated in class, they witnessed us turning to mindful strategies. They began to recognize the usefulness of the strategies from these authentic moments.

While it was difficult, some days, to give over content time to mindfulness practices, we felt that it was overwhelmingly worth the investment in our students from a holistic perspective. The video documents our journey in mindfulness and gives suggestions on how to use these strategies. It is our hope that other teachers will recognize that there is no 'secret' lesson plan for mindfulness practices. They can be scripted or unscripted. Their incorporation into our classrooms has allowed some of our more trauma-stressed students practice in the art of mindfulness. It is our fervent hope that this strategy will serve them well during their lives.

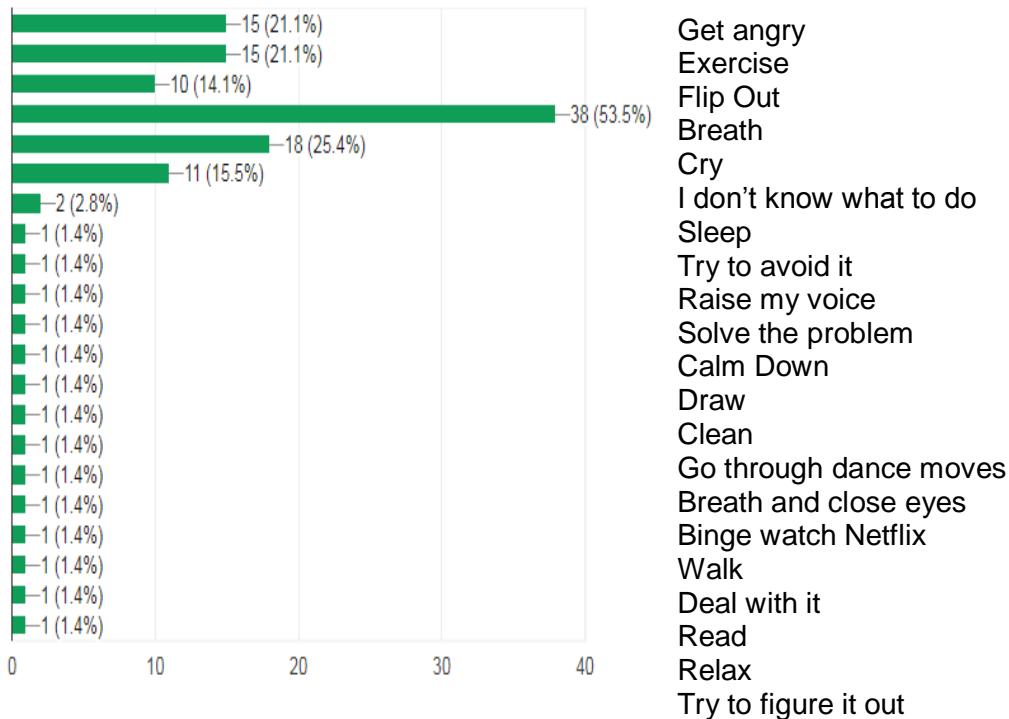
ANALYSIS OF DATA ON STUDENT LEARNING:

During the 2017 - 2018 school year, we put focus on weekly presentation of mindful activities. These activities took many forms including: mood awareness through a mood meter, sa ta na ma meditations, grounding methods, breathing and breath awareness (energizing and relaxing breathing techniques), chair yoga, mindful focus in drawing and reading, and guided meditations. These activities were conducted by teachers during testing periods, such as prior to state or local testing, as well as during traditional classroom activity time.

We examined data which was collected prior to beginning classroom practice of mindful activities which showed that 55% of students responded to stressful situations with negative behaviors. Those negative responses included getting angry, flipping out, crying, or avoiding a stressful situation.

What are ways you deal with stressful situations?

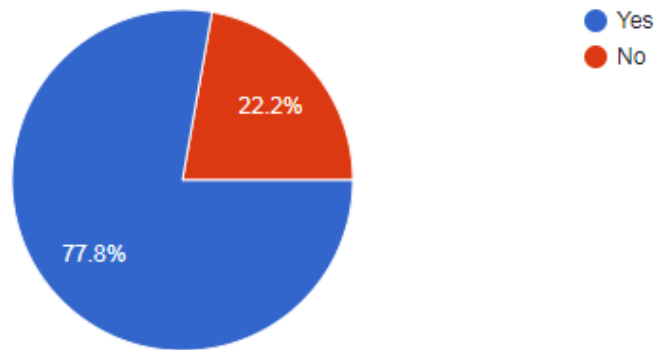
71 responses



After regularly incorporating mindful practices, 78% of students said that they engaged in mindful activities taught in class to reduce their stress levels. We found that students who regularly practiced mindfulness in the classroom setting were independently incorporating these practices into their lives.

Since learning about mindful practices this year, have you used any techniques learned in class to reduce your stress?

54 responses

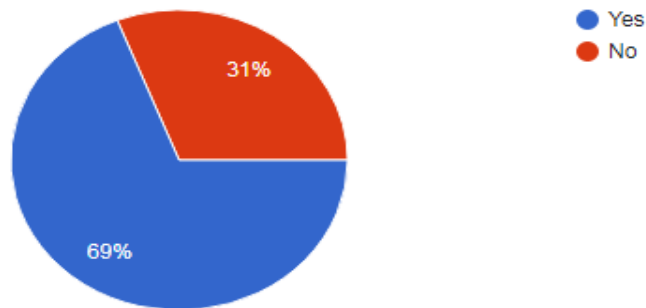


This was a 33% reduction in students who chose negative behaviors to manage stressful situations. This data suggests that once students begin regularly practicing mindful activities in their everyday routines, it becomes a strategy they independently turn to when experiencing stressful situations.

We examined data which was collected prior to beginning classroom practice of mindful activities which showed that 69% of our students had never been exposed to any type of mindful practices. 70% of this same group said that they were interested in learning about these methods as a way to cope with stress.

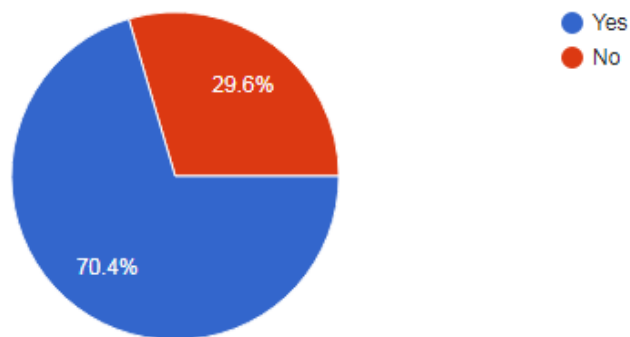
Prior to this year, have you been exposed any type of mindful practices?

71 responses



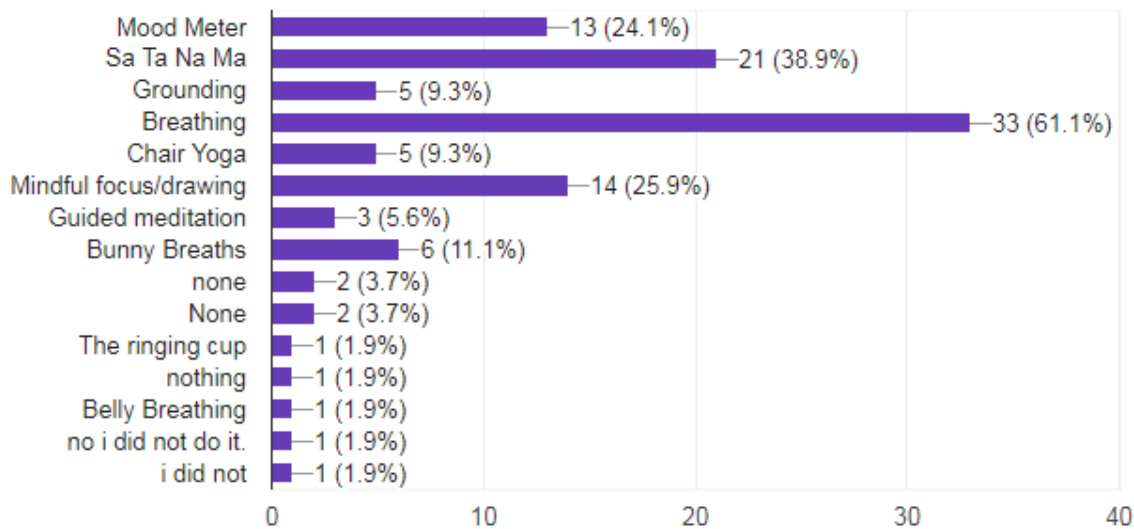
Are you interested in learning more about mindfulness?

71 responses



After regular incorporation of mindful practices into our classrooms, student-response data shows that only 13% chose not to incorporate those practices into their stress-management regimes. However, a majority of students surveyed picked a variety of mindful techniques that they would employ to reduce their stress.

What mindful strategies will you use to manage your stress?

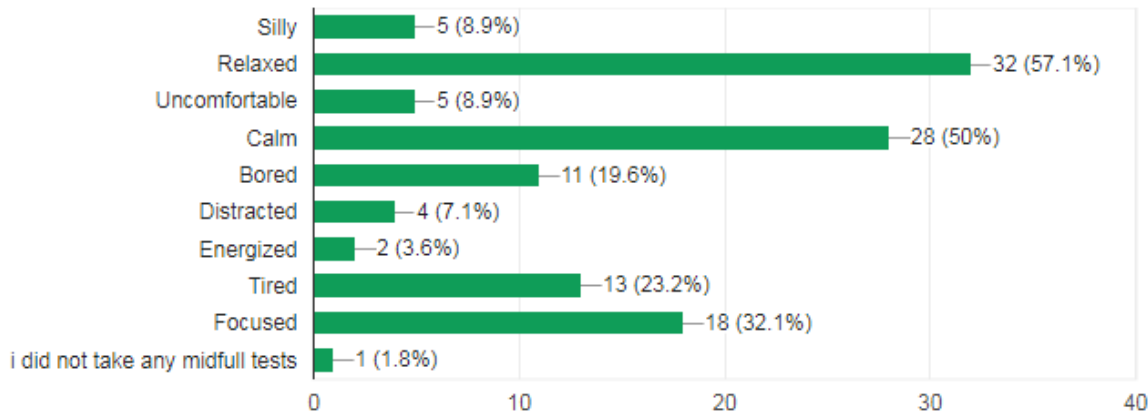


This data suggests that 87% of students who were exposed to mindful practices in the classroom setting for the first time positively responded to those practices.

We examined data which was collected prior to regularly being exposed to mindful practices, 68% of students who had been exposed to mindful practices said that they felt "silly," "uncomfortable," "bored," "distracted," or "tired" when being encouraged to participate in mindfulness.

If you answered yes to the above question, how did these practices make you feel?

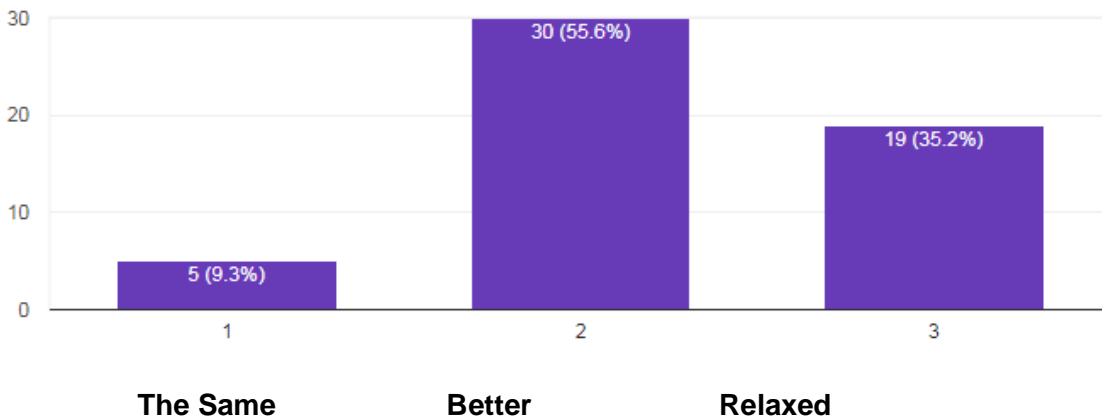
56 responses



After regularly incorporating mindful practices, our data shows that 91% of students said that after engaging in mindful practices on a regular basis, they felt “better” or “relaxed.” Is this accurate? I couldn’t see the titles for categories 2 and 3 - but I thought they reflected positive responses.

After completing any of the above techniques, how did you feel?

54 responses



This data suggests two things, in our opinion. The first is that if students are regularly exposed to mindful ways of thinking, they become less foreign and are seen as accepted practice. The second thing that this data suggests is that the amount of “teacher buy-in” (ceding class content time to mindful practices) is an investment in our students’ mental health. The benefits of mindful practices are established. By choosing to give time to other than content-specific practices, we begin educating in a holistic manner.

In terms of English Language Learners (ELLs), the individual results of the survey were anonymous. However, through interviews and interactions with the students, it was found that mindful practices were new to them. Of five students, three of them had never practiced any of the strategies introduced in this school year. This was something that they had not experienced in their native countries. They were very receptive to these techniques and especially found breathing the most helpful. They use breathing in situations they find overwhelming and stressful. The other two students were adopted and live with families that are native speakers of English. They have endured a lot of trauma and they were familiar with some of these strategies because they were practiced in

the home. They use these strategies when they feel frustrated or angry. Although these strategies do not always work in every situation, all five of the students have become more mindful of their feelings and are, at times, able to step back from a problem and refocus.

In the video, two of the five students interviewed are English Language Learners. They were very nervous about being filmed. To ease the tension, we practiced grounding and breathing before filming. This helped them relax and feel more comfortable in front of the camera. Many times, English Language Learners do not like to speak in front of people because they fear making mistakes or sounding foolish. However, through conversations with these students, they have documented that mindful practices have helped them through times in which they need to speak in front of others. The fact that they spoke in front of the camera is evidence that they are able to overcome these feelings. The use of mindful strategies will help English Language Learners communicate better in the future. Overall, not only will these techniques help English Language Learners, they will also help students from all different types of backgrounds.

Participant's Names:

Sally Kingsbury and Amy Odell

ACTION: Describe specifically how the Creating Collaborative Spaces for Learning themes are incorporated into your project to cultivate and support student learning.

Embodied learning is one course topic that promotes self-awareness of their individual goals. Our project teaches the growth vs fixed mindset as well as how to set goals and reflect on how their thoughts and feelings affect their achievement towards meeting their goal.

Communication is another course topic that emphasizes the need for students to effectively communicate and express their goals and obstacles found in trying to reach them.

Collaborative spaces is a theme that incorporates the collaboration of team teachers in addition to students sharing their goals with each other. This encourages the circle of support that students have in our team.

Change is the last course topic that our project aligns with. We are supporting ourselves and each other to create knowledge and promote reflection.

RATIONALE: Fully state your **rationale** for the project. Why is this work important?

We want our students to know about growth vs fixed mindset. We also find it necessary that they know how to set a goal and think through the necessary steps to achieve their goal. This encourages better communication skills, authentic learning and self-awareness.

RESPONSIBILITIES/TIMELINE: Identify a series of **action steps** you will take to complete your project. Next to each step, identify person(s) **responsible** for carrying out that task. For each step also identify your **timeline** (during what month(s) you plan to complete each step).

In September, we both taught fixed vs growth mindset to our students. We included the effects of learning on our brain and the importance of perseverance in learning as well as in other areas of our lives. We emphasized goal setting and we encouraged each student to set a goal for this school year. We posted the goals in a very visible place so students would see them daily (on the windows overlooking the library in our hallway).

In October, we both took our students to see Marc Mero speak at OMS. Marc is a motivational speaker who inspires students to get an education, set goals, and work hard to achieve them. Discussions after the

presentation were a good way to review mindset and the goals that we set. Some students shared that they reached their goal. We both journaled about the presentation and our classroom discussion.

In January, we will both have our students review the goal they set in September. We will have them complete a reflection piece that guides them through obstacles and factors they have control over while other factors are not. We will encourage students to modify their original goal or set a new goal.

In February, we will both have our classes review their goals and reflect on them using a data tracker. We will celebrate students who were successful and encourage the ones who were not.

In March, we will both have our classes review their goals and reflect on them again using the data tracker. We will celebrate students who were successful and encourage the ones who were not.

EVALUATION: What **data** will you collect that shows the impact of your project on teacher and student learning? How will you document student learning? Teacher learning?

We will each keep copies of student goals as well as their reflections and data tracker. We will also keep a personal journal to record our own thoughts, reflections, and observations.

We will administer a student survey to collect data on their learning about mindset and goal setting.

RESOURCES: What resources will you need for this project? What costs, if any, will be incurred? What are possible sources of funding for needed resources?

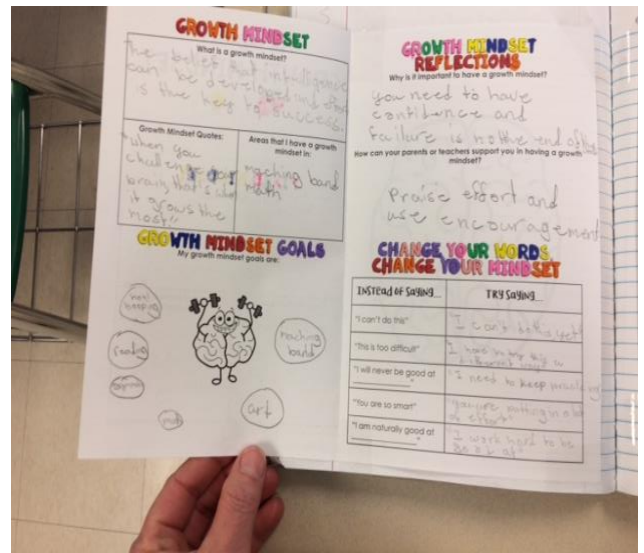
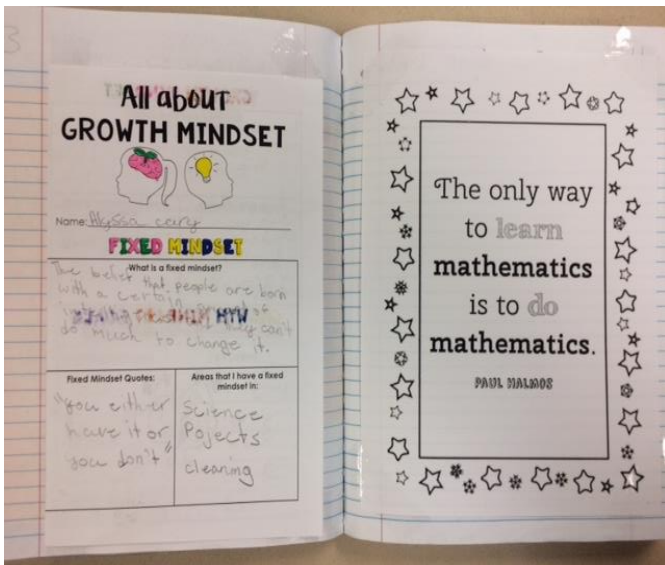
Resources needed will be copies made of the notes on mindset and goal setting pennant we used in September. We may purchase a digital data tracker that will allow students to keep a digital journal to reflect on their goals. It is \$16 and we will split the cost of the purchase.

UPDATE:

In our original plan, we wanted to formally track student progress by using a data tracker. Instead, we decided to informally discuss progress or necessary revisions that students made towards meeting their goals. This was done in a whole class discussion as well as in small groups. We did not end up using a digital journal, but we did have students reflect on the process through discussion, on the pennant, and on the foldable. We decided to evaluate our students' knowledge of growth vs fixed mindset, we would administer a brief survey using Google Forms and a QR code to collect the results.

ANALYSIS OF DATA ON TEACHER LEARNING:

1. We examined our reflections and found that our students could easily identify a goal but often times found it difficult to list a set of steps necessary to achieve their goal. When students were completing their goal pennants, they needed extra time and suggestions of ways to meet their goal. We discussed what honor roll was, and as a class came up with ideas to get on honor roll. For the student who wanted to make more friends, we discussed places she could meet new friends. In the future, we will be sure to discuss the importance of prioritizing the steps to meet their goal.
2. Another reflection on teacher learning was the fact that a student was the one to share with me "Mrs. Kingsbury, I met my goal...I made the basketball team!". This statement was made in the fall, months after we set the goals in September. We were impressed with the fact that he remembered setting the goal and was excited to share his achievement with his teacher.
3. Due to our lessons on growth vs fixed mindset, we noticed that many students phrased their goals and reflections using "I can..." and "I will..." statements. We attribute the lessons on mindset as helpful in determining how to adjust their goals and/or create a new goal. Here is what our Growth Mindset lesson looked like in our interactive student notebooks.



4) We also discussed the fact that it was okay if they did not meet their September goal, but they had to reflect on the steps they outlined to find out why. 52 out of 60 students had logical reflections that explained why they did or did not accomplish their goal. See examples below.

ANALYSIS OF DATA ON STUDENT LEARNING:

- We examined our student goals and found the majority of students set realistic goals that they were able to achieve. Out of our 60 students, 34 met their goal set in September. Some examples of the goals they set are:
 - “get a 90 in Spanish”
 - “make the basketball team this year”
 - “be on honor roll”
 - “be more organized”
 - “improve in English”
 - “help my group in class”
 - “tell my teachers what I need”
 - “to get all my homework done on time”
 - “to make more friends”.

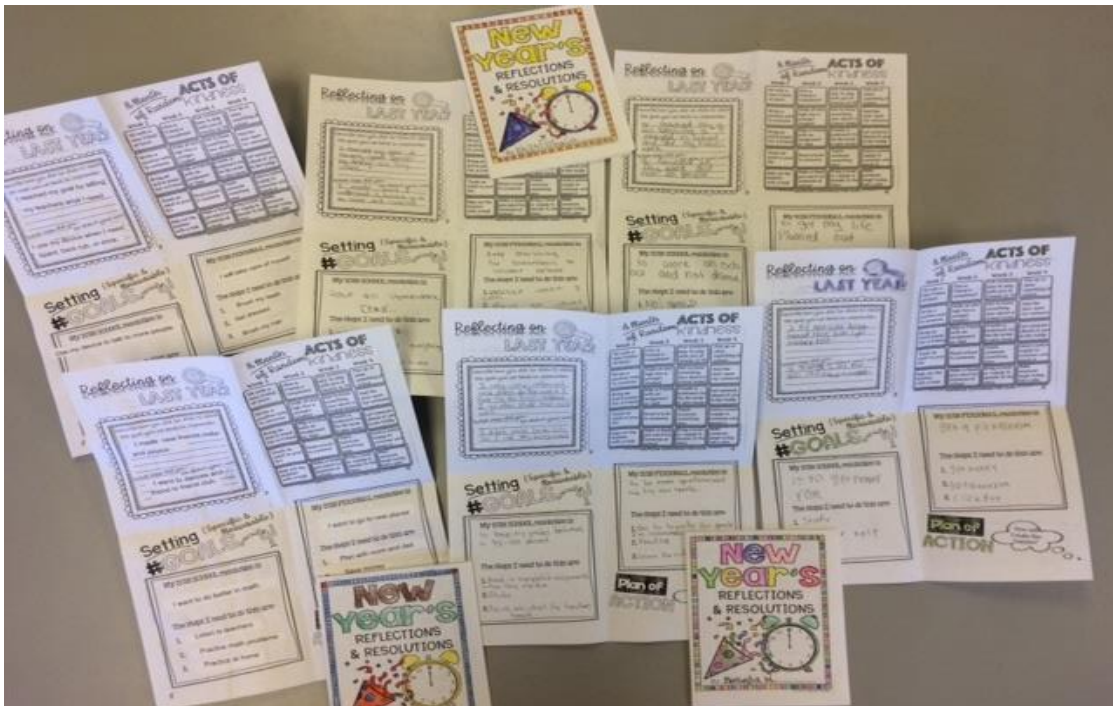


2) Once students set their goal, we found the steps outlined by the students were appropriate and necessary in helping them accomplish their goal. Some examples of the steps outlined by the students are:

- “I will hand in everything in on time”
- “I will study more”
- “I will get organized”
- “Study my Spanish and do all my homework”
- “I can share my ideas and listen to my group”
- “I can go to dances and join a club”
- “I can use my communication device”
- “I will go to every practice “.

3) We examined our student reflections in January and found the majority of students were able to reflect sensibly on their goal setting process from September (even if they did not meet their goal!). Examples of this are:

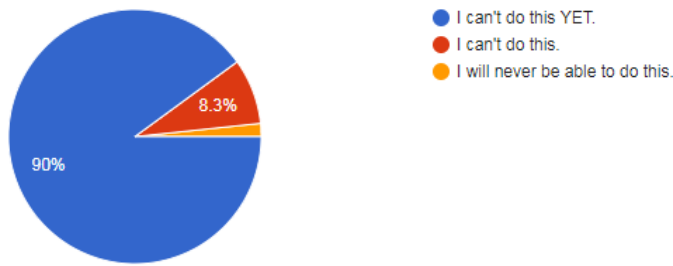
- “I used my device to tell my teachers what I needed”
- “I made new friends by going to dances and joining a club”
- “I didn’t make to-do lists so I was very disorganized”
- “I was very unfocused and didn’t do the work I had to do first”
- “I did not get high honor roll but I got honor roll - I studied a lot but got lazy and stopped”
- “I reached my goal of having good grades by doing all my work - I made sure I understood it, turned it in on time and listened.”
- “I focused on my work and not on people”.



4) After evaluating our survey, we found that 90% of our students were able to correctly identify a growth mindset statement. However, only 48% were able to correctly identify a fixed mindset statement.

What statement is an example of growth mindset?

60 responses



What statement is an example of fixed mindset?

60 responses



The majority of students found setting goals was helpful. Some examples of comments made by the students were:

- "Yes, because I know I can do it if I trick my mind into saying I can do it."
- "Yes, because it kind of gave me something to achieve."
- "Yes, because it is always important to have a goal to work towards."
- "Yes, it helps you to complete what you want to do and remind you that you always have something to improve."
- "Yes, because then it helps you strive for success and try your hardest."
- "Sometimes because I feel bad when I set a goal and don't achieve it but I still helps to know what you are trying to accomplish and it helps you find yourself."
- "No, I try to be able to do everything and plan too, but goals just make it harder because I have to focus on one thing instead of everything I want to at once."

Participant's Name:

Elisa Davis

ACTION:

"This course will focus on creating collaborative spaces for learning to support academic as well as out of school success, particularly in high need schools."

Nature Walks

Once a month I will be engaging my students in monthly nature breaks. Students will be engaged in silent nature walks and will complete self-reflections after. Students may keep a photo journal or written journal of how the engagement in nature makes them feel.

Introduction to Yoga mini course-

By offering a yoga introduction course to all students I will be able to research how yoga can help a variety of students manage the daily stress of school and schedules. The setting will provide students the chance to focus on how they manage the stress associated with middle school while building a community among the students participating.

RATIONALE:

Yoga has been shown to benefit students in the following areas during middle school:

- **Academic Outcomes** - Yoga engages students in the learning process, improving their focus, encouraging them to think critically and creatively, and helping them integrate learning across subjects.
- **Self-Image** - Yoga helps to plant the seed for a positive self-image and high self-esteem, encouraging students to have self-compassion and promoting non-judgment.
- **Resiliency** - Yoga helps students navigate their emotions and develop the self-assurance and positive attitude to face adversity with confidence.
- **Peer Relations** - Yoga cultivates a culture of non-judgment, increasing positive social experiences and feelings of social connectivity between peers, while reducing bullying behaviors.
- **Self-Awareness** - Yoga supports students in observing and acknowledging their feelings, emotions and opinions, and encourages them to communicate them respectfully.

RESPONSIBILITIES/TIMELINE:

Nature Walks -- October to May – E. Davis

September/October - E. Davis -Research the concept of Creating Collaborative Spaces for Learning and how it integrates it into my classroom.

November – E. Davis- Attend Yoga and Teens through Yoga Ed training.

December - E. Davis/ Tami Sullivan Collaborate on designing and implementing a Yoga and Teens introduction course for students. My program will focus on obtaining a cross section of students and not just the students identified as “students in trauma”. The idea is to engage higher achieving students that may experience stress but are able to be academically successful.

Tami Sullivan – arranged for a yoga teacher/mental health counselor to work with me. Find pre/ post assessments for students to take focused on stress.

E. Davis – Meet with Mary Beth Fierro to approve program and parent letter. Letter will be mailed out at the end of December. Research mediation for teens to use during the workshop, find yoga mats and find or make journals for students.

January – Work on lesson plans, contact parents and arrange class lists for 5/6week program –Classes are set to begin on January 22nd

February/March - E. Davis /Maggie Fitzsimmons 5-6-week 1x week class for students

April - Data Collection and analysis from students participating

EVALUATION:

What **data** will you collect that shows the impact of your project on teacher and student learning?

- Students will be taking a pre/ post survey about stress.
- Daily reflections and self -reporting by students

How will you document student learning?

- Evaluations by students and parents if possible

Teacher learning?

- Yoga and Teens trainings – reflections
- Working with Yoga teacher reflections

RESOURCES:

What resources will you need for this project? Yoga Ed training, yoga teacher, yoga mats, mediation readings for teens.

What costs, if any, will be incurred? Unsure – possibly books and yoga mats

What are possible sources of funding for needed resources? Collaboration with Tami Sullivan

UPDATE: Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan.

Nature Walks Update- Due to the weather it was impossible to schedule regular nature walks. Students were able to get out only a couple of times this year, so I redesigned the project to be an introduction to mindful activities. Over a two -week period two of my classes participate in seven alternating activities: three- minute body scan, five- minute break outside, five-minute break outside with music, walking the track and nature walks. My other two classes still participated in some of the activities, but I did not have them do formal reflections. I decided on my first period class and my sixth period class with the idea that the students have a difficult time engaging first thing in the morning and sixth period is right before lunch.

Mini Yoga Class - My original plan was to focus on my higher achieving students who generally have busy schedules and may not have the time for self-care but with limited time to in their school schedules none of them could participate. I sent the letter out to both parents and students and only had four students join. Instead of running five-week classes, I continued to have the same four students participate throughout.

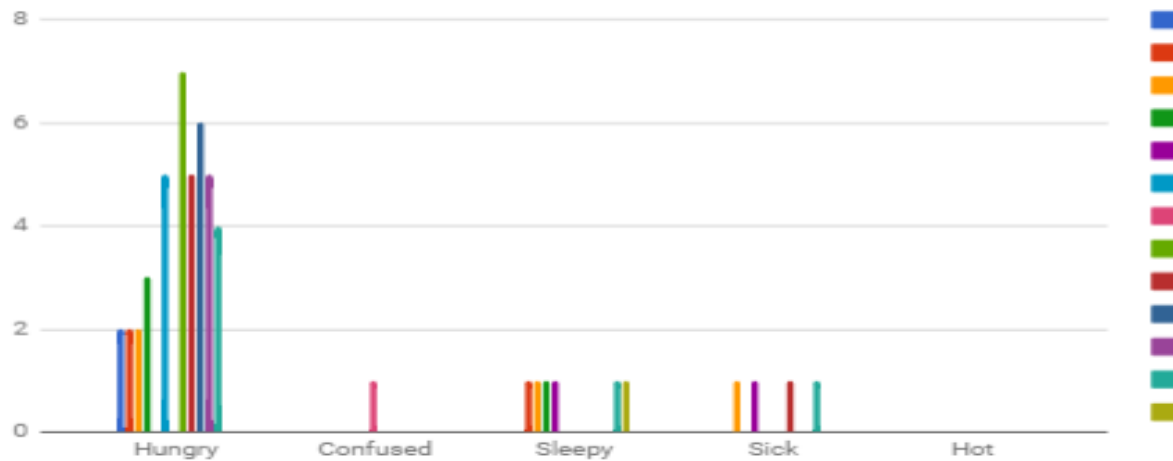
ANALYSIS OF DATA ON TEACHER LEARNING: We examined our reflections and found the following: (Support each claim with examples/evidence).

Yoga Ed Training Reflections

After examining my reflections during the Yoga Ed training, I was able to confirm my initial belief that I would need to have my full teacher training before I would become involve in a yoga for teens program.

- I really enjoyed the Yoga of Teens training and the Yoga Ed philosophy. The focus of making it a practice for students to not only become more mindful but to be self -aware and learn how to engage in self-care practices is essential for a successful program.

Post Emoji Reporting - Physical



- Participating in mindful activities with the students increases my own well-being. After the two-week period I had more patience and energy with the classes participating in the study. My living environment class is not affected. After some reflection, I think I have so much material and structure in that class that I don't feel the normal level of stress that I feel in my physical science classes.
- Students struggle expressing how they are feeling at a given moment. Students were able to identify feelings on an emoji chart but could not express in words why they were feeling that way. Many students asked, "why do we have to write?".
- Within the classroom students were able to focus and engage more directly in outside activities in small groups. At the beginning of the year I tried to bring students out as a class, but it was difficult for students to focus on the activity. They were often talking to their friends or looking around to see what everyone else was doing. I switched the structure of the activity by taking groups of four to six outside for 5 minutes a piece and that helped.
- Students have difficult time completing the pre and post stress assessment. Students seem to lack the emotional vocabulary to understand how they are feeling.

Mini yoga class reflections

1. Students are still reluctant to participate in yoga during the day.
 - Only 4 out of 119 students participated. Most students simply do not have the time in their schedules for another activity.
2. Students who participated looked forward to class each week. They were able to build a sense of community.
 - Every class if someone was missing they check up on where they were
3. The students participating are students that need either extra support or time away from the daily pressures of school
 - Parental contact about participating indicated that the parents felt the students would benefit
4. The students quickly adjusted to the structure of the yoga class.
 - At the beginning of the classes it was taking between seven and ten minutes to settle down and engage in the yoga session by the end the students were able to be fully engaged in under five minutes

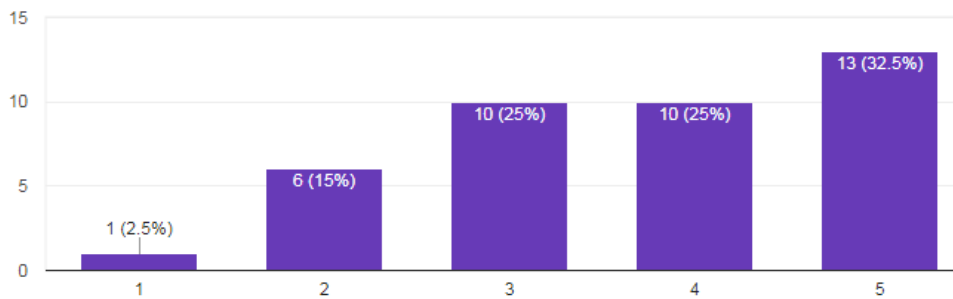
ANALYSIS OF DATA ON STUDENT LEARNING: We examined _____ and found the following: (Give examples/evidence for each claim).

Mindful Activities reflections

1. Students reported a positive experience engaging in mindful activities. In a post activity survey asking students how much they enjoyed participating on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much).

Did you like the mindful activities we participated in this year?

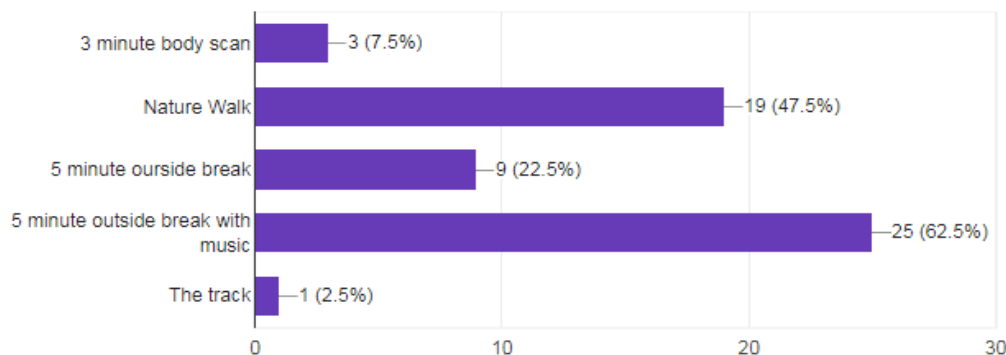
40 responses



2. Students felt outside activities were more beneficial than a prepared body scan video.

Which activity or activities did you find most beneficial?

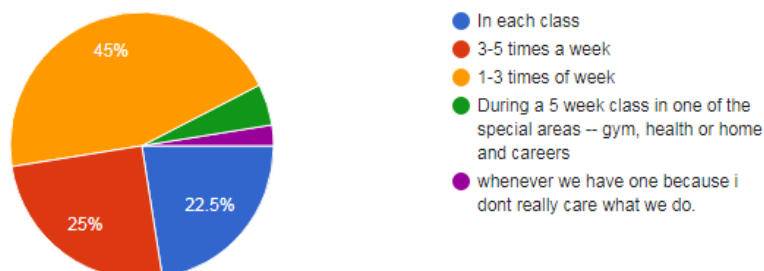
40 responses



3. Students would like to regularly participate in mindfulness activities on a regular basis during the day.

How often would you like to participate in Mindful activities during the school day

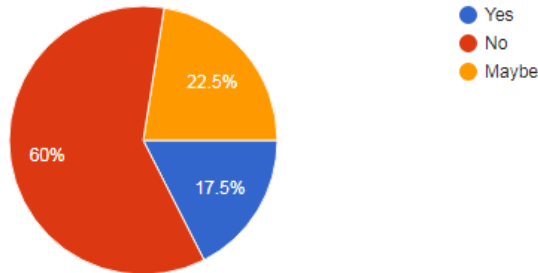
40 responses



4. Students are not interested in a yoga program during 8th period or afterschool.

Would you be interested in a yoga class or other mindful activity during 8th period or after school

40 responses



5. In a final reflection, students were able to express the aspects that were positive and negative about the mindful activities.

Positive aspects reported by students:

- Clear my thoughts
- That we can start and relaxing
- Being able to relax before learning.
- I liked the activity where we went outside
- it was nice and quiet
- it being quite
- you can get all the anger out
- You get see if the mindful activity changes the way you feel
- That we got to walk and explore with our classmates
- the best thing is that it helps me relaxed and calming.
- It made me more relaxed.
- I gave me a break from the school stress and i moment to relax.
- It made me calm and got rid of some of my stress
- Getting to go outside
- They gave us a break from the constant normalcy in the classrooms.
- It was really relaxing.
- is not loud is very quiet and it makes you relaxed
- It calms me and my nerves down. Especially after stressful classes and preparations for finals.
- I think that the best part about doing the activity is that we were able to go outside. I like this, because in Middle school you don't really get to go outside as much as I would like.

Negative aspects reported by students:

- Little amount of time to do it.
- The mindfulness worksheets got a little old
- was trying to the sties reveler when i dint have stress
- the video
- Having to hear see smell and taste something
- That i was absent when everyone got to walk outside
- what i do not like is having the mindful activities everyday

the 3-minute body
the sheet every day
Want it to be longer.

I didnt like the video that we watched and i felt weird doing it.

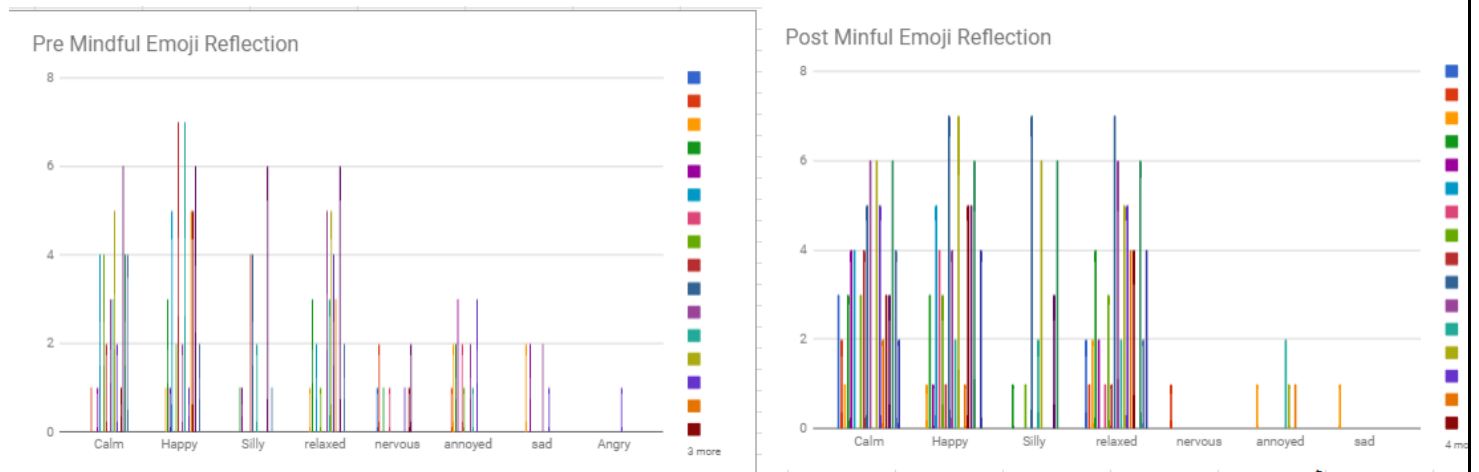
I don't like the sheets that we have to do

The sitting activity.

Sometimes they were rushed and not taken seriously

We usually do not have time for them, so the activities are rushed.

6. Students reported more positive emoji expressions after participating in a Mindful activity.



Mini yoga class reflections

- Students struggled to write about how they were feeling pre and post yoga. I asked students to take one minute prior to and after yoga to identify their feelings and none of them could wrote more than a sentence.
 - “I feel tired, hot and kind of sick. I feel more relaxed”
 - “I am tired and achy. Still tired and less stress but sleepy”
 - “Good and calm. Calmer than I was when I first came”
 - “Bored, tired and confused. More relaxed but tired”
- Students reported an increase of positive emoji reflection after yoga.
 - “Students selected the calm emoji after yoga twice as often”
- Students attendance increased on Mondays
 - On average students missed only one or two of the yoga session compared to their overall attendance.

Participant Name: Dan Rose

Action: Describe specifically how the Creating Collaborative Spaces for Learning themes are incorporated into your project to cultivate and support student learning.

How can students respond more mindfully (and more meaningfully) to what they are reading?

Since the dawn of S.E. Hinton's *The Outsiders*, the young-adult (YA) genre has begun to carve a deep crease all its own in the mountainous world of collegiate literature. Branding thematic depth, complex characters, plots packed with action and surprise and lasting lessons and morals, the YA model must no longer be cast aside as 'simple' portrayals of teen angst filled with too much emotion and 'drama.'

Like the readers who gobble them up, YA novels have grown into works containing the highest moral complexity and values. YA literature must become an integral piece of every literacy classroom if we hope to continue building life-long readers and writers who will talk and think in ways that will shape a better world.

YA literature can invoke the type of thought provoking, meaningful student response that not only combats reading apathy and disinterest, but also cultivates a lasting reading awareness and appreciation, giving all students a chance to enter into a lifelong conversation around the written word.

What matters most in this reading awakening and response?

1. Choice - (book choice - student selected text)
If students cannot select their own books, there is no hope of building a lifelong love of reading
2. Low risk sharing environment (Google Docs)
Students must feel comfortable with their audience and thus able to share deep and complex thoughts and ideas
3. Scaffolded, individualized, meaningful, consistent feedback (weekly)
The teacher (and later other readers?) must respond regularly to keep the conversation fresh and the 'teaching' on track
4. Mentor texts revealing how the writing could look (continued throughout the process)
Students must have continuous models (including the teachers own writing) to show what this kind of writing
5. Regular times to read (at least once a week)
6. Teacher talk about own reading and writing (modeling)
7. Students must be trained in the habit of noticing key parts of a text
8. Students must have a language (bank of words/ phrases) with which to express and respond to literature in a scholarly manner.
9. Elaboration - students must work to write beyond their initial thoughts and ideas. Teacher must teach students elaboration stems like: Also / In addition / First of all / To add on / Thinking deeper about this, / When I think more about this . . . / I can also say that / On the other hand / Some people think that . . . but I think that . . . / At first, I thought... but I'm starting to believe that / People might argue that . . .
10. Regular feedback - I will strive to respond once a week to my readers through a conversation journal.

Rationale: Fully state your rationale for the project. Why is this work important?

Like the readers who gobble them up, YA novels have grown into works containing the highest moral complexity and values. YA literature must become an integral piece of every literacy classroom if we hope to continue building life-long readers and writers who will talk and think in ways that will shape a better world.

YA literature can invoke the type of thought provoking, meaningful student response that not only combats reading apathy and disinterest, but also cultivates a lasting reading awareness and appreciation, giving all students a chance to enter into a lifelong conversation around the written word.

Sophisticated readers live *wide awake lives*, in *wide awake bodies*; bodies full of perspective, empathy and knowledge. Sophisticated readers develop an expansive view of the world, a view encompassing the possibility of acceptance, growth, and change. A view that encompasses the possibility of peace and love.

Building 'wide awake' readers is not just important work -- it is essential if we hope to continue pushing and advancing and inhabiting this place we call earth.

Responsibilities/Timeline: Identify a series of action steps you will take to complete your project. Next to each step, identify person(s) responsible for carrying out that task. For each step also identify your timeline (during what month(s) you plan to complete each step).

1. December – February – Reading conversation journal work - students self-selecting reading material and “conversing” with teacher through Google Docs. One independent reading class per week where teacher works on generating interest for books and reading while allowing students at least 30 minutes of uninterrupted reading time. Teacher responds to reading conversation entries. (Me)
2. March – Re-read and analyze student threads. Print out 5 example student threads and reflect on progress (or not) of teacher and student as readers.
3. April – Continue responding and fine-tuning responses to students.
4. May- Student reflection on reading conversation journals. What did they learn about reading? Their reading habits? How to respond to reading?
5. June- Analyze reflections. Re-design conversation journals for next year. Write professional article summing up results of conversation journals. Look for publishing opportunities.

Evaluation: What **data** will you collect that shows the impact of your project on teacher and student learning? How will you document student learning? Teacher learning?

Collection of journals for review (analyzing) by teacher. Student reflections on the whole process. Teacher reflection journal (entries). Final student-made entry.

Resources: What resources will you need for this project? What costs, if any, will be incurred? What are possible sources of funding for needed resources?

Looking for a professional book (something about reading response) that I can read as I am working on this project. Any suggestions?

UPDATE: Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan:

Not many this time. I just kept responding to student entries and using each week to get better and better at building life-long, wide awake readers. My responses became more efficient, and more individualized the longer the assignment went on.

ANALYSIS OF DATA ON TEACHER LEARNING:

I have taught a relatively successful writing workshop in my Language Arts classroom for close to twenty years now. Starting with Atwell and Graves and moving through Miller and Calkins, I have studied and read and practiced and attempted and failed at and reworked and redesigned so many approaches and lessons and mini-lessons and units in writing instruction that I now feel (somewhat) confident that I can adequately guide 8th

graders along the writing continuum, raise the level of their writing so that they become better, more adaptable, flexible users of the written word.

By writing workshop, I am referring to the method of teaching writing wherein the teacher utilizes daily focused mini-lessons, along with daily independent writing time in conjunction with individualized instruction through one on one student writing conferences and the close and careful study and utilization of mentor texts along with deliberately crafted teacher examples to make students better, more independent writers.

It is certainly not an easy method, but this workshop method has been VERY effective.

The best part is, that I can see the workshop method working. I can see the writing improve from day one to day ten, to day twenty, to hand in and share day. It is visible. It is clear. Each and every year the writing gets better, right before my very eyes. The students can see it, too. They comment and reflect about the differences in their writing after a unit of study -- the growth they have made, the confidence they have gained. They sight numerous, specific ways in which their writing has improved, they can pick out examples to illustrate these significant changes, and they can tell me how the various lessons will help them as they move forward on the writing continuum -- into high school, into college and beyond. They point to their pages and pages of writing, they say how it has changed, the effect that the writing now has on the audience, the deeper meaning hidden behind the first layer of text. It's all there, black and white, on the page for all to see.

But class period after class period, bell after bell, year after year, I was coming away from my teaching with this burning feeling at the back of my head. This itch that I could never quite reach. Never quite scratch. The same questions continued to linger like unfinished books long after all the halls had been silenced for summer: *What about reading instruction? What do I have to show of the growth of my 8th graders as readers? What can I hold in my hand as evidence that my students are all moving along the reading continuum?*

I mean, I had their writing portfolios with every last word they had written, I had all their first and final drafts, I had a series of written reflections articulating their voices, detailing their growth and understanding for each and every writing unit of study, I had their classroom notebooks showcasing the idea generation phases for each writing unit, each writing move. I had all the writing.

But what about reading? I never got these same feelings when teaching reading to my middle school students. I saw some of them reading. I talked to some of them about reading. We read books together as a class, or I read them, rather, and they listened and answered questions and wrote essays about the book after we were done. The essays weren't very good. I could not tell if anyone was learning to read better or not. I could not see it happening. And how do you teach reading in such a short class period? What needs to be taught? And maybe the biggest question of all -- How do I teach such a wide range of readers?

Through reading conversation journals, I can begin to see much more how comprehension happens, how reading happens. When students respond to their self-selected books, I can begin to connect with them as readers, as thinkers of text, as individuals growing at their own pace. I can figure out what they need next as readers and send them along on that path.

Through this class, I have discovered that talking to my students about reading is the best way to make them want to read (first), and to make them better comprehenders of what they are reading (second). I realized now that the second follows the first. I have learned a lot of things about teaching middle schoolers how to read well through these conversation journals.

My findings can be viewed in the attached google slide show, which I recently presented at the CNY Reading Council's spring conference at West Genesee High School.

ANALYSIS OF DATA ON STUENDT LEARNING: I examined _____ and found the following:
(Give examples/evidence for each claim).

Please see the Google Slides presentation that I constructed to show teacher and student learning. This presentation was given recently at the NYS Reading Council's Spring Conference at West Genesee High School, and I think it captures the findings well.