

“Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.”

John Dewey

Overview

This book introduces mindfulness-based expressive arts practices to teachers. Bringing mindfulness and expressive arts practices to the classroom offers students tools to enhance their creative process and encourages them to be open to their emotional life. Students may also become more engaged and focused on the task at hand. Imagine a classroom where all students feel safe to simply show up, be present to all facets of their amazing and growing beings, and respond through creative and mindful practices.

Designed to be useful whether read sequentially or opened randomly, this book offers teachers personal practices as well as lesson ideas. Here’s a quick look at what each chapter covers:

Chapter 1: What Is the Mindful Studio?

introduces the mindful studio concept and provides background information about the history and evolution of mindfulness and meditation. The chapter outlines some outcomes and benefits of mindfulness in education, both for students and teachers. Throughout this chapter, beginning practices help build a foundation for mindful and expressive arts experiences in the classroom.

Chapter 2: Expressive Arts, Creativity, and Mindfulness examines the ways in which mindfulness, combined with an expressive arts approach, can strengthen creativity in the art classroom. Expressive arts were originally developed within the psychotherapeutic field as a way to encourage healing and discovery, with a stronger focus on the creative process than the artistic product. This chapter explores how visual art, when experienced through the lens of expressive arts and mindfulness, can enhance students’ creative capacity.

Chapter 3: The Art of Self-Care is written specifically for teachers. As the well-known educator Parker Palmer explained, “We teach who we are.”³ Explore this chapter to begin or deepen your own personal mindfulness and expressive arts practice. Here you’ll also find visual journaling practices to support your creative renewal.

Chapter 4: The Mindful Studio and the Whole Student brings together mindfulness and expressive arts to support the whole student using head, hands, and heart. In this chapter, you can find information about the value of including emotions in learning, along with lesson plans that integrate expressive arts and mindfulness to support creativity and well-being.

Notes

- 1 Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi. “Two Kinds of Intelligence.” *The Essential Rumi: The Expanded Edition*. Translated by Coleman Barks. San Francisco: HarperOne, 2004.
- 2 Jane E. Dalton. “Art, Love, and Learning.” *Pedagogies of Kindness and Respect: On the Lives and Education of Children*. Edited by Julie A. Gorlewski, Brad J. Porfilio, Paul L. Thomas. New York: Peter Lang, 2015.
- 3 Parker J. Palmer. *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000.