

Mindfulness in Your Classroom: 4 Ways to FLOW ~ {Guest Post from GoNoodle}

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Mindfulness in Your Classroom: 4 Ways to FLOW

By Wynne Kinder BA Ed. (of Kinder Associates LLC and Wellness Works in Schools)

Meet guest poster [Wynne Kinder](#)— former classroom teacher (16 years), wellness educator, curriculum author, and teacher trainer—who has been using principles of mindfulness, social skills, and emotional balance in classrooms for 10+ years. Most recently, Wynne collaborated with [GoNoodle](#) to create Flow, the first-of-its-kind mindfulness brain break for classrooms.

Mindfulness Came into My Classroom

Jose was not having it. He declared, with actions and words, that he was not going along with my hopes of quiet, calm or “just breathing” in our 5th grade classroom.

I had envisioned that my newly-discovered personal practice of mindfulness would naturally assimilate into this 28-student, urban, public school classroom. Jose and friends responded, “You are just trying to calm

us to death,” and “We’re not like that, Miss. We’re not like you.” So, I stuck to the curriculum in the classroom.

That is until a mindfulness program, Wellness Works in Schools, came to our school to lead classroom sessions. I was hopeful, but still skeptical; My wiggly nay-sayers? My chatty, non-sitters? My separated from the group-ers? My Jose is going to try something new, quiet, calm? I think not.

I should have given him (actually, all of them) more credit.

Jose became the star student. He reminded me when the mindfulness teachers were coming. He helped set up our classroom. He even led a mindfulness activity in one of our final sessions, and I resisted the urge to tell him, “I told you so.”

Three years later, I retired from classroom teaching to help spread classroom mindfulness concepts around the district and the county through Wellness Works in Schools. Today, teachers like me who weren’t sure how, when or why to engage their students in mindfulness don’t have to wait for a mindfulness expert to save the day.

Mindfulness Goes Everywhere



Last week, I received an emailed plea from a teacher-friend two hours away. “How do I teach what you teach? I need to try. My kids are talkers. They seriously won’t stop. Help!”

I sent her straight to GoNoodle, an online suite of resources to engage students and teachers with physical activity breaks or “brain breaks,” that incorporate mindfulness practices. I specifically recommended Flow, the newest online, centering, mindfulness brain break I created with GoNoodle. I heard from her a day later. “Success! Made me cry.”

Brain breaks are three to five-minute experiences that can change the tone of a classroom from high energy chaos to channeled productivity or even to focused, balanced readiness.

Taking my work from one-on-one classroom wellness consulting to collaboration with GoNoodle opens up the possibilities for classroom mindfulness and reaching classrooms everywhere. Teachers who never imagined practicing mindfulness are now discovering the benefits, and those who wanted to practice classroom mindfulness, but weren’t sure how, now have an accessible starting point.

4 Ways to Flow



Flow is designed as a “jumping off” point for mindfulness practice. While Flow does not represent the entirety of mindfulness practice, it serves as a way to guide students in short, repeatable mindfulness exercises without need for prior experience.

1. Morning Meeting offers an opportunity to set the tone for your day. Take note of the vocabulary used in the exercises and remind students how they can “bring down their balloon” when feeling out of control, or “chin up” when feeling discouraged or frustrated.

2. Class Meetings are an interjection of a needed shift for you and your students . Use Flow during such times: before a test, after a conflict, or as a break from a challenging or frustrating lesson (long division, anyone?).

3. Transitions are one of the most uncertain parts of classroom management, as they afford the most opportunity to “lose” the class. Make Flow a natural 3-minute transition aid. Use Flow as a chance for students to be more present and to give yourself the opportunity to smoothly shift focus and manage energy.

4. Anytime. Really, any time you or your students want to Flow! Once mindfulness becomes a regular part of your classroom routine, students will ask for a brain break when they need it. Follow their intuition (and your own) to offer Flow as a strategy to rearrange energy and attitudes.

To use Flow with your kids or students, create a free account at GoNoodle.com. GoNoodle also includes 3-5 minute brain breaks of varying energy levels from calming to high energy.

Note from OMazing Kids: Be sure to check out the **FREE Teacher’s Guide PDF** on the GoNoodle website (<http://inspiration.gonoodle.com/2014/05/a-teaching-guide-for-flow/>)

and their social media sites for updates:

<https://www.facebook.com/GoNoodleGames>

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