**Scaffolding Calm**

Students, as well as adults, can have a hard time sitting still and breathing for any length of time. Sometimes we need to progress slowly and build up to being able to sit and breathe deeply for 5 minutes. We may need to “Scaffold Calm” just like we scaffold other learning for our students and ourselves. Mindfulness can be a tool to help scaffold calm.

**Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way; On purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally.”** Jon Kabat-Zinn’s

Here are some activities that help promote mindfulness and in turn, help us achieve a more calming feeling in our brains and bodies.

**Mindful Movement**

* Become alert or aware of the sensations of our body when we are moving.
* Mindful movements can be done anywhere: walking outside, standing in the classroom, and moving in the halls. Have your students focus on how they are moving and how it feels in their bodies.
* Here is a sequence you can do in the classroom:
  + Begin with mindful standing.

Simply stand up straight with your feet about hip-width apart. Allow your knees to be slightly loose. Have your shoulders back and down and your chest comfortably open. Allow your arms to hang by the sides of your body.

Check that your head is balanced on your neck and shoulders. Imagine a helium balloon is attached to the top of your head gently pulling you upright. Keep your eyes closed if you can maintain your balance safely that way.

* + Feel sensations in your body.

Notice the sensation of your own breath. Feel the weight of your body upon your feet. Become mindful of areas in your body that feel tense or uncomfortable without trying to relax them.

* + Move your arms up and down.

When you’re ready, move your arms upwards in front of you as you breathe in and back down again as you breathe out. Notice the physical sensations in your arms and hands as you do this about ten times.

* + Move your arms up and out, in and down.

The next time you breathe in, raise your arms in front. Then, as you breathe out, open your arms outwards. As you breathe in, bring your arms together in front of you again. As you breathe out, bring your arms back down to your sides again. Do this about ten times if you can.

Again just notice the physical sensations in your arms and hands.

**Mindful Tasting**

* Students love doing mindful tasting. Mindful tasting involves exploring a small piece of food using as many of your senses as possible.
* Here is a sequence you can do in the classroom:
  + Give each student a small piece of food such as one raisin or a small piece of chocolate. You can use any food that you like.
  + First, look at the food. Notice its texture. Notice its color.
  + Now, close your eyes, and explore the food with your sense of touch. What does this food feel like? Is it hard or soft? Grainy or sticky? Moist or dry?
  + Keeping your eyes closed, explore this food with your sense of smell. What do you notice?
  + Take your first bite. Chew *very* slowly, noticing the actual sensory experience of chewing and tasting. Place the piece of food on different areas of your tongue. Can you notice any differences?
  + Notice the texture of the food; the way it feels in your mouth.
  + Notice if the intensity of its flavor changes, moment to moment.
  + Take about 20 more seconds to *very slowly* finish this first bite of food, being aware of the simple sensations of chewing and tasting.
  + Now, take your second and last bite.
  + As before, chew very slowly, while paying close attention to the actual *sensory* experience of eating: the sensations and movements of chewing, the flavor of the food as it changes, and the sensations of swallowing.

**Scaffolding Calm**

**Mindful Seeing**

* Have students look at a picture or an object such as a flower or plant or pinecone.
  + Have them observe the object and describe all the details that they see: colours, size, shapes, unique details etc.
    - They can just think about all the details that they see or
    - They can draw what they see or
    - Working in small groups, they can individually take notes on what they see then compare with others in their group.
* Another activity you can have then look around the room and ask them if they can see something in the room that they never noticed before.

**Mindful Listening**

* Mystery sound
  + Ask students to close their eyes and sit comfortably. You or another student will have several objects that can be used to produce a recognizable sound. Ask the students to listen mindfully to the sound each object makes. Have them guess what the object is. For example, you can tap a pencil, crumple paper, hit a bell, shuffle cards.
* Sit spot
  + A sit spot is a place to step away from the commotion of our daily lives and check into what’s happening in nature. Have students go outside and sit down in a designated area. Instruct them to sit quietly for a set length of time and observe what’s around them. What do they hear? What can they see?

**Mindful breathing**

* See self-awareness exercise on reverse page
* Candle/Flower breathing – slowly and silently pretend to smell a flower as you breathe in and as you breathe out, pretend to blow out the candle.
* Belly breathing – have student’s lye on their backs and pretend they have their favourite stuffy on their belly. “Breathe in and as your belly gets bigger, image your stuffy is going for a ride and rising up towards the ceiling. As you breathe out and your belly relaxes back down, image your stuffy lowering to the ground”.

Compiled by Laura Paiement. For more mindful activities check out the Mind Up Curriculum.