



# New York Center for Teacher Development, Inc.

*In affiliation with The University of Massachusetts Global*

## Course Syllabus

**Course:** **EDZU 9981 Practicing Peace: Mindful Practices for a Calmer and More Connected Classroom**

**Credit Hours:** 3.0 credits / 45 hours

**Instructor:** Jessica Janowsky, M.Ed., RYT

### Course Description

Educators are faced with many challenging tasks every day. Students have many social and emotional issues which teachers are expected to contend with, oftentimes without any training. Students' inability to calm down and control difficult emotions has put many schools in crisis. Bullying, physically aggressive behaviors, and even school shootings are sources of great anxiety and fear for students and teachers alike. Children cannot learn when they are afraid or stressed out. Teachers do not teach effectively or compassionately when they are too anxious or overwhelmed. Mindful practices help participants learn to calm upsetting or difficult emotions and better self-regulate. When students (and teachers) use mindfulness, they are able to consciously choose how to respond to difficult emotions, instead of just reacting to stimuli inappropriately. This course will help you and your students become more mindful. In doing so you'll build a strong community of caring individuals. You'll do more teaching, students will be better focused to learn, and everyone will feel happier and healthier.

### Course Goals

#### Teachers Enrolled in This Class Will...

##### **Know**

- What mindfulness is
- Which concepts are integrated as mindful components?
- Which mindful practices can be appropriately integrated into your classroom to address your specific needs and concerns?

##### **Understand**

- How using your senses can be used to create mindful moments
- How body, breath, and mind become infused in mindful experiences
- How the brain and body respond to stress
- How the brain and body are relieved from stress when mindful practices are applied observed

**and To Be Able To**

- Use mindfulness to calm yourself prior to addressing a stressful situation
- Apply mindful lessons that accurately address your classroom dynamics
- Introduce least one new mindful lesson each week throughout this class
- Write and implement a mindful lesson that is inspired by an appropriate text for your students' age/interests.
- Use the data you collect to document which transformations, if any, have occurred since creating a mindful classroom

**Course Outline****I. What is Mindfulness?**

- a. What does it mean to be mindful?
  - Article
- b. What concerns do schools at large face?
  - Article
- c. What concerns do you face in your classroom?
  - Track and tally your students' anti-social behaviors

**II. Mindfulness Based Interventions in Schools**

- a. Interview other stakeholders to clarify concerns in your school community
  - Be sure to interview at least 5 students, 3 teacher colleagues, 2 parents, and one administrator
  - Ask for the top 3 most concerning issues from each stakeholder's point of view
- b. Compare and contrast stakeholders' input with the information presented in article about challenges in public schools.
- c. Continue to track and tally student target behaviors

**III. Mental Health as it Relates to Learning**

- a. The relationship between brain function and stress
  - Article
  - Video
- b. Using good judgment based on evidence, not emotion
  - Article
  - Write an opinion paper in support of, or against, mindful practices in schools

#### **IV. Mindful Practices for the Classroom**

- a. Benefits of practicing mindfulness
  - Video
- b. Create and implement a mindful lesson based on/inspired by a student texts or literature selection
  - Article

#### **V. Mindful Reflections**

- a. Re-interview students as to their experiences the last 5 weeks
- b. Reflect on what you've learned and, on your experiences, both pleasant and unpleasant
- c. Write a reflective documentary as to how you, your students, and the climate of your classroom has been altered since implementing mindful practices

### **Methods of Instruction**

Teachers enrolled in this course will refer to primary and secondary sources as well as gather data from observations and interviews to bring awareness to issues that are impacting educational practices in our nation and within their own classroom community. They will research mindful practices and determine which practices would be beneficial to address and correct the concerns in their classrooms. They will create their own mindful lesson by considering the following factors: (1) which issues/concerns they want to address, (2) by means of an appropriate text or book for their students age and interests, (3) executing a mindful practice that address the identified concern.

### **Methods of Assessment**

To earn an A in this class, a student must complete all the assigned readings and assignments, participate in all the discussion forums, and complete all the practicum tasks. This includes, but is not limited to:

- ❖ Keeping track, by way of tallying, student inappropriate behaviors in which to be able to base mindful lessons on student needs
- ❖ Interviewing different educational stakeholders to determine various perspectives of the challenges your school currently faces
- ❖ Sharing and reflecting on mindful lessons with the group to foster a community of learners within our course
- ❖ A detailed summary of what transformations, if any, were observed over the past 5 weeks with regards to students as well as your own personal practices.

To receive a B in this class, a student must complete all the assigned readings and assignments, participate in all the discussion forums, and complete two of the practicum tasks cited above.

### Time Validation

<b>Practicing Peace Assignment</b>	<b>Janowsky</b>	<b>Time (in hours)</b>
Week 1- <b>Read</b> Explanation of mindfulness		2.00
Week 1- <b>Read</b> Challenges in education		2.00
Week 1- <b>Write-</b> Respond to questions posed regrading article above		1.00
Week 1- DAILY-Track & tally your students anti-social behavior on tracking sheet; Begin personal mindfulness practices and log a minimum of 10 minutes per day		2.00
Week 2- <b>Interview</b> students, colleagues/teachers, administration, and parents - what does each of these stakeholders feel are the 3 most concerning issues in your building?		3.00
Week 2- <b>Write</b> a 3 comprehensive paper comparing and contrasting the feedback you received with the information from the "10 Challenges..." article.		3.00
Week 2- <b>Research</b> a mindful lesson and implement it into your classroom. Write a short summary of the lesson and the students' reactions		2.00
Week 2- DAILY-Track & tally your students anti-social behavior on the tracking sheet; Continue personal mindful practices- and log a minimum of 10 minutes per day		2.00
Week 3- <b>Read</b> Brain, stress and mental health		1.50
Week 3 - <b>Watch Video</b> Prevention of mental illness through mindfulness		0.50
Week 3- <b>Read</b> "How Stress Affects Your Health"		1.00
Week 3- <b>Read</b> "How Emotions Affect Learning"		0.50
Week 3- <b>Write</b> a letter to a concerned community member as to why you support mindfulness in school and also address/rebut at least two concerns that skeptic have or why you agree with their concerns. Use text based evidence to support your opinion.		3.00
Week 3- DAILY lead your students in at least one mindful activity. Document what activity, duration, and student reactions -positive and negative; Track & tally your students anti-social behavior on the tracking sheet; Continue personal mindful practices- and log a minimum of 10 minutes per day		2.00
Week 4- <b>Watch Video</b> Mindfulness and the brain		0.50
Week 4- Read "How I use picture books to teach mindfulness in middle school"		2.00

Week 4- Write and implement a mindfulness lesson using one of the books you researched	5.00
Week 4-DAILY lead your students in at least one mindful activity. Document what activity, duration, and student reactions -positive and negative; Track & tally your students anti-social behavior on the tracking sheet; Continue personal mindful practices- and log a minimum of 10 minutes per day	2.00
<b>Week 5- Read "Why is Mindfulness Needed in Education?"</b>	1.00
Week 5- <b>Re-Interview</b> students as to their experiences with Mindful Based Practices. Use the information from their perceptions at the beginning of this course and at the end of this course to help you write a comprehensive reflective documentary.	2.00
Week 5- <b>Write</b> a documentary as to what transformations, if any, occurred within your classroom as a result of practicing mindfulness with your students to during the course of this class. Reflect on what you have learned. Note any changes you have noticed within yourself and your students. Document your experience as a culminating assignment. Please include both positive and negative experiences.	5.00
Week 5- DAILY lead your students in at least one mindful activity. Document what activity, duration, and student reactions -positive and negative; Track & tally your students anti-social behavior on the tracking sheet; Continue personal mindful practices- and log a minimum of 10 minutes per day	2.00
<b>Total Time</b>	<b>45.00</b>