

Mindful Practice through Mindful Expression

COVID relief teaching resource

Jessica Lowry is a professional actor, writer and certified Iyengar Yoga Instructor. She is offering access to her Artstarts grant funded project: Mindful Practise through Mindful Expression.

This project was created by Jessica with Artstarts in partnership with LIS and the LIS PAC to present mindfulness in a challenge that is focused on joyful whole body/mind engagement. Mindfulness strategies are the target outcome and they are explored with students through the disciplines of acting and yoga.

Student benefits:

- Creates positive mindfulness practises
- Builds self-awareness and empathy
- Explores creativity and expression
- Encourages literacy inspired through physical literacy
- Empowers students to develop a daily practise

Teacher benefits

- Meets curricular competencies and content for Language Arts, Physical and Health Education, and Fine Art
- Fun Interactive and engaging approach to mindfulness
- Builds a positive classroom community
- Organized for you to clearly indicate space, time, materials required
- Flexible: follow a sequence or use as works for your classroom

Features:

- 38 videos for teachers to play in the classroom
- Each exercise is between 3 and 30 minutes
- Students keep a journal for their own process
- Schedule is flexible, teachers can pick lessons to meet their needs
- Lessons can be repeated
- Targets grades 4 - 8

'In my class, we have been participating in this program for several weeks and when we do not spend time in the morning "with Jessica", my class is disappointed. As a teacher, I can feel the energy in the room change and calm when we practice the mindfulness exercises.'

Kim Greenwood - Teacher, Ladysmith Intermediate School

Why Acting?

Presented as a regular challenge in a series of short online videos, students build a regular mindfulness practice through exploring an actor's tool kit. What does mindfulness have to do with acting? An actor's job is to become finely attuned with themselves, their senses, bodies, the world and people around them that they can inhabit moment to moment reality with full conviction and presence. Mindful awareness is the superpower of the actor! Many actor exercises focus on awakening our senses, developing

awareness of our bodies, and the world around us- experientially learning how to break down the process of listening and responding which brings us naturally into the present moment.

How does it work?

Teachers select a video daily or on a regular basis weekly from a library of 38 videos. The videos range from 3-30 mins and there are two sections, Character Study and Mindful Movement. Teachers flex back and forth between the video sections to develop 'the body as an instrument' with a mindful movement section that includes exercises influenced by yoga practise, breathing and meditation. Actors often train with a specific discipline, such as yoga, as their core mind/body training. This physical yoga work grounds the students for The Character Study sections that consists of exercises and writing prompts to help students develop 'an actor's tool kit' while targeting listening, empathy for others, focus, physical and creative expression and the embodiment of a totally unique 'Character'.

Journaling

There is a journaling component to this challenge that encourages literacy through immediate free expression and by encouraging students to document their work and responses to the process. This journal is intended for the students, not to be marked or graded and is based on developing a process over a product.

Culmination

The project culminates in optional final presentations which offer a few different forms. Students have an opt-in opportunity to share their created 'characters' in class. Alternative presentations are given for those who are not comfortable presenting or are interested in other forms of sharing work.

How do we get it?

Targeted grades for this project are grade 4-8. Licensing fee to opt in to this project is \$750 per school for usage through until the end of the 20/21 school year. Added required materials not provided by the artist are for each participating student a blank unlined journal, writing/drawing utensils and for the longer yoga sessions in the gym, a yoga mat. If your school is interested but can't meet the fee this year, please contact Jessica. She will endeavour to get this project to any school that needs it. This project was created with long term goals to bring an engaging approach to developing mindfulness skills in schools in and in direct response to the stresses precipitated by the COVID crisis as a project curated with both students and teachers in mind.

Contact Jessica through email with any further questions and to arrange a subscription for your school this year.

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