

This lesson is, “What am I gonna do, my first day in a mindfulness class?” Um, How am I going to layout a lesson um, and then from there we’ll get into the more of the five literacies and you’ll get to see how to actually, fit that in. How to fit each of these progressive lessons in. The first piece I always want to do when I go into a classroom is to read the room, right? I want to come in, I want to just get a feel for what’s happening. Then the first question pretty much always is, is have you ever heard of mindfulness, alright. And that has changed remarkably in the last ten years since I’ve been doing this, right. So when I first went in, nobody or one or two kids had heard of mindfulness. You know the odd, you know, kid whose parents have practiced it or heard about it on oprah or something you know. But now I go in to a lot of classrooms all over the place, and either they have a mindfulness program that’s going through, somehow a lot of kids have had access to this. So I want to get their preconceived notions. Some schools I’ve gone into, mindfulness has been taught in a way which is not exactly the way that I want to teach it. So I want to know what they think about it, right?

Sometimes I go in and the kids have this amazing, they...they’ve really pretty steeped it in already. Like, I’ve been working with the south Burlington Vermont’s school district, for, they’ve been doing it for like eight years or so. Every kid in every grade, K to 12 gets some form of mindfulness, you know. So these kids have just like in their school system. So I go in and I ask them and they’re like, they are...they’re masters of mindfulness. And I’m like, “Ok, great! Let’s...” I don’t have to teach a lesson, let’s just practice together and see what we’re up to and what you’re thinking. Um, I want to ask that and I don’t want to give them my definition of what mindfulness is. I want to hear theirs...If I say to them, “Mindfulness means paying attention on purpose, like what I mention earlier...”, whatever I, I want to phrase it as, especially if I say like, “Mindfulness means that you’re gonna be really calm and happy”, um, and then I’m going to get

back responses probably saying, once we practice saying, “That made me feel calm and happy”. Um, and then I don’t get actually know what, if that is...what they’ve experienced, right? I’m much more interested if a student says, “That made me feel really uncomfortable, I don’t like that”, I’m like, “Wow, so what were you experiencing?” that’s the trail that I’m looking for with mindfulness. Because then, what ends up happening is the kids, they create...it’s their definition, right? So I usually start by asking, “Has anybody heard of mindfulness?”, right? And then I’ll invite them to do a mindful moment, um...sometimes you need to do a little bit of movement first, before you have that moment. Maybe that moment’s ten seconds long, doesn’t need to be that long but getting an opportunity to be able to have some introspection for moments. Once I have that moment, I ask, “What was that like?” right? I might just say “Let’s just pause for a moment and just see what you’re experiencing”, I haven’t said anything about closing your eyes, anything about...maybe I haven’t even said anything about, definitely I’d be giving my definition of mindfulness or posture, or anything like that. Let’s just notice if you stop for a moment...”Wow, what did you notice? You were just here for a moment”, right? Just that you know like, I’ve had kids, you do that in kids and like, “I think I heard the lights buzzing”, you know and that’s where you get your, your magical mindfulness definition moment where you’re like, “wow you’ve been sitting in this classroom for how long? Have you heard the lights buzzing above you again before? No? We just did this mindfulness for like 15 seconds and you like noticed something that was above head all the time.” Well, that’s interesting don’t you think? What is this mindfulness thing? You know getting that discussion where you’re going to get to, wow mindfulness makes us be more aware, it opens our senses up, and you can really get the thing like oh, we did that and I think I felt my heart beating, it must get you more in touch

with your body, so I'm so much more interested in that and the definition of mindfulness coming to me from the kids.

So that would be this kind of harvesting insights idea, right? We're really harvesting their definition of mindfulness. What does mindfulness mean to you? Then what I'd like to do if I just have had them pause for a moment, I would like to say to them, "how do you think we could be even more aware if we did that again?" So we just pause may be 10 seconds, maybe a minute if we're up for it. How do you think we could do that again and like if we were able to hear the lights buzzing just for 10 seconds, what else could we do? And very often the kids will say things like, oh maybe if we close our eyes and maybe if we're like really still and maybe if we're really quiet, which is what I would say to them, but usually you get most of those just by asking them like how do you think you could be like ultra-aware? So, to a few of those points the eyes closed piece, I never tell kids to close their eyes, it's important to not tell them to, some kids closing their eyes is going to feel really unsafe, really vulnerable if their eyes are closed and there's somebody sitting behind them and or whatever. It's totally easy to just have them like look down at the carpet around, I'll just say like, oh yeah closing your eyes is a great idea, if it doesn't feel comfortable for you, you don't have to close them, but I do think, I think you're right, I think it'll be a good idea if we weren't looking around because it's really easy to get distracted when we look around. Maybe if we just kind of look, keep our eyes downward or let them close so that the attention really, we'll really be able to pay attention better.

Also that piece of, yeah let's try to be really quiet ourselves, no scratching our pants or no making any humming noise, let's see if you're really quiet, how could we really get our attention stronger. So then I'm interested to let them try it again. So like, yeah let's try again, let's see

how much we can focus now that we're really paying attention. Giving them another chance, maybe giving them a little bit longer.