



## 2015-2016 AESN Case Study

**School:** Tuc-el-Nuit Elementary

**District:** #53 Okanagan Similkameen

### **Inquiry Team Members**

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**Our focus for this year:** As an extension of the MindUp program, how can we help students to focus their attention and control their breathing, so that they can learn to reduce stress and optimize the learning capacity of their brain?

**Scanning:** Learners were experiencing anxiety with daily stressors and were needing a quiet place to calm their brains so that they could get in the right learning mode. We needed a variety of sensory objects to meet the needs of various learning styles. The MindUp program was effective but we needed to provide a place for self-regulation and an extension of the program. Questions that were asked to students:

- Tell us two people that believe in you and believe that you will be successful.
- How did the mindful center help your learning?
- What have you learned about your experience at the mindful center today?
- What do you need to do to get better at self-regulating?

Using the four key questions:

- We wanted to know how their learning was affected after the mindful center and to see if they could self-regulate to go back to better learning.
- We noticed that students struggled with naming two adults who believed in them but they all loved the Mindful Center and lit up when they talked about it.
- We used the First Peoples Principles of Learning in our scanning process by incorporating cultural sensory items through consultation with the District Aboriginal Teacher.

**Focus:** We collaborated on how to incorporate quiet, mindful stations into the classroom and determined that the **center** of the library, in the **center** of the school, would be a great place for the Mindful **Center**. We wanted to incorporate Aboriginal Heritage into the Mindful Center so we approached the district Aboriginal contact teacher who came up with Aboriginal sensory items (and a Dream Catcher with buckskin background) to highlight the connection to Aboriginal culture. We were hoping that learners would be calmer and in a better learning state.

**Hunch:** All students came to the library for class time, book exchanges and a place to be during recess and lunch. We felt that students would naturally see the library as a calm, safe place to self-regulate. We felt that the Mindful Center was a universal solution or opportunity for all students no matter if they were in the Response to Intervention(RTI) framework: Tier 1, 2 or 3.

### **New professional learning:**

- The co-creator of the Mindful Centre and Big Brothers and Big Sisters' South Okanagan Program Manager attended the biofeedback workshop which initiated the interest in providing a place to come to self-regulate which was outside the classroom. She also attended MindUp and Mindfulness in the classroom workshops.
- Our librarian went to a Self-Emotional Learning Workshop and used the book "Calm, Focus and Alert" as a resource. She also used the Mindful Center as an extension of the MindUp Program and as a tie in for calming the brain to improve literacy results.
- Oral and kinesthetic presentations on the Mindful Center have been given to all students, staff, parents, as well as community partners so that everyone understands the purpose, when and how to use it.

### **Taking action:**

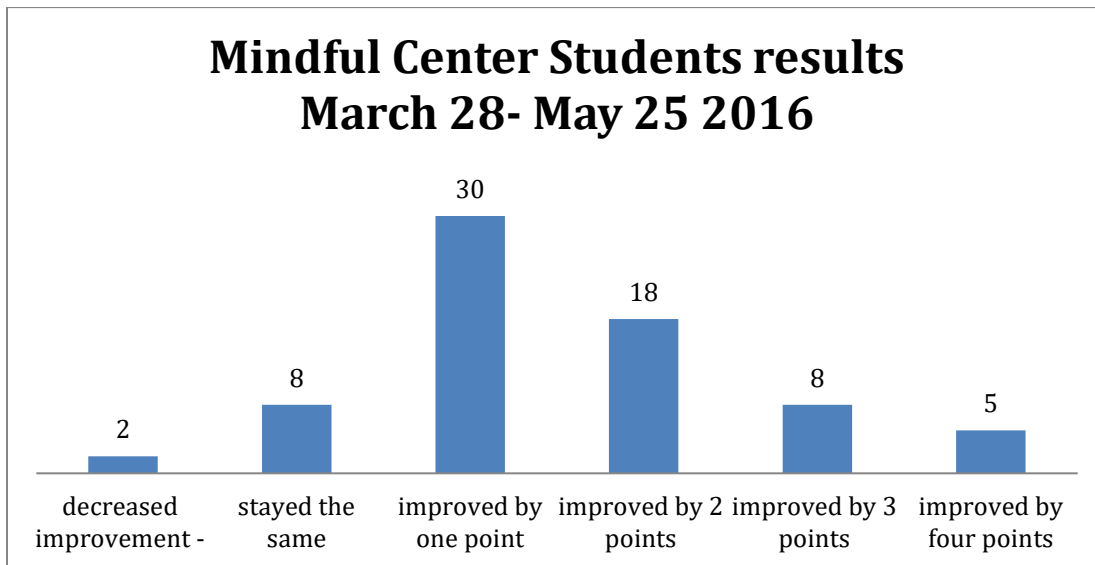
- We created a brochure for public information and typed up guidelines to display at each station
- Collected sensory items, such as the rawhide, smoked hide, rabbit fur, beads, sweet grass and sage, in collaboration with Helen, District Aboriginal Teacher. Helen also made a dream catcher for the center
- Donation drives to raise funds for Kore stools, mindful drawing boards, CD players and headphones, five-minute sand timers and liquid lava timers
- Pam purchased baskets at the dollar store
- Marlene collaborated with Terri Straiton, Social emotional helping teacher in the Abbotsford school district.

**Checking:** We are very happy with the results as students are self-referring to utilize the Mindful Center for a variety of reasons. Parents and teachers have noticed a transference of the skills to classroom and home situations

- Student voices:
  - ✓ "Me and my friend had a really big fight so I had a big problem. I came in and thought about all the good things while I was drawing and listening to the water sounds. It made me take deep breaths." When I asked her if she found a way to solve her problem, she responded, "No but I feel better." - Grade 2
  - ✓ "I like the painting. It makes me feel good when I paint." – Grade 4
  - ✓ "It helps me relax." By Karissa – Grade 4
  - ✓ "I really like the mindful center. My daughter made her own mindful center in the middle of her bed this morning." – student's mom
  - ✓ "I like the squishy things and that I can't be bothered by other people when I'm there."
  - ✓ "Makes me feel calmer & calmer & warmer & warmer." - Grade 3
  - ✓ "I love it! My uncle died and I feel really sad. It helps me feel better." - Grade 3
  - ✓ "My Grandpa died and it helps me." - Grade 4
  - ✓ "I like the boards and the music, touching and smelling the things. The music calms my brain" – Grade 4
  - ✓ "I was feeling not so happy and it helps me a little bit better. It helped me when I could smell stuff and hear stuff. I feel a bit nicer and a bit more calmer." – Grade 4
  - ✓ "We were doing reading and I was energetic from playing outside so we came in here to calm down." – Grade 4
  - ✓ "I like the Mindful board because it makes me reflect on what I'm feeling now (I draw a dandelion) and what I want to feel (I draw a lily)." – Grade 6
  - ✓ "I like listening to the water....it calms me down." – Grade 6

- ✓ “If you close your eyes and listen to the outdoor noises it feels like I’m in a jungle and it calms me down.” – Grade 6
- ✓ “I like this center. I really like the sand timer and the painting. A lot of kids could use this.” – Grade 1
- ✓ “It works for me because it is kind of good for learning. I felt a bit stressed out and I asked the teacher and she let me go. I felt stressed out because I had to color quickly. The Mindful Center calmed down my nerves so then you’re listening to water and see the sand go down the timer.” – Grade 4
- ✓ “I was over excited because everything good was happening today. I needed a mindful moment or I would have jumped everywhere.” – Grade 2
- ✓ “Everyone in the class was yelling and I started to get a headache. The Mindful Center helped to calm me down and me head is not as bad.” – Grade 4
- ✓ “A couple of weeks ago, I gave everyone Christmas cards and they threw them away and said they were stupid. The Mindful Center helped to calm me down and feel a bit better.” – Grade 2

We used a data collection of how students felt before and after using the Mindful Center and why they used the Mindful Center (Results below):



Why did I use the Mindful Center today? (Anecdotal)

- My sister / brother was being mean to me X2
- My head / back was hurting
- I was stressed and worried
- Because someone died in my family
- Friends - laughing picking on me - Also I am sick of kids picking on me
- I got in a fight with my friend
- I was overwhelmed
- Another student is with someone I want to play with
- Because my friend ditched me
- I was sad and emotional X2
- Because I was stressed and I needed to use the mindful moment
- I couldn't keep up with writing and my friend got me mad
- Tired
- Because I was stressed and I missed my daddy X5

- Because I was confused
- I used the mindful center today because I felt bothered by something
- Because my friends were fighting and I can't (I don't know how to side with both) X2
- I saw my friend really sad
- I was laughing in class after being told not too
- I didn't want my mom to leave
- Because my friend yelled at me
- I lost my library books
- I got in a fight
- My brother was bothering me
- I wasn't sure what to do, I had to do something so I did the mindful center
- It is so loud!!! We had a substitute who is really mean
- Everyone was against me
- I was bored
- Mad that I missed music
- Because I was nervous of the showcase assembly
- I came here because science was hard and it made me sad
- I miss my old friends really bad
- The class was being loud

**Reflections/Advice:**

- We would like to offer mobile Mindful Center kits that students can sign out at the library to take home.
- We have significant interest from other educators to view the Mindful Center and implement it in their schools.
- It needs to be a community partnership with a social service organization