



THE **MINDUP** CURRICULUM

Grades Pre-K-2

Brain-Focused Strategies for Learning—and Living

Focused Classrooms • Mindful Learning • Resilient Children

 **SCHOLASTIC**

MINDUP

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Welcome to **MINDUP**

Imagine ... joyful learning, academic success, and a powerful sense of self and community.

Imagine ... students who are able to engage in a focused, energetic way with one another, with their teachers, and with their learning.

Imagine ... schools that are productive, harmonious centers of successful learning, where all students thrive because they recognize themselves as

- capable, creative learners
- self-aware human beings
- compassionate, responsible citizens

All of this is possible. **MINDUP** can help you achieve it.

MindUP Online Training

At www.thehawnfoundation.org, you'll find resources to enrich your MindUP instruction, including

- the entire spectrum of MindUP techniques, addressing social and emotional learning
- classroom demonstrations conducted by experienced MindUP consultants and mentors
- instructional insights, grade-specific teaching strategies, and other resources
- the latest in neuroscience about how the brain works and how it affects learning

Register at www.thehawnfoundation.org to access this innovative, interactive training and learning resource, developed in partnership with Columbia University's Center for New Media Teaching and Learning.



Dear Educators,

From Scholastic

For 90 years, Scholastic has been a presence in your classrooms, supporting teaching and learning. The challenges faced by you and your students today are well known and unprecedented. These include the following expectations:

- providing differentiated instruction to children who come with diverse language and experiential backgrounds
- improving academic performance
- addressing new standards geared to career and college preparedness
- helping children and their families handle economic and social changes

When we met Goldie Hawn and the Hawn Foundation team, we were impressed by their commitment to helping all students achieve their potential socially and academically. Also, we shared their respect for educators who, like all of you, are entrusted with the preparation of the next generation.

We are pleased to introduce MindUP, a collaboration of the Hawn Foundation and Scholastic. MindUP isn't one more program to implement or subject to teach, but a set of strategies that can be integrated with what you are already doing, so that you and your students will become more focused when doing schoolwork and are able to work and play more successfully with others. The essence of what the MindUP program calls for is embodied in the idea of the Optimistic Classroom—a place where all children have the opportunity to achieve their potential.

Thank you for inviting us into your school.

Optimistically yours,



Francie Alexander
Chief Academic Officer
Scholastic Inc.



Patrick Daley
Senior Vice President, Publisher
Scholastic Inc.

From the Hawn Foundation

Thank you for bringing the MindUP Curriculum into your classrooms.

MindUP has been my focus and my passion for many years. I am so grateful to you, devoted educators who believe in the limitless potential of children and give tirelessly of your time, energy, creativity, and love.

The simple practices at the core of MindUP will help your students to become resilient, focused, and mindful learners. I have seen the MindUP practices at work in classrooms all over the world. I have witnessed its success and have heard from countless teachers in praise of its transformative effect on children's ability to learn.

I know that with your help we can equip our children with the skills they need to live smarter, healthier, and happier lives. Together we will create optimistic classrooms where children successfully cope with the stresses they face in school, at home, and in their communities.

Thank you for accepting the enormous and critically important responsibilities and challenges that accompany your mission as an educator.

From the bottom of my heart, I thank you.



Goldie Hawn
Founder, The Hawn Foundation
and the MindUP Curriculum

What is MindUP?

MindUP is a comprehensive, classroom-tested, evidence-based curriculum framed around 15 easily implemented lessons that foster social and emotional awareness, enhance psychological well-being, and promote academic success.

The MindUP classroom is an optimistic classroom that promotes and develops mindful attention to oneself and others, tolerance of differences, and the capacity of each member of the community to grow as a human being and a learner. MindUP's expansive dynamic is built to a large extent on routine practices that are inherent to the MindUP Curriculum. Over the course of the MindUP experience, children learn about the brain and how it functions, in the process gaining insight into their own minds and behaviors as well as those of the people around them.

How Does MindUP Work?

The essential work of MindUP is accomplished through the lessons themselves, which include the repetition of the Core Practice—deep belly breathing and attentive listening. The Core Practice makes mindful attention the foundation for learning and interacting; ideally, it is repeated for a few moments of each school day throughout the year. (See Lesson 3, page 42, for a complete overview of the Core Practice.)

**"MindUP makes my brain happy,
so I can learn better."**

—David, first grade

MindUP has the capacity to alter the landscape of your classroom by letting children in on the workings of their own agile minds. Each MindUP lesson begins with background information on the brain, introducing a specific area of concentration with an activity in which children can see concrete examples of how their brain functions. As you and your class become accustomed to learning about the ways in which the brain processes information, your students will become habitually more observant of their own learning process.

MindUP offers teachers and children insights that respond to the natural thoughtfulness of young people and lead to self-regulation of their behavior. MindUP is dedicated to the belief that the child who learns to monitor his or her senses and feelings becomes more aware and better understands how to respond to the world *reflectively* instead of *reflexively*.

Who Needs MindUP?

Everyone. Joyful engagement isn't incidental; it's essential. Yet, young people today are no strangers to stress. From an early age, they experience stress from a range of sources. For some, stress goes hand in hand with the pressure to achieve; for others, it is prompted by economic hardship, poor nutrition, or inadequate health care; for still others, it may be linked to emotional deprivation or limited educational resources. Whatever the particular circumstance, any one of these factors could hamper a child's ability to learn without anxiety. In "communities of turmoil" (Tatum, 2009), children often cope with several problems at once, and suffer from chronic stress—with consequences that can be disastrous for their learning and their lives. MindUP addresses these obstacles to productive learning and living by offering children and teachers simple practices and insights that become tools for self-management and self-possession. At the same time, the MindUP program works to make learning joyful and fun by emphasizing learning modes in which children flourish:

- lively instruction that invites problem solving, discussion, and exploration
- teacher modeling and coaching
- cross-age mentoring and decision making among children
- conflict resolution
- inquiry and the arts

Joyful engagement is not incidental; it's essential. MindUP shows you how to put joy into your teaching.



MindUP and the School Day

The MindUP program was developed not only to expand children's social and emotional awareness but also to improve their academic performance. The concepts and vocabulary associated with MindUP will expand the scope of students' thinking in all academic disciplines.

MindUP Core Practice can become a staple routine for the opening and closing of each school day as well as at the moments of transition: settling down after recess, waiting for lunch, moving from one subject to the next. As countless MindUP teachers have discovered, any topic benefits from being approached with focused awareness.

The MindUP lessons themselves can be worked smoothly into a daily routine and require minimal preparation on your part; suggested follow-up activities link each lesson to content-area learning. You'll likely find yourself adopting the MindUP techniques and strategies across subject areas. MindUP may well become a way of life for you and the children in your class!

The Day Begins

The best teachers we know are mindful about the beginning of each school day. They make a point of standing by the school door and greeting with an open heart and welcoming smile every child who passes through their classroom door.

An ideal way to unify the class as they begin their day is to gather and share a few moments of "checking in," followed by the Core Practice of deep breathing and mindful awareness. Once you have established this simple routine, you will find that the day feels more coherent and the group less scattered as this practice brings the group together organically while setting an easygoing tone for engagement with the rest of your daily learning.

Transitions

The MindUP Core Practice works beautifully during transition times. With your guidance and thoughtful attention, you can accustom your children to respond to a simple reminder at which they habitually turn to the Core Practices to center themselves and prepare to move easily—even eagerly and joyfully—to the next classroom activity. "Our classroom transition times are some of the most important routines of our day....Our days are full, our curriculum is rich, and we have so much to do together! The tighter our transitions, the more time we will have for instruction" (Allyn, 2010).

The Day Ends

Just as you can help students greet a new day with eagerness and mindful purpose, so can you close the day with a spirit of purpose and celebration—your students will leave the classroom feeling calm yet energized. Eric Jensen, whose "brain-based" teaching has transformed teaching and learning in countless classrooms, explains, "Asking kids to visualize success on an upcoming skill or knowledge set is no 'new Age' strategy. When done well, mental practice is known not only to make physical changes in the brain but also to improve task performance (Pascual-Leone et al., 2005)" (2010). The goal is to end the day on a high note.

Breathing First: The Core Practice

From the earliest grades on up, the recommended approach to MindUP is to first establish the habit of deep belly breathing and focused attention—the so-called Core Practice. Well before you teach Lesson 1, you can lay the groundwork for it in your class by introducing the Core Practice in the first days of the school year. Once children have learned the simple techniques of breathing and listening, you will be able to use the Core Practice to unify your classroom community and provide the stability and receptivity needed for days of rich and fruitful learning. (See Lesson 3, page 42, for a full explanation of the practice.)



Literacy expert Pam Allyn has visited and observed hundreds of classrooms around the world.

"We have seen many classrooms where there are lots of pieces in place, but one secret, fabulous ingredient is missing. That ingredient is celebration. We see teachers wait to celebrate until the end of the year, until a child does well on a test, until the child actually masters the art of reading. But why wait? Celebration is the ultimate management strategy. . . . It is the core ingredient that infuses the entire life of the classroom with joy, with hope, with faith, and with optimism" (2010, p.107).

Using MindUP in the Classroom

MindUP comprises 15 lessons arranged into four units:

Unit I: Getting Focused (Lessons 1–3)

Introduce brain physiology and the concept of mindful attention;
establish daily Core Practice

Lessons: 1. How Our Brains Work, 2. Mindful Awareness,
3. Focused Awareness: The Core Practice

Unit II: Sharpening Your Senses (Lessons 4–9)

Experience the relationship between our senses, our moving bodies, and the
way we think

Lessons: 4. Mindful Listening, 5. Mindful Seeing, 6. Mindful Smelling,
7. Mindful Tasting, 8. Mindful Movement I, 9. Mindful Movement II

Unit III: It's All About Attitude (Lessons 10–12)

Understand the role of our mind-set in how we learn and progress

Lessons: 10. Perspective Taking, 11. Choosing Optimism,
12. Appreciating Happy Experiences

Unit IV: Taking Action Mindfully (Lessons 13–15)

Apply mindful behaviors to our interactions with our community
and the world

Lessons: 13. Expressing Gratitude, 14. Performing Acts of Kindness,
15. Taking Mindful Action in the World

The framework is designed to strengthen children's sense of social and emotional well-being while creating a cohesive, caring classroom environment. Because the concepts build on one another, you'll find it most productive to teach the lessons in sequential order.

Lesson Structure

Each lesson follows the same format:

- **Introduction to the Lesson Topic**... identifies and explains the subject of the lesson, frames *why* it's important, and includes testimony from a MindUP teacher.
- **Linking to Brain Research**... explains how each lesson relates to the neuroscience. This section provides background for you, some of which you may want to share with your students to help them gain a progressively more sophisticated awareness of how their brains work.
- **Clarify for the Class**... includes guidelines for making brain research concepts accessible to students at various grade levels.

- **Getting Ready...** identifies what the lesson entails as well as learning goals for the lesson.
- Also listed are materials and resources required for leading the lesson.
- **MindUP Warm-Up...** helps the class prepare for the Engage, Explore, Reflect part of the lesson activity by introducing and discussing subject matter in an easygoing, open-ended way that relates content to children's lives.
- **Leading the Lesson...** offers a step-by-step approach that engages children in the inquiry, helps them explore the topic, and encourages them to reflect upon and discuss their insights and experiences. The lesson layout also establishes concrete links to the learning process and classroom issues at the Pre-K through second grade levels.
- **Connecting to the Curriculum...** offers specific opportunities for children to bend their minds around language arts, math, social studies, science, health, physical education, the arts, and social-emotional learning. These optional across-the-curriculum learning experiences expand the lesson and offer alternative approaches to content.

Special Features

- **Creating the Optimistic Classroom...** offers classroom management strategies for reaching English language learners, special needs students, and general learners in order to maximize the effectiveness of the lesson.
- **MindUP in the Real World...** connects lesson content to a career or undertaking, expands discussion beyond the classroom, and grounds ideas in a concrete application.
- **Once a Day...** suggests ways for teachers to apply lesson content to everyday situations involving children or colleagues.
- **Journal Writing...** gives children an opportunity to reflect on motivation, actions, and their consequences, so they can learn to mediate and understand their actions. According to Susan Kaiser Greenland, journaling allows children to use what they've learned to create happier, more successful lives for themselves (2010). We recommend that you provide children with a notebook to create a journal that they can personalize with decorations of their choice, and use this personal record to document responses within Greenland's general framework of
 - What I Noticed
 - What It Means
 - What I Learned
- For the youngest learners, set up a Visual Journal for them to record responses with drawings and early efforts at handwriting.
- **Literature Link...** recommends four books that extend the learning.

Lesson Opener

Each MindUP lesson is focused on one aspect or practice of the curriculum.

Mindful Listening

What Is Mindful Listening?

It's the buzz of a cell phone to the wall of a siren, sounds are all around us. Mindful listening helps us choose which sounds to focus our attention on and helps us to be thoughtful in the way we hear and respond to the words of others.

Why Practice Mindful Listening?

Research suggests that children become more focused and responsive to their environment by participating in mindful listening activities, such as Guess That Sound in this lesson. In fact, training our brains to concentrate on specific sounds helps heighten our sensory awareness. As children monitor their own auditory experience—noting what they choose to focus on and/or respond to—they build self-awareness and self-management skills. Mindful listening also lays the groundwork for social awareness and effective communication—an important part of the Common Core State Standards.

Being able to listen in a focused way to what others say and to home in on important words and phrases give a young listener more context for understanding what's being said and a better idea for how to respond. This work helps prepare children for following directions, resolving conflict through discussion, building friendships, and listening for important details in texts read aloud.

What Can You Expect to Observe?

"Children love making a game of identifying familiar sounds. They are eager to practice their listening skills because right away they see an improvement in their ability to isolate and identify sounds. This supports our phonemic awareness work: the class is more interested in—and now has more skills in—listening to words in words."

—Kindergarten teacher



The targeted curriculum area is defined and placed in context for the teacher.

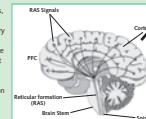
Experience of MindUP users attests to the effectiveness of the specific practice or lesson.

Linking to Brain Research

What Is the RAS?

An intricate network of long nerve pathways lies within the core of the brain stem. This reticular formation, also called the reticular activating system (RAS), helps regulate many basic body functions and connects the brain stem to the prefrontal cortex (PFC) and other parts of the brain. The RAS is a mechanism for keeping the brain awake and alert and is the brain's attention-focusing center. Sensory stimuli (visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory, taste) continuously arrive via the spinal cord and are sorted and screened by the RAS. The sensory input deemed relevant by the RAS is routed on to its appropriate destination in the conscious brain. What's irrelevant is blocked.

The RAS is critically important because the brain cannot process the millions of bits of sensory information coming in at once! A child sitting in a classroom body has competing sensory experiences, such as the voice of her teacher, a wiggly knee, the sight of an outspilling window, and the aroma of food from the cafeteria. A mindful, focused student is able to redirect her attention to the task at hand, reassuring herself that lunchtime will come after math. Athletes, musicians, scholars, and other "focused" people have "trained" their RAS to choose the most pertinent sensory stimuli. With practice focusing on specific details, children can train their RAS to be more effective. Such practice is especially important for children who have trouble focusing their attention on their work, instructions, or social cues. Sensory awareness activities in this lesson and the others in this unit provide children with repeated RAS-strengthening practice.



The RAS serves as an "executive personal secretary" to the PFC, forwarding or only what's immediately relevant.

Clarify for the Class

Make a model of the RAS using a kitchen strainer, sugar, and lentils or split peas. Demonstrate how a strainer works. Much like the RAS, it filters input, allowing only some things to pass through. Explain that the RAS lets important sights, sounds, feelings, tastes, and smells pass on to the brain, just as the filter lets sugar pass through. But it blocks unwanted material, just as the strainer blocks the lentils.

Discuss: What are some situations, places, or times of day when it's hard for you to pay attention? When that happens, what do you think is happening in your brain?

Brain research related to lesson exploration is laid out for instructor, along with supporting illustration.

Language and modeling help instructor make the brain research link understandable to students.

This two-page spread offers an opportunity for easing into the main lesson, so that students are most receptive to the language and ideas that follow.

Getting Ready

Getting Ready



What's that sound?
Children guess what hidden object their teacher is using to make a sound.

GOALS

- Children train their attention on specific sounds and try to identify those sounds.
- Children learn how mindful listening skills can help them communicate more successfully.

MATERIALS

- various common objects for creating sounds
- bag for holding the objects
- Sounds & Scents activity sheet (p. 154)



CREATING THE OPTIMISTIC CLASSROOM

Classroom Management Over a week of circle time, invite pairs of children to use puppets to role-play a simple conversation that targets a communication skill they need practice with (for example, asking a peer to share a book, tool, or toy). Suggest a scenario and have children act it out first in an unkind, unfriendly way and then in a mindful, friendly way. Ask the class to discuss the differences between the two conversations (e.g., the way words were used and the tone—polite, angry, frustrated, and so on). Guide children to understand that choosing their words carefully with a friendly intention can positively affect how they get along with others.



MINDUP Warm-Up

Mindful Listening Practice

Choose a song with parts that are easy to identify, such as vocals, drums, harmonica, cymbals, or violin, and have children gather in a circle on the rug to experience the music. Tell them that you are going to play them a song with special sounds and ask them to listen very carefully to the music so that they can enjoy all the different parts. As they listen to the song the first time, have them put their thumbs up each time they hear a new sound or part. Afterward, list on the board the sounds they heard.

Before you play the song a second time, organize children into groups that will each listen for the sound of a specific instrument or part. Invite the groups to stand or do a special movement each time they hear their special sound and sit when they no longer hear the sound. (For younger children, start with two groups and two different sounds or simply focus on a single recurring sound that the whole group listens for.)

Discuss: How did this kind of listening help you enjoy the music? Let's pretend each sound was the voice of someone we know. Whose voices do you listen carefully for at home? in school?

The core lesson ties in with wider self-management and awareness skills. Materials used are basic and usually already available in the classroom or as reproducible pages.

Suggestions for classroom management, supporting brain-based learning, and helping all learners address common obstacles to attentiveness and full engagement with learning.

Before each core lesson, a simple preparatory activity helps both teacher and student know what to expect from the lesson and think in advance about how it may be useful in a broader context of learning.