

Reasons and Strategies for Changing Schools to Be More Mindful

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Abstract

This paper is based on the definition and related knowledge of mindfulness which is from the book named MINDFULNESS by Ellen J.Langer. This essay is about how to change schools be more mindful. And I'm going to discuss about it in four main sections, they are schools' environment, teachers, curriculum content and kindergartens how to help families. Ellen J.Langer (1989) suggests that mindfulness is actively noticing new things and we shouldn't blindly follow routine and rules because everything is constantly changing, so we should focus on process instead of result. In addition to these, mindfulness is an active state of mind characterized by novel distinction. This paper is on the basis of MINDFULNESS (1989). As a part of the future of education, it is important for me to apply mindfulness to make schools be more mindful.

Keywords

Mindfulness; Kindergarten.

1. Reasons and Strategies for Changing Schools to Be More Mindful

First of all, in this essay, I will concentrate on kindergarten, which is a part of schools because my major is preschool education, and I always visit different kindergartens, observe the teaching classes in various kindergartens by watching videos or being an internship in a kindergarten each semester. So, I think I know more about all aspects of kindergarten than middle school, primary school, or other kinds of schools.

After I learned mindfulness, I gained a lot. It not only increased my knowledge but also made a significant change in my mind and mentality. First, all are constantly changing, so we should respect uncertainty and focus on the process, not the outcome. Because our expectation is solid and determines what we see and hear, the more we focus on the outcome, the stronger the expectation becomes, the less we can see and focus. Second, I know that mindfulness is an active state of mind characterized by novel distinction, and we should be situated in the present, sensitive to context and perspective.

Moreover, the most important is that something that does not work in one context will very well work in another context, so everything looks different from different perspectives. For example, the glue made by 3M failed, and it is not very sticky; on the other hand, it could be used for Post-it notes. It made me less afraid of failure because I could look at failure from a different perspective, which allowed me to be more mindful and creative. Furthermore, what inspired me to choose the topic of school? In addition to my major, there is a part of content about education in MINDFULNESS. It is most of us who do not reconsider what we mindlessly accepted earlier. [1] Such mindsets, especially those formed in childhood, are premature because we cannot know how possible future uses a piece of information may serve (Ellen, 2014, p.24). So, I think it is necessary to help preschool children and staff in kindergartens to become more mindful.

2. How to Make Schools' Environment Mindful

Environment plays an essential part in preschool education. It also mentioned the importance of the context in the MINDFULNESS; contexts control our behavior, and our mindsets determine how we interpret each context. Many of the contexts that affect us most deeply are learned in childhood (Ellen,2014,p.37). In addition to it, the education of preschool children is more through guidance, games, or other stimuli to stimulate their abilities, rather than teaching them knowledge as teachers in primary schools or middle schools do. Therefore, teachers need to keep an eye on the changes of the times and society to create a school environment and put different materials in it.

[2] The kindergarten environment contains the wisdom of teachers, and they create it with mindfulness. Each environment layout and environmental planning of excellent kindergartens has its significance; based on the majority of teachers' research and analysis, they are not arbitrary and mindless. So, kindergarten administrators should consciously create an excellent educational environment. For example, there are many areas in a classroom, and how do we arrange these areas properly? Let us separate noisy areas from quiet areas. Both the reading area and the art area are quiet areas, and they need plenty of light to put them together next to the window. Both the performance and construction areas belong to the noisy area because children need to communicate and discuss. They need to keep a certain distance from the quiet area. Moreover, water is often needed in scientific areas, so it should be located where the water is readily available. The division of each site should be meaningful rather than arbitrary, and the layout of each environment should reflect the thinking of teachers and kindergarten administrators.

Putting materials also requires mindfulness. When you are mindful, you are growing because you are constantly seeing new things((Ellen,2014). Therefore, teachers should not become unconscious when putting in materials. Before putting in materials, they need to observe the number of children, each child's interests, the age characteristics of children, and the development level of different children. These acts of being aware of changes around you can improve your teachers' academic ability. Moreover, it can allow materials to be distributed reasonably and allow children to focus on the game since the teachers pay attention to the number of children and avoid the quarrels caused by the lack of materials in the game process. In addition to it, because the level of development of each child was observed at the beginning, it was also possible to put material according to Vygotsky's zone of proximal development theory to promote the development of each child.

So, whether it is the creation of the environment or the delivery of materials, we need to mindfully observe, pay attention to the characteristics and changes of children, let them enjoy the joy of the game in the environment and operating materials, it also let children grow up more healthily.

3. How to Make Teachers Mindful

Though they began participating with equal competence, the labels they assumed undermined their performance (Ellen, 2014, p.50). So, teachers must not label children and define who they are. Do not use the definition of children to limit the development of children, because everything is changing, you cannot predict the future, at the same time, this is to respect the children.

Ellen J. Langer (2014) also said nothing is necessarily interesting, and nothing is boring. It all depends on how much you engage. Furthermore, interest guidance has always been an essential educational idea advocated by educators. So, in order to let children in the future life and study can use a better state of mind, actively deal with different situations, teachers should

make good uses of children this period of substantial curiosity and thirst for knowledge, it can help children to keep their interest in surroundings all the time and find nothing is boring. This will allow them to explore for themselves and enjoy finding answers because they can find much fun during each process. However, teachers should not blindly inculcate knowledge and pay attention to results. This kind of way to study is boring, and it will make everything dull, which will make children face their study and life with negative emotions because this educational method will make children think everything is so tedious. This is not conducive to children's physical and mental health development.

As a result, for teachers, teaching with mindfulness is food for children.

4. How to Make Curriculum Design Mindful

Ellen J. Langer (2014) said about education for the outcome. A very different, but not incompatible, explanation for why we become mindless has to do with our early education. From kindergarten on, the focus of schooling is usually on goals rather than on the process by which they are achieved (Ellen,2014,p.35). [3] In the past, many of our kindergarten activities focused on results rather than process. For example, in the past, the purpose of music education in kindergartens is not to let children feel the beauty of music in the course, but to let children sing the same song repeatedly and boringly, to achieve the result that children can sing this song.

Nevertheless, fortunately, more and more educators have changed with the times, and they are not teaching unconsciously. Nowadays, kindergarten teachers and educators pay more attention to children's exploration and process of learning rather than the outcome. For example, I watched a video of a kindergarten class. The teacher asked the children to use various tools like poles, brooms, and so on to obtain the hydrogen balloons floating in the classroom ceiling. However, the goal is not to test how many hydrogens balloons the kids can get, but to let the kids think independently and make them learn to use different tools in the process. I think we should encourage more kindergartens to change their curriculum design.

In any case, the curriculum designed by our teachers should focus on the process rather than the result because it can help children learn mindfully in the future. Ellen J. Langer(2014) said that fun is not mastering something, the fun is learning.

5. How Do Kindergartens Teach Parents to Educate Their Children Mindfully?

Kindergartens have two tasks: to educate children well. The other is to serve the parents well. Ellen J. Langer (2014) said a rose is not a rose several times. This reminds me that kindergartens should teach parents not to socialize their children's gender. Some parents think mindlessly that boys should be naughty, active, like blue, love to play with cars in China.

Moreover, girls are supposed to be quiet, friendly, love pink, love to play with dolls. However, they do not know how to observe their son or daughter's interests, then miss a crucial moment to help their children develop their interests and talents. What a pity!

So, kindergartens should teach parents how to find their children's interests and talents instead of being trapped by their stereotypes. It can help more and more parents educate their children more mindfully and encourage children to develop their hobbies better.

6. Conclusion

I would change schools to be more mindful of these perspectives. Educators must educate more mindfully and think without the box. As I stated above, I think schools should make some changes in the environment, teachers, curriculum design, and teach parents.

References

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