Supporting the Whole Child Through Mindfulness and Process Focused Art

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Abstract

Mindfulness is built on being present in action and experience, and being aware of one's body in relation to the world around us. Process focused art uses exploration of materials, tools, senses and open-ended problem solving for a positive and relaxing art interaction. This research focuses on combining mindfulness with process focused art to support the Whole Child, and develop a more inclusive, sensory engaging creative outlet.

Methods and Materials

Methods:
Combine cues from mindfulness practices with specialized process focused art experience curriculum
Repetition - both verbal + physical
Problem Solving
Inclusion of Sound - cultural music + bell prompts
Breathing + Being Present

Materials:
Use art materials + tools focused on sensory exploration and experience such as:
chalk + charcoal
paint + ink
variety of papers - rough, smooth, transparent
wire
variety of adhesives - glues + tapes
wood + metal

Background

Psychologist Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory appreciates that human beings have varying kinds of intelligences that reflect the different ways they interact with the world.

• Essential in understanding how to reach the broad spectrum of children and their needs

• Parallel path to both mindfulness and process focused art in that it relies on experience and bodily relatable to tangible materials

References


Results

• Positive creative experience through material exploration and open-ended choice making - confidence of child

• Child centered sensory exploration + motor skill development using both art and everyday materials

• Development of the Whole Child - language + vocabulary building through repetition and matching physical material to word

• Mindfulness cues and awareness of body supports child to be present in the moment, focus on a task, and explore outcomes

• Inclusive to a wide range of children - process focused art does not demand a "right way" for creativity - reduces anxiety

Future Direction

• Research centered on mindfulness and process focused art for young children in low-income communities

• Research centered on mindfulness and process focused art for children with anxiety and behavioral disorders

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