Students benefit from mindful teachers

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SIMPLY put, mindfulness in education means being attuned to ourselves, our students and colleagues and the learning environment and activities. When teachers (and academics) are doing their best work, the most important thing to be mindful of is themselves.

As most teachers put everyone else first, the opportunities which come from mindfulness are lost, which can lead to poorer outcomes for the very students they are focused on helping.

In mindfulness training, it's common for teachers to want to miss the first stage of mindfulness—which needs to be about them—and go straight to what they can do in the classroom.

For mindfulness to be most effective, it needs to start with the teacher. At recent sessions Marden Primary and St John's Grammar School staff saw the importance of creating space for meaningful and relevant teacher learning.

They took part in a holistic approach to mindfulness involving activities such as the short “soles of the feet”—meditation that can be done at work. It’s a way to quickly ground and stabilise ourselves in the current moment to assist in dealing with a complex situation.

Other activities included quizzes, creating mandalas and movement exercises. Teachers have given feedback saying they have since been able to develop strategies to help them be calmer, more aware and more effective role models for students.

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