



The New York Center for Teacher Development, Inc.

In affiliation with the University of Massachusetts Global (Extended Education)

Course Syllabus

Course:	EDZU 9121	Mindful Schools, Joyful People: Supporting Leaders, Educators, and Students
Credit Hours:	3.0 credits / 45 hours	
Instructor:	Jessica Weinberg	

Course Description

In the fast-paced and often overwhelming world of education, teachers and administrators are constantly navigating competing demands, frequently prioritizing the needs of others over their own well-being. This course invites educators and school leaders to embark on a transformative journey of self-care and renewal while recognizing that caring for oneself is not a luxury, but a foundational step toward caring effectively for others.

Participants will explore practical and restorative self-care tools including mindfulness, breathwork, visualization, gratitude practices, and world cultural traditions that support emotional regulation, stress reduction, and resilience. Beyond personal well-being, these practices are intentionally designed to be meaningful and adaptable for classroom use, helping educators cultivate calm, connection, and emotional safety for students. As participants deepen their own mindfulness practice, they will also develop strategies to model, teach, and integrate these skills into classroom routines, school culture, and student interactions. The culmination of this course will result in a greater sense of joy and balance in our schools.

At its core, this course emphasizes the power of relationship-building, beginning with self-awareness and compassion, and extending outward to students, colleagues, families, and the broader school community. By the end of the course, educators and leaders will feel empowered to lead with clarity, presence, and heart, creating equitable, supportive environments where adults and students alike feel seen, valued, and able to thrive.

Join us on this journey of renewal, connection, and growth to become not only a more mindful educator, but a catalyst for well-being across the entire learning community.

Course Goals

To Know

1. Key self-care and classroom mindfulness practices including breathwork, meditation, and gratitude techniques.
2. The impact of stress and burnout on educators and how intentional self-care can mitigate these effects.

3. Tools like visualization, journaling, and energy-based practices that support holistic well-being for educators, administrators, and students.

To Understand

1. The connection between self-care and effective teaching and leadership in educational environments.
2. How cultivating self-awareness and emotional balance strengthens relationships with students, colleagues, and the community.
3. The role of vulnerability, authenticity, and community in building supportive professional networks.

To Be Able To

1. Integrate mindfulness, gratitude, and visualization techniques into daily routines and in a school environment.
2. Create and implement a personalized wellness plan for ongoing self-care.
3. Practice reflective strategies such as journaling and intentional pauses to manage stress and maintain emotional clarity.

Course Outline

Unit 1: Foundations of Self-Care and Mindfulness

- Introduction to course goals and identification of the challenges educators face, determining why self-care is critical to the success of educators and administrators
- Basics of mindfulness and breathwork to manage stress and increase awareness, including guided meditation, sound bath healing, the principals of Reiki, and other ancient rituals that promote stress reduction and balance in life
- Techniques for promoting social and emotional awareness in classrooms and school buildings
- Cultivating gratitude and beginning a daily mindfulness practice that is customized to participant's comfort and ability level, pre-assessment for stressors and the determination of personal triggers and an action plan for real-time relief
- Journaling as a tool for reflection and emotional balance, the power of writing thoughts as transformational practices for children and adults
- Begin journaling assignment and prepare to share one entry and reflection at end of Unit 1

Unit 2: Emotional Resilience, Visualization, and Community Building

- Meditation practices to deepen emotional regulation, reduce stress, and promote clear thinking for adults and children
- Manifestation and visualization techniques for goal setting and professional exploration as we consider how our thoughts shape our realities
- The importance of vulnerability in building authentic, empathetic connections with students, staff, and colleagues
- Research on self-care practices and the creation of a slide show to guide others along their journey that can be shared when appropriate
- Sharing reflections and group discussions on community and well-being as our self-care toolkit is developed into a nurturing and joyful routine

Unit 3: Integration, Wellness Planning, and Sustaining Self-Care

- Exploring holistic wellness concepts and how to use elements found within nature such as Earth, air, fire, and water to soothe your soul...even on the busiest days!
- Learning about self-care from countries around the world, for example the Danish concept of Hygge
- Developing and finalizing a personalized wellness plan that nourishes the participant's soul beyond this course
- Development of a classroom or school-wide SEL plan that can be shared with colleagues to collaborate and implement
- Reflection on personal growth and course learnings, how to share knowledge with those around us and cultivate a community of care in our school buildings and offices
- Strategies for sustaining self-care practices beyond the course into participant's daily personal and professional lives
- Presentation of individualized wellness plans, student-centered plans, and submission of all assignments due by the end of Unit 3

Methods of Instruction

This course uses a blend of interactive and experiential teaching methods to engage participants and support meaningful learning. Instruction includes guided mindfulness and breathwork exercises to foster present-moment awareness and stress reduction. Participants will engage in reflective journaling and group discussions to deepen self-awareness and share personal insights, building a supportive community. Visualization and manifestation practices will be introduced through both individual and collaborative activities, encouraging goal setting and positive mindset shifts. Multimedia resources, such as articles and videos, will supplement learning and prompt thoughtful responses. Opportunities for vulnerability and authentic connection will be facilitated in safe, small-group settings to nurture empathy and trust. Additionally, participants will develop personalized wellness plans incorporating the techniques learned, ensuring practical application beyond the course. Throughout, emphasis will be placed on self-paced practice, regular pauses for reflection, and experiential learning to empower educators to integrate self-care into their daily lives and professional roles.

Students will connect with each other throughout the course within forums and various other types of online feedback options built into each class.

Methods of Assessment

Assessment for this course is designed to encourage active engagement and personal growth. To earn an A, students must actively participate in the class discussions, maintain a consistent mindfulness practice of their choice during the five weeks, and demonstrate empathy and compassion towards themselves and others. Additionally, students are required to complete a pre and post assessment and three assignments: (1) keep a daily journal and share entries as discussed in each topic, (2) develop an individualized wellness plan integrating course concepts and individual preferences, and (3) complete part one of an educational application project.

Graduate students will complete a second part of the educational application project which asks for participants to research the benefits of a self-care practice and create a slideshow summary. Graduate students have an additional discussion board where they will share and discuss the findings of their research.

Students aiming for a B may choose to not complete one of these projects while fulfilling the other participation requirements. This assessment structure supports both experiential learning and practical application of self-care strategies.

Instructors are online each day of the course and correspond with students through the course itself, feedback on assignments, and e-mail.

Time Validation

Assignment	Time (in hours)
Students will complete a pre-assessment.	1.00
Students will engage in mindfulness activities to spark interest in self-care throughout the course.	2.00
Students will learn about the course's goals and identify educational challenges that can impact stress and well-being.	1.00
Students will determine why self-care is critical to their success and set individual personal and professional goals.	1.00
Students will learn about journaling and how the power of writing can transform mindsets.	1.00
Students will read articles about the importance of self-care for educators and respond to guiding questions in their journals.	2.00
Students will learn the basics of mindfulness, meditation, and breathwork through a series of self-guided activities.	2.00
Students will have the option to explore ancient mindfulness practices, such as Reiki and sound healing, as tools for stress reduction.	2.00
Students will read articles and watch a video about gratitude, with an emphasis on the neurological impact that cultivating gratitude has on the human mind.	2.00
Students will complete a vision board , gratitude map, and will learn to identify their "stress triggers" and develop an action plan for relief.	2.00
Students will form a daily mindfulness practice of 10 minutes per day throughout the course, which is customized to their comfort and ability.	5.00
Students will write in a journal throughout the course for five minutes a day and will share selected topics with the class.	3.00
Students will explore types of meditation and learn about the benefits that a meditation practice can have on our health.	1.00
Students will learn about ways to create mindfulness in their classrooms, offices, and buildings through articles, videos, and class discussions.	1.00

Students will research the mind to body connection and consider the impacts of manifestation and visualization.	1.00
Students will consider ways to connect and build relationships with students, staff, and colleagues in supportive ways.	1.00
Students will research self-care practices and begin to create a personal wellness plan and toolkit.	3.00
Students will create a slideshow teaching others what they have learned about mindfulness and add their own reflections and ideas to inspire others in an educational setting.	3.00
Students will explore holistic wellness concepts, such as nature, through immersive experiences and self-guided tours.	3.00
Students will explore self-care practices from around the world through teacher's materials, interactive multimedia, and articles.	2.00
Students will complete an educational application and research project.	3.00
Students will review their daily journal, self-care slideshow, and develop their personal wellness plan by the end of the course.	3.00
Students will reflect on their personal growth and learning throughout the course in their responses to questions and dialogue among students in the class forum.	2.00
Students will complete a post-assessment.	1.00
Total Time	45.00