



# MindUP™

*Promotes academic  
and social and  
emotional growth*



August 2011

[www.thehawnfoundation.org](http://www.thehawnfoundation.org)



## The science behind MindUP™

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- Should students really be studying social and emotional skills at school? (p. 3)
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- Just breathe...how mindfulness helps students' social, emotional and academic growth (p. 5)

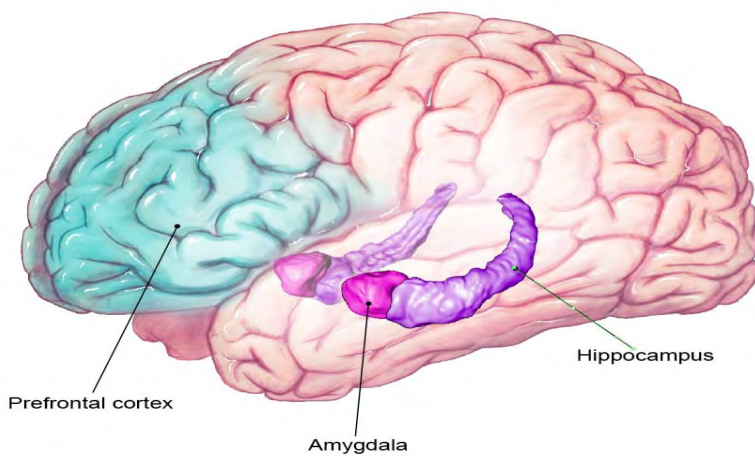
## Why are schools choosing MindUP™?

MindUP™ is an evidence-based teaching model and curriculum for students in kindergarten through grade eight. It is aimed at fostering children's social and emotional competence and psychological well-being.

Development of MindUP™ was based on the latest research in **neuroscience, social and emotional learning, positive psychology and mindfulness.**

A recent study on the MindUP™ program conducted at the University of British Columbia by Dr. Kimberly Schonert-Reichl and Molly Lawlor found that:

- 82% of students who participated became more optimistic and thought more positively
- 81% of students learned to make themselves happy
- 87% were more accepting of others perspectives
- 58% tried to help others more often
- 88% felt they could use at least one thing they learned in MindUP™ at home or at school



## Happy brains work better! (Adele Diamond, neuroscientist, 2009)

### Getting to know and love the brain

From the MindUP™ poster – *Fascinating Facts about the Brain*

Students who participate in the MindUP™ curriculum learn about three important parts of their brain that helps them think and react to everything around them. These parts include the:

- **Prefrontal Cortex** – the prefrontal cortex uses important information to focus, decide, compute, analyze, and reason—it is our thinking part of the brain and helps us to make good decisions! **Here's the catch:** it only receives information when the amygdala is calm.
- **Amygdala** – Have you ever felt like you want run, freeze or fight? That was the amygdala. The amygdala is programmed to keep you safe at all costs! It regulates and blocks information from going to your prefrontal cortex so you can react in an instant. The challenge is it can't tell a stressful situation from a true emergency and it can cause you to react without thinking.
- **Hippocampus** – What are your favourite memories? The most useful facts you know? The hippocampus creates, stores, and process all important facts and memories the prefrontal cortex passes on to it. It is like a library system for the brain.

### The STRESSED brain...

The brain's response to stress is linked to the amygdala. When we're calm and peaceful, this filter is wide open and information flows to the prefrontal cortex. When we feel negative or stressed, our ability to think and make good decisions are inhibited.

Information stays in the amygdala and doesn't flow to our prefrontal cortex so we can think about how to react. Fear and anxiety actually shut down our ability to think about how to best assess and approach situations.

Over time, the hormones released while stressed can stop the healthy growth of certain cells. When cells stop growing they are in a mode that conserves resources for future threats. According to Eric Jensen, an educator and brain expert, this may not only stop children from developing but may also cause damage to areas that control emotional development.

### The HAPPY brain...

Research is showing that when we are engaged in activities we find interesting or pleasurable, our brain is flush with dopamine. Dopamine helps:

- lubricate our information filter
- rev up high powered thinking in our prefrontal cortex
- get our brain ready for peak performance

Dopamine is highest when students are:

- fully engaged in learning
- experiencing positive feelings like optimism, gratitude, hope and an overall sense of well being.

### Classroom activities that prompt the release of dopamine include:

- making choices and solving problems
- participating in acts of kindness and collaborating with peers
- engaging in physical activity and enjoying creative efforts such as music, art, drama, reading and storytelling.



## Social and Emotional Learning

Should students really be studying social and emotional learning at school?

All research points to YES! According to reliable studies and review conducted by the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) through the University of Illinois in Chicago, participation in social and emotional learning (SEL) programs improves students' positive behavior and reduces negative behavior.

### Benefits of SEL programs

Students and classrooms that participated in SEL programs showed improved:

- social-emotional skills
- attitudes about self, others, and school
- positive classroom behavior
- standardized test results

Studies also show classrooms and students that engage in a SEL program show a decrease in:

- Conduct problems
- Aggressive behavior
- Emotional distress

CASEL finds that SEL promotes health, well-being **AND** academic success while preventing problems such as violence, alcohol and drug use, truancy, and bullying (from [www.casel.org](http://www.casel.org)).

### Preparation for success in adulthood

Social and emotional learning programs prepare children for adulthood by helping students become:

- good communicators
- cooperative team members
- effective leaders
- caring and concerned members of their communities

### SEL teaches students how to:

- set and achieve goals
- persist in the face of challenges

### Academic achievement results

- research shows an 11 point percentile gain on standardized tests of those students who participated in an SEL program

**For more information on the importance of SEL in schools please go to [www.casel.org](http://www.casel.org)**

# What's positive about positive psychology?

Studies suggest that fostering positive attributes such as optimism and gratitude may buffer against negative experiences such as poor school performance and psychological difficulties.

What's encouraging is that by participating in a SEL program, students can adopt a more optimistic and positive outlook versus a negative outlook through engaging in a series of brain-based behavioral strategies such as practicing gratitude and optimism and focusing on happy experiences, all lessons found in the MindUP™ curriculum.



## Grateful Words...

A lesson taught in MindUP™ is Expressing Gratitude.

Gratitude is a feeling of thankfulness and joy we feel in response to something we've received, whether the gift is tangible or intangible.

Research confirms that those who keep a gratitude journal or list feel more optimistic and make more progress toward their goals.

Young people who engage in daily gratitude activities have displayed:

- higher levels of alertness,
- greater enthusiasm,
- more determination and attentiveness, and
- increased energy.



## The three components of positive psychology:

- 1 Positive psychological experience:**  
well-being; contentment; satisfaction (past); hope and optimism (future); and flow and happiness (present)
- 2 Positive psychological traits:** the capacity for love and vocation; courage; interpersonal skills; aesthetic sensibility; perseverance; forgiveness, originality; future-mindedness; spirituality; high talent; and wisdom
- 3 Positive Institution:**  
Enable the first two to occur and promote citizenship; responsibility; nurturance; altruism; civility; moderation; tolerance and work ethic



# Just breathe...how mindfulness helps students' social, emotional and academic growth



**By focusing or *being mindful* of our senses and our breath, we have the capacity to change the structure of our brains.**

## A definition of mindfulness...

Mindfulness (being “mindful”) is a state of being aware of your own mind, at any given moment. It means to pay attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment and without judgment.

(Jon Kabat-Zinn, 1990)

## How can breathing help the brain?

Want to calm your amygdala when you feel stressed? Breathe deeply. Deep, full breathing calms your amygdala and helps you think and remember clearly.

Breathing helps calm the body by:

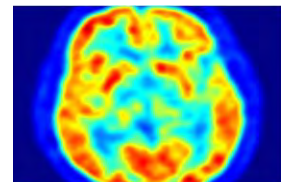
- Slowing your heart rate
- Lowering blood pressure
- Sharpening your focus

When your body and mind are calm, learning is much easier! The more controlled breathing is practiced, the more self-managed and mindful children can become. When children are able to manage their emotions and think about their decisions, their ability to work collaboratively and to build and maintain friendships improves.

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While participating in the MindUP™ Program, students learn to mindfully pay attention to their breathing AND to what they see, hear, taste, feel and smell.

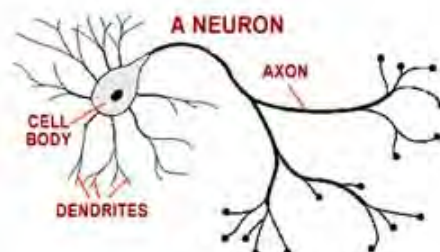
Dr. Sara Lazar and Dr. Richard Davidson have used neuro-imaging to study the brains of adults who have a mindfulness practice and found that they have a denser prefrontal cortex.



The prefrontal cortex is the area of the brain that enables us among other things, to reason, make decisions, take perspective and focus.

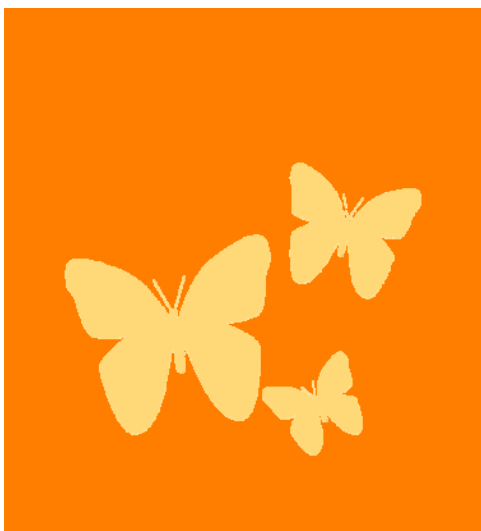
The repeated action of focusing of paying attention in a particular way while practicing mindfulness creates and strengthens neuron connections. Branch-like receptors called dendrites increase in number and size, enabling a more efficient passage of information along neural pathways. This is one of the many ways in which the structure of the brain is flexible and ready to grow.

(MindUP™ Program  
Grades 6 to 8)



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KPM1 HAWN FOUNDATION

## MindUP in the Kindergarten Classroom



**MINDUP CURRICULUM**  
Focus-Focused Strategies for Learning and Living

VS

KPM2 HAWN FOUNDATION


## Core Practice-the heart of the program



VS

KPM3 HAWN FOUNDATION

## The MindUP Program



**15 Lessons**  
**Core Practice (3 x daily)**  
**Integrating Concepts, Ideas & Skills**

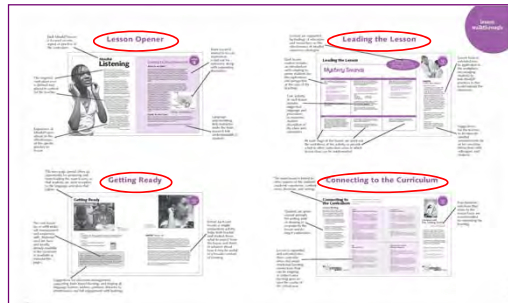
Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4
Getting Focused	Sharpening Your Senses	It's All About Attitude	Taking Action Mindfully

*Incorporating the research base throughout*

VS

KPM4 HAWN FOUNDATION

## 10 of 1200 School Day Hours



VS

KPM5 HAWN FOUNDATION

## The Healthy Mind Platter




**SLEEP TIME** **PHYSICAL TIME** **FOCUS TIME**  
**TIME IN** **DOWN TIME** **PLAY TIME** **CONNECTING TIME**

*The Healthy Mind Platter, for Optimal Brain Matter*

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VS

KPM6 HAWN FOUNDATION



### Writing after 10 breathing sessions

Skiing are on the mountain.  
Speed skaters go super fast by using their blades.  
Sledgers use safe stuff like helmets and knee pads.

VS

Slide 2

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**KPM2**      KPBrown, 27/11/2011

Slide 5

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**KPM1**      KPBrown, 26/11/2011



**The Macro Brain**

**PREFRONTAL CORTEX**  
(executive function, planning complex cognitive behavior, personality expression, decision-making and moderating correct social behavior)

**HIPPOCAMPUS**  
(compares new learning to past learning and encodes information from working memory to long-term storage)

**AMYGDALA**  
(encodes emotional messages for long-term storage in the brain)

**RETICULAR ACTIVATING SYSTEM**  
(filters ALL sensory input to the brain)

VSB

**Stress in the Classroom**  
Blame the Brain, Not the Student

**Disruptive in class**  
**FIGHT**

**Distracted during class**  
**FLIGHT**

**Withdrawn from class**  
**FREEZE**

VSB

**MindUP and the 5 Senses**

What does Peace...

watching birds

tasting cherries

sitting and playing a game

cookies

ball bouncing

VSB

**Mindful Movement**

VSB

**Lesson 11: Choosing Optimism**

optimism

Pete the Cat

glass half full

cheery

rose coloured lenses

happiness

buoyant

exuberance

bliss

positive

peace

brightness

exhilarated

elation

VSB

**WE VETERANS - WE'RE HERE**

VSB

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