

USING NATURE TO DEVELOP MINDFUL AWARENESS

Background Information

A sit spot is a child-selected space where they observe nature. Sit spots offer an opportunity for students to carve out a space and time in their day that is committed to their relationships with nature and mindful awareness. Sit spots allow students to find a place in their natural world and get to know it, as they would a good friend. It provides students with opportunities for mindful awareness and is exceptionally important for all students and vital for some. Paying close attention in a mindful way is an excellent strategy to reduce anxiety, promote calm feelings and focus attention.

Lesson Objectives

- 1) Allow students to connect with nature
- 2) To promote students to feel calm and relaxed
- 3) Increase students' focus and observational skills in nature by practicing mindful awareness

Lesson Overview

1) Engage:

Classroom Brainstorm or Think-Pair-Share with a Partner

Question: Can you think of a spot in nature that makes you feel safe, calm, and relaxed?

- Provide students with an example: I feel safe, calm, and relaxed when I am at the beach.

- Remind students that this is a chance to connect with nature away from technology and other distractions.

- Explain to students what a sit spot is (see above) and provide examples. (You might choose a spot in your backyard, in a park, on your balcony, near a window or next to your favourite houseplant)

Things to Remember:

- Choose a spot that is easy for you to visit often – maybe every day or a few times a week.
- Choose a spot where you can be safe – if you are in a park or backyard, make sure your adult is with you.

2) Activity:

- The task for the first week is to have students choose a sit spot and visit it as often as they can!
- *Writing activity:* Get students to write about their sit spot- include where their sit spot is and what it looks like. Encourage students to use descriptive language.

3) Extensions

When students feel comfortable in their sit spots, they can be encouraged to do the following:

- Take deep meaningful breaths
- Close their eyes
- Tune into their five senses (the feeling of the wind, listen to the birds, insects etc.
- Try to be as quiet as they can be
- Focus on an object around them (talk about these options with your students!)
- Share and Tell about their sit spot to their classmates. This can be done through multiple domains (pictures, words, story, poetry, reflections, etc.)
- Map their sit spot
- Befriend a tree/plant

Additional Resource

- <https://www.oraeyc.org/single-post/2017/12/11/Build-Childrens-Observation-Skills-with-Sit-Spots>