

Munster Meet

December 11, 2021

ROUND 1

Should Schools Teach Mindfulness?



Mindfulness exercises are already taught in many schools worldwide, including this one in New York. Schools in England are joining a study to determine which

Have you ever tried mindfulness or meditation, practices that focus on the present moment and being aware of your thoughts, feelings and bodily sensations? If so, what was it like for you? If not, does it sound like something you'd like to try?

Do you think that such practices have a place in schools? Why or why not?

In “[Schools in England Introduce a New Subject: Mindfulness](#),” Iliana Magra writes about how British schools are using this practice to address mental health problems among young people:

Students in England already learn about mathematics, science and history, but hundreds of schools are preparing to expand the traditional curriculum with a new subject: mindfulness.

In up to 370 English schools, students will start to practice mindfulness as part of a study to improve youth mental health, the British government said on Monday.

They will work with mental health experts to learn relaxation techniques, breathing exercises and other methods to “help them regulate their emotions,” the government said in a news release announcing the program.

The goal of the program is to study which approaches work best for young people in a world of rapid change. The government said the study, which will run until 2021, is one of the largest of its kind in the world.

“As a society, we are much more open about our mental health than ever before, but the modern world has brought new pressures for children,” Damian Hinds, the British education secretary, said in a statement.

“Children will start to be introduced gradually to issues around mental health, well-being and happiness right from the start of primary school,” he added.

The article continues:

“Every day our front-line services see children and teenagers struggling to get to grips with how they fit into the increasingly complex modern world — contending with things like intense pressure at school, bullying or problems at home, all while being bombarded by social media,” he said in a statement on Monday.

He added: “Services like these can lessen the anxiety, pain and anguish that some teens go through, but also reduce their need for intensive support further down the line.”

Round 2-

US diplomats to boycott 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics

BBC News

The US has announced a diplomatic boycott of the 2022 Winter Olympics in China

- a move that has been heavily criticised by Beijing.

The White House said no official delegation would be sent to the Games because of concerns about China's human rights record.

But it said US athletes could attend and would have the government's full support.

China called Washington's move a "self-directed political farce".

"The US just wants to politicize sports, create divisions and provoke confrontation," said a statement by the Spokesperson of the Chinese Mission to the UN.

"The success of the Games does not rely on the attendance of a handful of countries' government officials."

Earlier, anticipating the announcement, Beijing said it would take "resolute countermeasures" against such a boycott.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki confirmed the boycott on Monday, saying that the administration would not contribute to the "fanfare" of the Olympics.

"US diplomatic or official representation would treat these games as business as usual in the face of the PRC's [People's Republic of China] egregious human rights abuses and atrocities in Xinjiang," she said. "We simply can't do that."

Ms Psaki added that the US government did not feel "it was the right step to penalise athletes who had been training for this moment", but that not sending an official US delegation to the 2022 Games "could send a clear message".

Following the US announcement, New Zealand said on Tuesday it too would not send a delegation. Other countries, including the UK and Australia, are said to be considering boycotts.

'Political posturing'

China's Washington embassy also waded in on the announcement, calling the boycott a "grave distortion of the spirit of the Olympic Charter".

"No-one would care about whether these people come or not, and it has no impact whatsoever on the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics to be successfully held," said spokesman Liu Pengyu, quoted by Reuters.

Mr Liu added that no invitation had been extended to US politicians, "so this 'diplomatic boycott simply comes out of nowhere".

On Chinese social media platform Weibo, the search topic "US diplomatic boycott of Beijing Winter Olympics" has been censored as of Tuesday morning.

Most of the comments below a post on the announcement by state media outlet Global Times were also deleted, leaving only eight out of close to 1,500 comments untouched.

"The Olympics are for athletes, what does it have to do with... politicians? Even if you boycott, the only people you're hurting are your own countrymen (including athletes)," one such comment read.

High-level government representatives - from the US and other countries - are usually present at Olympic Games.

Earlier this year, First Lady Jill Biden led the US delegation at the summer Olympics held in Tokyo.

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ROUND 3-

The Hill We Climb (Poem)

By: Amanda Gorman

When day comes, we ask ourselves, where can we find light in this never-ending shade?

The loss we carry. A sea we must wade.

We braved the belly of the beast.

We've learned that quiet isn't always peace, and the norms and notions of what "just" is isn't always justice.

And yet the dawn is ours before we knew it.

Somehow we do it.

Somehow we weathered and witnessed a nation that isn't broken, but simply unfinished.

We, the successors of a country and a time where a skinny Black girl descended from slaves and raised by a single mother can dream of becoming president, only to find herself reciting for one.

And, yes, we are far from polished, far from pristine, but that doesn't mean we are striving to form a union that is perfect.

We are striving to forge our union with purpose.

To compose a country committed to all cultures, colors, characters and conditions of man.

And so we lift our gaze, not to what stands between us, but what stands before us.

We close the divide because we know to put our future first, we must first put our differences aside.

We lay down our arms so we can reach out our arms to one another.

We seek harm to none and harmony for all.

Let the globe, if nothing else, say this is true.

That even as we grieved, we grew.

That even as we hurt, we hoped.

That even as we tired, we tried.

That we'll forever be tied together, victorious.

Not because we will never again know defeat, but because we will never again sow division.

Scripture tells us to envision that everyone shall sit under their own vine and fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid.

If we're to live up to our own time, then victory won't lie in the blade, but in all the bridges we've made.

That is the promise to glade, the hill we climb, if only we dare.

It's because being American is more than a pride we inherit.

It's the past we step into and how we repair it.

We've seen a force that would shatter our nation, rather than share it.

Would destroy our country if it meant delaying democracy.

And this effort very nearly succeeded.

But while democracy can be periodically delayed, it can never be permanently defeated.

In this truth, in this faith we trust, for while we have our eyes on the future, history has its eyes on us.

This is the era of just redemption.

We feared at its inception.

We did not feel prepared to be the heirs of such a terrifying hour.

But within it we found the power to author a new chapter, to offer hope and laughter to ourselves.

So, while once we asked, how could we possibly prevail over catastrophe, now we assert, how could catastrophe possibly prevail over us?

We will not march back to what was, but move to what shall be: a country that is bruised but whole, benevolent but bold, fierce and free.

We will not be turned around or interrupted by intimidation because we know our inaction and inertia will be the inheritance of the next generation, become the future.

Our blunders become their burdens.

But one thing is certain.

If we merge mercy with might, and might with right, then love becomes our legacy and change our children's birthright.

So let us leave behind a country better than the one we were left.

Every breath from my bronze-pounded chest, we will raise this wounded world into a wondrous one.

We will rise from the golden hills of the West.

We will rise from the windswept Northeast where our forefathers first realized revolution.

We will rise from the lake-rimmed cities of the Midwestern states.

We will rise from the sun-baked South.

We will rebuild, reconcile, and recover.

And every known nook of our nation and every corner called our country, our people diverse and beautiful, will emerge battered and beautiful.

When day comes, we step out of the shade of flame and unafraid.

The new dawn balloons as we free it.

For there is always light, if only we're brave enough to see it.

If only we're brave enough to be it.

FINAL ROUND -



