

PERFORMING SELF-CENTERING AND BREATHING PRACTICES TO IMPROVE AND
PROMOTE PURPOSEFUL LEARNING IN BEGINNING BAND

by

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requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Teaching.

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My capstone project is motivated by wanting to promote positive, purposeful learning in my classroom as well as develop a curriculum that includes proper breathing techniques and self-centering practices during band rehearsal warm-ups. My project question is: *How will self-centering and breathing practices improve and promote purposeful learning in beginning band?*

This project is a unit of eight band rehearsal templates for band directors who teach beginning band. This project offers mindful and centering activities developed in lesson plans specifically chosen for beginning band students. Each lesson within the unit includes centering, mindfulness, and breathing activities during warm-ups, an open rehearsal section to customize the rehearsal plan of the day, opportunities for reflection, and affirmations of mindfulness saying and motivational quotes for each lesson.

This unit was created using the framework of Understanding by Design (Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006). I have chosen to use this framework because of the backward planning design and planning templates. Within the Understanding by Design framework, I focus on using Direct Instruction strategies because these are founded on these principles:

- Effective modeling
- Emerging Independence
- Learning by Question
- Ongoing Assessment (Silver et al., 2007, p. 38)

I have selected specific centering and mindfulness activities, created a script for each activity, and broke down each activity down into clear steps. I also reinforce what we learn from the daily lessons centering, mindfulness, and breathing activities throughout the rest of rehearsal. Finally,

students' focus will be assessed with the evaluation and feedback methods using rating skills and holistic rubrics (Shaw, 2018).

This project two different ensembles performing this unit over the course of four weeks. My unit includes eight lessons and each band will have two rehearsals a week that includes my centering, mindfulness, and breathing scripts. I will have both bands start this unit as soon as they can perform the entire first page of our beginning band first five note warm-up packet. This will take place around the last week of October, or first week in November, fall of 2020.

Data collection will be analyzed over the course of four weeks. This time period is long enough to collect data and compare the results of student focus from when students first start the unit, compared to the end. I will also be able to see how their focus improves how we learn new concert pieces, sight-read repertoire, and if the tone of students and the band in general improves.

Since my project is meant to improve student focus throughout rehearsal, I will have students rate their focus prior to rehearsal, after our warm-up routine, and at the end of rehearsal. To collect the overall ensemble progress of incorporating a more focused warm-up routine and check-ins of mindfulness throughout rehearsal, students will rate their focus prior to rehearsal, during, and after on a slip of paper. These anonymous results will be collected and analyzed over the three weeks of the project.

To keep track of student data, after each rehearsal I will input each student's ratings of how focused they were onto a Google Form. Each lesson in my unit has a separate color coordinated Google Form so it is easy to keep track of the lesson that is being analyzed. Once the entire unit is completed, I will be able to download and compare each lesson's results.

The intended audience for my project is specifically for band directors who teach beginning band, however, it can be adapted to work with any ensemble such as choral groups and orchestras. I know that every director's rehearsal space is different, so this project has also been created to be functional in any classroom setting.

 **Beginning Band**
CENTERING and MINDFULNESS
Rehearsal Unit 

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PERFORMING SELF-CENTERING AND BREATHING PRACTICES TO IMPROVE AND PROMOTE PURPOSEFUL LEARNING IN BEGINNING BAND

Target AUDIENCE: Any ensemble, small or large.

*This unit is specifically designed for beginning band students, however, it can be adapted to be used for any ensemble.

Each LESSON will provide:

- Centering Activity
- Mindful Activity
- Breathing Activity
- Fill-in Warm-up Section
- Fill-in Rehearsal Section
- Transition Options

UNIT Outcomes:

- Improvement in Class Performance
- Focused and Well-Managed Ensemble
- Efficient Transitions
- Breath awareness
- Improved tone
- Improvement of self-awareness

NOTE to the Director: Remember your students will be copying everything you do. Make sure to PRACTICE how you present yourself demonstrating this lesson prior to rehearsal.

Supplemental Materials to Purchase:

- ★ <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Mindfulness-Activities-26-Mindfulness-Scripts-and-Mindfulness-Exercises-3566659>
- ★ <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/MINDFULNESS-BREATHING-EXERCISES-FOR-KIDS-Tools-for-a-Trauma-Informed-Classroom-4520640>
- ★ <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Mindfulness-Guided-Meditation-Scripts-For-Self-Regulation-2265062>
- ★ Balloons!

Other resources:

<https://www.thepathway2success.com/101-positive-affirmations-for-kids/>

Ensemble:

Your Start Date:

Your End Date:

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Lessons

Lessons:	Lesson Description:	Check when completed:
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Lesson EIGHT	Balloon Breathing, Receive a Compliment, Inhale & Exhale [pg. 33]	

Data Collection Links:

- **Student Slips** (Google Sheet)
- **Lesson ONE** (Google Form)
- **Lesson TWO** (Google Form)
- **Lesson THREE** (Google Form)
- **Lesson FOUR** (Google Form)
- **Lesson FIVE** (Google Form)
- **Lesson SIX** (Google Form)
- **Lesson SEVEN** (Google Form)
- **Lesson EIGHT** (Google Form)

When all data is collected after each lesson, go to each Google Form's "Responses" tab, print or screenshot your ensemble's results of the day.

Standards:

- *American School Counselor Association Mindset Standards:*
 - ◆ M 1. Belief in development of the whole self, including a healthy balance of mental, social/emotional and physical well-being.
 - ◆ M 2. Self-confidence in the ability to succeed.
 - ◆ M 3. Sense of belonging in the school environment.
 - ◆ M 5. Believe in using abilities to their fullest to achieve high-quality results and outcomes.
 - ◆ M 6. Positive attitude towards work and learning.

- *National Music Ensemble Standards:*
 - ◆ Connect #10 Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make music. Enduring Understanding: Musicians connect their personal interests, experiences, ideas, and knowledge to creating, performing, and responding.
 - ◆ Connect #11 Relate musical ideas and works with varied context to deepen understanding. Enduring Understanding: Understanding connections to varied contexts and daily life enhances musicians'

Lesson ONE

Week of:

Date:

Today, you will be leading... Bubble Breathing, Daily Intentions, Hot vs. Cold Breathing

Plan:	Description:	Check when completed:
Materials Needed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Today is going to be a GREAT day!" visual - "Today I CHOOSE to THINK positive." visual 	
Goal(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Become aware of our breath: filling the diaphragm up, hot vs. cold - Each student will create a daily intention, challenging themselves or setting an achievable goal. - Students will be introduced to starting class with centering, becoming mindful, and really thinking through our breathing 	
<p>INTRODUCTION: TELL students the WHY</p> <p><i>Use the same words and reasoning each lesson.</i></p> <p>CENTERING:</p>	<p><i>(option to edit for your classroom here)</i></p> <p>Today we are starting a series of three simple activities in our everyday warm-up routine. I want you all to feel as though when you step into this classroom, you can wash away any worries or stress you may have, and feel safe being yourselves. I want YOU to be the best YOU.</p> <p>BUBBLE BREATHING: Close your eyes and focus on your breathing. As you inhale deeply and air flows into your lungs, imagine a bubble being filled with air. As you exhale slowly blowing the air out of your lungs, imagine bubbles calmly floating away in the air. Let your thoughts float away too, clearing your mind of everything but the present moment. (p. 2, A-Z Poster)</p>	

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<p>OPTIONAL Transitional Jargon and/or TIPS:</p>	<p>ENTERING: Have your lights half-turned off.</p> <p>"Today is going to be a great day!" ← Make a visual and reinforce this by saying it throughout rehearsal. "Today I choose to think positive."</p> <p>Reminders: The breath should never be forced. Even exercises where deep breathing is encouraged, it should feel natural.</p> <p>Continue to use the same language when reminding kids to become focused and back on track throughout rehearsal. Ex: Take a bubble breath between songs. Make sure to also demonstrate these expectations.</p>
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<p>Reflections:</p>	
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Lesson TWO

Week of:

Date:

Today, you will be leading... Focused Body Scan, Daily Intentions, Inhale & Exhale Breathing

Plan:	Description:	Check when completed:
Materials Needed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Today is going to be a great day!" Visual - "My challenges help me grow." Visual 	
Goal(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students will become aware of their own focus in the ensemble setting. - Students will become relaxed and ready for a focused rehearsal. - Students will create another achievable rehearsal goal. - Students will expand their breath out, learning to continue to sustain air. 	
<p>INTRODUCTION: TELL students the WHY</p> <p>CENTERING:</p>	<p>Today has had its ups and downs. Right now I feel _____.</p> <p>Together we are going to make sure you feel like you are being the best version of you. Maybe you are tense, excited, sad, or just going "through the motions." Let's make you become the best version of you.</p> <p>Calming the MIND and BODY...Sit tall with your back against the chair or at the edge of your chair with your feet flat on the ground...</p> <p>FOCUSED BODY SCAN: As you scan your body, notice where you feel tension, peace, warmth, and other feelings. Spend time focusing your attention on your head. Pause to notice how your head feels. Move your focus down to your neck. Pause to notice how it feels. Move your focus to your shoulders, then arms, hand, and fingers. Focus on your chest and then stomach. Focus on your chest and then stomach. Focus on your legs, feet, and toes.</p>	

	<p>LEAVING: Check-in with your stand partner. Did they accomplish their goal today in rehearsal?</p>	
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<p>OPTIONAL Transitional Jargon and/or TIPS:</p>	<p>“Today is going to be a great day!” ← Make this a visual! “My challenges help me grow.” ← Make this a visual!</p> <p>Continue to use the same language when reminding kids to become focused and back on track throughout rehearsal. Ex: Let’s do a quick focused body scan.</p>
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<p>Reflections:</p>	
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Lesson THREE

Week of:

Date:

Today, you will be leading... Mindful Melt, Mindful Melt Reversed, Inhale & Exhale Breathing

Plan:	Description:	Check when completed:
Materials Needed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beach Hat and Sunglasses - "I BELIEVE in my GOALS and DREAMS!" visual - "I've got this!" visual 	
Goal(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to improve sustaining breathe longer (8 counts) - Students will relax and then become excited, gaining energy to help push them through our breathing exercise, using this energy throughout rehearsal with hopes it improves overall tone production. 	
<p>INTRODUCTION: TELL students the WHY</p> <p>CENTERING:</p> <p>MINDFULNESS:</p>	<p>Every year we look forward to springtime here in Minnesota. The snow melts, the grass turns green, the trees bud, and then before we know it it is summer! However, our winters bring us joy. Snow is crunchy, packy, and beautiful. We get to watch and play hockey, sled, ice fish. No matter the season, there is always something to look forward to.</p> <p>Sit up tall in your chair with your instrument relaxed, yet secure in front of you...</p> <p>MINDFUL MELT: Close your eyes and using your imagination ONLY, imagine that you are a snowman on a hot beach. Imagine your body melting into your seat. Think of your legs, chest, arms, shoulders, neck, and head slowly melting into the floor. How does your body feel? (p. 13, A-Z poster)</p> <p>MINDFUL MELT REVERSED: Now let's rewind! It is getting colder outside, the winds have picked up, and you are gaining energy and feeling more yourself. Your legs feel stronger, your chest arms, shoulders, neck and head feel tall and at attention. Notice how</p>	

<p>BREATHING:</p> <p>RECAP: "We did this to..."</p>	<p>confident you feel?</p> <p>Three times: Inhale 1..2..3..4... Exhale 1..2..3..4... moving a hand in and away from your mouth</p> <p>Using this energy and cool breath, keep this moving forward as we perform warm-up song _____ in our warm-up packet on pg. ____ ...</p>	
<p>WARM-UP:</p>		
<p>Rehearsal Plan:</p>		

<p>OPTIONAL Transitional Jargon and/or TIPS:</p>	<p>"I believe in my goals and dreams." ← Make this a visual! "I've got this." ← Make this a visual!</p> <p>Continue to use the same language when reminding kids to become focused and back on track throughout rehearsal. Ex: Are you using your mindful re-energized mind to stay focused or are you melting slightly?</p>
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<p>Reflections:</p>	
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Lesson FOUR

Week of:

Date:

Today, you will be leading... Express Joy, Listen and Notice, Inhale & Exhale Breathing

Plan:	Description:	Check when completed:
Materials Needed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "I am SMART." visual - "My POSSIBILITIES are ENDLESS." visual - "What's your JOY?" visual 	
Goal(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students will reflect on what makes them joyful and it is with hope this finds them peace of mind. - We will discuss being mindful of how we match our neighbor or section compared to the rest of the band. Are we playing correct notes? Are we breathing and tonguing at the same time? Are we paying attention to the conductor or just going through the motions? 	
<p>INTRODUCTION: TELL students the WHY</p> <p>CENTERING:</p> <p>MINDFULNESS:</p>	<p>My favorite part of the day is when I get to make music with all of you.</p> <p>Start with sitting... EXPRESS JOY: Close your eyes or soften your gaze. Turn your focus inward and think about something that brings you joy. Picture that thing or person in your mind. Where in your body do you feel joy? What does joy feel like? Express your joy. "Today, I feel joy because of ..." (p. 24, A-Z Poster)</p> <p>LISTEN and NOTICE: Today we are using our sense of hearing to pay attention to how our sound fits together as a band. As we warm-up, listen to your neighbor. Are you matching them? Are you tonguing and performing your rhythms correctly and at the same time as them? Does the sound of the band match what I am conducting for you to produce?</p>	

Reflections:	
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Lesson FIVE

Week of:

Date:

Today, you will be leading... Tense and Release, Hand Over Heart, Inhale & Exhale Breathing

Plan:	Description:	Check when completed:
Materials Needed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Today will be a GREAT day." visual - "I am IMPORTANT." visual 	
Goal(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students will release any tension(s) they carried with them to class and find a release and relaxation when we begin our warmups. - Students will become mindful of their own space and how they use it. - Students will continue to expand their lungs by sustaining air longer both during our breathing exercise and performing long notes in our warm-up. - Students will receive a piece of paper stating: I am IMPORTANT. From myself and will make it a goal to place it in their folder, instrument case, on the fridge at home, or give it to a friend who they think needs this reminder too. 	
<p>INTRODUCTION: TELL students the WHY</p> <p>CENTERING:</p>	<p>Have you ever ridden a roller coaster at Valleyfair and were so scared when going up, then when you went down the slope and finished the ride you felt excited, maybe you were laughing, (or maybe you were crying good tears!), and found thrill? Maybe you have experienced this sledding, or maybe doing an activity in P.E.</p> <p>Sitting...</p> <p>TENSE AND RELEASE: Focus only on you while we complete this exercise. Push all other thoughts out of your mind. Squeeze your face tight and hold for 5 seconds. Slowly release the tension in your face. Repeat for: shoulders, arms, fists (don't drop your instrument), legs, and feet. How does each area feel now? How does your entire body feel? (p. 20, A-Z Poster)</p>	

<p>MINDFULNESS:</p> <p>BREATHING:</p> <p>RECAP: "We did this to..."</p>	<p>HAND OVER HEART: Place your hand over your heart. Place your other hand over your belly. Zoom your attention on your breathing and to the sensations in the space between your two hands. Do this for a few moments. Move your hand from your belly to your forehead. Focus on your breath and space between your hands. Place both bands over our heart. Tell yourself something kind. (p. 66, Breathing Exercises for Kids)</p> <p>Standing... Two times: Inhale 1..2..3..4... Exhale 1..2..3..4... Two times: Inhale 1..2..3..4... Exhale 1..2..3..4..5... Two times: Inhale 1..2..3..4... Exhale 1..2..3..4..5..6... Moving your hand in and away from your mouth.</p> <p>As a group, your air has become more focused. I can tell you are concentrating as a team. You seem more relaxed and your sound has improved in just a short amount of time. Remember you can "tense and release" in any class or at home if you ever need it. Remember to find your safe space. Remember to continuously breathe.</p>	
<p>WARM-UP:</p>		
<p>Rehearsal Plan:</p>		

<p>OPTIONAL</p>	<p>"Today will be a great day." ← Make a visual and say throughout</p>
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Transitional Jargon and/or TIPS:	<p>rehearsal!</p> <p>“I am important.” ← Make as a visual. You can even make this quote into little slips of paper and place one on each student's chair. Students can place these in their folder, instrument case, their homeroom desk, or even give it to a friend after class.</p> <p>Continue to use the same language when reminding kids to become focused and back on track throughout rehearsal. Ex: Placing your hand over your heart, reminding students of their space and their progress. Are they growing? Are they continuing to breathe correctly in our concert music or are they just going through the motions of focusing only on playing notes and remembering their fingerings?</p>
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Reflections:	
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Lesson SIX

Week of:

Date:

Today, you will be leading...How Are You Feeling?, Mascot (Hawk) Hug, Inhale & Exhale Breathing

Plan:	Description:	Check when completed:
Materials Needed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "I am in CONTROL of my emotions." visual - "Today I am going to SHINE." visual 	
Goal(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students will tie our breathing and mindfulness activity into our school mascot. - Students will continue to expand their breath and sustain air longer. 	
<p>INTRODUCTION: TELL students the WHY</p> <p>CENTERING:</p> <p>MINDFULNESS:</p>	<p>Today I feel: _____ When I see you all, I feel: _____ I hope today you feel: _____- Remember you can talk to me any time if you ever need anything.</p> <p>HOW ARE YOU FEELING?: Today we are going to focus on how we are feeling. As we begin, close your eyes and take a deep breath in through your nose and out through your mouth. Continue breathing as you focus on the way your body feels physically. Are you in any pain or discomfort? Is a part of your body cold or hot? What does your body feel like? When you are finished, gently shift your focus to the way our mind is feeling. Are you tired, anxious, content, etc.? How do you know? What is making you feel this way? Do you need to do something to change how you are feeling either physically or emotionally? When you are finished, take a deep breath in through your nose and out through your mouth and slowly open your eyes. (p. 11, Morning Mindfulness Guided Meditations)</p> <p>Start by Standing...</p>	

OPTIONAL Transitional Jargon and/or TIPS:	<p>“I am in control of my emotions.” ← Make it into a visual. “Today I am going to shine.” ← Make it into a visual.</p> <p>Continue to use the same language when reminding kids to become focused and back on track throughout rehearsal. Ex: Everyone, do a hawk hug. Are you in control of your body? Mind? Breath?</p>
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Reflections:	
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Lesson SEVEN

Week of:

Date:

Today, you will be leading... Balloon Belly, Mindfulness with our Instruments, Inhale & Exhale Breathing

Plan:	Description:	Check when completed:
Materials Needed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Today is going to be a GREAT day!" visual - "ANYTHING is POSSIBLE." visual - Balloon for breathing visual 	
Goal(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students will get to practice balloon breathing before incorporating balloons in the next lesson. - Students will perform an instrument scan, making sure they look it over, seeing what they might not have before, maybe become aware of certain actions of levers they have not explored or noticed, etc. - Students will continue to expand their breath and sustain their air longer. 	
<p>INTRODUCTION: TELL students the WHY</p> <p>CENTERING:</p> <p>MINDFULNESS:</p>	<p>How many of you have blown up a balloon? A balloon is a great way to see how much air you can both put in your lungs AND push out.</p> <p>Carefully holding our instruments, stand with your feet spaced slightly apart or under each shoulder...</p> <p>BALLOON BELLY: Pretend that your belly is like a balloon. Take in a slow, strong breath. Notice how the balloon gets bigger as it inflates with air. Slowly breathe out. Pay attention to how the balloon gets smaller as it deflates. Take a few, quiet moments to practice slowly inflating and deflating your balloon belly. (p. 61, Breathing Exercises for Kids)</p> <p>MINDFULNESS WITH OUR INSTRUMENTS: Today we are going to take some time to really focus on something we do a lot,</p>	

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<p>OPTIONAL Transitional Jargon and/or TIPS:</p>	<p>"Today is going to be a great day." ← Make it into a visual. "Anything is possible." ← Make it into a visual.</p> <p>Continue to use the same language when reminding kids to become focused and back on track throughout rehearsal. Ex: Are you mindful of your space? Of your note reading? How are you holding your instrument? Are you using your belly balloon breath?</p> <p>*Make sure to inform students how to either hold their instrument or properly place it on their chair when balloon breathing! When finished with this activity, make sure to have them pick up their instrument BEFORE sitting back down.</p>
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Lesson EIGHT

Week of:

Date:

Today, you will be leading... Balloon Breathing (with Balloons!), Receive a Compliment, Inhale & Exhale Breathing

Plan:	Description:	Check when completed:
Materials Needed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "I am PROUD of myself." visual - Balloons - Trash cans 	
Goal(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students will see how much air it takes to fill up a balloon. - Students will use this challenge to continue to expand their inhale and exhale using a balloon. - Students will receive a compliment of their progress from their neighbor and MYSELF! 	
<p>INTRODUCTION: TELL students the WHY</p> <p>CENTERING:</p>	<p>For the last seven lessons, we've learned about breathing with cool air to play and perform with our best air. We have melted, we have relaxed, we set mini-goals, we became more confident, we became more focused and our concert songs have improved. Today, we are going to use our awesome new air and have some fun. Last rehearsal, we mimicked using a balloon to fill up our lungs and breathe out for a longer amount of time. Today, we are going to be using them! Please keep in mind, this is for our activity to keep pushing our lungs. Keep your awesome focus, be a leader for your section, and let's see how you all do compared to ME!</p> <p>Begin by Standing... BALLOON BREATHING: Everyone takes their balloon, stretches it, and watches an example of what they will be instructed. First, practice blowing up your balloon. Next, Inhale: 1..2..3..4... and blow into your balloon until you run out of air. Pinch and observe. Let the air out. Now Inhale 1..2..3..4... and blow out</p>	

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<p>OPTIONAL Transitional Jargon:</p>	<p>“I am proud of myself.”</p> <p>VALUE THE MOMENT: Turn your focus to the moment. What about this movement right now is important to you? Focus on what about this moment is special and important. “I value this moment because...” (p. 22, A-Z Poster)</p> <p>Continue to use the same language when reminding kids to become focused and back on track throughout rehearsal. Ex: Feel that balloon breath in this piece... are you taking in enough air to finish this phrase? Are you being mindful of when you breathe in our music or are you just taking breaths without realizing it?</p>
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<p>Reflections:</p>	
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Other Recommended Materials to Purchase:

- 26 Mindfulness Scripts and Exercises:
<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Mindfulness-Activities-26-Mindfulness-Scripts-and-Mindfulness-Exercises-3566659>
- Breathing Exercises for Kids:
<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/MINDFULNESS-BREATHING-EXERCISES-FOR-KIDS-Tools-for-a-Trauma-Informed-Classroom-4520640>

- Mindful Mornings: 30 Guided Meditation Scripts:
<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Mindfulness-Guided-Meditation-Scripts-For-Self-Regulation-2265062>