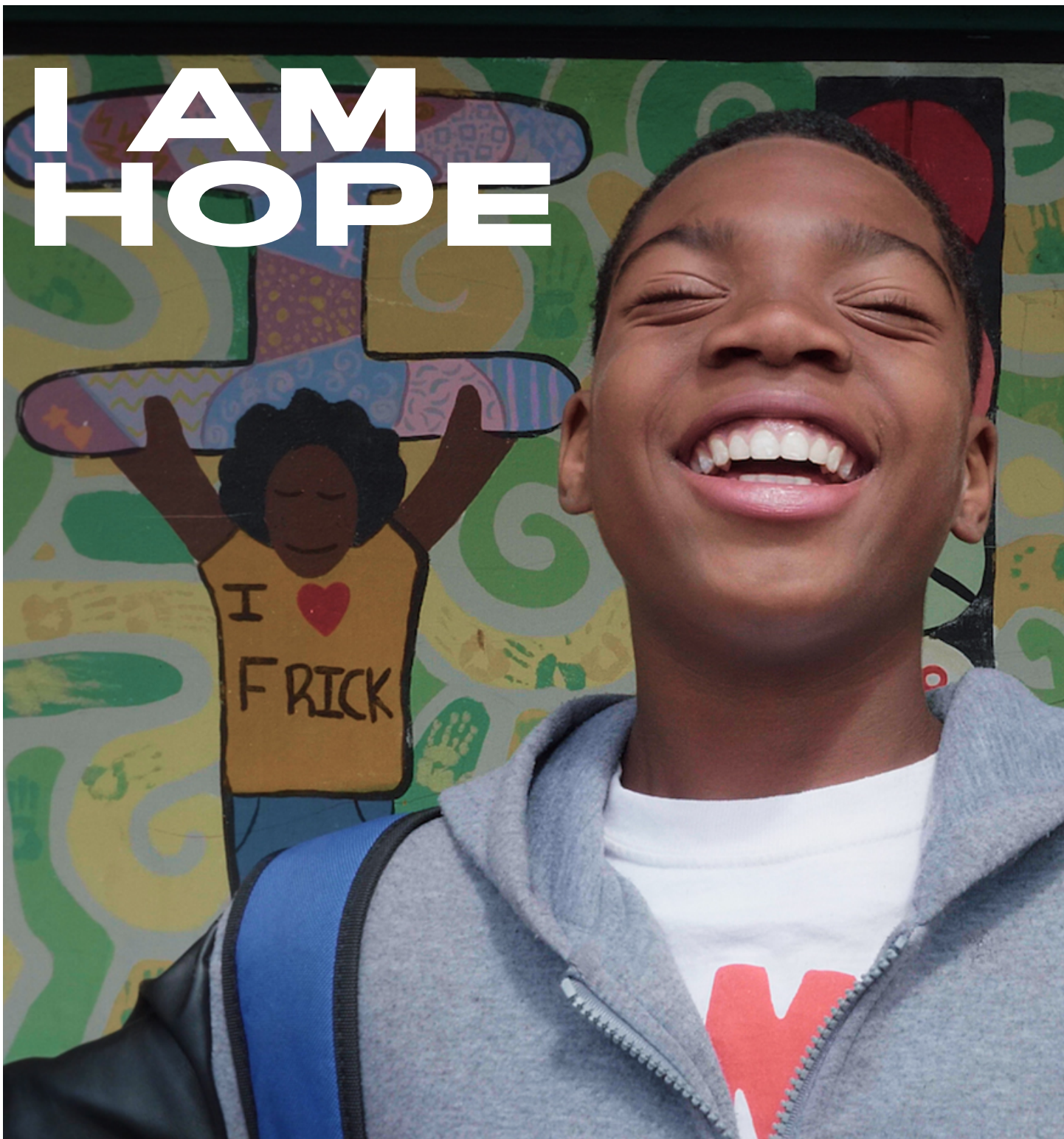


MVFF EDUCATION

I AM HOPE



CURRICULUM GUIDE
GRADES: 4-12

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Dear Educators,

Thank you for attending the 46th Annual Mill Valley Film Festival's screening of *I Am Hope*. We are excited to return in our 2023 fall season with a combination of both in-person screenings for local schools and online screenings for those of you joining us from afar.

This year, our MVFF Education film selections for schools continue to focus on increasingly relevant issues of global empathy and active citizenship, and we believe this film will be a powerful and engaging text to use in your classroom. These curricular materials are designed to get students to engage deeply with film by the common-core aligned skills of developing an evidence-based interpretation of a text.

The discussion questions on the following page offer a variety of options for fostering small-group or whole-class dialogue. If your students are already familiar with a process of writing evidence-based interpretive essays, consider using the suggested essay prompts for a short writing piece. Additionally, individual handouts for before and after viewing are provided as stand-alone activities to be used individually or in sequence, with a particular emphasis on social-emotional learning. We have also included a handout that provides some context for the film festival experience, which may help to introduce your screening experience.

Thank you so much for your tireless work!

Sincerely,

The CAFILM Education Team

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the central message of the film? What new insight did you gain from the beginning to the end of the film?
2. What did you see in this film that reminds you of other stories from your life or other stories you know?
3. What issue, situation, or dilemma is most prevalent in the film? After viewing the film, consider the filmmaker's purpose. Why do you suppose he chose to make a film about this topic? What was his purpose behind the creation of this film?
4. What new information or ideas will you take away from this film? How could you apply these takeaways to your own life? Your school? Your community?
5. What is the significance of the title *I Am Hope*? How does it relate to the film's themes and the film's message?
6. What does it mean to be a mindful learner? What does it mean to be a mindful leader? What can we learn from the students featured in the film about the value of practicing mindfulness both in school and in the community?
7. What is important to understand about the history of Oakland before it was even called Oakland? How is that history connected to the larger issues of power and oppression in schools, communities, and this country?
8. The Black Panther Party believed in the liberatory power of education. How does that belief resonate with the students and educators throughout the film?
9. Oakland has a long history of activism around issues of justice and equity. Both institutional oppression and the resistance to that oppression have shaped the city's past and inspired hope for the future. How is the film a testament to this?
10. What does equity in education mean? How does the film address it? How can education equity liberate students of color from institutional oppression? How can it help students succeed, achieve their dreams, and become change makers?

INTERPRETIVE ESSAY PROMPTS

1. *I Am Hope* depicts how practicing mindfulness increases self-awareness and self-regulation which ultimately fosters resilience. How do the students in this film use mindfulness to confront the challenges they face both in and out of school?
2. In what ways does this film challenge traditional ideas of education and, at the same time, celebrate the liberatory power of education?
3. In what ways do the teachers in the film use mindfulness to confront the challenges they face in the classroom? What is the transformative impact of teachers and other adults in schools increasing their self-awareness and self-regulation through a sustained Yoga/mindfulness practice?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

I AM HOPE Documentary Film

<https://www.iamhopedocumentary.com/>

The official website for the film, featuring a comprehensive classroom curriculum and additional resources.

Making Time for Mindfulness

<https://www.gse.harvard.edu/ideas/usable-knowledge/19/01/making-time-mindfulness#:~:text=A%20new%20study%20suggests%20that,academically%20and%20avoid%20behavior%20problems>

A new study shows how mindfulness education in the classroom can reduce students' sense of stress and lengthen attention spans.

United African Alliance Community Center

<https://www.uaacc.net/>

A global community of people committed to making a positive change.

Niroga Institute

<https://www.niroga.org/>

Frick Impact Academy and Niroga partnered to bring dynamic mindfulness and Yoga to east Oakland. Niroga Institute works at the intersection of education and mental health, families and workplaces, to nurture trauma-resilient communities using dynamic mindfulness curriculum.

Explore the Black Panther Party's History in Oakland, California

<https://www.visitoakland.com/blog/post/black-panther-party/>

ABOUT CAFILM

The nonprofit California Film Institute celebrates and promotes film as art and education through year-round programming at the independent Christopher B. Smith Rafael Film Center, presentation of the acclaimed Mill Valley Film Festival and DocLands Documentary Film Festival, as well as cultivation of the next generation of filmmakers and audiences through CAFILM Education programs.

Follow the California Film Institute on social media



STANDARDS

Common Core State Standards ELA-Literacy

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.1

Cites strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.2

Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.3

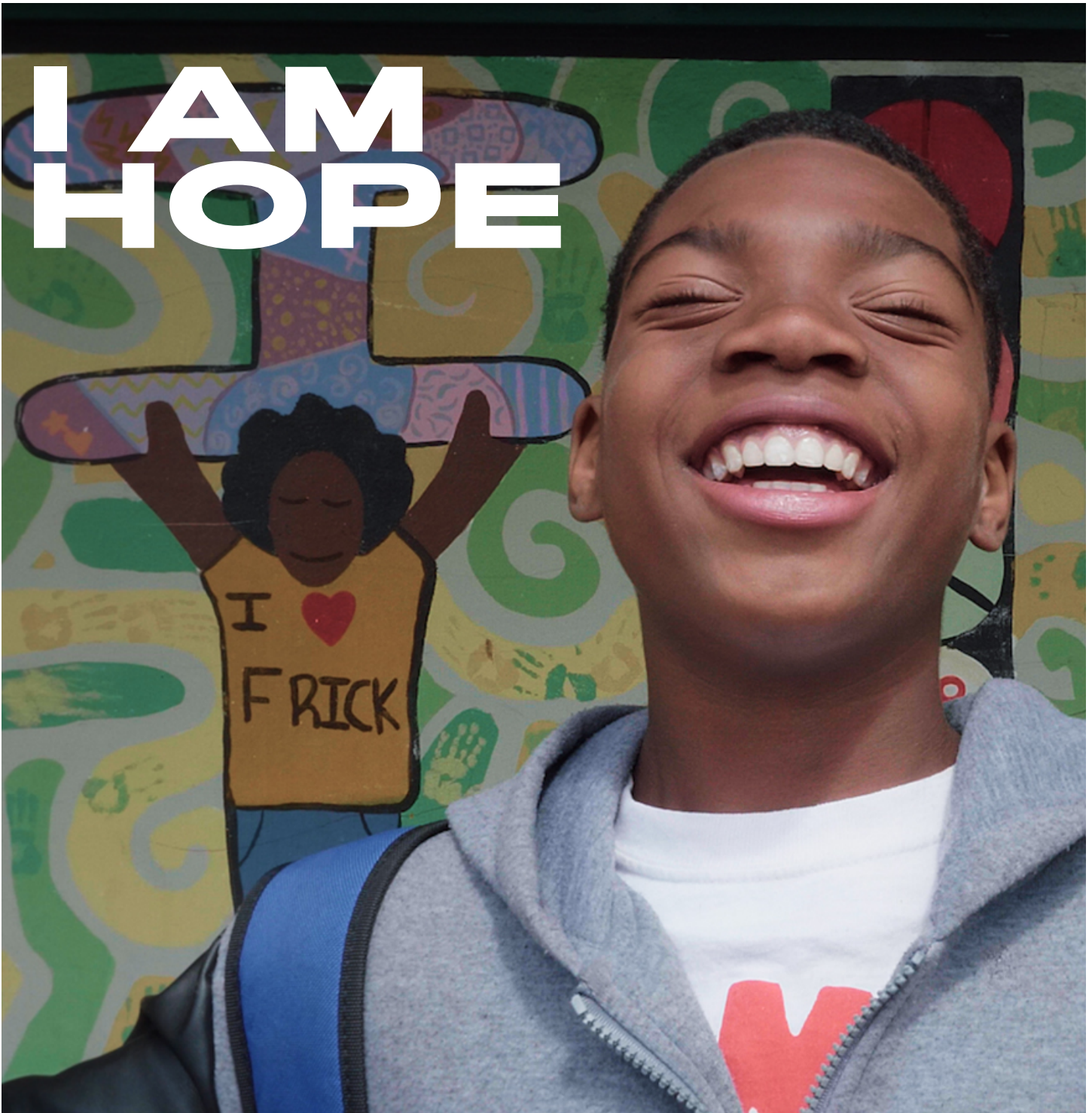
Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.4

Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.



ABOUT THE FILM

This insightful documentary follows a resilient community coming together to create the first Yoga and mindfulness class in Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) Middle Schools. Working collaboratively with staff and administration, Yoga instructor ShakaJamal develops relationships with youth who are receiving their first in-school instruction of Yoga and mindfulness. Through a challenging school year, students are engaged in a range of mindfulness activities that transform them from mindful learners to mindful leaders.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKER SHAKAJAMAL

ShakaJamal is a culturally innovative artist and filmmaker from Oakland, California. He is the founder of Olu8 Film & Culture and Olu8 Records; creative spaces for the production of dynamic sound, story, and visuals. His passion for film and music grew through travel and while living in South Africa. Partnering with community members, nonprofits and corporations, ShakaJamal's work reveals the inspiring achievements of change makers – whose stories often go untold.

FILMMAKER'S STATEMENT

As I sat within the first few months of the quarantine in 2020, I thought to myself, "What ever happened to all that film footage that was shot of me leading Yoga at Frick Impact Academy?" It then dawned upon me that I had to do everything I could to track down the footage and create a film about my experience of being a Yoga instructor in one of the most challenging and rewarding middle schools in all of Oakland.



BEFORE VIEWING ANTICIPATION GUIDE: THREE WHYS

Directions:

The film you are about to see follows Mindfulness Instructor ShakaJamal as he helps kids deal with their own trauma and the trauma that surrounds them by helping them find their inner strength and connecting with their community. The students featured in the film share their individual journeys from becoming mindful learners to mindful leaders.

Consider the following three questions and record your responses in the chart below.

Why might this topic matter to me?	
Why might this topic matter to people around me: family, friends, community, nation?	
Why might this topic matter to the world?	

DURING VIEWING MIRROR OR WINDOW?

Directions:

The world looks different depending on who and where you are. Film has the power to transform human experience and reflect it back to us. In that reflection we can sometimes see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience. Film also offers views of worlds that are unfamiliar to us and has the power to provide us with insight into perspectives different from our own.

I Am Hope follows a group of students who share the challenges they face and how learning to practice mindfulness leads to resilience in school and in their local communities. Use the chart below to decide whether the individual stories in the film reflect your own lived experiences or provide more of an insight into the lived experiences of others.

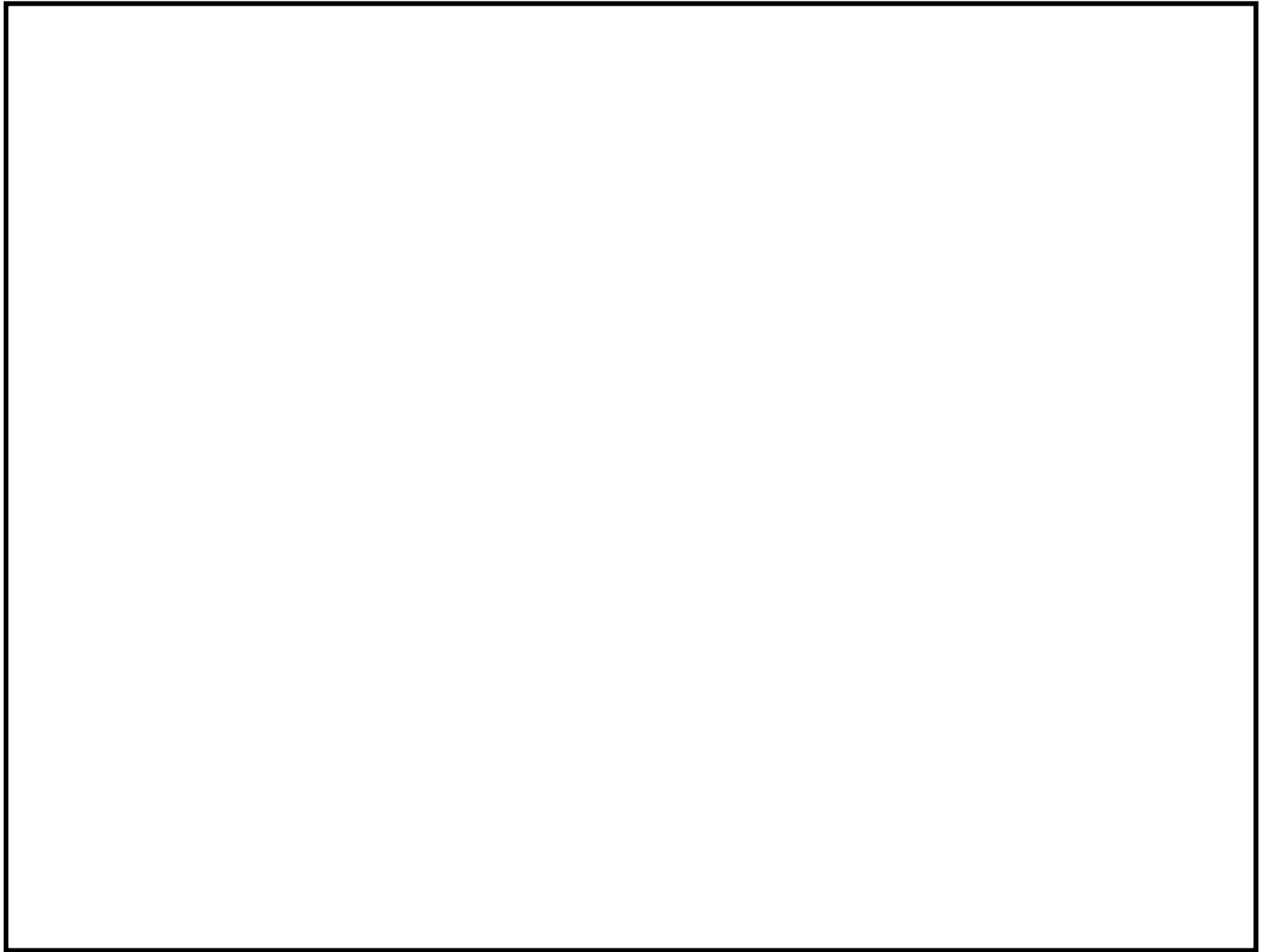
MIRROR In what ways does the content in the film reflect your own identity, experiences, or motivations?	WINDOW In what ways does the content in the film provide insight into the identities, experiences, and motivations of others?

AFTER VIEWING TAKE NOTE

Directions:

After viewing *I Am Hope*, "take note" of ONE of the following:

1. What is the most important point made in the film?
2. What are you finding challenging, puzzling, or difficult to understand?
3. What question would you most like to discuss?
4. What is something you found interesting?



A Thinking Routine Borrowed from Harvard Project Zero's Think Routine Toolbox:
<http://www.pz.harvard.edu/resources>

AFTER VIEWING RESPONSE QUESTIONS

Directions:

Respond to each question, referring to specific scenes, events, and dialogue from the film as evidence for your interpretation.

1. What are some of the challenges the students featured in the film are facing in Oakland, California?

2. What are some of the details of the history of Oakland that the film addresses? How is this history important to understanding the challenges these students are currently facing?

3. How is the history of Oakland important to understanding ShakaJamal’s vision and mission and the liberatory power of education?

4. In what ways does *I Am Hope* comment on larger systemic issues of education equity in the United States, beyond Oakland?

5. How are the students of Frick Impact Academy making a difference in their community and the Oakland Unified School District? In what ways could *I Am Hope* reach other schools and impact communities, beyond Oakland?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

MINDFUL JARS

Make Mindfulness Glitter Calm Down Jars

As seen and demonstrated in the film, the mindfulness glitter jar represents the mind settling. Mindful jars can be an effective tool for students when they need to slow down, find calm, and combat anxiety or stress when experienced in the classroom. It's a creative activity and a simple tool that students can use as a mindfulness practice.

Directions on How to Make One:

1. Use a plastic water bottle for safety in the classroom. Fill the bottle to the top with water.
2. Have students pick three colors of glitter: one to represent thoughts, one to represent feelings, and one to represent behaviors (or "urges to do things").
3. Drop a few pinches of each glitter into the water, which represents their mind. Be sure to use glitter that sinks rather than floats. Adding some glycerin to the water slows down the fall of the glitter.
4. Adding a few drops of food coloring is optional.
5. Seal the bottle with its cap and reinforce with duct tape.

Directions on How to Use One:

1. With your students, acknowledge that we all sometimes have really big feelings. Our mind may feel swirly and mixed up because we are mad, angry, confused, sad, or something else.
2. Tell students that when they have these feelings, they can take a mindfulness break, watch their feelings, and then let them settle by shaking up a glitter jar and watching it swirl all over.
3. Then, set the jar down, watch it swirl, and finally settle. Remind students to breathe with whatever is going on, be still and watch their big emotions as they gently float down.
4. As students breathe and are still, the glitter starts to slowly settle and become calmer.
5. Tell students to watch until they can see through the jar again.
6. Remind students that the objective is not for our feelings to disappear, but that we don't want them to block our view of what is really going on.

For more information and/or variations on the mindfulness glitter jar go to:

<https://www.mindful.org/how-to-create-a-glitter-jar-for-kids/>

<https://kumarahyoga.com/how-to-make-a-mindfulness-glitter-calm-down-jar/>

EXTENSION ACTIVITY INCORPORATING MINDFULNESS IN THE CLASSROOM, PART ONE

Mindfulness helps develop a common language among teachers and students that can be used in the classroom to work through moments of student stress or anxiety. Try incorporating the following mindful activities for learners in your classroom.

1. Mindful Breathing

This activity is great for bringing the mind back to the importance of our breath. As it turns out, when we're stressed we take shallow breaths. On the other hand, deeper "belly breaths" focus our attention and calm us. Introduce students to the exercise by telling them that mindful breaths encourage the body to go into a relaxed state to manage anxiety, stress, and restlessness. Sitting or standing, ask your students to practice breathing deeply and slowly. Ask them to count to six on the inhale, and to six again on the exhale.. You may like to suggest they put their hands on their stomachs to feel the air as it moves in and out.

2. Color Breathing

Ask your students to think of a relaxing color and another color that represents anger, frustration, or sadness. Now, have your students close their eyes and imagine they are breathing in the relaxing color and letting it fill their entire bodies. On the exhale, ask them to picture the "negative" color leaving their body and dissipating throughout the room.

3. The Five Senses

This activity is an exercise to do when experiencing a moment of stress, or as a way to reconnect. Relax and ask yourself:

- What are five things I can see?
- Four things I can touch?
- Three things I can hear?
- Two things I can smell?
- One thing I can taste?

4. Body Scan

You know the feeling when you suddenly realize your neck, shoulders, or back are full of tension? Enter the body scan. While sitting or lying down, ask students to stop and check in with how they are physically feeling, without judging themselves or asking "why." Check-in questions include:

- "How is my breath? Shallow or deep?"
- "Where do I feel sore or tense?"
- "How do my (back/shoulders/face muscles/feet/neck) feel?"

As they go through these cues, they respond by relaxing that part of their body.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY INCORPORATING MINDFULNESS IN THE CLASSROOM, PART TWO

5. Breaktime Bell

After being exposed to the practice of mindfulness for some time, some students may enjoy the chance to increase their autonomy with the class's mindfulness practice. In this activity, assign a bell to a student at the start of class. During the lesson, they are able to ring the bell whenever they or everyone needs a break (with a recommended limit of three rings per class).

When the bell is rung, the class carries out a short mindful activity (breathing, stretching, checking in with their thoughts, etc). Following this, the lesson resumes.

Note: If you don't think giving the bell to students would work for your class, you can always ring it yourself.

6. Daily gratitude

Humans are great at remembering the negative. Not so much, however, when it comes to recalling the positive. Being grateful helps us keep this balance in check. There's no "right" way to practice gratitude, however, you may like to set aside the last five minutes of class for students to write down what they are thankful for, briefly share them with a partner, or silently think them to themselves.

For more information go to:

<https://teacherblog.ef.com/daily-mindfulness-for-students-6-activities/>



ABOUT FILM FESTIVALS



An opening night screening at the Mill Valley Film Festival.

©Tommy Lau

What is a film festival?

A film festival is an event in which multiple movies are presented over the course of one or several days. Depending on the size of the festival, all of the screenings may take place in a single theater or may involve multiple venues throughout a city. Festivals also include special events like panel discussions with filmmakers and actors. Typically, filmmakers submit their works to a festival, where a team of curators selects the best entries for inclusion in the festival. For independent and international filmmakers, festivals are often an important way to raise awareness of a film, generate an audience, and/or attract a studio to purchase the rights to distribute a film in a wider release. Acceptance into a major festival can add significant prestige to a film, with some festival awards (such as the Cannes Film Festival's Palme d'Or) considered among the highest honors a film can receive.

There are many film festivals through-

out the world, with some focusing on particular themes, such as highlighting LGBTQ films/filmmakers, specific cultural groups, or particular genres. While some of the more famous festivals may be in distant locations, there are hundreds of small festivals spread through every corner of the world and, increasingly, festivals are using streaming access to make it easier for the public to view their curated programs.

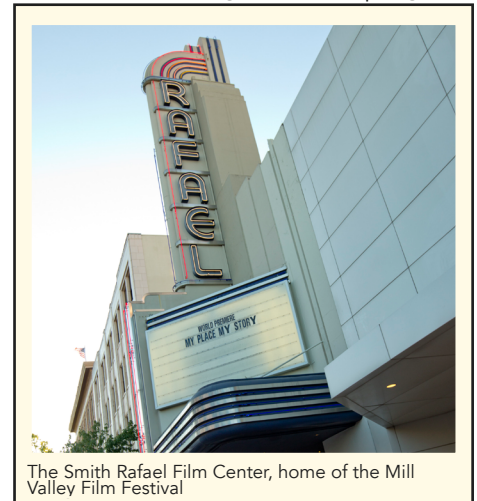
History of the Mill Valley Film Festival

Since founding the Mill Valley Film Festival in 1977, Executive Director Mark Fishkin has shepherded this once small, three-day showcase into an eleven-day, internationally acclaimed cinema event presenting a wide variety of new films from around the world in an engaged, community setting.

The festival has an impressive track record of launching new films and new filmmakers, and has earned a reputation as a filmmakers' festival

by celebrating the best in American independent and foreign films, alongside high-profile and prestigious award contenders. The relaxed and non-competitive atmosphere surrounding MVFF, gives filmmakers and audiences alike the opportunity to share their work and experiences in a collaborative and convivial setting.

Each year the festival welcomes more than 200 filmmakers, representing more than 50 countries. Screening sections include world cinema, US cinema, documentaries, family films, and shorts programs. Annual festival initiatives include Active Cinema, a forum for films that aim to engage audiences and transform ideas into action; Mind the Gap, a platform for inclusion and equity; and ¡Viva el Cine!, a showcase of Latin American and Spanish-language films.. Festival guests also enjoy an exciting selection of Tributes, Spotlights and Galas throughout the program.



The Smith Rafael Film Center, home of the Mill Valley Film Festival

Questions to Consider:

1. What is the purpose of a film festival? What are the benefits for filmmakers? For the audience? For the community?
2. How might the films at a festival differ from the films available to watch at your local movie theater?
3. What qualities do you think festival curators might look for in a film? If you are watching a festival film with a class/school group, what aspects of the film do you think made it appealing to the curators?

Get Involved!

Many film festivals, including the Mill Valley Film Festival, have student film categories. If you are a filmmaker, explore FilmFreeway (www.filmfreeway.com) for a database of worldwide film festivals where you can submit your film. The call for entries for MVFF opens in late February and closes in June. Youth filmmakers do not have to pay an entry fee. MVFF also offers many opportunities for volunteering. Find out more at <https://www.cafilm.org/volunteer/>.