

# RAISING RESILIENCE

CONNECTING COMPASSION  
+ WELL-BEING WITH  
PEDAGOGY IN THE  
COLLEGE OF THE BUILT  
ENVIRONMENTS

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2019 UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON  
RESILIENCE AND COMPASSION  
INITIATIVES SEED GRANT  
SUMMARY REPORT

## PROJECT LEADS

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Dr. Brooke Sullivan



# CREDITS

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## **RAISING RESILIENCE: CONNECTING COMPASSION + WELL-BEING WITH PEDAGOGY IN THE COLLEGE OF BUILT ENVIRONMENTS**

2019 UW RESILIENCE AND COMPASSION INITIATIVES SEED GRANT

June 2021

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# LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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Land acknowledgment is an important first step in understanding the land you are living and working on. It is important to acknowledge First Nations and their history and resilience through genocidal colonial politics and 'nation building'. We acknowledge that we are writing this on the unceded traditional, ancestral lands of the first people of Seattle, the Duwamish people. A people who are still here, continuing to honor and bring to light their ancient heritage. Our University and our lives exist within the traditional lands and waters of these and other Coast Salish peoples, including the, Suquamish, Puyallup, Muckleshoot, Tulalip and other Pacific nations. We honor the Duwamish and other Coast Salish People and their elders, past, present and future. We offer gratitude for the land and gratitude for these caretakers from time immemorial. We make this acknowledgement of their rightful past, present and future home and towards greater appreciation and understanding.

## PROJECT ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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We acknowledge and thank the UW Resilience Lab and Campus Sustainability Fund, whose UW Resilience and Compassion Initiatives Seed Grants program funded activities undertaken through the project. This project builds on the research and collaborations of the UW Resilience Lab's Well-Being for Life and Learning (WBLL) initiative, in which the project's co-leads participate.

We thank College of Built Environments Dean Renee Cheng for support with costs not covered by this Grant. We extend our gratitude to the community of faculty who took on this project with us in co-creating our resources and retreat and continue to meet; to the faculty and staff who engaged in the Autumn 2019 meetings; and to those who reviewed and gave feedback on this Summary Report. And we give much appreciation for Professor Iain Robertson, whose constant mentorship and enthusiasm for this work inspires us.

We appreciate the challenges that UW and higher education have faced with regards to well-being since the pandemic, racial justice activism, and other transformative events have emerged since the start of this grant. Our current context only amplifies the need for well-being and resilience in our pedagogy, our students, and our community of faculty and staff.

# PREFACE

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As we complete this project in early 2021, the concept of “raising resilience” seems both challenging and urgent. The outbreak of COVID-19, the ongoing socio-political movements coupled with other colliding crises, have provided an environment rich in resonance for topics of well-being and resilience, especially in higher education.

We are excited by the recent release of the University of Washington Resilience Lab’s [Well-Being for Life & Learning](#) (WBLL) Guidebook<sup>1</sup>, with mentorship and support by Ed Taylor, Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Academic Affairs; the vision and leadership of Megan Kennedy, Director of the Resilience Lab in creating this guidebook with School of Medicine Assistant Dean of Well-Being Anne Browning, the WBLL Community of Practice, and Resilience Lab staff. The Resilience Lab, its leaders, and the WBLL Community of Practice with whom we have learned, inspired this Seed Grant project.

We have witnessed a growing number of faculty, staff and students applying contemplative and mindful practices in their lives and learning environments. If our embodied experiences in this COVID-19 pandemic have taught us anything, it is the need for higher education to continue to work towards adopting meaningful and effective strategies for increasing the well-being of ourselves, students, communities and environments that we rely upon. Well-being in an educational community can be improved at both the individual and collective level through a shared experience of our vulnerability, diversity, and desire for wholeness.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Arguetty, D., Cantu, A., Chen, C., Ganti, A., Germinaro, K., Johnson, J., Kennedy, M., Lichty, L., Masuda, D., McLaughlin, K., Monteith, J., Sullivan, B., Tench, B. (2020)., 2020; access at: <https://wellbeing.uw.edu/get-involved/well-being-for-life-learning-initiative/>

2. Brewer et. al. 2019

# **PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESOURCES**



# 1. OVERVIEW

*Higher education has not recognized student needs for person-centered learning that facilitates psychospiritual maturation during young adulthood. We expect students to undertake difficult programs of study and participate capably in culturally-inclusive campus communities without mentoring psychological resilience and interpersonal skills necessary to navigate this difficult terrain. Further, we often assume that students are the cause of their problems, rather than recognizing that their behaviors mirror societal issues - J.D. Kass, 2016*

How do universities and colleges address student well-being? Over 60-percent of students may be clinically stressed.<sup>1</sup> University students broadly report diverse and overlapping challenges affecting mental health, including inadequate diet, separation from family, academic pressures, lack of employment opportunities following graduation, and financial distress.<sup>2</sup> J. D. Kass (2016) explores how developing a ‘person-centered’ pedagogical approach to skills development (through the lenses of bio-behavioral, cognitive socio-cultural, socio-emotional and existential-spiritual lenses) can improve outcomes for faculty and students.

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1. Stallman, 2016

2. Orygen, 2017



Figure 1: During the Raising Resilience Retreat at Friday Harbor Labs, faculty created temporal art from the local environment, and engaged in discussion about connecting pedagogy across personal, social and environmental well-being.



Resilience can play a key role in students ability to overcome pressing challenges, support their own well-being and ultimately, graduate. Promising research has demonstrated the value of incorporating socio-emotional well-being and resilience and coping skills into higher education practices. In fact, a number of universities have developed well-being guidebooks, demonstrating a recognition of its importance and in improved socio-emotional outcomes for faculty, students and staff.

The University of Washington's Well-Being for Life & Learning (WBLL) builds from similar initiatives at the University of Texas at Austin and at Georgetown University. Outreach and tools demonstrating the effectiveness of integrating well-being into course curriculum and campus culture at the University of Washington has been completed by the UW Resilience Lab through their Well-Being for Life and Learning Initiative (WBLL). The Community of Practice is an important part of this work, where faculty from across the three UW campuses regularly meet to share insights, and who were directly involved in the development of the Well-Being for Life and Learning Guidebook.

Within the UW College of Built Environments (CBE), our disciplines embody several of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, as we envision and engage in more resilient futures through a lens of social and environmental justice. Our pedagogy also needs integration of intentional well-being practices that could better endow faculty and students with not only greater resilience and compassion, but the tools to discover relationships among our own resilience and the community and ecological systems we address. Given the critical need to respond creatively and meaningfully to emerging human and ecological crises driven by climate change across the globe, we recognize the urgency of equipping our students and ourselves not just with relevant knowledge and skills in our particular disciplines, but also to foster compassion and a commitment to our shared humanity. These priorities resonate with the [Declaration on University Global Engagement](http://globallyengageduniversities.org/declaration/)<sup>3</sup> that the University of Washington has signed, and the Declaration's referenced [United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals](https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/).<sup>4</sup>

This paper summarizes work done in the College of Built Environments through a 2019 University of Washington Resilience and Compassion Initiatives Seed Grant. Through this project, we sought to continue the work of the WBLL Community of Practice and create a similar, satellite Community of

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3. <http://globallyengageduniversities.org/declaration/>

4. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

Practice in CBE. The project was piloted by a group of CBE faculty exploring how built environments pedagogy can better foster well-being and compassion in faculty, students and staff. Specifically, we considered relationships and synergies among three themes that inform our disciplines' theory and practice—resilience and well-being; systems thinking; and biophilic design—as potent means to enrich pedagogy, in not only what our students need to know, but how their learning process engages these interrelated concepts.

Our project goals, cooperative process, and key reflections are presented in the subsequent sections. What we describe here is a 'ripple in the pond' so to speak, with regards to what practices may advance our commitment and capacity to support the efforts of the UW Resilience Lab's WBLI initiative in our own UW College of Built Environments.

## 2. PROJECT SCOPE AND GOALS

Realizing the important connections between our socio-ecological pedagogy and ‘resilience’ in the learning and lives of students, staff and faculty, this project sought to spark a community of faculty who would collectively explore and advance approaches to better connect what we teach with how we teach and engage with each other. Through funding from the 2019 UW Resilience Seed Grant program, a group of CBE faculty embarked upon a year-long collaborative journey. What follows are the discoveries this group made in exploring the question:

**How may the intersections of  
resilience and well-being;  
systems thinking; and  
biophilic design  
enrich our pedagogy and better support our students?**

### 1. RESILIENCE AND WELL-BEING

We adopt a broad definition of resilience, that may be viewed through ecological, social, political, economic, spiritual, and other frameworks we find in built environments teaching and scholarship. Resilience applies to institutions, systems, and individuals--occurring at multiple scales and contexts within each of the disciplines in our college. To foster holistic well-being, we see resilience rooted in diversity, equity, justice, and inclusion. Needs and relationships within and among communities and individuals are supported through the affordances and qualities of their built environments.

### 2. SYSTEMS THINKING

Donella Meadows’ compelling frame for systems-thinking serves as a foundation for our evolving built environments pedagogy:

*At a time when the world is more messy, more crowded, more interconnected, more interdependent, and more rapidly changing than ever before, the more ways of seeing, the better. The systems-thinking lens allows us to reclaim our intuition about whole systems and*

- *hone our abilities to understand parts,*
- *see interconnections,*
- *ask ‘what-if’ questions about possible future behaviors, and*
- *be creative and courageous about system redesign.*<sup>1</sup>

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1. Meadows, D., & Wright, Diana., 2008, pp. 6-7

### 3. BIOPHILIA

E.O. Wilson's biophilia hypothesis proposes that humans seek other forms of life. He observes: "Modern biology has produced a genuinely new way of looking at the world that is incidentally congenial to the inner direction of biophilia.... The conclusion I draw is optimistic: to the degree that we come to understand other organisms we will place a greater value on them, and on ourselves."<sup>2</sup> His proposition lies squarely in what we view as compassion. The concept of "biophilic design" applies Wilson's hypothesis to the planning and design fields. Stephen Kellert and Judith Heerwagen define this term as "an innovative approach that emphasizes the necessity of maintaining, enhancing, and restoring the beneficial experience of nature in the built environment."<sup>3</sup> We explore how biophilic design models compassion, and how a compassionate frame of mind through design supports biophilia.

**Collectively, these themes challenge us to intentionally connect compassion and well-being with our pedagogy and mentorship as faculty in the UW's College of Built Environments.**

Our process was scoped as a collaborative endeavor with a self-selected group of CBE faculty to co-create a summer retreat/workshop and Autumn Quarter meetings in which we would:

- Identify, share and delve into each of these themes to better understand and find common ground among each other's disciplinary framings;
- Introduce and use well-being mini-practices through our collaborations, as concepts and practices that could be applied in our teaching;
- Experience and reflect on affordances of different environments for active learning and fostering well-being;
- Apply insights and practices in our Autumn Quarter courses;
- Learn from our experiences through dialogue and reflection to create a framework of concepts and methods; and
- Build a sense of community among CBE faculty around these goals.

As an outcome of this process, we have developed the following insights, reflections, and resources to share with CBE faculty and staff and the UW Resilience Lab.

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2. Wilson, Edward O., 1984, p. 2

3. Kellert, Stephen R., Judith H Heerwagen, Martin L. Mador, eds., 2008. p. vii



Figure 2: Faculty co-lead a retreat session on 'Resilience and Well-being'

### 3. PROCESS AND INSIGHTS

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As we reflect on this Seed Grant project, we highlight aspects of our process and corresponding insights that may inform future work. The WBL Community of Practice was a model for this Seed Grant with CBE faculty, and it is not surprising that our process and insights echo our experiences in the WBL Community of Practice. A more detailed description of our process is provided in the Appendix.

#### 1. INVITED FACULTY TO OPT IN

Our email invitation to CBE faculty to learn about and participate in this project asked faculty to take part in a kick-off meeting, and respond to a Catalyst survey regarding their interests and availability for a late summer retreat. This invitation resulted in successfully recruiting a small but engaged group of colleagues for a 'Kick Off' meeting.

We see this self-selection as an asset and critical path for the formation of the inaugural participant group, similar to the WBL Community of Practice, where participants commit to working and learning together.

#### 2. HOSTED A KICK-OFF MEETING TO SHARE AND DRAW OUT INTENTIONS

Given the timing of our Seed Grant award, we held the kick-off meeting the morning of CBE graduation. We opened with a moment of gratitude and acknowledged the self-selected nature of the group, sharing out our name, our preferred pronouns, our department, and what brought each of us here.

The facilitator set some basic ground rules of mutual respect and learning in sharing out our project goals and projected process, and engaged in initial conversations about the meanings of our three concepts--resilience and well-being, systems thinking, biophilia. As faculty from different disciplines, these conversations revealed different disciplinary framings of terms and relation to pedagogy, and how important this open sharing and mutual learning is. We adopted a 'both and' stance, where it was okay for definitions and expectations to be shared but not 'resolved' or decided. This was an important step in building trust and community, as we noted that each faculty participant would



help co-lead portions of the faculty retreat. We concluded with an overview of what we hoped to gain from the late summer retreat and through the inclusion of well-being and resilience in our coursework.

We view this meeting as initiating the group's culture and beginning to model well-being and resilience practices in the academic setting.

### **3. DEVELOPED RETREAT WITH CO-CREATED CONTENT**

Our Seed Grant was planned with funding for a co-created 3-day retreat at Friday Harbor Labs on San Juan Island, shortly before Autumn Quarter 2019. We were intentional in having the retreat developed collaboratively towards building a community of practice. Thus, we were not so much retreat leaders with benchmarks to meet, but as facilitators of a process whose success was only measured by whether we were able to drop a rock in the pond and create some ripples. In that, it was important to us that all faculty participating felt that they were equal contributors to the group and to the group process.

To enable open sharing of ideas and information between faculty, we created a Shared Drive on Google Drive. There, all could share and collaborate on resources and engage each others' expertise with articles, books and other media available to support contemplative practices in higher education. This Shared Drive remains a resource to revisit for inspiration, course readings or other media to share with students. This Shared Drive may be shared more widely across CBE where all can contribute and share insights.

As facilitators, we created a schedule that included the insertion of several well-being "mini-practices" throughout the retreat, co-led thematic sessions, and opening and concluding day activities that we led. Based on their expressed interest in the three themes (resilience and well-being, systems thinking, biophilia), we paired the six participating faculty to co-develop a session on one of these themes. Each pair identified readings or videos, and planned a two-hour workshop that they led at the retreat.

The impact of the physical retreat and community building on the success of the project could not be overstressed. Through our subsequent interviews, each participant reflected on the retreat experience explicitly and fondly. It was important and meaningful for faculty to feel like we could

physically ‘retreat’ from the normal operations and contexts, to focus on pursuing and facilitating our own learning about psycho-social-ecological well-being. There was a sense that the retreat gave us a shared experience, traveling through several hours, meals together, and overnight stays, which necessitated some vulnerability and compromise. The co-led sessions, and time in between, facilitated meaningful personal connections with other faculty participants and increased a sense of shared capability and openness to well-being and compassion practices.



Figure 3: Faculty use available materials to create interactive learning opportunities for connections between resilience and well-being.

#### **4. RE-CONNECTED ON EXPERIENCES IN MID-QUARTER MEETING**

We organized a mid-Autumn Quarter 2019 meeting to share success and cautions related to faculty experiences integrating mindfulness and well-being practices into the classroom so far. We used the eight themes featured in the UT Austin Texas Well-Being document to focus discussion of pedagogical strategies being integrated into faculty members’ courses. We collectively explored how these may align with shared topics/strategies with the Seed Grant themes of resilience, systems thinking, and biophilia.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Index 3, p. 28

In the future, organizing around the fewer and more comprehensive UW Well-Being for Life and Learning Guidebook focus topics--1. Teaching for Equity and Access, 2. Nurturing Connection 3. Building Resilience Coping Skills, 4. Connecting to the Environment--may be more conducive to faculty reflections and discussions.

## **5. REFLECTED ON PEDAGOGY AND PRACTICES AT END-OF-QUARTER MEETING**

Our end-of-Autumn Quarter 2019 meeting engaged the group in reflecting on practices integrated into our teaching this quarter. Discussion included the eight UT Austin themes, and what seemed to be missing in these 8 themes: vulnerability, humanity, mutual respect. We undertook a sticky-note exercise, using different colored stickies to reflect on practices that worked, practices that didn't work, practices to try, and supportive literature and precedents--and placed these notes within one of the eight themes featured in the UT Austin Texas Well-Being document. The meeting discussion also explored how these goals and practices may be advanced in CBE, and may connect with the then-concurrent CBE Strategic Plan development that engaged all faculty and staff.

## **6. INTERVIEWED INDIVIDUAL FACULTY FOR FOLLOW UP REFLECTIONS**

One of the most interesting and rewarding parts of this project was the decision to host post-participation faculty interviews in early Winter Quarter 2020. Without the time constraints of a large group discussion, ideas were explored between the facilitators and the participants with more nuanced insights about integrating these practices into CBE. The one-hour faculty interviews were semi-structured, with a set of guiding questions. These questions are provided in the Appendix. With a commitment to anonymity with responses, the interviews were recorded and transcribed to capture insights shared. Insights are discussed in the next section of this document.

## **7. CONTINUED TO BUILD COMMUNITY AND PRACTICES WITH MONTHLY GATHERINGS (EVEN IF VIRTUAL)**

As Winter Quarter 2020 came to a close, so did in-person meetings and classes in response to COVID-19. The stresses resulting from the pandemic made resilience and well-being practices, along with systems thinking and biophilia, essential parts of online teaching and learning. The tragic events leading to Black Lives Matter and related racial justice activism created a challenging context

for individual, community, and institutional change. As we entered Autumn Quarter 2020, we reached out to our faculty group to gauge interest in meeting again. People wanted to reconnect, and so we began monthly “Happy Hour” virtual gatherings to share experiences and ideas.

In these gatherings, we are beginning to discuss potential opportunities to engage other CBE faculty and staff in advancing a culture of compassion and well-being. Additional meetings could be organized around thematic topics and remain primarily a space for sharing and skills development. Other CBE initiatives could be modeled after the UW Resilience Lab’s programs, such as the annual ‘Fail Forward’ event. This could be a powerful outcome of this group as we continue to develop a CBE Community of Practice.

We envision the group initiate or plan at least one event/meeting to push forward or “pay forward” the benefits that are recognized by these participating faculty. For us, the preparation of this document and a mini-practices booklet for group learning, along with coordination of monthly Happy Hour gatherings are ways that we are seeing the pedagogy and culture within CBE continue to move forward.

## **8. KEEP GROWING AND INTEGRATING RESILIENCE AND WELL-BEING PRACTICES**

Based on feedback described in the next section, this Seed Grant pilot retreat and related activities to promote compassion and well-being in CBE pedagogy through a community of faculty did effect change. The project enabled a safe and supportive context to collaboratively explore concepts, try practices, and learn together from successes and failures. Changing ones’ pedagogy to support resilience requires risk-taking. But this should not be a deterrent from offering well-being intentions and practices in the classroom. Like a muscle, the more you flex it, the stronger it becomes. There is time to refine and retry techniques and pedagogical frameworks, and to learn from and to mentor other faculty in the process.

## 4. FACULTY AND STUDENT REFLECTIONS

*"Everything [in CBE] is fundamentally about human health and well-being"*

- Faculty Participant

This section summarizes reflections from faculty interviews and from CBE students who participated in an optional Autumn 2019 course survey through the UW Resilience Lab.

### 1. FACULTY PARTICIPANT REFLECTIONS

This Seed Grant primarily funded an initiative for a self-selected group of faculty to engage in shared learning of compassion and well-being practices related to themes in CBE pedagogy, and to provide a reflective process for these participating faculty. Participants co-led a retreat, shared insights in meetings and in a follow-up interview. Post-Autumn Quarter faculty participant interviews reflecting on this work were undertaken and recorded in Winter 2020 at the UW's Community Design Building. These were semi-structured interviews; the list of questions are provided in the Appendix. With a commitment to anonymity with responses, the one-hour interviews were recorded and transcribed to capture insights shared. Notes and transcriptions were prepared for a total of 7 interviewees. Six of these faculty participated in the retreat at Friday Harbor Labs, and one faculty member integrated practices and participated in one of the Autumn Quarter meetings. Below we share a range of faculty responses around the topics of faculty experience, pedagogy and future integration.

One recurring theme was the importance of the organizers' approach to forming the group. One participant stated, "the approach of the team was so welcoming and as co-learners, the openness, genuine-ness, gave us permission to explore in ways you could feel self-conscious about." Another noted, "There is a level of trust you have enter into something like this with." And another participant observed, "Your project upholds those realities of our life and give them space and honor them as a real part of who we are, not just treating ourselves as machines in academia".

Second, there was common agreement that the physical act of going on retreat together and spending time in a beautiful environment with a self-selected community helped create a comfortable atmosphere to learn and experience mindfulness and well-being teaching techniques. Positive personal and relational experiences emerged. One participant shared, "The retreat from a selfish perspective, just having space and being reminded how valuable that is, being taken out

of your environment and then reflecting back on that moment- How do we create retreat in the classroom consciously?"

Through their participation in the Seed Grant, all but one faculty tried some kind of well-being and resilience practice in their Autumn courses. Several faculty shared specific practices they had tried in the classroom. Some class activities and practices that faculty reported using include:

- Sketching
- Being taken out of the expected environment
- Giving pause
- Bringing food
- Adjusting course times to reduce student time/stress
- Learning names (name plates, games)
- Bringing visual props, like a plant and a seasonal runner
- Going outside
- Half sheet exercises to keep it 'real' and structured
- Low stakes testing of practices make it ok to fail
- Inspirational quotes

One faculty member did not feel their course was a good fit for trialing these ideas just yet. This faculty reported challenges associated with co-teaching and altering established course content. Other faculty reported feeling there could have been more room for sharing and mentorship between faculty, "It was great to be with people and get feedback from folks in other departments. Wish we had more time to go over the syllabi, ask questions, make suggestions etc." Another states, "We were thirsty for it. There is a need among faculty for moral support."

One area of ongoing discussion and evaluation between nearly every participant was centered around how to acknowledge the human condition and be compassionate with students, and also adequately uphold professional expectations that students will experience in practice, including rigor in skills development and ability to meet strict project deadlines. A faculty member states, these ideas are "still very novel and not very well understood or accepted." A participant questions, "Are we giving up rigor? Are we being too flexible?". Another noted, "Wondering about the balance between being supportive and responsive to student stress without being rolled over; still trying to figure this out." And another asked, "How do we maintain standards? How do we make sure the knowledge base is conveyed? What is the goal and role of the teacher in the classroom?" One also



observed, “I feel like being really supportive about students’ needs, but also, I am not going to reach out to them. You need to reach out to me if you are sick or absent.” So the balance of maintaining structure and balance is a challenge faced and raised by nearly all of the faculty.

With regard to their observations of student responses to well-being practices, faculty generally reported positive results. These quotes highlight faculty perceptions of responses to particular practices:

- “Using names is really making a difference. I feel and see a greater level of engagement and talkativeness, positivity.”
- “In doing a thesis or capstone project- we have all been through those and born witness to students- something about those projects pulls out a lot of anxiety, length and scope, mystery and awe or fear builds around it. Admitted or not. Most people recognize it. This was a good venue to acknowledge these things.”
- “Can we halt business as usual? Still very novel and not very well understood.”
- “There was a little bit of air in the room that was really calming.”
- “I don’t remember professors ever saying you should take care of yourself. It was definitely about projects.”

## **2. STUDENT SURVEY REFLECTIONS**

A voluntary post-quarter anonymous student survey was also prepared and distributed through the UW Resilience Lab, however feedback was limited. There were 10 responses; four of which were blank. These statements were collected from the survey:

- “Instructor tends to always come off as someone who cares. They regularly checked on with us and used methods such as Menti(? Not sure if that was what it was called) [Mentimeter] which allowed us to submit anonymously and see the results live on a screen.”
- “Takes the time to thoroughly answer individual questions.”
- “They were always open to our questions and flexible to our requests for changes.”
- “Feedback and encouragement to move forward with assignments, etc.”
- “The instructor made time to speak to me one on one and have a conversation about how I was doing.”

These statements begin to demonstrate how the efforts of faculty are impacting the students’ experiences of higher education.

## 5. LOOKING FORWARD

*"Mindfulness seems to operate outside of academic thinking"*

- Seed Grant Project Participant

Research and experience is beginning to teach us the importance of integrating compassion and well-being practices with our pedagogy. The more we integrate these practices into our daily lives and through our teaching, the more fundamental they become in our academic culture, such that we can no longer remove this intertwined relationship of compassion and well-being for our built environments and for ourselves.

### 1. BUILDING CONNECTIONS AMONG SPATIAL AND PERSONAL RESILIENCE

*"Well-being is relevant to every setting and every member of the UW community; however, the integration and application of well-being practices are not expected to be uniform. "*

- UW Wellbeing for Life & Learning Guidebook (2020), p. 6.

Through this Seed Grant, we have succeeded in 'raising resilience' and capacity for incorporating compassion and well-being practices in the UW College of Built Environments. We aimed to co-create pedagogical and personal connections between ecological and personal resilience with CBE faculty through the themes of well-being and resilience, systems-thinking, and biophilia. The process undertaken with a small and dedicated group of CBE faculty initiated new insights and practices, and ongoing dialogue as a Community of Practice around sustaining and advancing this pedagogy.

### 2. ADVANCING WELL-BEING IN OUR CBE CULTURE AND PEDAGOGY

Our interviews with faculty revealed there was room for expanding well-being in CBE. Collectively, we generated discussion points, and identified several ways in which this Seed Grant initiative could be carried forward. Here are some personal reflections by faculty participants about how they see this project 'seeding' and raising resilience in our college going forward:

- "I will be carrying this forward."
- "Hopefully this makes its way into our cultural DNA. The more of us that are stirring the pot the

easier this will be.”

- “This is critical in the EDI work our Dean and the College Strategic Plan are undertaking.”
- “We need more opportunities to engage like this in the future.”
- “This work is needed in the professional setting as well. We need to embody resilience and well-being in the design process and products.”
- “We need to do away with alienating culture of student and professional awards going forward.”
- “Other faculty should be encouraged to join.”
- “Building these relationships was huge! In having the ability to ‘crowd source’ solutions when a class isn’t going well is helpful for new and part-time faculty.”
- “There are still really important connections between broader issues of resilience and well-being – our college is well equipped to respond to those.”

The topics raised in this CBE Community of Practice quickly became very relevant given the convergence of multiple crises, as we engage with climate change disruptions, COVID safety precautions, and active racial and other social justice movements, among other and more personal hardships. Thus, the true value or impact of a project like this may be immeasurable in this time without context. However, we provide some evidence for the value in developing a shared language, sense of community and portfolio of teaching models to provide faculty with actionable steps to take to improve their own and their students’ well-being. This includes centering compassion and well-being in the academic structure. In our College of Built Environments, we rely on students to explore ideas and present creativity and vision--such things are hard to access when we are in a state of distress.

Simultaneous to this project a College-wide Strategic Planning effort was underway, with faculty and staff participating in different Task Groups. Two of the project faculty were participating in the Health and Wellness Task Group, and we invited this group’s leader to join our post-quarter reflection meeting. In this way we were able to connect concepts we were exploring with related strategic planning activities.

Starting in Autumn Quarter 2021, we reconnected as a Community of Practice with monthly ‘Happy Hour’ meeting on the last Thursday of the month. These gatherings allow informal discussion and support for each other in our teaching practices, with the well-being of ourselves and our students in mind. Participating faculty and we value this time of collective reflection and sharing of resources and experiences. This creates a need to consider how to mindfully grow the community of practice

networks with other CBE faculty, especially from departments that have not been participating yet. Within and beyond our college community, we see value in continuing collaborations through informal networking, teaching or research, as well as seeking outside funding to sustain a formal structure for the collaboration.

Moving forward, we acknowledge that this Seed Grant has been faculty-focused, and a more complete picture of this initiative's value lies in students' reported experiences. We learned through this project that effective outreach to students for feedback and analysis of responses would require additional infrastructure and support. There could be improved approaches for gathering student feedback, such as allowing time in class for students to complete surveys to highlight their importance in validating successes and identifying where and how we improve our pedagogy towards greater well-being.

Growing evidence demonstrates integrating mindful and contemplative practices and skills development in education is effective in educating the 'whole person'.<sup>1</sup> The development of a personal 'resilience tool-kit' can help faculty, students and staff help themselves to alleviate mental, physical and environmental stressors that may impact access and success in their life and experiences in work and learning in higher education. Our focus here was to identify and share a pathway and some actionable practices as a splash in our pedagogy, and offered to inspire others to create their own 'ripples', in centering well-being and offering space for learning about and practicing resilience.

### **3. FUTURE QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

As we look ahead, additional questions challenge how we engage in compassion and well-being through our pedagogy:

- How can we stage and celebrate well-being in our classes as part of students' professional skillsets?
- How do we better integrate well-being and compassion in our teaching and research?
- How may well-being and compassion practices be integrated in other College functions, such as faculty and staff meetings, speaker series, and awards programs?

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1. Haynes, Deborah, 2005, p. 8-10 and Lawlor, Molly Stewart, 2016, p. 65-80.

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# APPENDIX

# 1. TIMELINE

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Our process in undertaking these goals got underway at the end of Spring Quarter 2019, when we were notified of our grant award. This timeline highlights outreach and activities, with ongoing planning by project leads:

## **SELF-SELECTION OF CBE FACULTY THROUGH INVITATION WITH INFORMATIONAL MEETING AND CATALYST SURVEY**

- 6.11.2019 Emailed BE faculty inviting their participation in this initiative, noting a retreat at Friday Harbor Labs, and three meetings to share findings. Invited all interested to informational meeting (6.14) or email Julie Johnson; and complete a Catalyst survey by 6.21. Online resources from WBLL and Seed Grant call provided.
- 6.14.2019 Held brief informational meeting to give project overview and all introduced themselves and their interests.

## **GOOGLE SHARED DRIVE FOR CO-CREATING RESOURCES, RETREAT PLANNING MATERIALS, FOLLOW-UP**

- 6.27.2019 Finalized list of retreat participants. Emailed group with welcome, introductions, retreat goals, next steps for co-creating the retreat.
- 7.17.2019 Emailed group with retreat logistics; invitation to post readings related to themes in Google Shared Drive; and questions on familiarity with three themes, well-being practices people would like to share, and courses each will teach in Autumn.
- 8.2.2019 Emailed group with updates on retreat logistics, readings shared by group, paired faculty to co-create thematic 2-hour workshops based on responses to 7.17 email.
- 9.6.2019 Emailed group with invitation for thematic workshop pairs to post any other material for all to review, packing considerations and Friday Harbor Labs information.
- 9.12.2019 Emailed group with updates and readings/video suggestions from pairs co-leading sessions

### **3 DAY RETREAT AT FRIDAY HARBOR LABS, CO-DEVELOPED BY PARTICIPATING FACULTY AND PROJECT LEADERS**

- 9.16.2019    --Early morning meet + drive together to Anacortes Ferry Terminal; informal welcome and
- Ferry: informal introductions; retreat journals, materials + mini-practice handouts
- San Juan Island South Beach: lunch with shared reading of engagement rules from The Case for Everyday Democracy by Milenko Matanovic; aspirations discussion; mindful walking exercise and discussion.
- Friday Harbor Labs: orientation with mini-practice handouts, group sharing of class introductions strategies, planning for next day, dinner together.
- 
- 9.17.2019    --Resilience and Wellbeing workshop led by AnnMarie Borys and Kristi Park: outside mindfulness exercise; defining terms discussion; small group exercise Andy Goldsworthy-inspired temporal art creation with found objects outside; reflection on lessons learned.
- Systems Thinking workshop led by Bob Freitag and Rob Pena: storytelling + framing discussion; small group exercise outside locating systems/relationships/processes; reflection.
- Biophilia and Biophilic Design workshop led by Lynne Manzo and Elizabeth Umbanhowar: framing discussion; individual perceptions exercise; outdoor sensory scaling exercise
- 
- 9.18.2019    --Compassion meditation led by Brooke Sullivan
- Aspirations exercise led by Julie Johnson
- Report summary of WBLL Aug. 2019 Feedback from students + faculty, discussion on how findings relate to our work
- Fail Forward exercise led by Brooke Sullivan
- Syllabus Sharing and Feedback exercise led by Julie Johnson; followup discussion
- Resources sharing
- Return to UW

## **RETREAT FOLLOWUP, MID-QUARTER AND END-OF QUARTER MEETINGS ON PRACTICES AND INSIGHTS, FACULTY INTERVIEWS**

- 9.22.2019    Emailed group with other universities' resources on well-being practices in classes
- 10.7.2019    Emailed group with retreat photos + scheduling options for mid-quarter meeting.
- 10.15.2019    Emailed group with mid-quarter meeting date and draft agenda
- 10.28.2019    Emailed group plus other interested faculty mid-quarter meeting invitation and agenda
- 11.4.2019    mid-quarter follow-up meeting with retreat group plus other interested faculty.  
agenda:  
1. welcome - introductions + check in + coffee/snack  
2. Fail Forward exercise  
3. course practices updates - each of us on how we're integrating well-being, resilience, biophilia, systems-thinking into our pedagogy and student experience, and how that's going  
4. activity/small groups: reflecting on UT Austin's "Texas Well-Being" document 8 dimensions of well-being.  
5. UW's Well-Being for Life and Learning Initiative updates  
6. next steps for our classes - all discussion  
    • draft questions for optional mid-quarter class survey  
    • different practices people plan to use  
7. potential connections with new CBE strategic planning groups  
8. set date for post-quarter reflection/synthesis meeting
- 12.2.2019    Emailed group with reminder of next meeting; announced well-being course evaluation option through Resilience Lab; and planning for January interviews.
- 12.12.2019    end-of-quarter meeting with retreat group, other interested faculty and staff. agenda:  
1. welcome - coffee/tea + snacks  
2. introductions with which of the 8 practice(s) did you find most easy to incorporate into your classes this quarter  
3. reflecting on UT Austin's "Texas Well-Being" document 8 dimensions of well-being:



4. sticky notes activity
  - practices this quarter that worked
  - practices this quarter that didn't work
  - practices to try
  - supportive literature + precedents
5. discussion on connecting this initiative with new CBE strategic planning groups
6. next steps... how advance this work in the College?
  - For seed grant, follow up with interviews and white paper findings in Winter Quarter to share with CBE faculty + UW Resilience Lab
  - For each of us...?
  - In our departments...?
  - For CBE...?
  - And...?
7. sign up for post-quarter reflection interviews

1. 2020      semi-structured interviews with retreat participants.

**PANDEMIC SHIFT TO ONLINE TEACHING; FOLLOW-UP GROUP GATHERINGS; SHARING SEED GRANT AND WELL-BEING FOR LIFE & LEARNING GUIDEBOOK TO COLLEGE AND AT CONFERENCE; POTENTIAL ONLINE CBE RESOURCE FOR SHARING PRACTICES**

4.2020+      continued development of mini-practices resources for faculty and interview summaries

9.24.2020    emailed group with photos from last September's retreat; group interest in reconnecting

10.14.2020    emailed group with invitation to informal happy hour

10.29.2020    Informal Zoom Happy Hour gathering

10.30.2020    follow-up email with link to newly released Well-Being for Life & Learning Guidebook at UW Resilience Lab

11.19.2020    Informal Zoom Happy Hour gathering

- 12.9.2020     3 faculty give overview of this CBE Seed Grant and Well-Being for Life & Learning Guidebook at CBE College-wide meeting. In Zoom Chat, faculty share practices they've tried in their classes and express interest in a means to share practices and how these went. Project leads exploring with CBE leaders potential platforms to share practices from Seed Grant and for faculty to continue sharing practices and reflections.
- 1.28.2021     Informal Zoom Happy Hour gathering; sharing out themes from last year's interviews; plans to continue monthly meetings
- 3.2021        project leads present in session at Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture (CELA) conference on pedagogy supporting well-being (noting CBE Seed Grant, Well-Being for Life & Learning Guidebook, and teaching practices)

## 2. FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Semi-structured, in-depth exit interviews conducted January 13-24, 2020 by project leads.

CBE Building Resilience Seed Grant Faculty Interview Questions:

- This initiative has engaged us in collaborative research and learning about well-being and resilience, systems thinking, and biophilia and biophilic design—as well as potential connections with our pedagogy. In reflecting on your research on a particular theme for the retreat, the activities we undertook in our retreat, and discussions in our Autumn Quarter meetings, how have these experiences changed you or your perspectives?
- What did you enjoy most? Why?
- What was a challenge to you? Why?
- What do you think you have learned that you would want other CBE faculty to learn about?
- Thinking back to your fall classes: Do you think participation in this project resulted in your implementing different instructional strategies?
- What did you incorporate that worked well?
- What did you try that presented challenges? What might you do differently?
- To what extent would you continue using any of these themes [well-being and resilience, systems thinking, and biophilia and biophilic design] and supportive practices in your pedagogy—what you teach and how you teach?

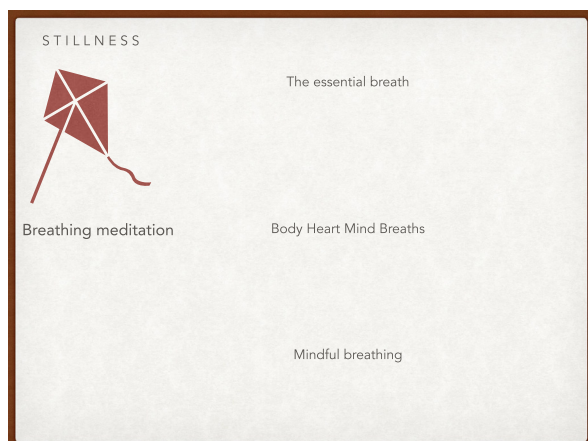
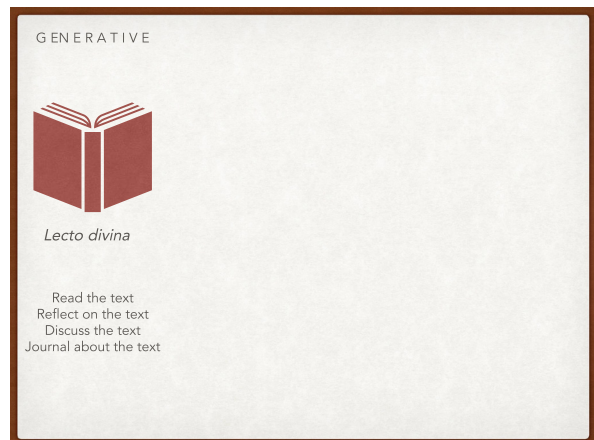
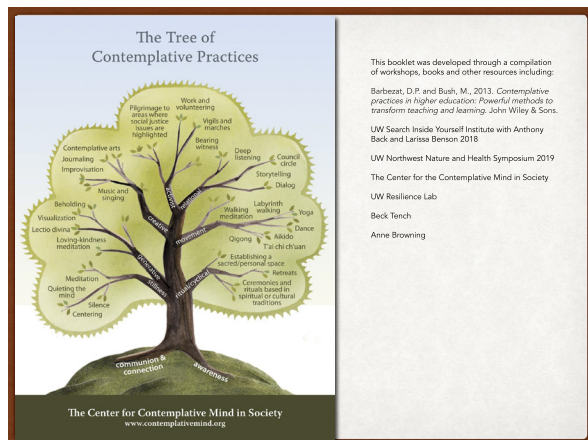
### 3. MID-QUARTER REFLECTIONS

The Table below provides selected notes from the Autumn mid-quarter 2019 faculty reflections on the connections between the three topics of the Seed Grant (resilience, biophilia and systems thinking), and the eight themes featured in the UT Austin “Texas Well-Being” document.

	Resilience	Biophilia	Systems Thinking
<b>Mindfulness</b>	personal stress reduction	going outside for field trips or take time to breathe, to appreciate the nature around	consider microscales of systems within yourself - how does breathing shift your mind, your muscles, your heartbeat? How do we return to larger scales and systems that are part of our built environment? what are these systems that we may not be able to 'see' but need to acknowledge through design?
<b>Growth Mindset</b>	use personal stories of resilience as an analogy to community resilience  choices in how a student is assessed = resilience being	use an example of natural growth that adapts around an unexpected “event”	Demonstrate a process of confronting an unknown concept and how you break it down into parts, analyze, look for relevant connections, and move again towards a whole
<b>Gratitude</b>	Individual (psychological) adaptation bounceback	human/nature urban/rural	Feedback loops single loop learning double loop learning
<b>Self-compassion</b>	Debriefing your experiences	Go outside whenever possible, free as 'field work' in the built environment - but allow connection to nature	Step back - put the particular into a larger context.

## 4. RETREAT MINI-PRACTICES

This collection of mini practices, curated by Brooke Sullivan, was shared with faculty at the retreat. Many of the practices were inspired by The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society ([contemplativemind.org](http://contemplativemind.org)).




MOVEMENT



Mindful eating

Eat in silence  
Chew slowly and attentively  
Give thanks  
Rest

RELATIONAL




wabi-sabi: (n.)  
The discovery of beauty in imperfection and authenticity

Wabi sabi

Find something imperfectly perfect.  
Draw it here.

RELATIONAL



One person speaks, the other listen only.  
"What I heard you say was..."  
(Switch)

Mindful listening


RELATIONAL



Share:  
Something great that happened this week  
OR  
Something disappointing this week  
OR  
A great new restaurant experience

Pow Wow Chow

CREATIVE




Prompt  
Personal reflection  
Share out small group  
Share out larger group

Journaling

COMMUNION & CONNECTION

Recall a time that you felt anger, shame, guilt or disappointment  
How did you grow or what did you learn from the experience?



Fail Forward

## AWARENESS



Reflection: How do you feel after today?

## RITUAL



The key to unlocking the power of the forest is in the five senses. Let nature enter through your ears, eyes, nose, mouth, hands and feet. You can walk, sit or lay down. Give yourself 30-60 minutes to begin to feel immersed. Stay as long and often as you can.

Listen to the birds singing and the breeze rustling in the leaves of the trees.

Look at the different greens of the trees and the sunlight filtering through the branches.

Smell the fragrance of the forest soil, water and trees and breathe in the natural aromatherapy of phytoncides.

Taste the freshness of the air as you take deep breaths. Place your hands on the trunk of a tree. Dip your fingers or toes in a stream. Lie on the ground.

Drink in the flavor of the forest and release your sense of joy and calm.

Repeat often.

This is your sixth sense, a state of mind. Now you have connected with nature. You have crossed the bridge to happiness.  
-Qing Li

Forest bathing

Shoes off  
Eyes closed

## GENERATIVE

Beholding



Look at an object.  
Focus.  
Be still.  
Don't blink!  
Keep looking.

Visual Meditation

## RELATIONAL



Storytelling

Tell someone a story that is important or meaningful to you. It can be fiction or non-fiction, a comedy or a tragedy, but it MUST have 3 acts, or, a beginning, a middle and an end.

## GENERATIVE

Identify someone who has made a positive impact on your life, however big or small.

Write them a thank you card.



Gratitude

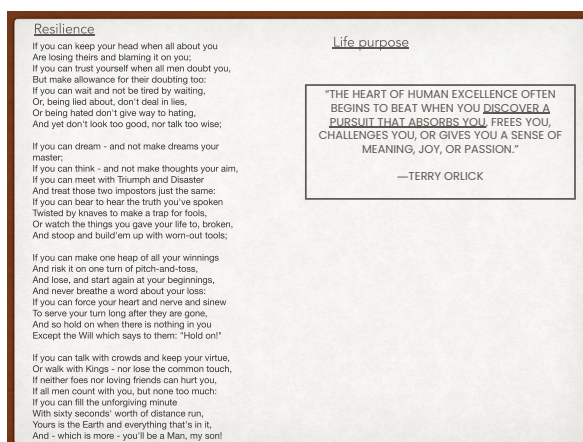
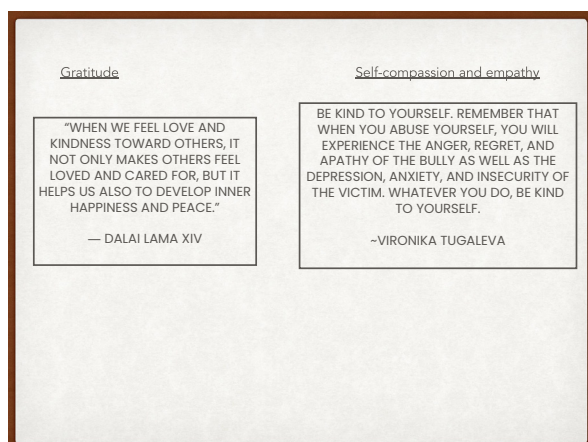
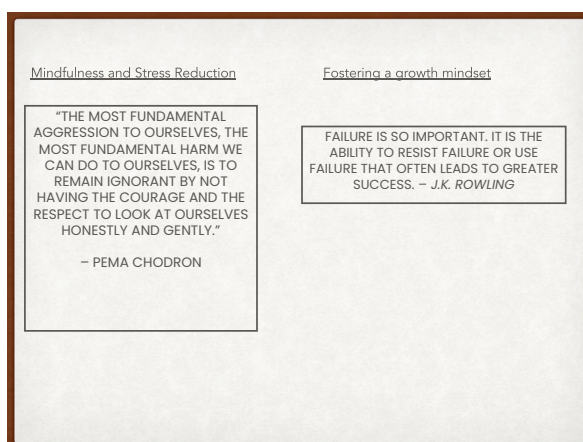
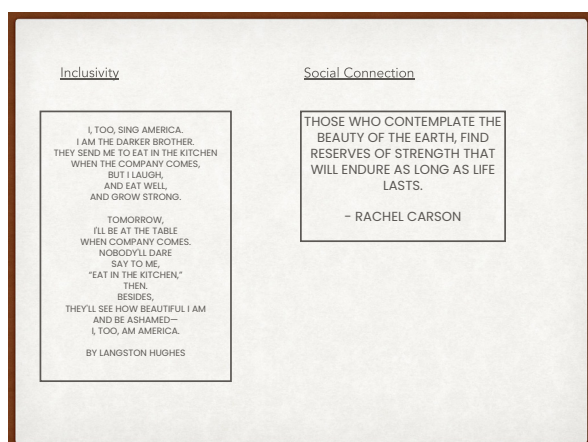
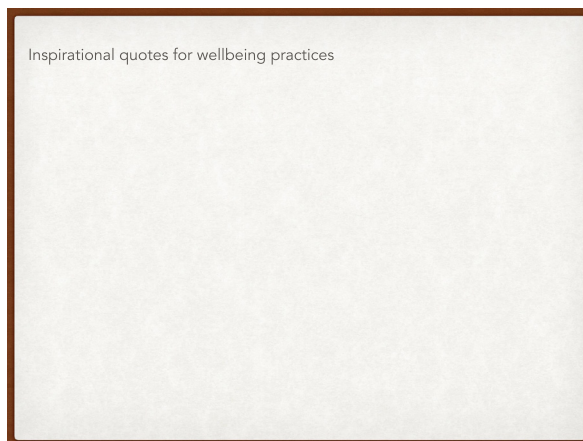
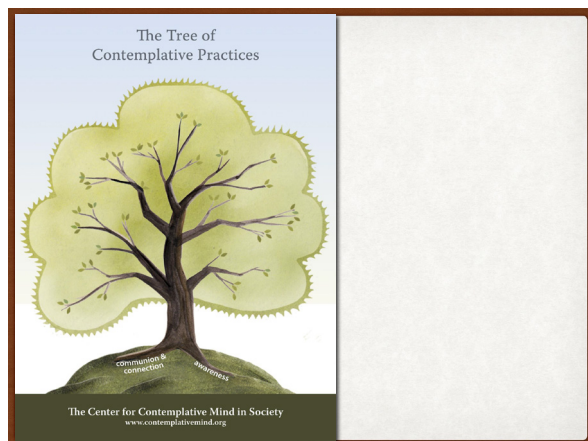
## ACTIVIST



Take a meaningful action

What do you care about?  
Where are you needed?  
What can you do to help?





## 4. DIGITAL BOOKLET: “A COLLECTION OF WELL-BEING PRACTICES FOR CBE FACULTY”

The attached booklet is a short introduction to well-being practices for UW CBE faculty. It was developed by graduate student assistant Claudia Sackett Hennum as a part of the Raising Resilience Seed Grant project, with direction from grant project leads Julie Johnson and Dr. Brooke Sullivan, and additional feedback from the Seed Grant’s core faculty group.

### Raising Resilience



**Connecting Compassion + Well-Being with Pedagogy in the College of Built Environments**

A COLLECTION OF WELL-BEING PRACTICES FOR CBE FACULTY



# Raising Resilience



**Connecting Compassion + Well-Being with Pedagogy in the College of Built Environments**

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# Credits

**RAISING RESILIENCE: CONNECTING COMPASSION +  
WELL-BEING WITH PEDAGOGY IN THE COLLEGE OF  
BUILT ENVIRONMENTS | A COLLECTION OF WELL-BEING  
PRACTICES FOR CBE FACULTY**

June 2021

**PREPARED + ILLUSTRATED BY**

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*Cover Images: Claudia Sackett Hennum*

# About

Through funding from a 2019 University of Washington Resilience and Compassion Initiatives Seed Grant and from the College of Built Environments' Deans Office, the project "Raising Resilience: Connecting Compassion + Well-Being with Pedagogy in the College of Built Environments" was undertaken with a committed group of CBE faculty and Graduate Research Assistant. We explored how three themes that inform our disciplines' theory and practice—resilience and well-being; systems thinking; and biophilic design—may also enrich pedagogy, in not only what our students need to know, but through their learning process. A Summary Report describes the project in detail.

This booklet was developed by graduate student assistant Claudia Sackett Hennum as a part of the Raising Resilience Seed Grant project, with direction from grant leads Julie Johnson and Dr. Brooke Sullivan, and additional feedback from the Seed Grant's core faculty group.

## Seed Grant Project Reflections

As a part of the Seed Grant project, students in one class taught by a participating faculty member responded to a survey for feedback on well-being practices in the class. Students responded most positively to faculty being available for questions, showing flexibility in assignments, and checking in with students either in person or through Mentimeter. In follow-up interviews of the core participating faculty by the Seed Grant project leads, faculty noted positive student responses from taking outdoor field-trips, investing in learning student names and incorporating resiliency practices. Additionally, faculty reported positive personal experiences with contemplative practices and positive experiences of connection and support with other faculty participants. These responses demonstrate the **importance of equity and pedagogy** in fostering student well-being, the **value of peer support for faculty** members, and the experiential **benefits of resiliency practices**.

## Using This Booklet

This booklet is a short introduction to well-being practices for UW CBE faculty. For each of the well-being themes presented, an overview and resources are provided to give a context, followed by specific practices. Practices at the beginning of each section are most explicitly compatible with the CBE curriculum, while those towards the end would likely be a bigger stretch for most classes. Throughout the booklet, buttons at the bottom of pages and hyperlinked text within the narrative connect you to more extensive resources. This booklet is intended as a catalyst for the use and sharing of these and other well-being practices by CBE faculty. We hope to foster an ongoing discussion about enhancing well-being within the college and beyond.

## UW WELL-BEING FOR LIFE AND LEARNING WEBSITE



During the Raising Resilience retreat at Friday Harbor Labs, faculty created temporal art from the local environment, and engaged in discussion about connecting pedagogy across personal, social and environmental well-being.

# Context

## ORIGIN + POPULARIZATION OF CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICES

### Contemplative Practice

Most of the practices in this booklet could be considered “contemplative practices.” Contemplative practices in educational settings are often secularized forms of religious practices that have been shown through scientific study to have emotional, psychological and/or physical benefits for practitioners.<sup>1</sup> The integration of these secular forms of practice into educational environments has been on the rise in recent decades.<sup>2</sup> Throughout this document, we provide links to public universities that teach, promote and research these practices in order to support the well-being of students, faculty and staff. A particularly wide spread and well researched subset of contemplative practice are mindfulness practices.

### Mindfulness Practice

The origin of secular mindfulness practice as a tool to increase well-being is generally credited to University of Massachusetts Medical Center Professor Emeritus and founder of Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction, Jon Kabat-Zinn. Kabat-Zinn and others have used scientific research to prove physical, psychological and emotional benefits of these practices which they derived from an ancient Buddhist text called the *Satipatthana suta*.<sup>3</sup>

There is a long history of erasure of Asian and Asian American Buddhists within predominantly white American Buddhist and meditation communities. The secularization and capitalization

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1. Example: Mindfulness as demonstrated by Shapiro, Shauna L, Oman, Doug, Thoresen, Carl E, Plante, Thomas G, & Flinders, Tim. (2008).

2. Ergas 2014

3. Ergas 2014

of Buddhist practices in the form of mindfulness meditation by white practitioners trained in Buddhist meditation techniques is arguably a continuation of this legacy. For this reason we explicitly acknowledge the Asian roots of mindfulness practices within this document. For more on the history of Asian and Asian American exclusion and erasure in white dominated Buddhist communities read [“We’ve Been Here All Along”](#) by Funie Hsu and other works collected in the [Angry Asian Buddhist Reader](#).

## CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICES + WELLBEING

### Research on the Effects of Contemplative Practices on Well-being + Resiliency

Contemplative practices including mindfulness, journaling, gratitude and self-reflection can reduce stress and improve well-being. By integrating these practices along with teaching approaches that support equity, access, and connection into the CBE curriculum we have the potential to enhance community well-being and academic performance.<sup>4</sup>

### Contemplative Practices and Activism

There are many teachers and practitioners who directly tie contemplative and mindfulness practices to activism. These practitioners vary in their relationships to religion and spirituality. Some such teachers working at the intersection of mindfulness practices, inclusion and social justice activism include: [Thich Nhat Hanh](#), [Rhonda Magee](#), [Resmaa Menakem](#), [Reverend angel Kyodo williams](#), [Lama Rod Owens](#), [Larry Yang](#) and [Mushim Ikeda](#).

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4. Arguette, D., Cantu, A., Chen, C., Ganti, A., Germinaro, K., Johnson, J., Kennedy, M., Lichty, L., Masuda, D., McLaughlin, K., Monteith, J., Sullivan, B., Tench, B., 2020

DISRUPTING SYSTEMIC WHITENESS IN THE MINDFULNESS  
MOVEMENT | Q & A WITH DR. ANGELA ROSE BLACK

# Contents



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## CONTEMPLATIVE CREATIVITY

An overview of contemplative creativity highlighting  
contemplative drawing and photography



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## EMBRACING BIOPHILIA

An overview of contemplative nature connection  
highlighting movement breaks and walking meditation  
practices



3

## RESILIENT MINDSET

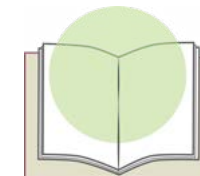
An overview of self compassion highlighting growth  
mindset and gratitude practices



4

## MINDFULNESS

An overview of mindfulness highlighting mindful breathing  
and mindful eating



5

## RESOURCES

A collection of online and print resources



# 1 Contemplative Creativity

## OVERVIEW

Creativity can enhance well-being as a form of confidence development, skill progression, self expression<sup>1</sup> and as a contemplative practice. In order to embrace the contemplative potential of creative practices, such as drawing and photography, it is helpful to focus on the experiences of the present moment such as sensations and perceptions, rather than the outcome. These practices can be incorporated into studios, seminars and lecture settings.

1. Macpherson, H., Hart, A., & Heaver, B., 2016

### LINKS TO CONTEMPLATIVE CREATIVITY RESOURCES

[Bradford C. Grant lecture “Listening to Our Eyes: Seeing as Meditation”](#)  
[Naropa University Classroom Practices and Resources](#)



## CONTEMPLATIVE CREATIVITY REFERENCES

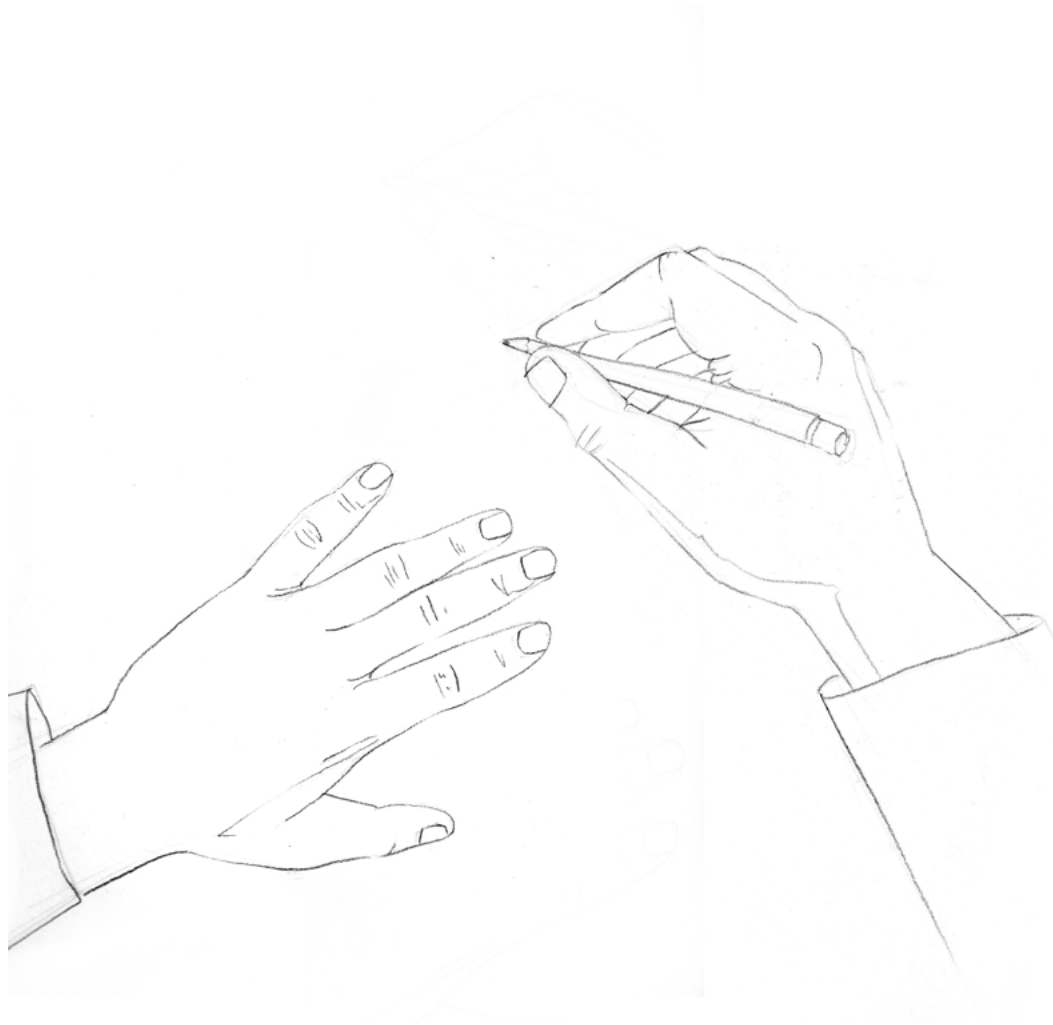
**Bradford C. Grant NOMAC** Howard University professor of architecture, speaks about and uses contemplative practices in architectural education.

**John Daido Loori** Artist, Zen teacher and author of *The Zen of Creativity; Cultivating Your Artistic Life*.

**Betty Edwards** Artist, author of *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*.

**Kimon Nicolaïdes** Artist, teacher at the Art Students' League in NYC author of *The Natural Way to Draw*.

# Blind Contour Drawing



## OVERVIEW

According to the [Naropa University Website](#), blind contour drawing was first developed by Kimon Nicolaïdes in the 1930's. Robert Spellman adapted it as a contemplative practice for courses he taught at Naropa University. Blind contour drawings can be done outside to combine the benefits of biophilic and creative practices.

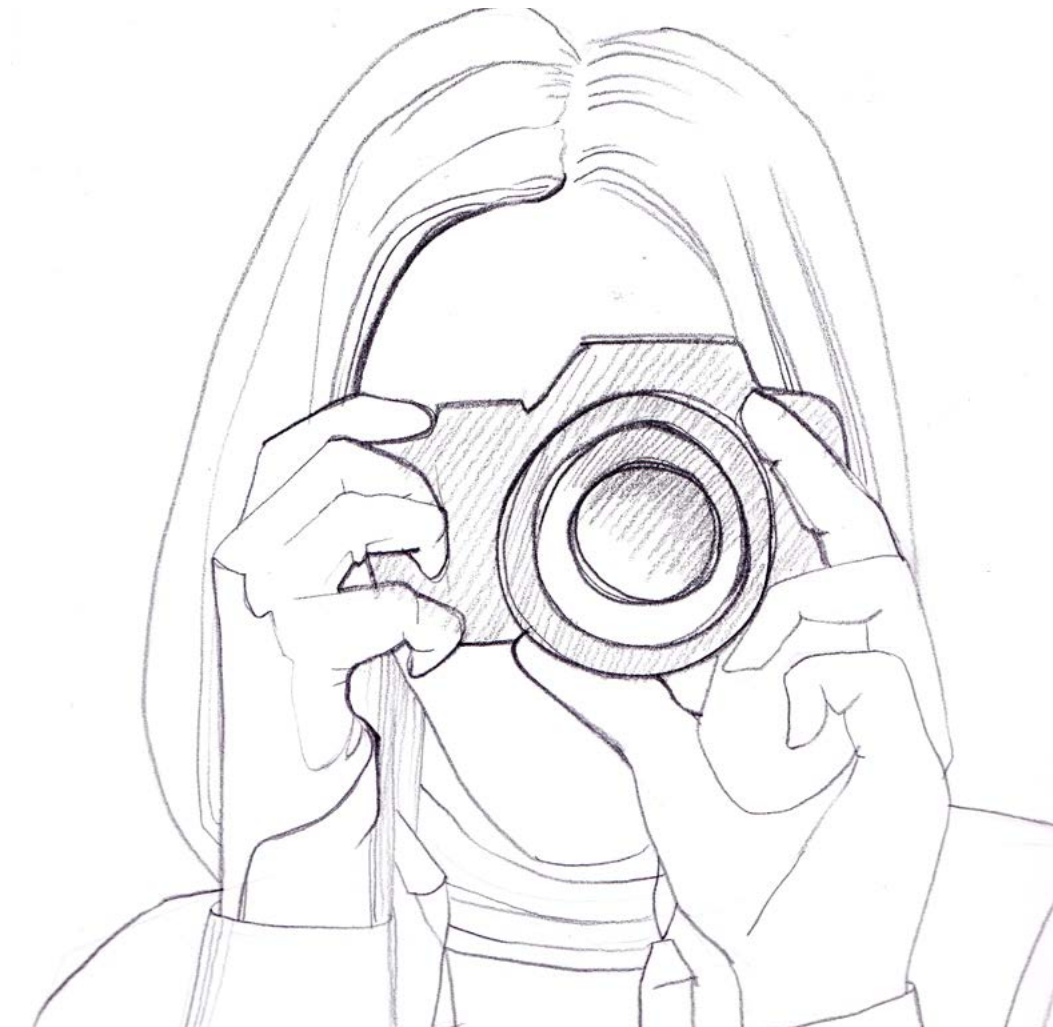
## CLASSROOM APPLICATION

As blind contour drawings inherently encourage a present-moment focus, this technique is well-suited for a contemplative approach. According to Robert Spellman, in order to enhance the contemplative qualities of this practice, it is helpful to encourage a non-judgemental attitude and begin with a short mindfulness practice (click bellow for more information).

Blind contour drawing could be included as a part of the analysis phase of a design or planning studio to help encourage students to notice site forms, conditions and details. The drawing exercise can be followed by a discussion of what students learned and focused on through this process.

**CONTEMPLATIVE DRAWING** | Naropa University

# Photography



## OVERVIEW

Photography can be used to help students find and express what is most meaningful to them. To heighten the contemplative quality of photography, encourage students to slow down and connect with their bodies as they take photographs.

## CLASSROOM APPLICATION

Greater Good in Education outlines an assignment where students use photography to reflect on what is meaningful for them. This assignment involves in class discussion sessions as well as a homework assignment, and can be adapted as a drawing assignment. Click the link below for the full exercise.

Like blind contour drawing, this practice is well suited for the analysis stage of planning and design studios. Students may use this exercise to focus on what is meaningful to them within the built environment. It could also be paired with a discussion of what they learned from and focused on throughout the process.

**MEANINGFUL PHOTOS FOR STUDENTS** | UCB

# 2 Embracing Biophilia

## OVERVIEW

The biophilia hypothesis posits that humans are innately attracted to nature and other species. Studies show many people experience significant physiological and emotional benefits from nature exposure.<sup>1</sup> These benefits can be pursued through practices such as the Japanese art of Forest Bathing (Shinrin-Yoku) and nature therapy. On a smaller scale, they can be integrated into a classroom environment through outdoor activities. The concept of biophilia has informed research on biophilic design of built environments.

1. Hansen et al.

### LINKS TO EMBRACING BIOPHILIA RESOURCES

[Practices from The Work That Reconnects \(transforming ecological grief\)](#)  
[University of Minnesota Arboretum Shinrin-Yoku Resources](#)



## EMBRACING BIOPHILIA REFERENCES

**Dr. E. O. Wilson** Harvard University Professor Emeritus and author of *Biophilia*

**Dr. Joanna Macy** activist, systems theory and deep ecology scholar, creator of The Work that Reconnects and co-author of *Coming Back to Life*

**Stephen R. Kellert**, co-editor of *Biophilic Design: The Theory, Science and Practice of Bringing buildings to Life*, co-editor of *The Biophilia Hypothesis*

**Judith H. Heerwagen** co-editor of *Biophilic Design: The Theory, Science and Practice of Bringing buildings to Life*, environmental psychologist

**Martin L. Mador** co-editor of *Biophilic Design: The Theory, Science and Practice of Bringing buildings to Life*

# Get Outside

## Movement Breaks



### OVERVIEW

For the health of our minds and bodies, it's important to take short breaks over the course of the day. By recognizing the health benefits of getting outside, we can use our breaks to enhance well-being.

### CLASSROOM APPLICATION

Biophilia can be incorporated into long classes through short breaks during which students are encouraged to go outside. The UW campus has ample outdoor opportunities. Locations such as the sunken lawn outside Gould 110 and 114 and the Varey Garden outside Gould 142 are especially convenient to classes taking place in Gould Hall.

NOTE: Students may have differing physical abilities. In order to be inclusive of all students, it may be helpful to share an overview of the time frame and level of physical exertion you are asking students to engage in in advance of the activity.

**MOVEMENT BREAK | UW**

# Walking Meditation



## OVERVIEW

There is a long history of contemplative and meditative walking. Outdoor walking meditations can be enhanced by biophilia. Practitioners of walking meditation may focus on a variety of experiences such as pressure, temperature, movement, breath, light, or their surroundings. Walking meditation is a part of the Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn. According to [Greater Good in Action](#), research has shown that mindfulness practices can have a number of psychological and health benefits.

## CLASSROOM APPLICATION

Outdoor walking meditation could be incorporated into CBE classes as a form of sensory and experiential site explorations, or it could be used as a classroom break.

**MINDFUL WALKING** | UCB

# 3 Resilient Mindset

## WHAT IT IS

How we think about ourselves and the world has an impact on our experience in it, and our capacity to learn.<sup>1</sup> This section includes practices that have the potential to improve well-being and resiliency by working with mental frameworks.

NOTE: Changing your mindset does not solve everything, and these practices should not be used to obscure structural or systemic issues such as racism and ableism in academia.

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1. Stallman, H. M., Ohan, J. L., & Chiera, B. (2018)

### LINKS TO RESOURCES

[UC Berkeley Growth Mindset for Students](#)

[UC Berkeley Self Compassion for Adults](#)

[UC Berkeley Self-Compassion for Student Well-Being](#)

[Dr. Kristin Neff Self-Compassion Exercises](#)



## RESILIENT MINDSET TEACHERS

**Dr. Kristin Neff** UT Austin professor, self-compassion researcher, author of *Self-Compassion Step by Step*

**Dr. Carol Dweck** Stanford University professor, motivation, personality and development researcher, author of *Mindset: How You Can Fulfill Your Potential*

**Dr. Tara Brach** clinical psychologist, meditation instructor, author of *Radical Compassion: Learning to Love Yourself and Your World with the Practice of R.A.I.N.*



# Growth Mindset Practice



## OVERVIEW

Growth mindset is the idea that a personal quality or ability is malleable. It is linked to psychological well-being. According to the [Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley](#), growth mindset can support better academic performance, more positive emotions, improve social competence, reduce bias and promote pro-social behavior.

## CLASSROOM APPLICATION

Teachers can frame feedback in a way that encourages students to hold a growth mindset. According to the Greater Good Science Center, this includes providing actionable feedback, expressing high expectations and showing confidence in the student's abilities. Click link below for more complete instructions.

[GIVING WISE FEEDBACK | UCB](#)

# Gratitude Practice



## OVERVIEW

According to [Greater Good in Education](#), gratitude has been shown to enhance well-being, improve interpersonal relationships, and reduce stress. Gratitude practices can be used to intentionally improve an individual's experience of gratitude. Such practices may include meditation, journaling, and verbal or written expressions of gratitude to others.

## CLASSROOM APPLICATION

Expressions of gratitude could be worked into collaborative group processes. Greater Good in Education describes a process which involves a brief reflection, followed by voluntary popcorn-style expressions of appreciation. See below for more details.

**GRATITUDE PRACTICE** | UW

**GRATITUDE CIRCLE** | UCB

# 4 Mindfulness

## OVERVIEW

Mindfulness is a core component of traditional Buddhist monastic training. It has also been shown to have cognitive and emotional benefits. Many contemporary mindfulness scholars and practitioners have worked to adapt traditional mindfulness practices for secular audiences.<sup>1</sup>

NOTE: Meditation + Trauma: Sometimes mindfulness practice participants [report](#) experiencing panic or traumatic flashbacks. For this reason mindfulness practices should be opt-in rather than required.

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1. Ergas, Oren., 2014

### LINKS TO MINDFULNESS RESOURCES

[University of California, Berkeley](#)

[University of California, Los Angeles](#)

[University of Texas, Austin](#)

[University of Washington](#)



## MINDFULNESS TEACHERS

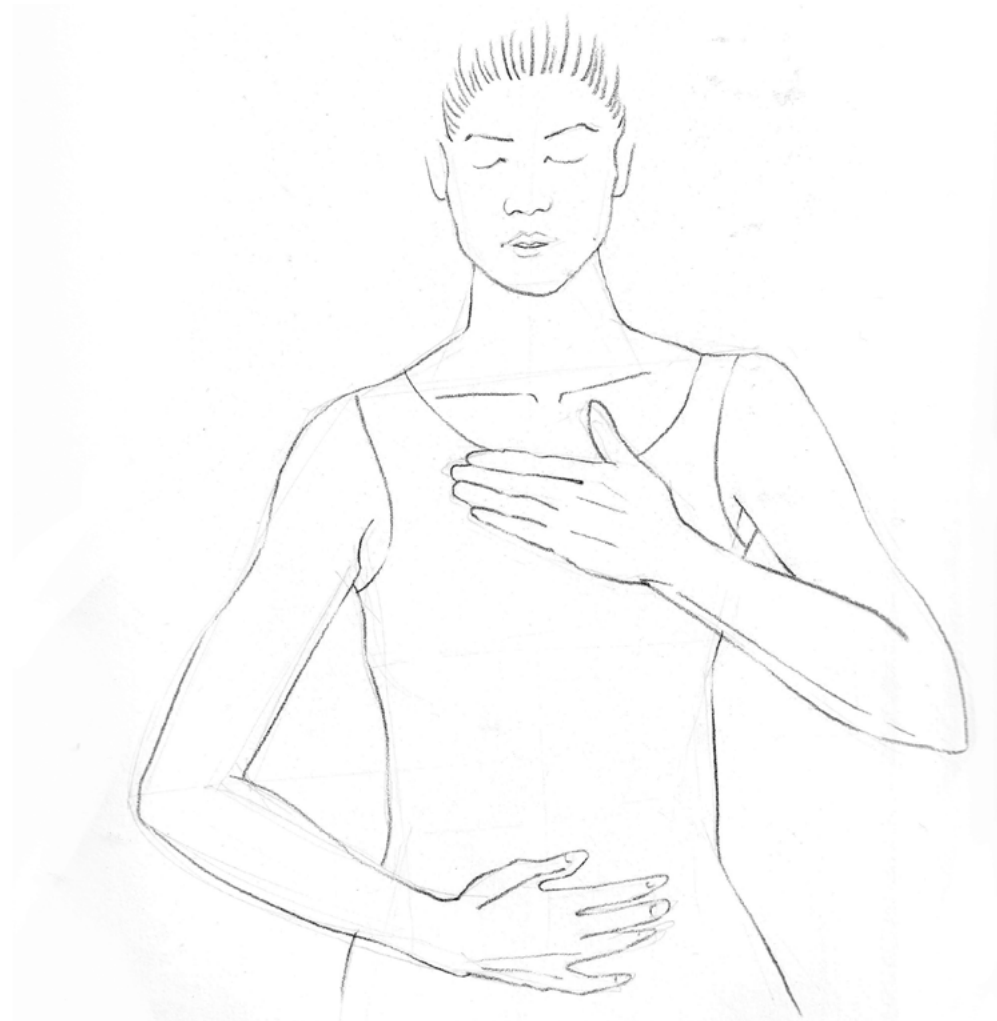
**Thich Nhat Hanh** Vietnamese Zen Monk, founder of engaged Buddhism and author of *The Miracle of Mindfulness*

**John Kabat-Zinn** University of Massachusetts Professor Emeritus and creator of *Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction*

**David Treleaven** author of *Trauma-sensitive Mindfulness*

**Resmaa Menakem** somatic trauma therapist and author of *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies*

# Mindful Breathing



## OVERVIEW

Breathing Meditation is common in both Yogic and Buddhist traditions. Practices include counting breaths, associating the breath with a statement or mantra, concentrating on the sensation of breathing (especially in the lower abdomen, throat or nostrils) and controlling the length of the breath.

## CLASSROOM APPLICATION

Instructors may choose to begin class with a short breathing meditation. Alternately, they may choose to practice breathing meditation on their own as a way to reset and find balance in the midst of a busy day.

NOTE: Focusing on breath may be a trigger for students who have trauma relating to breathing difficulties. These exercises should be optional, and one of multiple well-being strategies offered to students. Other focal points for mindfulness meditation may include attending to physical sensations and kinesthetic awareness, temperature, sight and sound, or thoughts and emotions.

**MINDFUL BREATHING PRACTICE** | UCLA

# Mindful Eating



## OVERVIEW

Mindful eating can include focused awareness of the experience of eating, including attention to the smell, site and taste of food. Additionally, it can include attention to the history, cultural context, labor, and environmental implications of food.

## CLASSROOM APPLICATION

Mindful eating could be an experiential component of classes on food systems and agricultural land use. It could also be used by teachers or students outside of the classroom to settle and check in with their sensory experiences.

Food is often shared during CBE studios, presentations and courses in an act of welcoming and celebration. Such a gesture could also be incorporated into classes by bringing snacks, or inviting students to bring their own snacks to a particular class session, and opening that class with an invitation for all to pause and consider where this food was grown and who gathered and prepared it. This is an opportunity to explore connections with the systems of places and people we rely upon, as well as those that we design and plan for.

**MINDFUL EATING PRACTICE** | UC Berkeley

# Web Resources

## UNIVERSITY - BASED RESOURCES FOR RESILIENCY

The University of Washington

- [Mindfulness Practices](#)
- [Resilience Lab](#)
- [Well-Being for Life and Learning Initiative](#)

The University of Texas at Austin

- [Texas Well-being: Promoting Well-being in UT Learning Environments](#)
- [Mind-Body Lab Exercises \(English, Spanish + Mandarin\)](#)

Georgetown University

- [The Engelhard Project for Connecting Life and Learning](#)

The University of California, Los Angeles

- [MARC: Mindful Awareness Research Center](#)
- [Mindful Meditation \(English + Spanish\)](#)

The University of California, Berkeley

- [Greater Good In Action: Science-based Practices for a Meaningful Life](#)
- [Greater Good In Action: Science-based Practices kinder, happier schools](#)

The University of Massachusetts Medical School

- [Department of Psychiatry Mindfulness Resources](#)
- [UMass Memorial Health Center for Mindfulness](#)

## OTHER RESOURCES

The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society

- [Contemplative Practices](#)
- [Resources](#)

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Training (Developed at the UMass Medical School by John Kabat-Zinn)

- [MBSR Research Summary](#)
- [Mindfulness Facilitation Techniques](#)

Self Compassion (Created by Dr. Kristin Neff)

- [Self-compassion Exercises](#)

# Print Sources

## INTRODUCTION

Arguette, D., Cantu, A., Chen, C., Ganti, A., Germinaro, K., Johnson, J., Kennedy, M., Lichty, L., Masuda, D., McLaughlin, K., Monteith, J., Sullivan, B., Tench, B. (2020). Well-being for life & learning: a guidebook for advancing student well-being at the University of Washington.

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