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Engaging the Heart and the Mind: Mindfulness in Service-Learning

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Abstract

Service-learning is a pedagogy which allows students to test their classroom knowledge in real-world scenarios, while also serving a greater good. Students may find that guided reflection of service-learning provides additional context to their classroom knowledge. Without proper guided reflection, students may not experience deep learning, or may not be critical of the role they play in communities. Mindfulness is one suggested practice to guide students' reflection, and to promote the more equitable practice of critical service-learning. Through an interactive virtual workshop, students in a civic engagement fellowship program were taught principles of mindfulness and how they may be used to reflect on past service-learning. Workshop activities encouraged participants to learn new theories of mindfulness and critical service-learning, and to apply them to social issues. Participants utilized the principles of mindfulness in workshop activities, suggesting that the hands-on activity was an effective method to teach the topic.

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Engaging the Heart and the Mind: Mindfulness in Service-Learning

Service-learning, for many, is a life-changing experience. It is an experience that challenges previously held beliefs, expands one's worldview and drives social change. While many experience these benefits of service-learning and embrace the ensuing paradigm shift, the experience is not universal. Without a supportive environment to fully reflect on their experience, service-learning participants may have positive, feel-good experiences but not experience meaningful personal change. While the critical role of reflection in service-learning has been demonstrated, the various means by which reflection can happen is a field ripe for further exploration.

Meaningful reflection can be guided by several theoretical, historical, and spiritual constructs. One such construct is mindfulness. According to Kabat-Zinn, the practice of mindfulness can result in "paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally" (1994, p. 4). Mindfulness is a practice in which one focuses their thoughts on the present moment, without judgment of their own reactions. It is a practice that can be taught and learned. Mindfulness is like a muscle that must be exercised in order to be strong. It can be exercised by classroom learning, in-the-moment practice, and meaningful incorporation of its principles into one's day to day life.

Service-learning is an especially appropriate learning context in which to apply mindfulness because of the nature of new experiences. Participants of service-learning experiences may engage with social issues for which they had previously held beliefs. These beliefs can be challenged, confirmed, or called into question by new experiences. For example, a participant may hold a belief that homelessness is a chronic condition caused by heavy drug use. Upon spending time in a homeless shelter, they may discover this to be untrue; that there are

myriad reasons why people experience homelessness, and that it can be a temporary experience for many. Upon reflecting on their experience with a mindful lens, that participant can consider where their previous perceptions came from. By practicing mindfulness, participants can incorporate this new knowledge into their conceptualization of homelessness. They can expand their personal definition and add new context to their experience of the topic. With new context developed through real-world experience, they may have developed more empathy for those experiencing homelessness, therefore understanding that the problem is not as simple as they originally thought it to be.

Service-learning participants often identify being surprised by the experience. This feeling of surprise is one ripe for exploration with a mindfulness lens. One of the definitions of the word surprise is "the feeling caused by something that is unexpected or unusual" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). If the experience was "unexpected," a few questions should be asked: What were you expecting? How does that differ with what actually happened? Why do you think you expected what you did? These questions can lead a participant to better understand themselves, the people they will meet in service-learning contexts, and their ideas about the world. When service-learning takes place in a context where these questions can be asked freely, participants may experience *deep learning* – a learning experience in which new information is both understood and applied (Biggs, 1987). When participants experience deep learning, they are well positioned to experience meaningful change.

This workshop will capitalize on the ways in which service-learning is a vehicle for social justice education and mindfulness. It will utilize the practice of mindfulness as a way to challenge previously held beliefs, expands participants' worldview, and drive social change. As participants engage with social issues such as homelessness, food insecurity, and income

inequality, they will discover new opportunities to conceptualize and frame their thoughts and reactions to these issues. Through a number of hands-on activities, participants will learn practical ways to implement mindfulness into their service-learning. After participating in the workshop, it is the aspirational goal that participants will also see value in mindfulness ways of thinking in their everyday lives.

Literature Review

Traditional and Critical Service-Learning

The literature on service-learning touts its many benefits. The act of "bringing the classroom to the community" is a practice which realizes many of the goals of a more equitable, democratic education – one in which students do not confine their learning to the four walls of a classroom. It is a practice of education which is a "whole process rather than a restrictive practice that disconnects and alienates them from the world" (hooks, 2003, p. 44). Service-learning experiences place students in contexts that challenge the notion that learning only happens in the "in here" of the classroom, rather than the "out there" of the outside world.

Service-learning, as a philosophy, is "human growth and purpose, a social vision, an approach to community, and a way of knowing" (Kendall, 1990, p. 23). Traditional service-learning, which is often divorced from notions of social change or claims an apolitical stance, centers the experience of students entering a community to complete some community service. The *learning* of service-learning happens when students connect their experience to academic literature, establishing new ways of seeing the world and the social problems within it (Mitchell, 2008). Service-learning is both a pedagogy and a praxis; it is both a way of teaching and a way of driving social change.

The transformative nature of service-learning for its students (or participants) is stated as its inclusion on Kuh's (2008) list of High-Impact Practices in Higher Education, shared widely among higher education practitioners and scholars of service-learning. It places service-learning among the likes of practices such as internships, undergraduate research and capstone projects. This definition centers the experience of the student as the *learner* and the community as the *teacher*. Kuh's titling of "Service Learning, Community-Based Learning" (2008, p. 2) underscores this point: that learning happens *based within* a community, not *by* or *with* a community.

The typical power dynamic between universities and communities can be described in the language of Arnstein (1969) and the Ladder of Citizen Participation. In this seminal text on community organizing, Arnstein describes a dichotomy of the "haves" and the "have-nots" – those who have socioeconomic, political, or institutional power; and those who do not have that power. In this view, it is advantageous for citizens (the "have-nots") to fully participate in the process of decision-making, above simply being informed, consulted, or placated.

While service-learning practitioners often have noble intentions, the impact of their work can often be felt negatively by community organizations and members. Treating communities as *teachers* (such as in the construct *community-based learning*) or as *recipients* (as in the construct of *service*) reinforce the power dynamic of the haves and the have-nots. Educators and their students, often associated with predominantly white institutions hoarding massive endowments, go into communities either to *learn from* communities or to *serve* them. In either of these interactions, there is a one-way flow of goods and services. One party acts as the giver; the other, a passive recipient, resulting in universities holding an unequal amount of power over the universities they serve. While service-learning often comes with good intentions, the flaws in its

design require a different way of considering the relationships between universities and communities.

Breaking down the reproduction of hegemonic power structures often associated with traditional service-learning requires a more critical view of the practice of service-learning. Critical service-learning, then, is the practice of service-learning that attempts to dismantle structures of injustice, particularly hegemonic power structures (Warren-Gordon & Graff, 2018). Mitchell (2008) identifies three key elements which distinguish critical service-learning from its predecessor: "working to redistribute power amongst all participants in the service-learning relationship, developing authentic relationships in the classroom and in the community, and working from a social change perspective" (p. 50). In practice, this means having a keen eye on disrupting the ways in which service-learning reinforces the unequal power balance between a university and community. This disruption takes place in the way partnerships are established and the ways in which we consider our place in the service relationship.

To this end, Butin (2015) suggests, albeit tongue-in-cheek, a list of tenets by which critical service-learning can be measured. To name a few, that a community partner's phone number is programmed into the instructor's cell phone, that the instructor knows the name of the administrative assistant at the community partner site, and that the community partner has a say in the creation of the service-learning project. Each of these tenets describe a relationship between universities and their community partners where there is a multidirectional flow of information-sharing and decision-making. It is a true partnership, where everyone has an equitable share of the risks as well as the benefits. In critical service-learning, the community and the university serve as *co-creators* of the goals, design, and outcome of a project. There is a multidirectional exchange of resources, insights and benefits among all parties.

There is no solitary approach to critical service-learning, which Butin (2015) himself states as he suggests the importance of knowing the name of the administrative assistant at the community partner site. Critical service-learning is a practice which requires critique from all involved: students, instructors and community members. Each person in the room should continue to ask themselves, "What is my place in this? Am I taking up too much space? Are we holding true to our goals?"

The practice of critical service-learning shifts the power dynamic of traditional service-learning, in which the "haves" in academia provide volunteer hours to the "have-nots" of community partners, and where the latter party has little say in the experience. Critical service-learning shifts away from the traditional partnership, where universities are active givers of service and communities are the passive recipients. A true partnership can be established, where all parties assume risk as well as receiving benefits. This is the goal of critical service-learning: a more equitable, holistic partnership.

Learning and Reflection

One theory which describes the role of experience within education is Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (ELT). Kolb (1984) theorizes four dimensions of grasping knowledge: concrete experience (CE), reflective observation (RO), abstract conceptualization (AC), and active experimentation (AE). Effective learners should engage each of these four modes; and effective teachers should teach to each of the four modes (Kolb et al., 2014). While there is debate on whether "learning styles" exist at all, ELT makes the case that all learning styles and modes of grasping knowledge should be engaged (Riener & Willingham, 2010). It encourages educators to teach not only by classroom knowledge, but by reflecting, thinking, trying, and doing. Experiential education can be described as "transformative education," in

which new experiences and reflection bring about change in one's perspectives of self and the world (Gardner, 2021). Critical service-learning, by definition, is a model for experiential education and may be transformative as well. In addition, service-learning and the ELT model has been demonstrated to improve student outcomes, including personal growth and civic responsibility (Wang & Calvano, 2018).

To further conceptualize the relationship between ELT's proposed four modes of grasping knowledge, Cone and Harris (1996) propose a "lens model" for service-learning. The lens model describes in three major steps how service-learning inspires meaningful learning: first, that students enter an experience with their own context and biases; second, that the service-learning experience leads a student to reconceptualize new hypotheses; and third, that reflection of the experience leads a student to construct new meaning of the world around them. This model has been cited throughout the service-learning literature as one which captures many of the elements involved in a service-learning experience. Critical to note in this model is the importance of reflection. In Cone and Harris' work, both written and oral reflections were utilized in order to speak to both the well-formed argument and the good story, respectively. Both means of reflecting upon experience encourage students to "test their thoughts in a marketplace of ideas" (Cone & Harris, 1996, p. 51). It is an iterative process of forming new ideas and testing them by measuring them against real-world experience.

There are many ways in which participants can reflect upon their service-learning experience. Consider both formal and informal means of reflection. Within the context of higher education, formal reflection encompasses ways that students can present their understanding of and reactions to the experience. Instructors can create assignments for students to complete, such as journaling exercises, essays in which students are asked to connect their experience to the

literature, oral presentations to the class, or creation of audiovisual content. Informal reflection often takes place spontaneously, during or after the experience, where students discuss the experience with each other or with their instructor. Students can help each other make meaning of their experience. They may also support each other through particularly difficult or emotional experiences. Both formal and informal reflection provide space for participants to create meaning of the experience. Eyler, Giles and Schmiede (1996) suggest that effective critical reflection is continuous, connected, challenging, and contextualized. That is to say, reflection happens throughout the process of service-learning, it is connected to the students' academic pursuits, it pushes students to think in new ways, and is appropriately relevant given the topic of the service-learning course.

An additional case for the importance of reflection in service-learning comes from Richard et al. (2017) who discover reflection to be a mediating factor between service-learning experiences and a "civic-minded orientation" as a post-graduate outcome for undergraduate students in service-learning programs. They note the importance of both formal and informal forms of reflection. Richard et al. (2017) note the particular importance of informal reflection in the form of dialogue with people who are perceived to be "different" from each other, whether that be a difference in age, race, or other experience.

There are as many ways to practice reflection in service-learning as there are individual people who engage in service-learning. Many practices include introspective journaling, dialogue with other participants, and connecting experiences to existing texts. Each of these practices are easily facilitated by an instructor and easily graded by a rubric. While many reflective practices ask participants to consider their own bias and standpoint in service-learning contexts, the literature on service-learning does not provide many best practices of how to effectively engage

in critical reflection. This is an area ripe for growth as instructors and community partners co-create a service-learning experience, with reflection being interwoven throughout the experience.

Reflecting upon service-learning experiences can bring up some difficult conversations, such as addressing one's privileges or ways in which they have directly caused harm to marginalized communities. For someone who is engaging with a community for the first time, they may experience feelings of guilt, shame or exasperation. Students make statements such as, "I can't believe I didn't realize that some people have it this bad." They are exasperated that the issue of homelessness is as pervasive as it is, and angry at themselves for not realizing it or acting upon it sooner. These are complicated emotions that facilitators may not be equipped to manage. This suggests that while reflections are a necessary component to elicit thoughtful discussions and the exploration of complex emotions, more tools are needed in order to anticipate these reactions and to harness them for the greater purpose of student development towards critical service-learning. While the literature contains many discussions of effective reflection on service-learning, here I will suggest that the practice of mindfulness establishes a mindset for deep learning through reflection.

Mindfulness

One such proposed tool to prepare students for meaningful reflection of service-learning experiences is the practice of mindfulness. Mindfulness is a practice which emphasizes awareness of one's current thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and behavioral urges. It encourages a non-judgmental awareness, where one can hold awareness of how they are feeling without attaching a value or judgment to it (O'Connor, 2020). Mindfulness has a long history as a spiritual practice, associated with Buddhist schools of thought and meditation. Put simply, mindfulness is "paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and

nonjudgmentally" (Kabat-Zinn, 1994, p. 18). The act of *paying attention* is a salient point here. In the so-called "hustle culture" in America, focusing on *paying attention* is a significant shift. Students engaging in service-learning may have a lot of distraction on their minds such as getting a good grade in the class, worry over an upcoming test, or concerns about an overdue tuition bill. Mindfulness can be an important tool to slow the mind and focus on the present.

The literature has provided a handful of tools to measure a person's ability to practice mindfulness. For one, the Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale-Revised (CAMS-R) is a 12-item questionnaire which asks participants to identify their ability to regulate attention, orientation to present experiences, awareness of experience, and acceptance (non-judgment) towards their own thoughts (Feldman et al., 2007). The four measurable constructs associated with mindfulness, as described by the CAMS-R scale, provide a meaningful window into how people can improve their mindfulness practice. In addition, this scale is a useful tool for self-assessment of mindfulness. It can be administered to help participants identify where they can improve their mindfulness practice.

In the field of education, "contemplative pedagogy" has been described to "integrate students' own rich experience into their learning" (Barbezat & Pingree, 2012, p. 179). This is a mindfulness practice with various implications for teaching and learning. Contemplative pedagogical practices allow students to put themselves at the center of their learning, empowering them to explore new ideas and make connections, rather than be bogged down by the anxiety of doing things "right" in the eyes of the professor. Rather than attempting to meet a set of predetermined outcomes, students can ask meaningful questions of their service-learning experiences. This illustrates the *nonjudgmental* aspect of mindfulness practice; when students don't expect their conclusions will be "graded" per se, they will be more apt to exploring the

richness of their experiences, generating new ideas and testing them against what they have experienced in the real world.

In the field of psychotherapy, mindfulness practices have been adopted into the practice of Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT). As described by O'Connor (2020), DBT balances acceptance and change, teaching patients to accept their current thoughts as well as encouraging efforts to bring about change. While these two behaviors may seem contradictory, DBT suggests it as an effective way to encourage behavior change. O'Connor (2020) suggests six principles of DBT that would be effective to guide reflection in service-learning. The first three principles are "what" skills, which describe the behaviors that participants can practice: *observing*, *describing*, and *participating*. These skills involve, respectively, simply observing one's own thoughts without attempting to end or prolong them; noting what has been observed and experienced, focusing on facts rather than interpretations; and being fully present in the moment. The next three principles are "how" skills, or how the behaviors are practiced: *nonjudgmentally*, *one-mindfully*, and *effectively*. These skills involve, respectively, not attaching value or judgment to any situation, instead, exploring the consequences of events; focusing only on the current moment, not being distracted by other thoughts; and acting towards a goal, given current context and limitations, rather than focusing on what the person thinks "should" be happening. Each of these six skills are particularly effective to evaluate classroom activities in whether they promote a mindfulness mindset.

Having a more mindful lens on service-learning would invite students to be more present, more fully engaged, and more critical of their own role within the service-learning activity. It may meet Mitchell's (2008) guidelines for critical service-learning, including the redistribution of power, authentic relationships, and a social change perspective. These practices may

encourage students to see past the traditional rubric of a classroom setting – "right" and "wrong" as determined by an all-knowing professor – and to embrace the gray areas inherent in community work.

Applying Mindfulness to Reflection in Service-Learning

The six principles of mindfulness as described by O'Connor (2020) are particularly relevant in the context of academic service-learning. They provide several pertinent guidelines on how to develop teaching of mindfulness, or the contemplative practice as described by Barbezat and Pingree (2012). As discussed previously, mindfulness is like a muscle that needs to be exercised in order to be effective. Simply being taught the principles is not enough to inspire a change in mindset. The "exercise" lies within completing activities that employ the principles of mindfulness.

One such activity proposed to exercise the "muscle" of mindfulness is entitled "What, So What, Now What?" As the name suggests, this activity asks participants to ask themselves a series of three questions about an experience. The first question, "What?", asks for a judgment-free account of the experience. The next question, "So what?", asks for implications of the experience. It asks participants to make meaning of the experience, to assess the potential impacts and to put it in larger context. The final question, "Now what?", asks for a course of action moving forward. This final step is one in which judgments, and solutions to the problem, can enter the conversation (Razzetti, 2019). This activity is one example of Kabat-Zinn's definition of mindfulness, "paying attention in a particular way" (1994, p. 18). It is a method of reflection in which participants must separate out their initial reactions to a situation, considering more objective facts and context, before jumping into assumptions and implications. It illustrates a handful of the principles described by O'Connor (2020). Namely, the principles of observing,

describing, non-judgmentally and effectively are employed. Events are observed without judgment in the "what" stage, they are described in the "so what" stage, and then their effectiveness is discussed in the "now what" stage. This activity can be completed as a class discussion after a service-learning experience, or as a written reflection completed by each individual student.

Another activity which employs a mindfulness practice is the "Letter to my Future Self." This activity asks participants to write a letter addressed to themselves, to be delivered at some determined point in the future (later in the semester, six months in the future, a year in the future, etc.). There are online tools that allow students to write themselves an email in the future. They can also write a physical letter, sealed in an envelope addressed to themselves, and an instructor can mail the letters to the students. This activity is a journaling experience that is divorced from the pressures of academia; by design of the activity, the letters are private. They are not graded or assessed by an instructor. Students are allowed to document their unadulterated thoughts on a service-learning experience without feeling the need to conform to the needs of the classroom. For students who resist more formal reflection assignments, this activity gives them more autonomy over their own reflection (Eyler, Giles & Schmiede, 1996). It meets O'Connor's (2020) principles of describing and nonjudgmentally. Events and reactions to those events are described to the audience (the audience of oneself), and the private nature of the journal leads to nonjudgment.

Deep Learning through Mindfulness

The shift from traditional to critical service-learning requires a keener eye on distribution of power in the relationship between a university and the community, strengthening holistic partnerships, and working from a social change perspective (Warren-Gordon & Graff, 2018;

Butin, 2015; Mitchell, 2008). The practice of critical service-learning goes beyond simply placing students in volunteer settings, having them provide service to a community partner, and coming away with more knowledge. In a more equitable partnership between universities and communities, the community has more of a say in the service-learning experience and shares in the benefits.

Without a mindfulness practice, students' reflection on their service can be devoid of nuance and the focus on dismantling hegemonic power structures. Without proper reflection, students may walk away from an experience only considering either some net positive impact they have made on the community, or the ways in which the community lacks resources. These reactions are not uncommon for students first entering into service-learning. Burton and Barnes (2017) describe these reactions within the spectrum of charity to justice. In the former, *charity*, the dangers include "reinforcing givers' lack of understanding with rewards that recognize their benevolence" (Burton & Barnes, 2017, p. 2). Students not engaged in long-term service-learning or continuous reflection are never asked to confront the long-term effects of their service. A short-term engagement may have very little impact or a net negative impact on community, but when students are not given the tools to properly reflect or engage in the community, they may only assume a positive impact. However, when sufficient reflection is introduced, and students are given the space to assess the impact of their service, the focus shifts from charity towards *justice* – the latter "supporting practices that liberate—and that change the attitudes, beliefs, and policies of—society as a whole" (Burton & Barnes, 2017, p. 2). The shift from charity to justice is aligned with other philosophical and ethical constructs that support more liberatory ways of practicing service-learning.

As students engage in reflection, guided by the principles of mindfulness, they will begin to see their service-learning in new ways. They will have a wealth of context for their experiences, aided by not only academic literature but also the rich tapestry of their past experiences, cultural norms, preconceived notions, political narratives, and expectations. Each student walks into a service-learning experience as a whole living person, and their learning is contextualized by the breadth of who they are. When guided by mindfulness, participants in service-learning may experience *deep learning*. This is a type of learning in which participants make meaning of their learning through making connection and understanding the big picture, rather than simply learning disjointed and disconnected details (Smith & Colby, 2007). Students enter a community with their current context, yet the experience they have may contradict what they had initially believed to be true. A mindfulness practice encourages a balance of acceptance and change – accepting that a person's current thoughts are true, while also welcoming the change brought about by new information (O'Connor, 2020). Initially introduced through mindfulness tradition and institutionalized through the practice of Dialectical Behavior Therapy, the balance of acceptance and change allows students to engage in deep learning through their experiences in community.

Current Project

The current project will educate students engaged in service-learning in how they can employ mindfulness practices in their service-learning. This will be done through an interactive workshop where students will reflect on service-learning they have done in the past or are currently doing. The activities used to reflect on service-learning will meet the principles of mindfulness practice as described by O'Connor (2020) and Barbezat and Pingree (2012).

The project will be hosted at Campus Compact, an organization with a rich history of strengthening the field of academic service-learning. Current students in the Newman Civic Fellowship program will be invited to participate in the workshop, which will be hosted on the videoconferencing platform Zoom. Fellows in this program were selected based on their engagement in social change and community-based work at their host institutions, so they will all be familiar with the field of service-learning. The workshop will build on their existing knowledge of how to reflect on service-learning and how to inspire their peers to do the same.

Project Plan

Service-learning does not happen in a vacuum, nor is it an activity that necessarily skews towards producing a common good. It is an extremely nuanced partnership which requires a keen eye on power dynamics, one's biases and assumptions, and co-creation of shared goals and outcomes. To achieve a more equitable partnership between universities and communities, students should be empowered to consider their own place in community. This workshop will impart students with practices and strategies of mindfulness in service-learning.

Situation Statement

Service-learning in higher education is often described in glowing terms of improving student outcomes, strengthening bonds between universities and communities, and community impact. However, there is no singular approach to service-learning that will always meet these goals. Students in service-learning contexts may act in ways that reinforce, rather than dismantle, systems of oppression. This workshop builds upon previous suggestions that mindfulness may be an effective strategy to engage in critical service-learning (O'Connor, 2020). In critical service-learning, students are more aware of their role as co-creating solutions *with* community, rather than the external experts who will deliver the solutions *to* the community (Warren-Gordon &

Graff, 2018). The practice of mindfulness will be used to raise participants' own critical consciousness around service-learning.

Define Your Goals

- Goal 1: Participants will understand the principles of mindfulness and how to utilize them in their daily lives.
- Goal 2: Participants will practice utilizing mindfulness principles as they reflect upon their own service-learning.
- Goal 3: Participants will discover ways to promote mindfulness strategies among their peers.

Target Audience

The target audience for this workshop is students (or "fellows") in the Newman Civic Fellowship. More than 200 fellows are nominated yearly by presidents of colleges and universities within the United States. Campus Compact, the organization that hosts the fellowship program, honors fellows on the basis on their being "changemakers and public problem-solvers" (Campus Compact, 2021). Fellows engage in monthly sessions to focus on advocacy, social change, personal and professional development. The workshop will be held on Zoom, a virtual videoconferencing platform, to allow for engagement of fellows across the United States. Zoom is the platform used for all fellowship meetings and fellows are generally comfortable using it.

Incentives for Engagement

This workshop will provide fellows a space to reflect upon their own work in communities. Fellows will not only learn about, but also practice in real-time, implementing mindfulness principles into their daily lives. Fellows will also get the opportunity to network

with each other during smaller group sessions. In addition, the activities completed during the workshop will be provided by participants for them to take home.

Crafting a Clear Message

Newman Civic Fellows are involved in activism and community work of all stripes. In that work, we need to find time to slow down, pay attention, and recharge; to consider our own place in our work. This workshop will introduce the concept of mindfulness as one way to guide critical self-reflection in service-learning.

Identify Outreach Methods

This workshop will be by invitation only to fellows in the Newman Civic Fellowship program. Fellows have monthly meetings, held on Zoom. I will present at a monthly meeting to briefly advertise my workshop, sharing a visual graphic that explains the topic, and details for how to RSVP for the workshop. After that brief advertisement, I will follow up with an email campaign to all fellows, as well as communication via the all-fellows group messaging platform.

Responsibilities Chart

NAME	ORGANIZATION OR AFFILIATION	RESPONSIBILITIES	CONTACT INFORMATION
Tevin Monroe	Merrimack College	Project Lead	monroet@merrimack.edu
Clarissa Laguardia	Campus Compact	Marketing/Outreach	

Tools/Measure to Assess Progress

One tool used to evaluate outcomes of the workshop will be a Mentimeter activity, which will allow participants to engage in a "body check-in", grounding the workshop in mindful self-reflection. Another tool used to facilitate conversations during a breakout room session will be a Jamboard, a free "virtual whiteboard" that allows people to collaborate in real-time. Contributions to that Jamboard are anonymous and can be saved after the workshop. The

Jamboard contributions will speak to whether participants are able to draw meaningful connections between the principles of mindfulness and a social topic of their choice. Zoom chat messages may also shed light on participants' thoughts regarding the workshop.

I will also distribute a post-event evaluation in an anonymous Google form. The evaluation will ask participants if they found the discussion on mindfulness to be helpful and if they would use any of the materials discussed. Lastly, throughout the workshop, an observation rubric will be given to a classmate to take notes throughout the workshop, to assess whether the activities are meeting learning outcomes.

Implementation Timeline

February 2022	2/11: Promote upcoming workshop at Newman Civic Fellowship monthly meeting
February 2022	Week of 2/21: Host workshop
March 2022	Analyze workshop observations, materials and evaluations
April 2022	4/6: Full capstone draft due 4/27: Submit final capstone paper for publication

Logical Framework

- We will… educate students on the practice of mindfulness in service-learning.
- So that… students are more mindful about their service-learning.
- So that… students consider their biases, preconceived notions, and worldviews that will affect their service learning.
- So that… students do not make assumptions about what community members are experiencing or benefiting from the service-learning experience.
- So that… students think of communities in an asset-based perspective, rather than a deficit-based perspective.

- So that… there is stronger partnership between students and the communities they are serving in.
- So that… communities have equal participation in the service-learning process.

Implementation Notes

This workshop format is possible due to the partnership of the Newman Civic Fellowship program. Fellows are typically undergraduate students engaged in community engagement at universities across the United States. They are leaders on their respective campuses and are heavily interested in topics of social justice, community engagement and civic participation. Due to this audience, it was an expectation that all participants would be already involved in community engagement. While terms like "service-learning" and "community engagement" will be defined in the workshop, it will be assumed that participants have a good working knowledge of these terms. Activities will ask students to draw upon previous service-learning experiences. If this project were to be repeated with a group of students who were less engaged in communities, it should be altered to allow for all students to participate, regardless of their previous context (or lack of context) of service-learning.

Methodology

This workshop helped participants engage in meaningful reflection on service-learning and ask critical questions of their service-learning. The two-hour Zoom workshop was highly interactive and gave participants multiple opportunities to bring in their past experiences to connect to the workshop content. The following sections describe who participants are, what materials were used, and how the workshop was conducted.

Participants

This workshop engaged the Newman Civic Fellowship ("the fellowship") program, which is a program of the Campus Compact organization. The fellowship program is well-suited to host a workshop focused on topics of community engagement, service-learning, and reflection. Selection of fellows is based on their engagement in leadership in community work. Each member university of Campus Compact can nominate one student per academic year. It is, then, a highly selective and competitive program, where the one student per university is expected to represent their engagement in community work among peers at other institutions.

Given that this workshop was focused on reflection, it required that participants had some past service-learning they could draw upon. It would not have been as effective with a group who had little to no service-learning experience, as they would not have as much to reflect upon. The Newman Civic Fellowship program was ideal – fellows all have some experience with service-learning, and therefore some wealth of experiences to reflect upon.

Materials

This workshop used several tools to facilitate engagement in the online format, as well as to assess the effectiveness of the workshop. For one, a Mentimeter tool was employed for the first activity, a "body check-in". Participants were asked to take a deep breath, focus on what the signals their body was telling them, then asked the question "How are you feeling right now?" Participants' responses in the Mentimeter website were projected to the entire group, in an anonymous format. In this way, participants were able to honestly answer the question at hand without fear of judgement from others. The activity allowed participants to practice mindfulness before even learning its principles. They were able to discover what might block them from full

participation in the workshop, and to honestly reflect their current state of mind, without judgement from others or self.

After learning about the principles of mindfulness, participants were asked to put them into practice in an activity called “Acceptance & Change”. In this activity, participants were asked to pick a social topic, and then discussed how they can use the principles of mindfulness as they engage with the topic. After being separated into small groups, participants took notes on a tool called Jamboard. The Jamboard is essentially a virtual whiteboard, where users can add virtual sticky notes and add text to a blank canvas that is editable and viewable for real-time collaboration. The data added to the Jamboard was preserved for assessment after the workshop completion.

A final activity asked participants to engage in the “What, So What, Now What” activity to guide reflection of a past service-learning experience. Participants verbally discussed this reflection exercise and then were encouraged to write a letter to their future selves on the website FutureMe.org. This website allowed participants to engage in additional reflection on a past service-learning experience, with the added benefit of their reflection being accessible to them at some point in the future. Data was collected in this activity during an observation rubric, while the narration in participants’ letter to their future selves was private.

In order to improve ease of access to all of the above online tools, a “take-home document” was distributed to all participants via the chat function of the Zoom meeting. This document provided links for each of the tools, so that they were all in one place and participants did not need to keep clicking links in the Zoom chat. The document also included a description of the two principal theories taught during the workshop. Easy access to principal theories prevented participants from clicking back and forth between windows as they were participating

in activities. Additionally, the document included the presenter's contact information, the link to the post-event survey, and a works cited page.

Throughout the workshop, a volunteer attended the workshop and provided virtual support to participants by distributing the take-home document, managing the Zoom chat, taking attendance, and completing an observation rubric. The observation rubric rated several topics on a three-point scale from exceptional, to good, to needs improvement. It assessed whether learning outcomes were communicated, supplemental materials (i.e. the take-home document) were utilized, whether each of the three activities were clearly communicated to participants, and whether the activities met learning outcomes. The volunteer also took notes on each activity and how it met learning outcomes.

A post-event survey was developed to administer to workshop attendees. The survey was a confidential survey, held on Google Forms, that participants completed at the conclusion of the workshop. It consisted of 27 questions that asked participants to assess their understanding of the workshop material, whether activities helped them learn the material, and whether learning outcomes were met. The first four questions asked about the impressions of the workshop and were rated on a four-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Those questions asked about general rating of the workshop, clarity of the goals, relevancy of the content, and whether the topics of mindfulness and service-learning were interesting. The next three questions, on the same scale, asked if each of the three activities were impactful. On a three-point scale, participants were asked about their understanding of mindfulness before the workshop, as well as how involved they are in service-learning on their campus. They were then directly asked about whether each of the learning outcomes had been met. Then, participants were asked how confidently they felt that they could explain the following concepts to a friend: mindfulness (as a

general definition), the six principles of mindfulness, traditional vs. critical service-learning, and the Ladder of Citizen Participation. Finally, some open-ended questions were posed, to get participants' thoughts on how a further workshop could be improved. These questions included: What was the best part of this workshop? If this workshop were offered again, what would you like to see added? What about this workshop got you out of your comfort zone? And, what was this workshop lacking? After the open-ended questions, a handful of demographic questions were also asked. These included class year, major/minor in school, religious identity, and how they would describe their role in service-learning on campus.

Procedure

This workshop was conducted at the end of February 2022 online to students in the Newman Civic Fellowship program. It was a private event and only those in the fellowship were invited. Advertisement of the workshop (see appendix A) was done by presenting at a regular monthly Newman Civic Fellowship meeting and emails sent to the entire fellowship program. RSVP's were collected over the span of approximately two weeks, and registrants were reminded of the upcoming workshop 48 hours before, the morning of, and an hour before. A full agenda with scheduled activities can be found in Appendix B.

At the conclusion of the workshop, data collected from the survey (see appendix D) were collected into a Google workbook. The workshop volunteer also submitted observation data (see appendix C) for analysis. A dynamic mixed methods approach allowed the researcher to look at the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the data in tandem to discover insights of the data. The post-event evaluation was examined quantitively to explore descriptive data such as demographics and scaled responses to learning outcomes; while the activities were assessed using qualitative data from the respondents and an observer in the workshop. Qualitative data

was first coded into various categories (i.e. positive versus negative reactions) and then coded data was compared and interpreted to find overarching themes. These themes were then examined against the feedback from the post-event survey as well as the goals of the workshop.

After the workshop analysis completion, additional data were collected via a semi-structured Zoom interview with an administrator with the Newman Civic Fellowship program. This program administrator was a participant of the workshop itself. Questions included the following: What are your general thoughts about the workshop? What was the most memorable part of the workshop? What are plans for future programming for Newman Civic Fellows, and how could you see this workshop aligning with those plans? Lastly, how does this workshop fit into your goals for providing more mental health support for fellows? The researcher took notes during the interview and recorded the conversation for accurate data analysis. The audio recordings were not shared with anyone except the researcher and were deleted after analysis.

Results

The workshop welcomed six members of the Newman Civic Fellowship community. Two members left early, and each of the four members that attended the entire workshop completed the post-event survey. Results below include the various data collected in each activity, the observation rubric completed by a volunteer, the post-event survey, and the semi-structured interview with a program administrator of the Newman Civic Fellowship program.

Activity 1: Body Check-In

The first activity utilized the Mentimeter tool, and asked participants to answer the question “How are you feeling right now?” Five responses were collected, and responses were that participants were feeling exhausted/sleepy (n=3), “busy but grateful” (n=1), and “heavy but hopeful” (n=1). The volunteer rated engagement in this activity in the “exceptional” stage.

Activity 2: Acceptance & Change

This second activity utilized a Jamboard, in which participants could collaboratively respond to the question at hand. The question posed to participants was "*How can you utilize the principles of mindfulness to engage with a social topic? How can you embrace both acceptance and change?*" They were separated into three breakout rooms to select a social topic and answer the question collectively.

The first group selected the social topic of climate change. Their Jamboard submissions included written notes that included both acceptance and change. Notes on acceptance included "there is a crisis happening," "the planet is falling apart," and "I cannot singlehandedly undo generations of bad behaviors and patterns." Notes on change included "I want to be part of the solution," "I try to pay attention to my carbon footprint," and "I can work towards incrementally decreasing waste around me." This group organized their thoughts along the dichotomy of acceptance and change, rather than using the six principles of mindfulness.

The second group selected the social topic of migration and human rights. Their Jamboard submissions were organized thematically according to the six principles of mindfulness first described by O'Connor (2020) and then discussed during the workshop. There was a description on how to approach the social topic utilizing each of the six principles. In addition, this group also discussed the context of the COVID-19 pandemic that can exacerbate the issue, as well as the current political landscape that can influence the issue.

The third group selected the social topic of homelessness. Their Jamboard responses centered on two ideas: 1) the impacts that being homeless can have on an individual, as well as 2) an ethical imperative for addressing the social issue. Neither response utilized the language nor the general concepts of mindfulness as outlined in the previous workshop content.

The workshop volunteer rated engagement in this activity as "excellent," as well as adding that participants enjoyed the activity and connecting their social topic to the six principles of mindfulness.

Activity 3: What, So What, Now What

This final activity asked participants to engage in the "What, So What, Now What" activity to reflect on a past service-learning experience. While participants were invited to write a letter to their future selves following the activity, that data was not collected, so the observations were only collected through small group discussions.

Not every participant shared their reflection to the larger group, but those who did, shared their reflections in the appropriate *What, So What, Now What* format. This suggests that instructions were clearly communicated.

The workshop volunteer rated engagement in this activity as "excellent," and added that participants made great connections between their personal experiences and mindfulness.

Post-Event Survey

At the conclusion of the workshop, a survey was distributed to each participant that attended the entire workshop. The response rate was 100% (n=4). The following sections describe each element of the survey and responses.

Demographic Data

Demographic data were collected from the participants, asking about area of study, class year, religious background, and experience with service learning. Areas of study ranged from public policy (n=1), to sociology (n=2), to biochemistry (n=1), to business (n=1), and international studies (n=1). Note that some participants had multiple areas of study. A majority of participants were in their fourth year of school (n=3) while one was in a graduate program

(n=1). In terms of religious identity, half of participants identified themselves as being raised Christian (n=2), one identified themselves as being raised Roman Catholic (n=1) and another identified as a non-believer (n=1). Participants were also asked the question "How religious are you?" A majority rated a 3 out of 5 (n=3) and one rated themselves a 1 out of 5 (n=1). Finally, participants were asked the question "How would you describe your role in service-learning?" Participants were able to select multiple options.

Table 1: Roles in Service-Learning

Role titles	**Role descriptions**
Participant	I participate when I can
Leader	I have a leadership role in service-learning
Advisor	I advise on service-learning work happening but do not directly engage
Reflector	I have a role in planning/executing on reflection on service-learning

Participants identified themselves across the various roles. More than half of participants identified as *participant* (n=3) and *leader* (n=3), while half of them identified as *advisor* (n=2) and *reflector* (n=2).

Assessment of Workshop Material

In addition to questions about demographics, participants were asked several questions about their understanding of the workshop material, whether activities helped them learn the material, and whether learning outcomes were met.

The first question asked "Overall, how would you rate this workshop?" with the options of excellent, good, okay and poor. All participants rated the workshop as excellent (n=4).

Participants were asked if they agreed with the following statements: "The goals of the event were clear," "The content was relevant to me," "The topic of mindfulness was interesting,"

"The topic of service-learning was interesting," "Activity 1 (Body check-in) was impactful," "Activity 2 (Acceptance & Change) was impactful," and "Activity 3 (Letter to your Future Self) was impactful." To that first question of whether goals were clear, most strongly agreed (n=3) while one agreed (n=1). For every other question, all participants answered that that they strongly agreed (n=4) with each of the statements.

Participants were asked, "Before this workshop, how aware were you of mindfulness?" Each participant responded that they were only somewhat aware (n=4).

Participants were asked, "How would you describe your participation in service-learning?" Half of them described themselves as extremely active in service-learning (n=2), while half of them described themselves as somewhat active (n=2).

Participants were directly asked whether they would agree that they met each of the three goals of the workshop as identified in the project plan.

- Goal 1: Participants will understand the principles of mindfulness and how to utilize them in their daily lives.
- Goal 2: Participants will practice utilizing mindfulness principles as they reflect upon their own service-learning.
- Goal 3: Participants will discover ways to promote mindfulness strategies among their peers.

Corresponding to each of the three goals, participants were asked about whether they agree with the following questions: "As a result of this workshop, I understand how to practice mindfulness," "As a result of this workshop, I understand how to practice mindfulness as I reflect on my service-learning," and "As a result of this workshop, I understand how to promote

mindfulness practices among my peers." For each of the three questions, half of participants strongly agreed (n=2) and half agreed (n=2).

To assess whether individual concepts were taught in a way where participants could teach them to others, they were asked whether they agreed to the statement of "I am confident that I could explain the following concepts to a friend." Each participant answered "strongly agree" about the topic of mindfulness, generally (n=4). On the six principles of mindfulness, one participant strongly agreed (n=1) and the others agreed (n=3). With the topic of traditional versus critical service-learning, each participant (n=4) strongly agreed. And on the final topic, the Ladder of Citizen Participation, half of participants (n=2) strongly agreed, one agreed (n=1) and one disagreed (n=1).

Open-Ended Questions

Participants were asked four open-ended questions about the workshop content. The first question posed was, "What was the best part of this workshop?" Participants discussed themes such as being able to connect with other Newman Civic Fellows (n=2) with one participant sharing that the workshop felt "intimate" and that the group had "bonded" at the end of the event. There was also mention of the resources such as the take-home document (n=1) and the activities (n=1).

Next, participants were asked, "If this workshop were offered again, what would you like to see added?" Responses included a deeper explanation of the Ladder of Citizen Participation (n=1), more personal experiences (n=1), a trivia game (n=1) and more activities with breakout room discussions (n=1).

Participants were asked "What (if anything) about this workshop was challenging (i.e., got you out of your comfort zone)?" One meaningful response was as follows: "Discussing

specific moments from my service experience and seeing them from a different perspective was at times challenging but certainly also very engaging and, due to such a supportive environment in the workshop, very productive/constructive as I was indeed able to enrich my understandings." Additional responses suggested they would have preferred to be in person and with more participants (n=1), and that it was "amazing to talk with people who are so interested and dedicated to learning more about mindfulness" (n=1).

The last open-ended question asked participants, "What was this workshop lacking?" Participants responded that they would have wanted a clearer understanding of the Ladder of Citizen Participation (n=1), and more participants (n=1).

Semi-Structured Interview

After the workshop's completion, the semi-structured interview was completed to assess the workshop's "fit" into the programming model of the Newman Civic Fellowship program.

The first question asked of the program administrator was, "What are your general thoughts about the workshop?" Among the positive comments were about the visuals and aesthetics of the presentation itself; that it was easy to follow, and not visually crowded. They discussed that while mindfulness is not a new topic and it can be presented as a "buzzword", this workshop provided a new and unique way to think about it. They suggested that they walked away with new ideas on how to be proactive when practicing mindfulness in their own personal life. The program administrator suggested that the workshop could, in the future, have a different structure: doing it over a series of lunch hour sessions, as to decrease the "virtual burnout" that people may face with the numerous virtual events they are constantly being invited to.

The second question of the interview was, "What was the most memorable part of the workshop?" The program administrator's response was that the second activity, Acceptance &

Change, was the most memorable. In their words, this was an exercise in "lifting the weight off our shoulders" when discussing social topics. This comment was discussed in relation to a global humanitarian crisis happening at the time of this interview. While the humanitarian crisis was a large and seemingly unsurmountable problem, in the words of the program administrator, the practice of mindfulness allows them to "understand their space and place" in dealing with the issue.

The third question posed during the interview was, "What are plans for future programming for Newman Civic Fellows, and how could you see this workshop aligning with those plans?" The program administrator discussed the plans to hopefully transition to more in-person programming. They discussed the selectivity involved in scheduling programming for fellows – that a lot of organizations are hoping to engage the current Fellows, and that any organization they partner with needs to be vetted against the goals of the program. The focus of all partnerships must be in civic engagement, first and foremost; while topics that support civic engagement (like supporting fellows' mental health and mindfulness) are also welcome partnerships. The goals of the fellowship program, in terms of the fellows' experience, are twofold: one, to create a nationwide network of civic engagement leaders; and two, to present fellows with exclusive programming to explore civic pathways and expand their skills for long-term engagement. To that end, partnerships that do not meet those goals may not be considered.

The final question of the interview was, "How does this workshop fit into your goals for providing more mental health support for fellows?" As discussed previously, programming that supports fellows' mental health is one of the goals of the fellowship program. The program administrator mentioned a few of the elements of mental health they would want to cover: how

to recognize the signs of burnout, how to prioritize self-care while doing civic engagement work, normalizing seeking mental health counseling, and importantly, mindfulness.

Discussion

This workshop was a novel way to teach the topics of mindfulness as a way to reflect on service-learning and utilizing reflection as a way to move from traditional to critical service-learning. The various activities proved mixed effectiveness in terms of meeting workshop goals. The following sections will discuss whether goals were met, various elements of the workshop content, themes from the semi-structured interview, and lessons learned for future projects.

Workshop Goals

Overall, this workshop had three goals that illustrated the knowledge, skills and behaviors that participants could walk away with. These goals were about, respectively: practicing mindfulness, using mindfulness to reflect on service-learning, and promoting mindfulness among peers. These goals were stated to participants and visually shown on the presentation.

To assess whether the goals of the workshop were met, the post-event survey directly asked participants if, as a result of the workshop, whether they agreed the goals had been met. Again, half of participants strongly agreed with each individual statement (n=2) and half of them agreed (n=2).

Workshop Content

Workshop content was focused around three main ideas: the six principles of mindfulness as described by O'Connor (2020), the shift from traditional to critical service-learning as defined by Mitchell (2008), and the Ladder of Citizen Participation as described by Arnstein (1969). Much of these are complex topics heavily based in theory. Given that the audience of this workshop were college students part of a civic engagement fellowship, and not necessarily

practitioners in the civic engagement field, I attempted to teach the theory in a way that was true to the spirit of it, but also steeped it in real-world context to make it relevant.

Mindfulness

To teach that first main idea, the six principles of mindfulness, I shared each of the six principles on a presentation and talked through each of them with examples. I attempted to share as much personal context as I could for mindfulness. The idea of mindfulness was introduced with my own story of how I discovered it: through my personal mental health journey. I then continued to share examples of how some of the six principles have been relevant in my life. As an example, I illustrated the "Effectively" principle by discussing how I try to avoid living my life by the "shoulds," or the external pressures that tell you that you "should" be living your life a certain way. It often manifests in feeling like I should be eating healthier, should be more innovative at my job, or should spend more time reading for pleasure. While many of these things may be debatably positive pressures, they should all be taken with a grain of salt. If they aren't achievable goals, at least at this point in my life, dwelling on how I "should" be doing them is not helpful. I shared with participants that this has been one of the most personally meaningful elements of mindfulness in my own life. In response to that statement, I received a few questions about how exactly I discovered mindfulness and was asked for further explanation of how mindfulness has been meaningful to me. From my own vantage point, it appeared that participants really enjoyed this discussion. They were highly engaged in it. In the post-event survey, one participant even shared that they would have liked to see added "more life experience scenarios or examples".

Sharing my personal examples was ultimately good and helped participants understand the content. However, it was clear that they wanted more. In the moment that the workshop was

happening, I was attempting to balance between over-sharing and sticking to the theory. I was afraid of going too far off-script and not getting through the material in a meaningful way. Upon reflecting on this, I do believe that more examples would have only been better; it added needed context to the theory and built rapport between myself and the participants.

Participants rated that they felt that they could explain mindfulness to a friend. The overall goal of teaching the mindfulness topic was that participants could experience *deep learning*, being able to understand as well as apply the knowledge (Biggs, 1987). Assessment of deep learning was done through Activity 2 which asked participants to discuss the principles of mindfulness as they relate to social topics. I was impressed with the richness of conversation that came out of that activity, as well as the corresponding Jamboard notes. Participants were responding to each other's comments and engaging in a group conversation. If I were to do this workshop again, I would not necessarily change anything about that activity.

The semi-structured interview provided an additional lens into how this activity may have been experienced by participants. The Newman Civic Fellowship program administrator described this activity as "lifting the weight off our shoulders" when discussing social topics. Within the context of this activity, this means that in addressing the complexities of social topics, we can lift the burden from ourselves and think about all the factors that go into them. We can choose to accept the way things are, while simultaneously working towards change.

Service-Learning

There were a few considerations when teaching the topic of service-learning. The workshop was specifically designed for an audience of students heavily engaged in community work. There was an expectation that students would not necessarily need a basic explanation of service-learning. I attempted to cover the basics in a way that respected the experience of the

students, yet also described the appropriate context of the term itself. I figured that many campuses may not necessarily use the term "service-learning," so it was necessary to define basic terms. However, more complex elements of this section of the workshop – critical-service-learning and the Ladder of Citizen Participation – were intentionally described in ways that assumed participants had no knowledge of them before the workshop.

To describe the shift from traditional to critical service-learning, I discussed the dynamics of partnership between universities and communities. All the participants shared in their survey that they strongly agree that they could explain critical service-learning to a friend, which suggests that topic was taught effectively.

Ladder of Citizen Participation

The Ladder of Citizen Participation was taught as a way to frame the relationship between universities and communities. This theory was the most difficult to teach. While the theory is neatly organized into a diagram that is easy to look at, each of the rungs are complex relationship dynamics. Larger groupings of rungs of the proverbial ladder were explained in the context of this relationship, with examples and effects of the relationship at each grouping. I did not go into the differences between each rung. I did not find a meaningful difference between partnership and delegated power, for example, in the context of this workshop. I explained the bottom rungs of the ladder, nonparticipation; the middle rungs, degrees of tokenism; and the top rungs, degrees of citizen power.

As one of the more complex elements of the workshop, the way I taught the Ladder of Citizen Participation received mixed responses. In the post-event survey, one participant disagreed that they could explain the concept to a friend. In open-ended responses, one person asked for "more explanation" of the theory with "additional visuals;" another shared they were

"confused" by the theory. These responses suggest that there should have been additional thought put into how this theory was taught. These responses suggest that this theory could have been taught by including more examples, real-world context or open discussion. The following activity also did not directly address that theory, so it was never put into practice. If I were to do this workshop again, I would dedicate more time and presentation slides to the theory and include an activity that can give participants an opportunity to discuss it. I would not want to omit the theory altogether, because it is such an integral piece to the workshop content.

The final activity, the *Letter to Your Future Self*, was difficult to assess. Due to the private nature of the activity – writing a letter to yourself that was not shared with others – it was not possible to assess how participants were able to tie together all the previous elements of the workshop. While the discussion after this activity was rich, only a handful of participants actually participated in it. For those who did participate, it appeared that they had a good understanding of the overall content. If I were to do this activity again, I would consider ways to incorporate the Ladder of Citizen Participation and give participants an opportunity to practice the theory. I would also consider building assessment into the activity, in ways such as another Jamboard or a discussion for participants to share their understanding of the theory.

Semi-Structured Interview

The interview with a program administrator of the Newman Civic Fellowship program was an important "look behind the curtain" of how speakers are chosen for the fellowship meetings, the future direction of the program and how it will continue to evolve with more in-person programming. The program administrator spoke about each potential partner was assessed on their potential fit with the goals of the organization. This is to be expected, as the fellowship program is a well-known, national program with a large number of participants. For

organizations who want to promote job opportunities, highlight the work they do, or recruit volunteers, presenting to the Newman Civic Fellows is an ideal way to go.

The conversation with the program administrator made me wonder if there may be additional opportunities for a workshop like this to find new audiences. The Newman Civic Fellowship program was chosen because its fellows were assumed to all have a baseline understanding of service-learning, and to all have past service-learning experience that they could reflect upon. Much of the workshop (particularly the *Letter to your Future Self* activity) would not have been effective if the audience did not have previous service-learning experience to reflect upon. All that being said, there are certainly many avenues that could have been pursued. One idea of this would be working with a service-learning course at an institution. This would have included a group of students all engaged in the same or very similar types of service work, who would have a classroom component to that work, in which a workshop would fit neatly into their regular course requirements.

Overall, the workshop format for exploring how to incorporate mindfulness into reflection on service-learning was successful in many aspects. Participants demonstrated some deep learning of new theories by connecting them to personal experiences. They were able to apply new tools to reflect on their service-learning in deeper, more meaningful ways. Most indicated they plan to implement some form of mindfulness in the future. The program administrator of the Newman Civic Fellowship noted that the topic is needed in their program. Activities and discussions were critical to the success, which reinforces the idea that engaging participants in hands-on activities helps them learn new concepts. With the new skills and theories they discovered in this workshop, most participants felt confident they could explain various concepts to a friend. While this workshop was a one-time activity, its impact was

hopefully continued forward by participants continuing to share the information in their campuses and communities.

Limitations of the Project

One limitation of this project was that it was held completely online, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and that the Newman Civic Fellowship also conducts its programming online, at the time of this project. While the virtual environment allows anyone to participate no matter where they are in the world, people are constantly bombarded with virtual panels, workshops, meetings, conferences and events. College students feel the weight of this "virtual burnout" – they have experienced, at the time of this workshop, almost two full years of the pandemic and doing their schooling mostly or fully online. It is difficult to get students excited about attending a virtual workshop, especially one that was scheduled for two hours.

The timing of this workshop was also not ideal. It took place on a Tuesday afternoon from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m., Eastern Standard Time. I believe that all participants were in the Eastern time zone, based on the locations of their universities. However, it was clear that participants were losing energy towards the end of the workshop. That may be one reason why participation in the third activity was not as strong as the first or second. In fact, the workshop ended earlier than expected because participation in that third activity was not as strong as the previous activities.

Implications for Future Projects

Future projects on using mindfulness to reflect on service-learning should certainly work with participants who do have some prior knowledge of service-learning or are actively engaged in service-learning. I would be interested to see how a future project may take form if students are currently engaged in service-learning, but newer to it – such as a first-year experience

service-learning course, where students are still building their sense of civic identity and finding their place in the larger community.

Future projects should incorporate hands-on activities to illustrate each principal topic. The data suggests that the first topic of mindfulness was better understood than the second topic of critical service-learning. One major difference between how these two topics were taught was the corresponding activity. Mindfulness had an activity that allowed participants to practice it; the topic of critical service-learning did not culminate in an activity that directly practiced its principal theory.

The importance of this project is in the introduction of the practice of mindfulness as a method to guide reflection of service-learning. More work is needed to evaluate various practices of mindfulness and how they may be useful to guide reflection.

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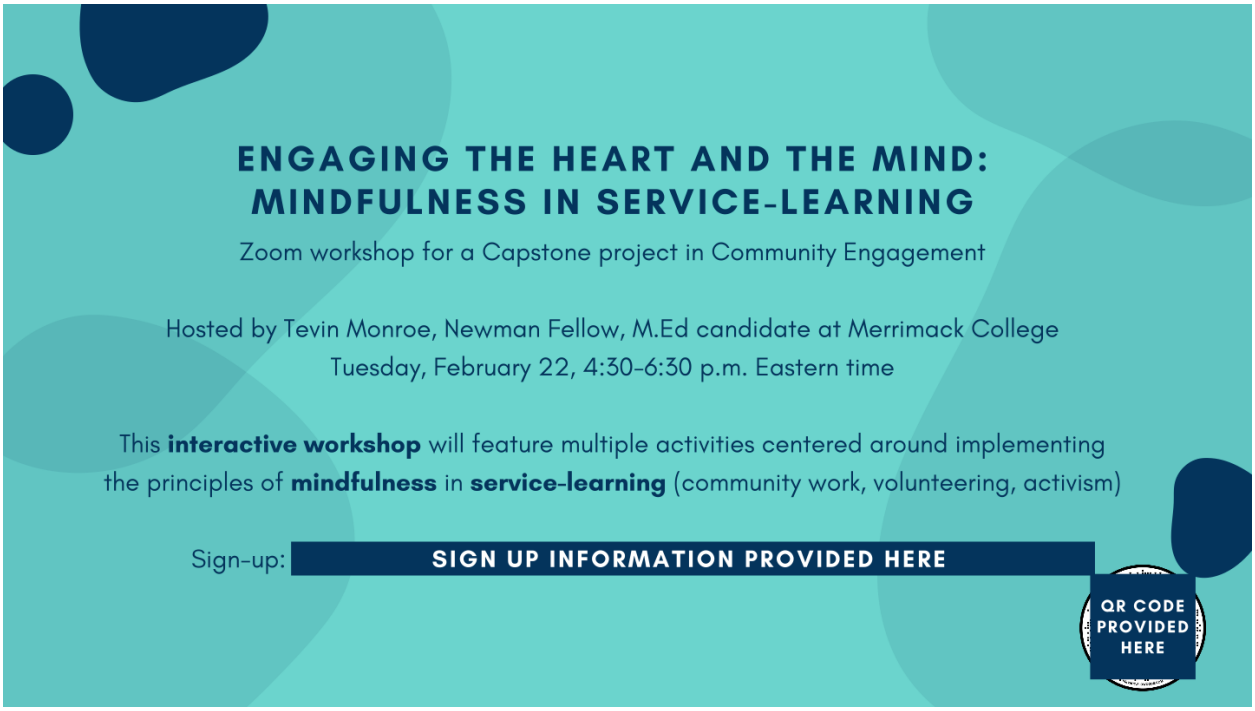
Appendix A: Workshop Announcement



Appendix B: Workshop Agenda

Time	Description	Materials
10 mins Start 2 min late 3: intro 5: Mentimeter **4:30-4:40**	Introductions, Zoom etiquette Ice Breaker: "Body Check-in" • I will **introduce** myself, **thank everyone for attending**, share some of the goals for the presentation, then ask participants to do an icebreaker. • I will ask participants to submit to a Mentimeter presentation: *Do a quick check-in of how your body is feeling. In 1-3 words, where are you at right now?* • This activity will set the standard for participants to slow down and focus on their thoughts, feelings and emotions. It may also give them the space to consider what might be blocking them from fully participating in the activity (i.e. holding stress somewhere in their body, feeling tired, anxious).	Mentimeter
15 mins **4:40-4:55**	Topic 1: Mindfulness • Introducing the concept of mindfulness. Utilizing the six principles described by O'Connor (2020). • Main takeaways: Mindfulness is not necessarily a spiritual practice; it can simply be a framework in which to reflect on difficult topics. Those who practice mindfulness can become comfortable with acceptance and change simultaneously – accepting things as they are while also working towards change.	Canva presentation
40 mins 5: intro 25: breakout rooms 10: sharing **4:55-5:35**	Mindfulness Activity: Acceptance & Change • This activity will draw on the principle of *acceptance and change*. • Participants will use breakout rooms and focus on one topic/issue. *Examples: racial justice, COVID-19 pandemic, education equity, social determinants of health.* • Jamboards will be utilized where participants can put sticky notes of words/phrases that demonstrate *acceptance* and those that demonstrate *change* related to the topic. • Debrief: Each group will share their topic and some of their sticky notes. *Examples of probing questions: How did it feel to separate out acceptance and change? Which side was easier to write? What made it difficult?*	Zoom breakout rooms Jamboard
10 mins **5:35-5:45**	Topic 2: Critical Service-Learning • Defining critical service-learning; differentiating it from traditional service-learning or volunteerism. Putting community needs first. • Explaining the Ladder of Citizen Participation theory. • Key takeaway: Creating a reciprocal relationship between yourself and the community you serve.	Canva presentation
35 mins 5: intro	Critical Service-Learning Activity: What, So What, Now What • In this activity, participants will engage in the activity "What, So What, Now What" by reflecting on the current service or community work they are doing.	Zoom breakout rooms FutureMe.org

20: breakout rooms 10: sharing **5:45-6:15**	• Participants will go into Breakout rooms to cover their What, So What, Now What. Before this activity, I will ask them to pull up the FutureMe.org website to take notes in – and encourage them to complete the letter after the workshop. • Participants will write a letter to their future self (the "letter" being the activity above) using the website FutureMe.org. They will be able to select when the letter is returned to them, though I will suggest at least six months from now. They will be given 5-10 minutes to write this on their own time. • Debrief will be done either in the larger group or in breakout rooms. Participants will share their experiences with the activity. *Examples of probing questions: What event did you write about? Did you uncover anything new in this different way of processing/reflecting on the event? Was there anything significant about the date you chose to send this?* • Key outcome of this activity is putting into the practice the balance of acceptance and change, as well as the six principles of mindfulness. When the letters are sent back to the participants, they will be able to look back and reflect on this workshop and whether the things they learned have been impactful.	
10 mins **6:15-6:25**	Wrap-up and final thoughts on workshop • Open discussion for participants to share thoughts or reactions to any of the topics or activities. • Share works cited and some suggestions on where participants can learn more information. • Distribute post-event survey	Post-event survey

Appendix C: Observation Rubric

Topics	Exceptional	Good	Needs Improvement
Learning outcomes were communicated	Outcomes were clear to the participants, available in writing, reiterated throughout the presentation	Outcomes were stated but not elaborated on or not provided in writing in the presentation	Outcomes were not addressed or were not provided in any way to reinforce the outcomes
Notes:			
Supplemental materials were utilized	Participants utilized the take-home document and referred to it throughout the workshop	Participants utilized the take-home document at times but did not refer to it	Participants were unaware of the utility of the take-home document or did not use it at all
Notes:			
Activity 1 was clearly communicated and engaged participants in a dialogue	Most participants answered the question candidly, and many of them shared further detail on their response	Some participants answered candidly, and a few of them shared further detail	Very little participation in this activity, both in initially answering the question as well as speaking out
Notes:			
Activity 2 was clearly communicated and met the learning outcomes in small group discussions	Participants draw on nearly all principles of mindfulness in their Jamboard notes	Participants draw on a handful of principles of mindfulness in their Jamboard notes	Participants do not utilize any of the principles of mindfulness in their Jamboard notes
Notes:			
Activity 2 was clearly communicated and met the learning outcomes in debrief	Participants demonstrate meaningful connections between their social topic and principles of mindfulness	Participants demonstrate some connections between their social topic and principles of mindfulness	Participants do not demonstrate connections between their social topic and principles of mindfulness
Notes:			
Activity 3 was clearly communicated and met the learning outcomes in debrief	Participants describe service-learning experiences, fully utilizing the framework provided	Participants describe service-learning experiences, vaguely utilizing the framework	Participants describe service-learning experiences, but do not utilize the framework at all
Notes:			

Appendix D: Post-Event Evaluation

Overall, how would you rate this workshop?

	Excellent	Good	Okay	Poor
Overall rating	○	○	○	○

Please answer the following statements

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The goals of the event were clear	○	○	○	○
The content was relevant to me	○	○	○	○
The topic of mindfulness was interesting	○	○	○	○
The topic of service-learning was interesting	○	○	○	○
Activity 1 (Mentimeter check-in) was impactful	○	○	○	○
Activity 2 (Acceptance & Change) was impactful	○	○	○	○
Activity 3 (Letter to your Future Self) was impactful	○	○	○	○

Before this workshop, how aware were you of mindfulness?

- ○ Extremely aware - I could teach a class on it
- ○ Somewhat aware - I knew it existed but didn't know the details
- ○ Not aware at all - I had never heard of it or only vaguely knew of it

How would you describe your participation in service-learning?

- ○ Extremely active - I consistently volunteer in my community
- ○ Somewhat active - I volunteer when I can
- ○ Not active at all - I do not volunteer much at all

As a result of this workshop...

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I understand how to practice mindfulness.	○	○	○	○
I understand how to practice mindfulness as I reflect on my service-learning.	○	○	○	○
I understand how to promote mindfulness practices among my peers.	○	○	○	○

I am confident that I could explain the following concepts to a friend...

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Mindfulness (generally)	○	○	○	○
The six principles of mindfulness	○	○	○	○
Traditional vs. critical service-learning	○	○	○	○
The Ladder of Citizen Participation	○	○	○	○

What was the best part of this workshop?

Your answer

If this workshop were offered again, what would you like to see added?

Your answer

What (if anything) about this workshop was challenging (i.e. got you out of your comfort zone)?

Your answer

What was this workshop lacking?

Your answer

Demographic questions
A few questions about you. These will not be used to identify you.

Your major(s) and/or minor(s)?

Your answer

Your class year?

- ○ First year (undergrad)
- ○ Second year (undergrad)
- ○ Third year (undergrad)
- ○ Fourth year (undergrad)
- ○ Fifth+ year (undergrad)
- ○ Graduate student (any year)
- ○ Other:

How would you describe your religious background?

Your answer

How religious are you?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not religious at all	○	○	○	○	○	Extremely religious

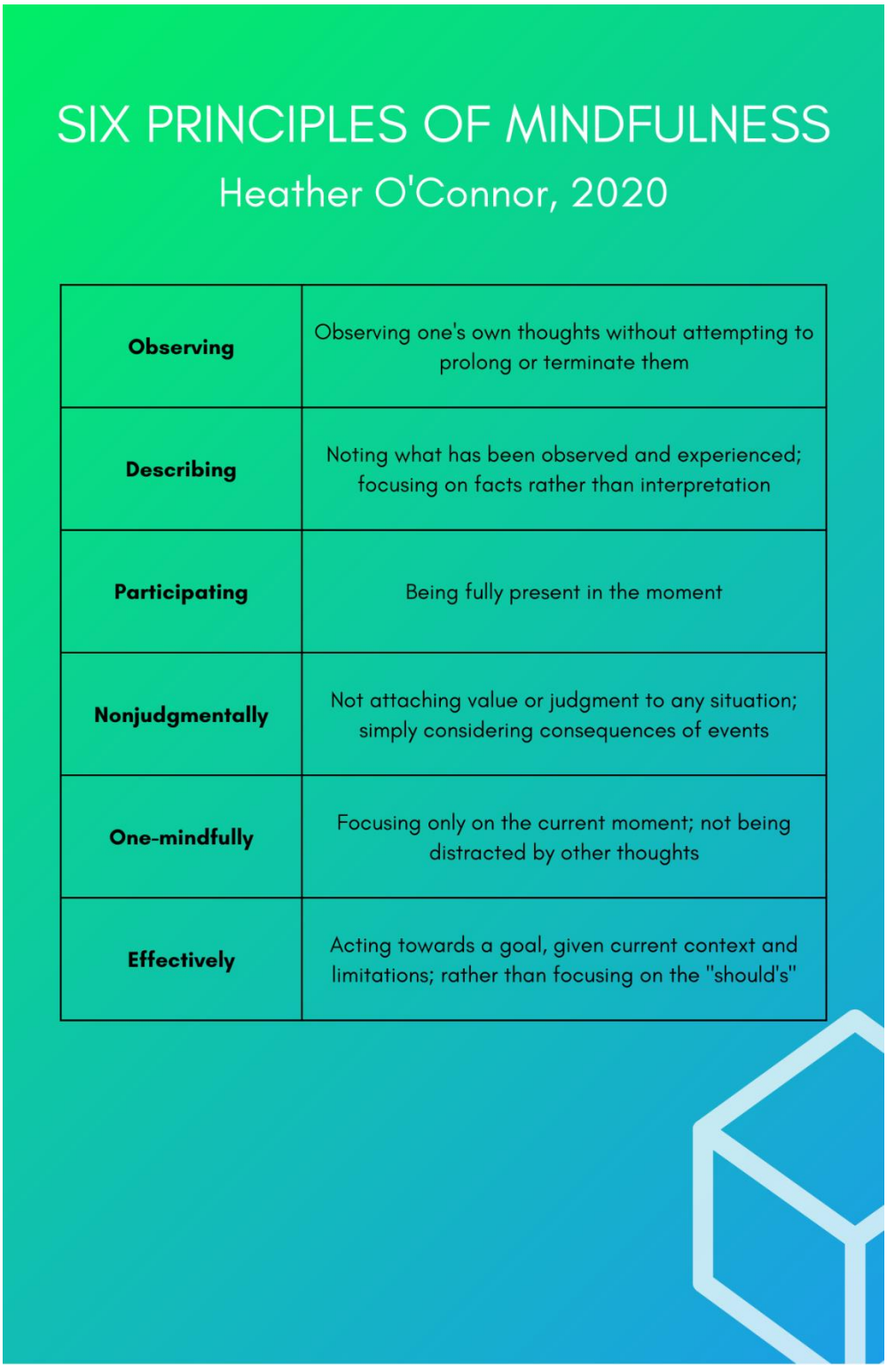
How would you describe your role in service-learning on your campus? Select all that apply.

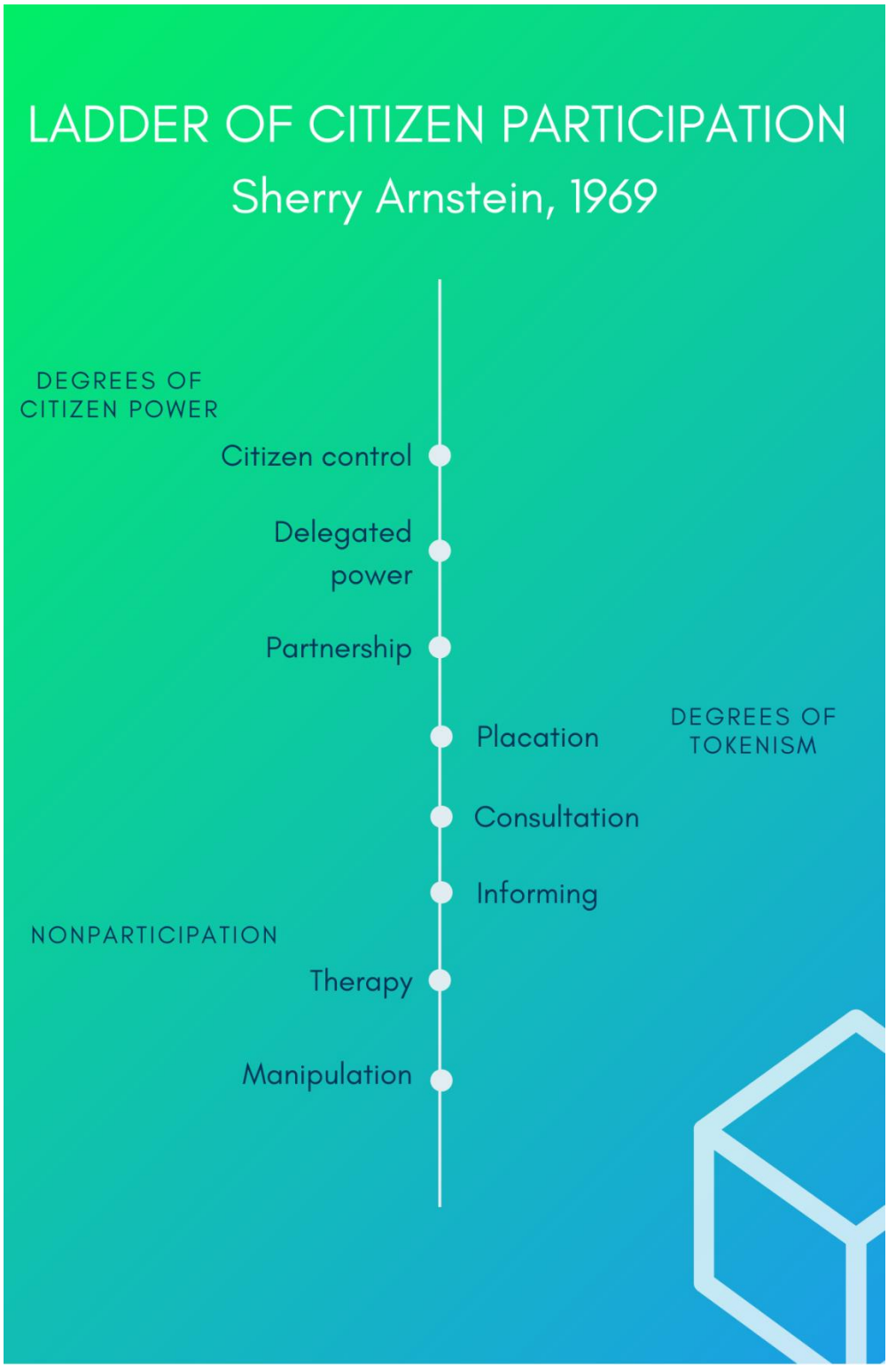
- [ ] Participant - I participate when I can
- [ ] Leader - I have a leadership role in service-learning
- [ ] Advisor - I advise on service-learning work happening but do not directly engage
- [ ] Reflector - I have a role in planning/executing on reflection on service-learning
- [ ] Other:

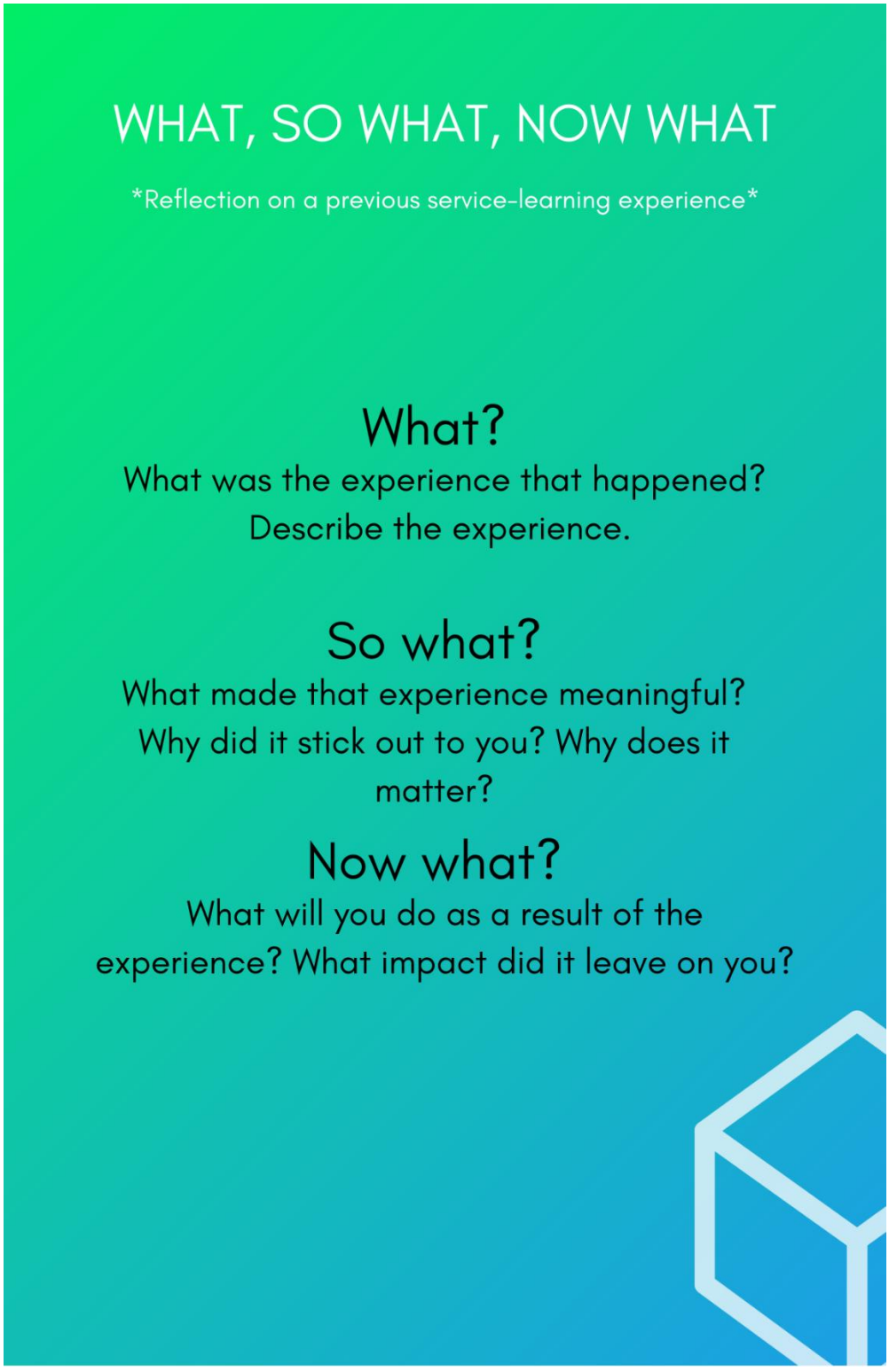
Any other comments you would like to share about this workshop?

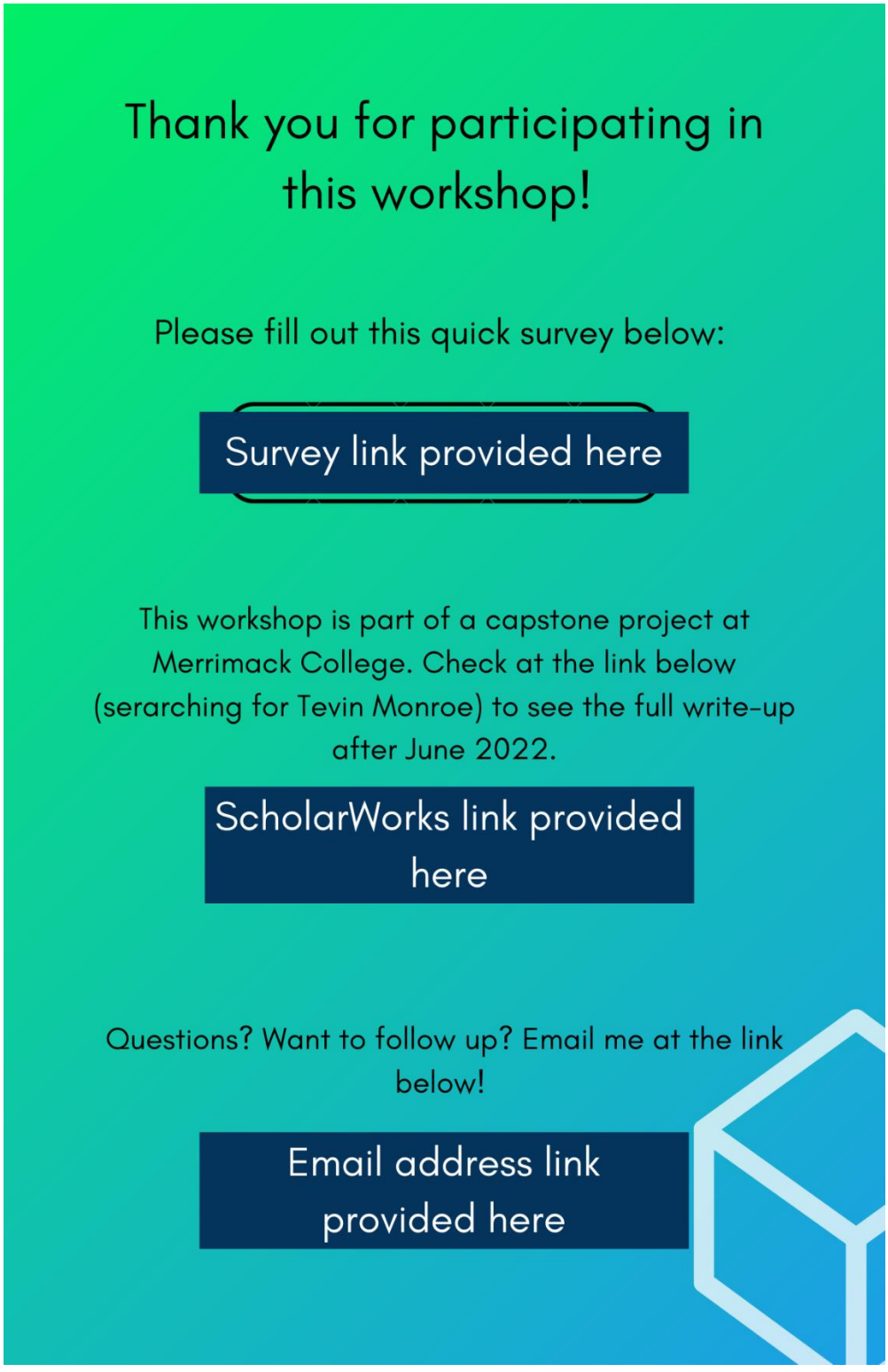
Your answer

Appendix E: Workshop Take-Home Document


SIX PRINCIPLES OF MINDFULNESS
Heather O'Connor, 2020
Observing
Observing one's own thoughts without attempting to prolong or terminate them
Describing
Noting what has been observed and experienced; focusing on facts rather than interpretation
Participating
Being fully present in the moment
Nonjudgmentally
Not attaching value or judgment to any situation; simply considering consequences of events
One-mindfully
Focusing only on the current moment; not being distracted by other thoughts
Effectively
Acting towards a goal, given current context and limitations; rather than focusing on the "should's"


LADDER OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION
Sherry Arnstein, 1969
DEGREES OF CITIZEN POWER
Citizen control
Delegated power
Partnership
Placation
DEGREES OF TOKENISM
Consultation
Informing
NONPARTICIPATION
Therapy
Manipulation


WHAT, SO WHAT, NOW WHAT
Reflection on a previous service-learning experience
What?
What was the experience that happened? Describe the experience.
So what?
What made that experience meaningful? Why did it stick out to you? Why does it matter?
Now what?
What will you do as a result of the experience? What impact did it leave on you?


Thank you for participating in this workshop!
Please fill out this quick survey below:
Survey link provided here
This workshop is part of a capstone project at Merrimack College. Check at the link below (serarching for Tevin Monroe) to see the full write-up after June 2022.
ScholarWorks link provided here
Questions? Want to follow up? Email me at the link below!
Email address link provided here

Suggested reading:

Kabat-Zinn, J. (1994). Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life. Hyperion.

O'Connor, H. (2020). Mindfulness as a foundation for reflection: Applying principles from Dialectical Behavior Therapy to service-learning instruction. Journal of Nonprofit Education and Leadership, 10(2), 123-138. https://doi.org/10.18666/JNEL-2020-V10-I2-10091

Full list of references:

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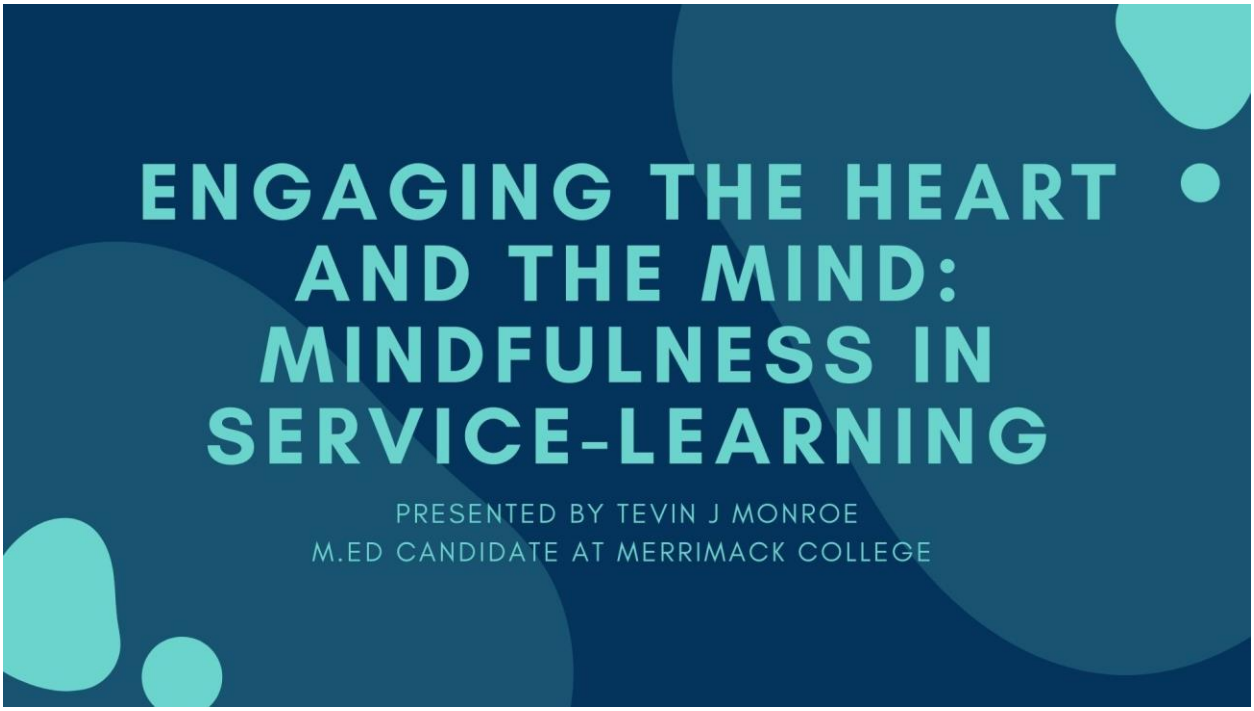
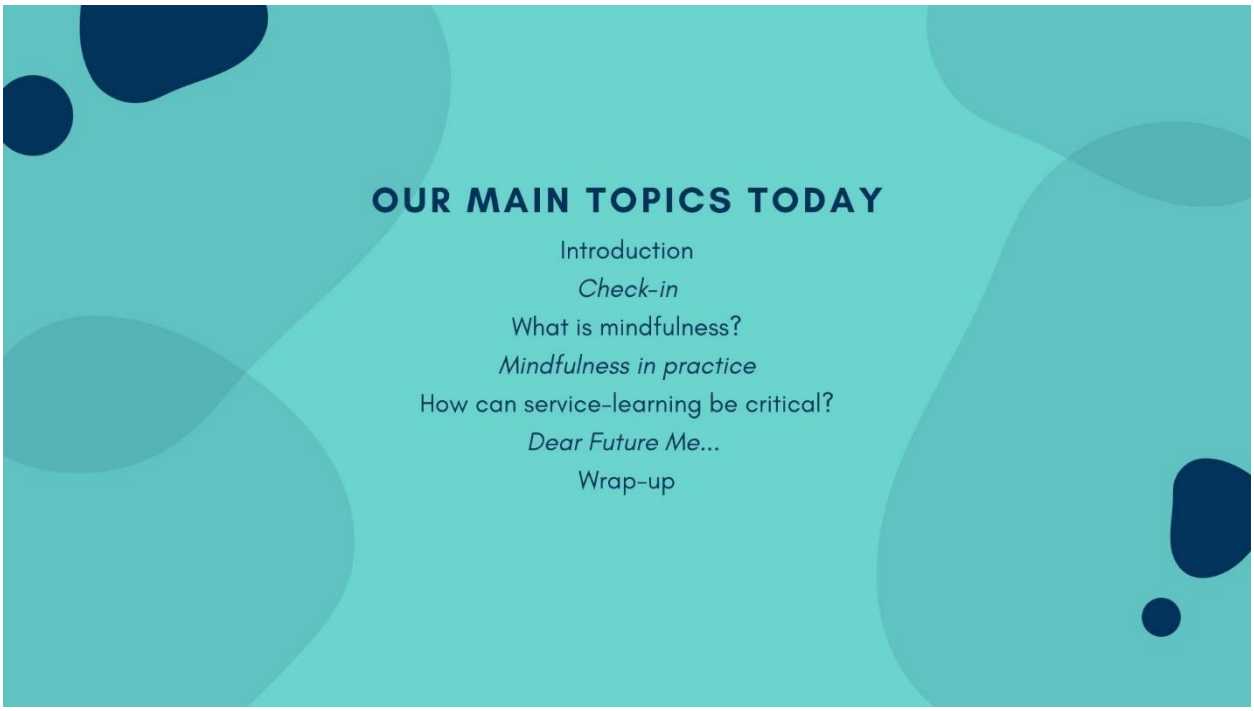
Appendix F: Workshop Presentation





Some notes

Feel free to utilize the **chat** function of the Zoom
Make sure you are on **mute** if not speaking
If you need help during the workshop, you can message Julielys
This workshop will be **interactive**!
Download the **take-home document** for links and supplemental information
"Vegas principle"

"We": Universities

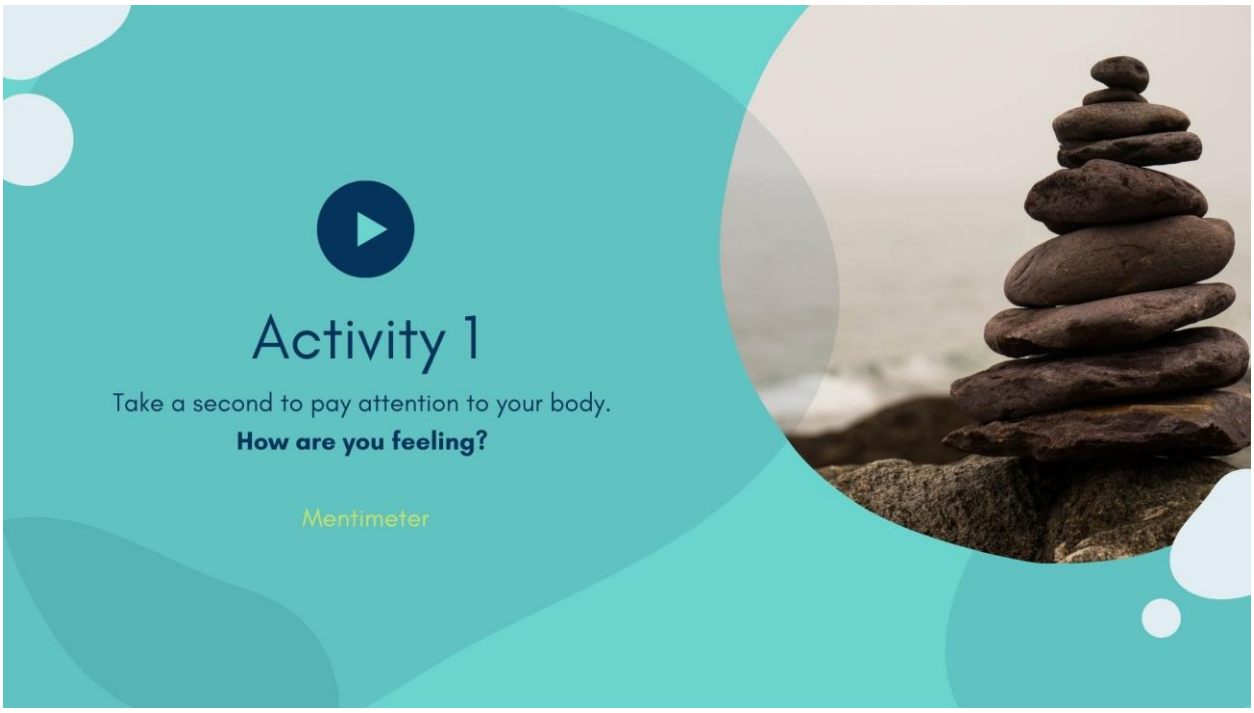
GOALS FOR THIS WORKSHOP

Participants will **understand the principles of mindfulness** and how to utilize them in their daily lives.

Participants will **practice utilizing mindfulness principles** as they **reflect upon their own service-learning**.

Participants will discover ways to **promote mindfulness strategies among their peers**.


QUICK FACTS ABOUT TEVIN
Pronouns: he/him/his
Hometown: Kalamazoo, Michigan
Day job: Recruiting for a finance internship
What I do for fun: Watch (and re-watch) Marvel movies


Activity 1
Take a second to pay attention to your body.
How are you feeling?
Mentimeter

WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

"Mindfulness is *paying attention* in a particular way:
on purpose,
in the present moment, and
nonjudgmentally."

- Jon Kabat-Zinn

MINDFULNESS IS...

A different way to think and reflect.

Informed by many years of scholarship.

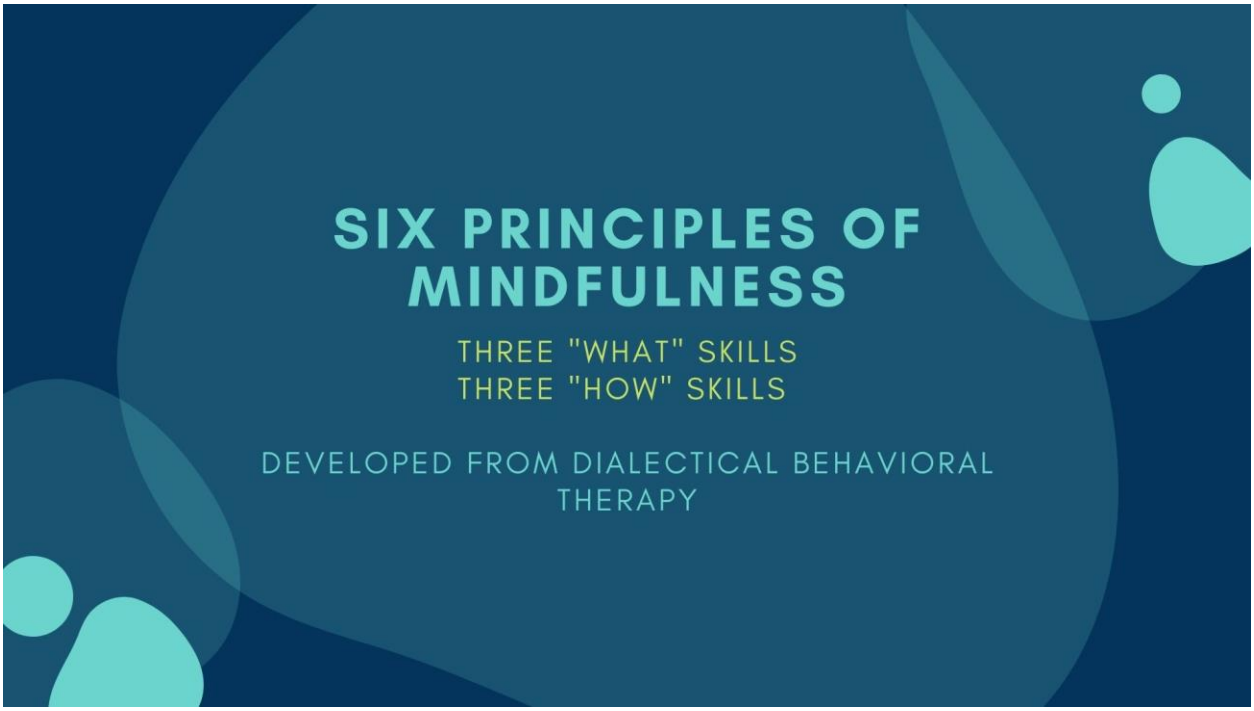
Easily implemented into your daily life.

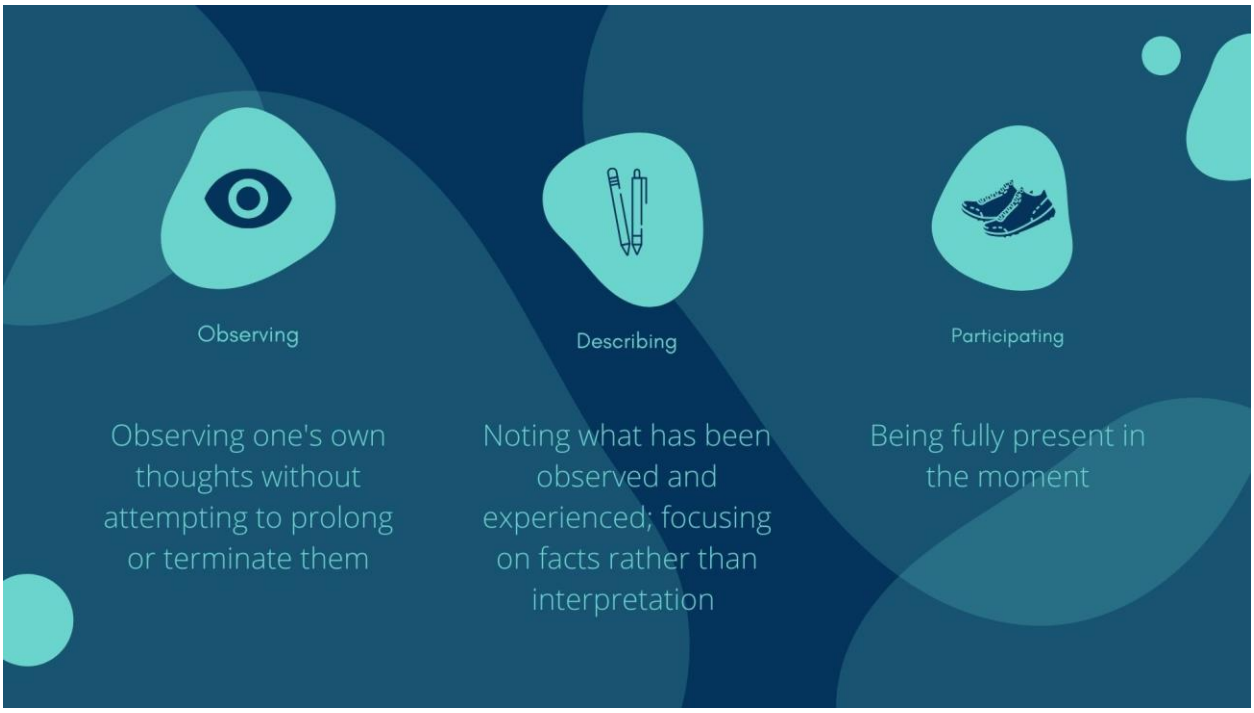
MINDFULNESS IS NOT...

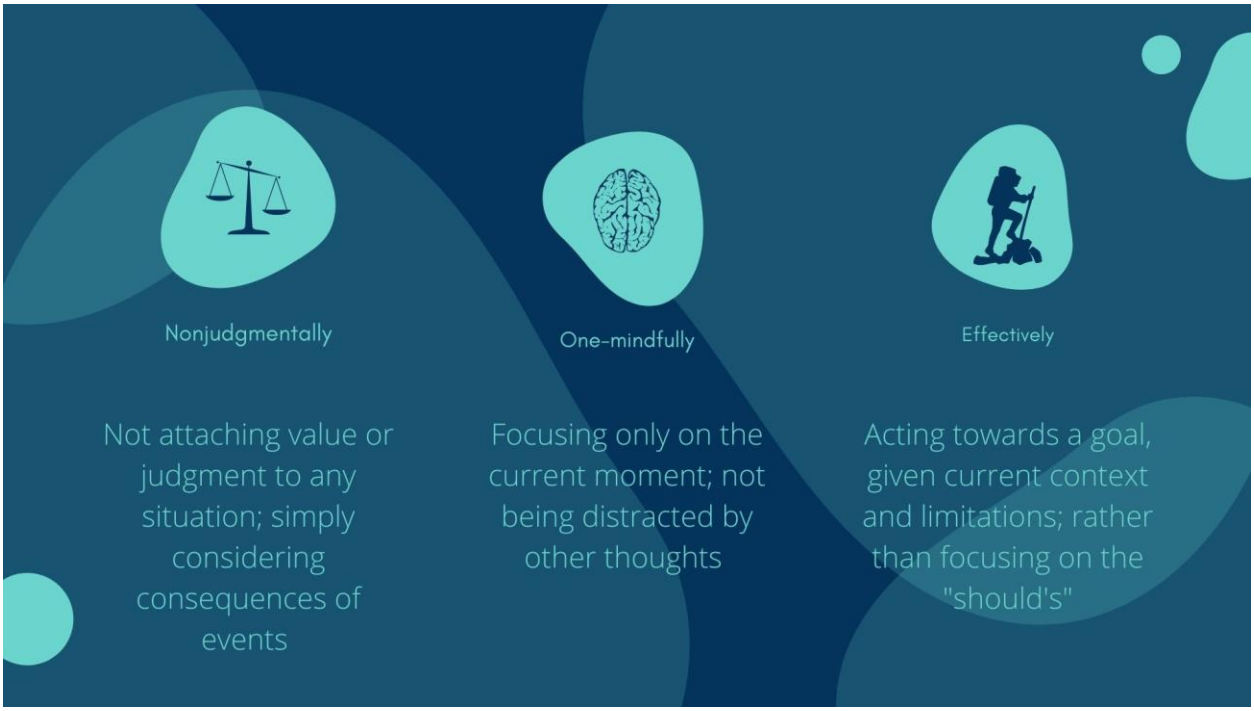
Solely a spiritual practice.

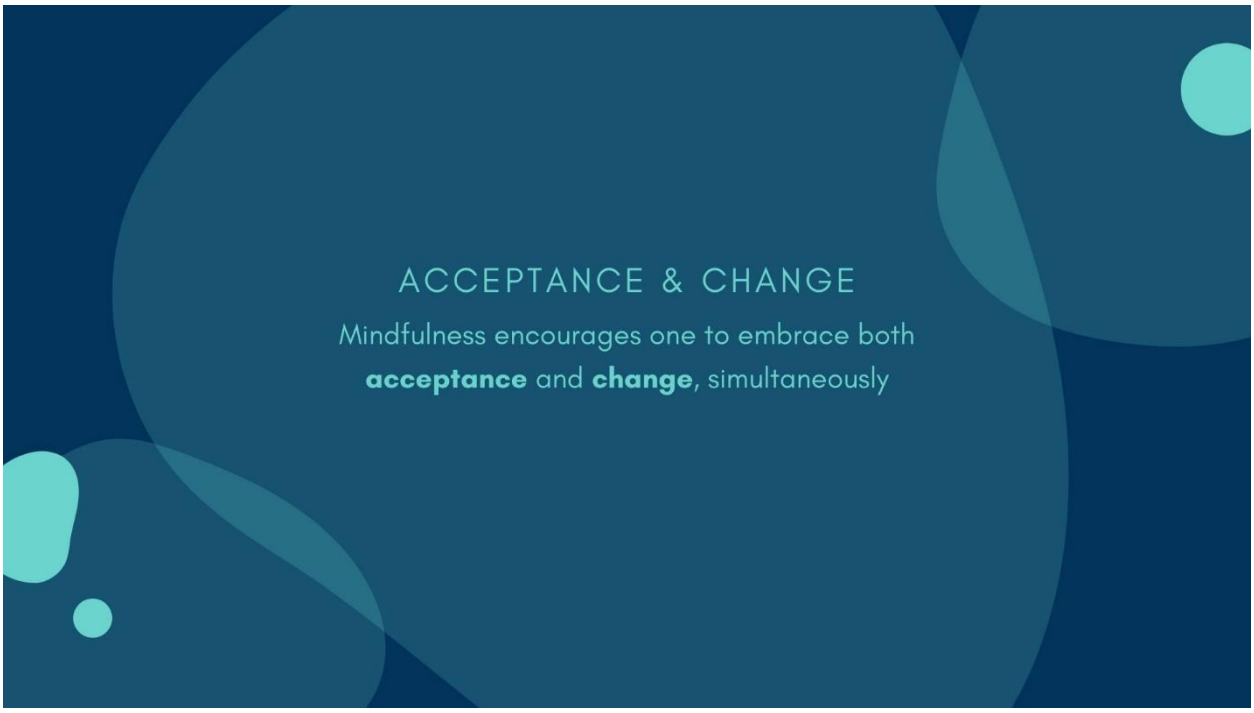
An inflexible and rigid tradition.

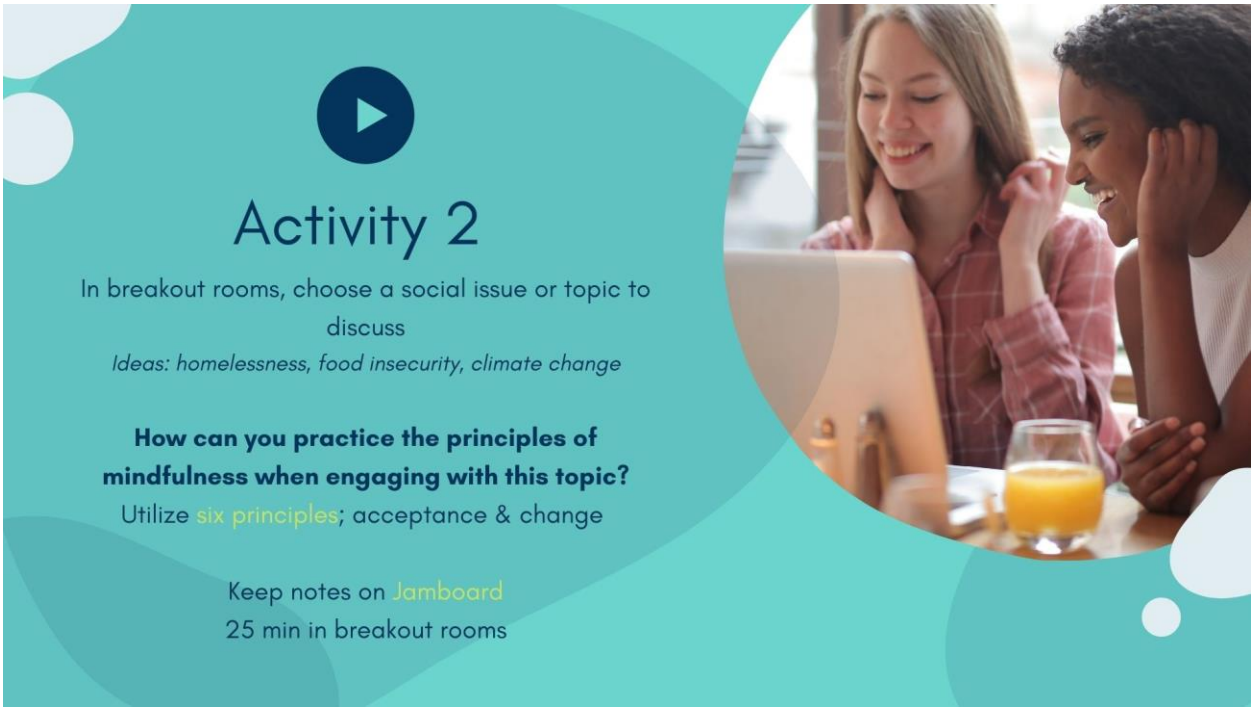
Only accessible through meditation.


SIX PRINCIPLES OF MINDFULNESS
THREE "WHAT" SKILLS
THREE "HOW" SKILLS
DEVELOPED FROM DIALECTICAL BEHAVIORAL THERAPY


Observing
Observing one's own thoughts without attempting to prolong or terminate them
Describing
Noting what has been observed and experienced; focusing on facts rather than interpretation
Participating
Being fully present in the moment

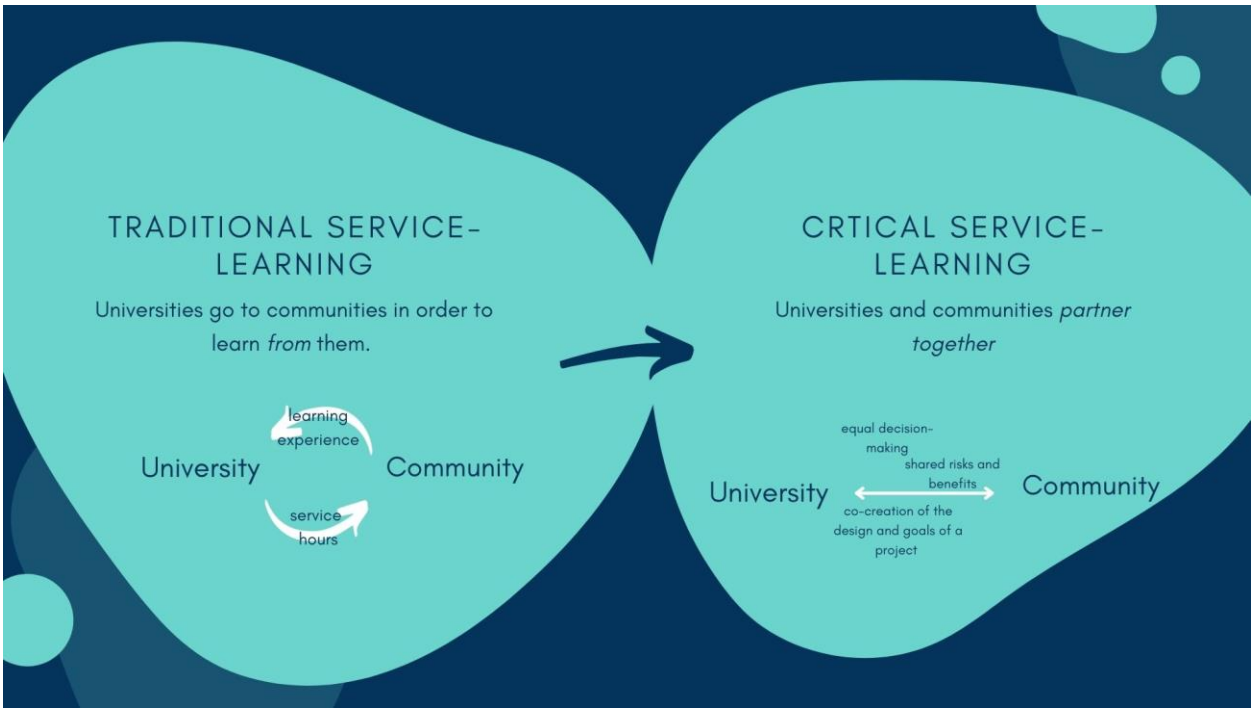

Nonjudgmentally
Not attaching value or judgment to any situation; simply considering consequences of events
One-mindfully
Focusing only on the current moment; not being distracted by other thoughts
Effectively
Acting towards a goal, given current context and limitations; rather than focusing on the "should's"

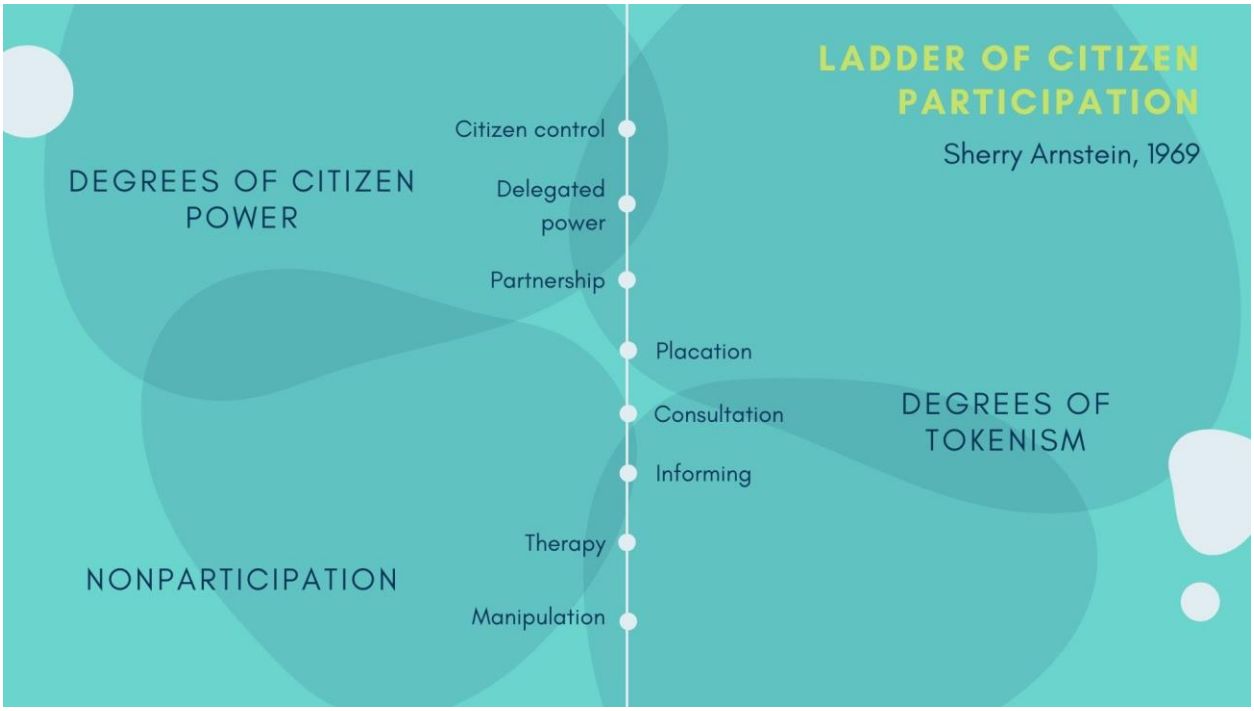

ACCEPTANCE & CHANGE
Mindfulness encourages one to embrace both
acceptance and change, simultaneously

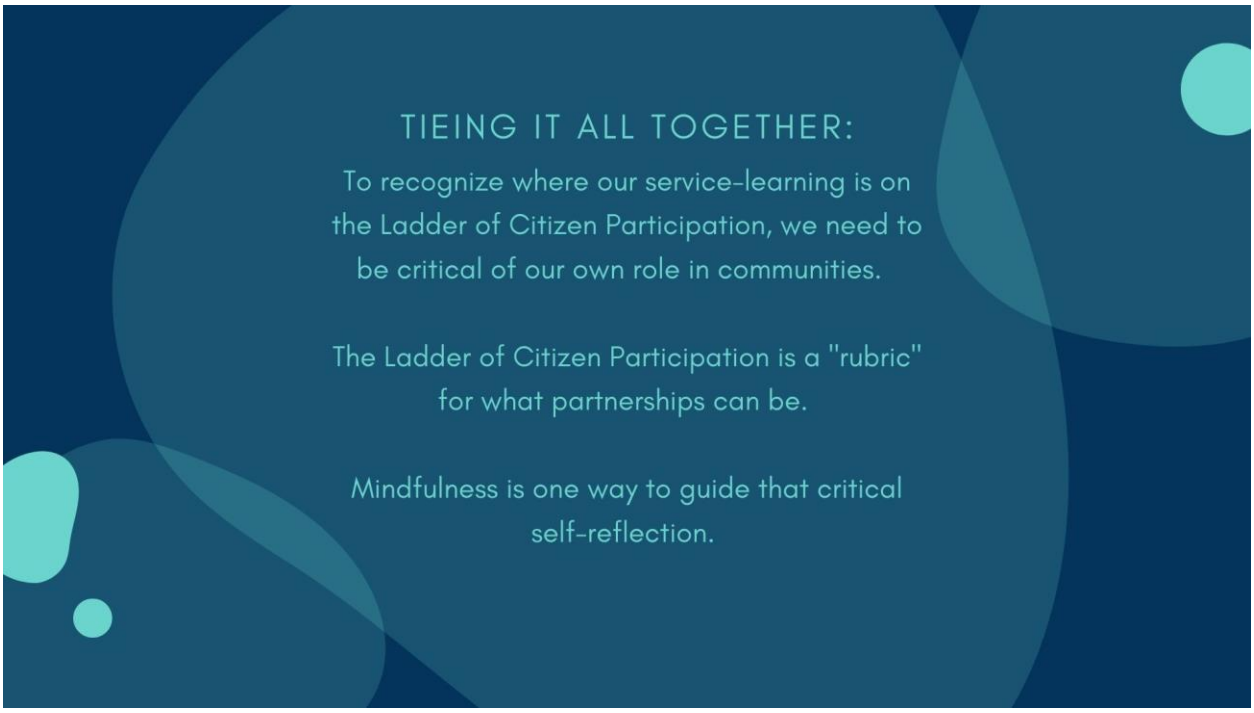

Activity 2
In breakout rooms, choose a social issue or topic to discuss
Ideas: homelessness, food insecurity, climate change
How can you practice the principles of mindfulness when engaging with this topic?
Utilize six principles; acceptance & change
Keep notes on Jamboard
25 min in breakout rooms

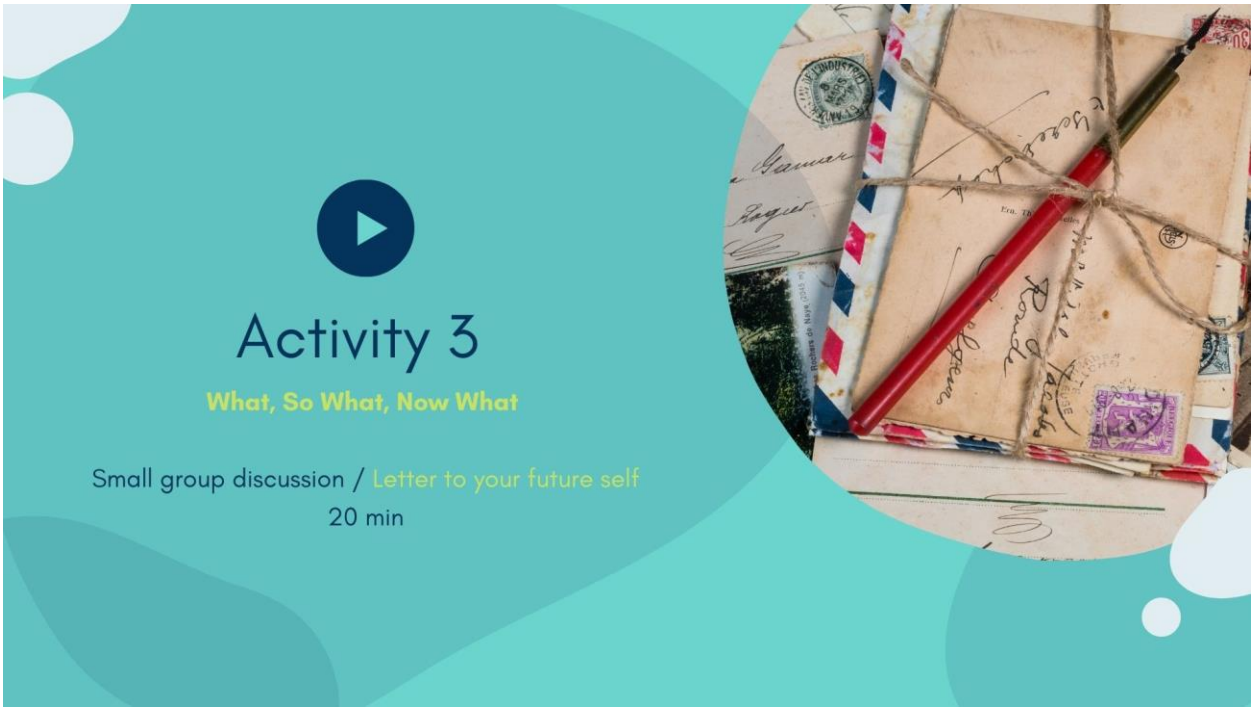

SERVICE-LEARNING
TRADITIONAL VS. CRITICAL SERVICE-LEARNING


WHAT IS SERVICE-LEARNING?
Service-learning, as a philosophy, is
"Human growth and purpose, a social vision, an approach to community, and a way of knowing."
- Jane C. Kendall


TRADITIONAL SERVICE-LEARNING
Universities go to communities in order to learn *from* them.
learning experience
University
Community
service hours
CRTICAL SERVICE-LEARNING
Universities and communities *partner together*
equal decision-making
shared risks and benefits
University
Community
co-creation of the design and goals of a project


LADDER OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION
Sherry Arnstein, 1969
DEGREES OF CITIZEN POWER
Citizen control
Delegated power
Partnership
Placation
Consultation
Informing
DEGREES OF TOKENISM
Therapy
NONPARTICIPATION
Manipulation


TIEING IT ALL TOGETHER:
To recognize where our service-learning is on the Ladder of Citizen Participation, we need to be critical of our own role in communities.
The Ladder of Citizen Participation is a "rubric" for what partnerships can be.
Mindfulness is one way to guide that critical self-reflection.


Activity 3
What, So What, Now What
Small group discussion / Letter to your future self
20 min


Thank you SO MUCH for attending!
Please fill out the post-event survey