

Mindfulness Matters: The Experience of Mindfulness Activity Facilitation by Faculty

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ABSTRACT

Background: Faculty and students have experienced increased stress and challenges over the past years. Mindfulness is a strategy that has been used in classrooms to help manage those challenges; however, there is limited research on the faculty experience of leading mindfulness activities in the classroom.

Aim: This research aimed to explore how university faculty perceive the experience of using brief mindfulness activities in the classroom.

Methods: This pilot study examined use of brief instructor-led mindfulness activities in the classroom. A descriptive qualitative design was used to examine faculty perceptions associated with leading mindfulness activities. Eight faculty teaching undergraduate and graduate students at a private midwestern research-intensive university, from four different schools, participated.

Results: Faculty perceived the brief mindfulness activities they led as encouraging students' well-being and mental health, helping students to transition into the classroom, fostering connection and community among faculty and students, demonstrating care and support of students, and helping faculty support their own self-development and well-being.



Conclusions: Leading brief mindfulness activities in the classroom provides benefits for faculty. Faculty perceive those practices to also be beneficial for students. More qualitative research is recommended to better understand the comprehensive effects and experiences associated with mindfulness practice in the classroom.

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BACKGROUND

Faculty teaching in higher education have experienced more stressors over the last few years (Evanoff et al., 2020). Exploring strategies to help faculty better manage those stressors is necessary as is understanding more about the impact that faculty may have on fostering student well-being (Hwang et al., 2019). A great deal has been written regarding the proliferation of student stress within colleges and universities as well as the fact that students entering college may benefit from developing resiliency to cope with the frequent and significant stressors found in higher education environments (Bland et al., 2012). Faculty are in a unique position to facilitate student mental well-being by assisting students in managing stress (Mary Christie Institute, 2021). The practice of mindfulness is a useful stress management strategy that has been identified as helpful for many types of students, including nursing (Flatekval, 2023; McVeigh et al., 2021), counseling (Sommer et al., 2023), psychology (Miller et al., 2019), and chemistry (Giordano & Shuster, 2023). Given the known benefits associated with mindfulness practice (Hwang et al., 2019), it is important to understand the faculty experience and associated perceptions of students when leading mindfulness activities in the classroom. Our research extends previous research to explore faculty perceptions about the learning space and class climate.

Benefits of Faculty Mindfulness Facilitation on Faculty Well-being

Benefits associated with enhanced faculty well-being can be observed on individual, group, and organizational levels. Past research indicates that the teaching and learning experience is more meaningful when faculty focus on their own well-being (Flook et al., 2013). Faculty success in teaching, research, and scholarship is predicated on overall faculty well-being (Roos & Borkoski, 2021). The work by Larsen et al. (2019) suggests that attending to faculty well-being is also critical for the overall success of academic institutions. Encouraging acts of self-care has a positive influence on faculty members' lives and provides the opportunity to give students excellent examples of how to live a life focused on health and well-being. Strengthening faculty well-being is critical for their professional success and may be a unique route to enhancing student health and well-being.

Schwind et al. (2022) found a significant increase in mindfulness following faculty training and practice with students in the classroom. Results indicated that there is the potential for mindfulness practices to enhance the quality of the teaching and learning experience. These beneficial aspects of mindfulness practice in the classroom with students have also been experienced by nursing faculty. Hagerman et al. (2023) studied 14 nursing faculty and found that personal and professional benefits were experienced following a three-part mindfulness training session delivered over a period of six weeks. Faculty practiced the mindfulness exercises during the training and between sessions. Yet,

this study did not extend to faculty using those new skills in the classroom with students and indicated a need for further research to explore the outcomes associated with those types of efforts.

Benefits of faculty leading mindfulness activities in the classroom may extend beyond overall well-being enhancement. Specifically, faculty-led brief mindfulness activities may build community within the classroom and may facilitate student learning given the established stress-reducing benefits of mindfulness (Mary Christie, 2021). A reduction in mind wandering and distractibility and an increase in positive emotions can stem from the practice of brief mindfulness activities within the classroom (Miller et al., 2019). Learning more about the benefits experienced by faculty when they practice mindfulness in the classroom is a feasible research focus (Glena et al., 2023) and is necessary to learn more about the benefits of such approaches.

Faculty Mindfulness Qualitative Research

While some research to date has analyzed the impact of mindfulness practice on faculty teaching and student learning (Schwind et al., 2017), most studies have focused on student outcomes and experiences (Honsky et al., 2023; Giordano & Shuster, 2023). Very little qualitative research has been conducted to understand the lived experience of faculty practicing mindfulness in the classroom. In one study, mindfulness, wellbeing, and self-compassion were measured pre- and post-intervention to assess the impact of mindfulness practice by faculty with students following a three-week mindfulness training period. A statistically significant increase in mindfulness for faculty was identified and improvements with wellbeing and self-compassion occurred, although those changes were not statistically significant (Schwind, et al., 2022). Qualitative focus-group interviews revealed benefits and barriers associated with the use of mindfulness activities with students. This study encouraged further research to identify sustainable mindfulness practices that will improve the quality of the learning experience for students.

Another study conducted by Schwind et al. (2017) involved faculty in leading mindfulness activities at the beginning (loving-kindness meditation) and end (breathing meditation) of class. While the focus of the study was to better understand students' perspectives of that experience, this work evolved to focus on the perspectives of faculty engaged in leading the activities. Focus groups for faculty were conducted to better understand their experiences. Those conversations supported the perspective that students were better able to focus in class following the introduction of mindfulness at the beginning. An environment conducive to learning was established with this class structure even though students arriving to class late caused some disruption. Similarly, the end of class breathwork was also disrupted occasionally due to students leaving class during that time. Learning more about faculty perceptions of leading mindfulness activities in the classroom is warranted.

Role of Faculty in Student Experience and with Student Well-being

Given their leadership role and power in the classroom, faculty are in a unique position to be highly influential within students' school life experiences (Turner & Thielking, 2019). Tapping into that influential power and focusing on making a positive impact is a unique opportunity that faculty may wish to adopt for maximum positive impact on students. Given the numerous threats to well-being currently experienced by higher education executive leaders, faculty, and staff (Mary Christie Institute, 2021), focusing faculty influence on the realm of student well-being is advised.

Study Purpose

This research sought to answer the following question: How do faculty perceive the experience of using brief, mindfulness activities in the classroom?

METHODS

Study Design

This study was a pilot program on the use of brief instructor-led mindfulness activities in the classroom. A descriptive qualitative design was used to examine the perceived experience of faculty leading mindfulness activities. Subjects included faculty at a private research-intensive university in the Midwest United States who self-selected to participate in a training program regarding the use of brief instructor-led mindfulness activities (e.g., guided meditations: breathing, mindfulness eating, body scan, and loving-kindness) in the classroom. The training included scripts and recorded meditations, as well as ongoing coaching for faculty. Details on the full training program can be found in Honsky et al. (2023). After the training program, faculty who chose to implement the brief instructor-led mindfulness activities were invited to participate in a research study aimed at examining their perspectives of having led those classroom-based activities. The training program took place between the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 academic semesters, with implementation of the classroom mindfulness activities in the Spring 2021 academic semester. The associated research study was approved by the institution's Institutional Review Board.

Sample

Data for the current analysis comes from a subset ($n = 8$) of the full group of faculty participants ($N = 14$) who participated in the broader study. The data used for this study were gathered during focus groups with faculty following the end of the semester (May 2021). Data was not gathered for the smaller sample in the focus groups due to confidentiality and to maintain anonymity. The faculty sample ($n = 14$) identified as female 50% ($n = 7$) and white 93% (13), representing higher percentages than the larger university faculty population (female 39% and white 69%). Faculty identified a variety of teaching roles, Adjunct 14% ($n = 2$), Lecturer 36% ($n = 5$), Assistant Professor 7% ($n = 1$), Associate Professor/Full Professor 43% ($n = 6$). The age range of the sample was 30-40 years, 7% ($n = 1$), 40-50 years, 43% ($n = 6$), 50-60 years, 14% ($n = 2$), 60-70 years, 7% ($n = 1$), and 70-80 years, 29% ($n = 4$).

Qualitative Data Collection

At the conclusion of the semester, faculty were invited to participate in focus group discussions to elicit their thoughts of and experience with leading students through the brief mindfulness exercises throughout the semester. Two different focus groups, scheduled at two different times, were offered to increase faculty availability to participate. Both focus groups followed the same semi-structured guide, outlined in Appendix A, were conducted on Zoom, and were audio recorded. Focus groups were conducted by a research team member with qualitative research expertise but who had no prior contact with participants. Faculty participants were not provided with incentive payments for their participation.

Analysis

Transcripts from both focus groups were transcribed by a professional transcriptionist. To interpret the results, two members of the research team followed the 6-step process of reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012; Terry et al., 2017). Initially the researchers familiarized themselves with the data independently, reading and re-reading the transcripts before generating initial codes for any data items that might be helpful in addressing the research questions. The initially coded data and codes were then reviewed independently to generate initial themes which were then reviewed together before further developing themes, defining, naming, and refining the themes. The final step, writing up the report, was then completed. An inductive coding approach was used by the two researchers working separately to identify themes, which were then reviewed together in a series of meetings, refining the themes, and revising the open codes for consistency and agreement, for confirmation of themes. Differences in application of codes or divergent thematic interpretations were resolved by iterative discussion throughout a series of weekly analysis meetings.

Results

Five core themes focused on the faculty experience of using brief mindfulness activities in the classroom were identified. First, faculty experienced the brief mindfulness activities as *encouraging students' well-being and mental health* and, second, providing critical space before class *to reset and transition into learning*. Faculty perceived that the mindfulness activities fostered *connection and community* among faculty, among students, and between faculty and students. Fourth, faculty experienced leading the brief mindfulness activities as one way to demonstrate their *care and support of students* through difficult circumstances. Finally, faculty reflected on the mindfulness activities as supporting *their own self-development and well-being*.

Encouraging Students' Well-Being and Mental Health

Faculty described the mindfulness activities as potentially helpful in bolstering students' mental health, stating, for instance, "I think it's really worth trying, especially given how many students are having mental health issues." Another elaborated:

It was a lot of stress, and they had this from the entire program. Whoever I had conversations with, they were stressed because of the children, the husband lost work, somebody got COVID. There was a lot of things that were on everybody's mind.

Faculty underscored the COVID-19 pandemic as a particular strain for students, musing, "I don't think you could ignore the impact that the ongoing pandemic had in terms of stress and discomfort and disconnectedness" and reflected on having seen "so many students struggling mentally during COVID." They embraced the mindfulness program as one opportunity to assuage students' stress, "The students were so affected by the pandemic. That was one of the reasons I liked the idea of having something happen regularly, [a thing] that wasn't something to be stressed with."

For another faculty person, strains associated with the pandemic and social unrest in response to rising visibility of myriad social injustices rendered the mindfulness programming pertinent for students:

All of the influences throughout the past six, 12, 18 months also made this easier to do. I think there was so much...whether it was the pandemic, social injustice, politics, you name it. I think everybody was looking for something that wasn't that and this was a very opportune time to introduce something.

Faculty recounted some students sharing how the mindfulness activities offered ways to regulate and cultivate compassion during emotionally challenging experiences. For instance, one faculty person shared:

I had one student who even said in class one day, 'I drove by someone protesting something just horrible and I did the Loving-Kindness meditation. My reaction would be just to fly off the handle and be mad, and instead I did the Loving-Kindness meditation.'

Providing Space to Reset and Transition into Learning

Faculty saw the mindfulness programming as providing students with a critical break, which they would not otherwise typically get, to reset and decompress prior to engaging in class content which then provided "a smooth transition into the material." One law school faculty recalled the exercises as:

providing students with a necessary— even though it was short— space and break between classes to reset, if you will...I don't know that there is much of that in law school, where students just get to take a moment to decompress and reset a little bit.

Another, reflecting on student feedback about the activities, shared that their students "comment[ed] that it really did help them— you know, if they were just coming from another class— just to transition. They found it helpful to transition into what we were doing in this class."

Another explained the mindfulness activities, as a transition into class, nurtured presence of mind as a condition for learning, "It's important to have people come in and have a transition between whatever it was they were just doing to bring them fully present into the room so they can be available for learning."

For one faculty member, the effectiveness of the activities at clearing the mind and conditioning it for learning new material was unexpected, "I found that starting class with the Mindfulness exercise really did allow folks to get into the material more quickly, and in a more focused way, which is a little surprising. It really was."

Building Sense of Community

The power of community to elicit well-being within organizations is powerful (Rath & Harter, 2014). When faculty feel connected to their colleagues, there is a strong sense of "we are in this together," which is power that can be leveraged into a positive benefit for students. Similarly, when students feel that they are known and understood by their peers and teachers, they have an opportunity to maximize learning experiences and gain more from their university years (Berry, 2019). Opportunities for growth and development when a sense of community is present between faculty and students is critical to highlight.

According to faculty, one of many positive impacts gleaned from participating in the program was the "mini-community" they formed while learning to facilitate mindfulness exercises in the classroom. Participation in the program broadened faculty persons' interactions with their peers teaching in other schools, creating community that may not otherwise have been formed, "I liked meeting people who were from totally different places on campus and getting to know other faculty a little bit."

Faculty expressed that the mindfulness exercises were a key, and sometimes surprising, tool that built a sense of bondedness and community both among students in class and between faculty themselves and students. One faculty person whose class met over Zoom because of the pandemic described:

I think that it did contribute to a more positive and bonded feeling with the students...I was surprised, because we had never met each other in person, that it seemed like the class had come together. I think the part of it was doing the mindfulness [exercises].

Others connected that nurtured sense of community to students' improved participation:

I think we were, as a whole, closer as a class this time and I also would say I noticed more participation in my class this time...setting the table early with an activity every class I thought lent itself [to] more participation throughout the entirety of the semester.

Faculty described the mindfulness exercises as helping to build a “warm, inclusive environment” that was a boon to students' interaction and ease within courses with more personally challenging content, a participation barrier that may have been exacerbated by the virtual learning environment. One faculty person reported:

I was teaching on Zoom, so I was never gonna meet my students in person. My class is about identity, so we talk about a lot of personal issues and I felt like that might be a good way for the students to bond with each other and to bond with me.

Another similarly recalled their teaching of a course focused on systems of oppression and diversity issues and feeling nervous about teaching such a course where potential conflict could erupt between students with varying political views over Zoom. While they may have initially seen facilitating mindfulness activities as a way to trim minutes of stressful teaching time, they detailed how the mindfulness activities generated a caring and inclusive learning atmosphere:

My one class that I teach...has to do with race, and I was really nervous to teach this class over Zoom. It doesn't only have to do with race— it has to do with LGBTQ, all diversity issues, and I have some students with very different views. The way I've been able to teach the class without any kind of issues is [that] I really try to cultivate this warm, inclusive space where people don't feel threatened. They don't feel if they say something, someone's gonna call them a bigot or a homophobe, and so that was part of my initial thought. It's like, 'Well, that buys me five minutes' less stressful time,' but, to me, as an instructor, I felt it actually helped me [grow] that warm, inclusive environment through Zoom, so I felt the students really felt that I was caring for them.

In addition to promoting inclusivity while engaging with difficult course content, another faculty explicitly tied the community-building generated from facilitating the mindfulness activities as somewhat of an antidote to students' isolation during pandemic quarantining and social distancing, “Some of them were really struggling, and when they got put into the quarantines and were all alone, I felt it was giving them some kind of community.”

Facilitating Faculty's Care for Students

Faculty saw facilitating mindfulness activities as one way to help students feel seen, heard, and cared for during the strained journey of earning an advanced degree and the mentally and emotionally arduous experience of isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic. One faculty person explained:

I'm the Director of the PhD program and I heard a lot from my students, how stressed they are, and I was actively seeking something that I could offer them in a time when I could not be physically anywhere close to them that would contribute to them feeling a little bit being taken care of, and [feeling] seen and heard.

Another elaborated that, considering “the kind of stress that so many of the students were under” during the pandemic, and “being on Zoom and being away and being isolated and all of that,” they “thought it was a good idea for [students] to have something that happened every class at the same time, and it was there no matter what.” Building in time for mindfulness at the start of each class was one way faculty felt they could care for students’ well-being during the pandemic’s environment of isolation and disconnection. A faculty person recounted an international student’s surprise at that relational container:

[One student] used to say to me, ‘This is so strange that you care so much about us,’ because for her culture, that’s not really the professor-student relationship...I did set the stage that ‘I care about your mental health. (I want you to be) present, learning, and that made them feel good in a time where they might have felt isolated and alone.

Supporting Faculty Self-Development and Well-Being

Finally, faculty described their participation in the mindfulness intervention as imparting benefits to their own mindfulness practices and, thus, nourishing their own well-being, emotion regulation, presence, and focus both inside and outside of their classrooms. One faculty person mused that their opportunity, through facilitating the exercises, to practice “being present in the moment” was “one of the biggest beauties for me participating in this,” and another recalled, “It was amazing to me how grounded it helped me feel.” Another reflected more specifically on two specific benefits they noticed within their own self throughout the semester:

I just felt a little more at ease, generally; and, patience is not a virtue that I’m blessed with much of. But, I did find that I was much more patient about things inside and outside of the classroom— even at home, or in other things that are going on. I found that I was able to be a little bit more calm and patient, and let things work themselves to where they needed to go.

Indeed, another recalled how the mindfulness activities—Loving-Kindness in particular—helped them extend patience toward colleagues during difficult department meetings, “Loving-Kindness helped me sometimes to really extend this to people who were very testy of my patience and my kindness towards them, and I reminded myself all the time that people come with the best intentions to these meetings.”

Other faculty observed that facilitating the mindfulness exercises helped them build their own mindfulness habit, or return to a past one, which helped assuage their anxiety and fatigue and improve their focus throughout the semester. One faculty person explained, “it helped me be engaged, because I’m sure we all were feeling this crazy Zoom fatigue.” While another described the mind-clearing effects of the mindfulness practice even in the facilitating role, “Even though I was reading the meditation and not doing the meditation, I really felt that it grounded me and got me ready for the class. It cleared my head, just as it, I think, cleared the students’ heads.”

Another described the class-based routine as “a good reminder for me about using the practice out of class” and elaborated, “I do the racing thoughts in the middle of the night thing. It’s always been helpful and, frankly, I’d sort of gotten out of that habit, but this helped me bring it back, so that was nice.”

Similarly, another faculty person recalled how the mindfulness intervention soothed their presentation-related anxieties for work elsewhere in the university:

I do think that this maybe motivated me to do short meditations in other instances. Like I gave a series of lectures this semester for the [campus center]. I was a little nervous because I don't usually lecture— my classes are discussion-based. So, I just did a five-minute meditation for anxiety before I started and it was just fine.

Learning to meditate and cultivating a regular mindfulness practice is not always comfortable for individuals. Having the opportunity to learn those skills and being encouraged to practice regularly may provide just enough motivation for some faculty to finally “take the plunge,” experiment with mindfulness, and realize the numerous associated benefits of such practice:

This had a profound effect on me. It did. No question, and to try to explain that— I really can't, except to say that I think it gave me permission to get more into this meditation that I just really wanted to do, but I needed some support and permission to do it, and this project did that. It gave me the support...I'm doing meditation on a daily basis. You know, it's absolutely life-changing.

Discussion

This effort marks an important contribution to the mindfulness research field. Our research clarifies faculty members' perceptions of using mindfulness activities, in contrast to previous research that has primarily focused on the student experience. The qualitative research in this current study supports and clarifies a more nuanced understanding of the effects of using brief mindfulness-based activities within the classroom.

Students have experienced multiple benefits when they have been led through mindfulness activities in the classroom. Those positive findings have focused on health and well-being, improved attention and learning, and enhanced feelings of connection and support. The current research found that faculty perceived a benefit to students' well-being and mental health following the implementation of brief mindfulness activities at the beginning of classes throughout the semester. Similar findings focused on increased well-being for students were found in studies that explored the impact of mindfulness practice on students (Giordano & Shuster, 2023; Kaisti et al., 2023; Schwind et al., 2022). Offering brief mindfulness activities at the beginning of class provides a transition for students to focus their attention on learning (Giordano & Shuster, 2023; Honsky et al., 2023; Kaisti et al., 2023; Schwind et al., 2017). Those findings were matched in this qualitative study of the faculty experience within the classroom. Larson et al. (2019) highlighted the importance of belonging and community connections in regard to faculty well-being. Given the prevalence of reports highlighting stress and burnout experienced by faculty, positive comments from faculty in this study regarding the positive impact associated with feeling more connected to colleagues and feeling greater connections with students, is powerful. Establishing cultures that foster faculty well-being have been encouraged as one means to better support faculty in their role (Roos & Brokoski, 2021). The possibility that classroom community building may facilitate student learning (Mary Christie, 2021) also underscores the great potential of mindfulness activity integration to benefit everyone involved.

This study found that providing greater support for students through mindfulness practice helps faculty provide more support for students and mirrors findings from others; mindfulness can help students experience less stress and anxiety (Flatekval, 2023; Giordano & Shuster, 2023) and greater calm (Schwind et al., 2017). Attending to student

needs is a desire of many faculty and may also help faculty support their own self-development and well-being, which is a final benefit identified through the current research.

Faculty experienced many positive benefits associated with leading brief mindfulness exercises in the classroom. Benefits to students when mindfulness activities are integrated into the classroom experience are numerous (Honsky et al., 2023), yet this study provides encouragement for continuing the practice to benefit faculty too. Training faculty to lead mindfulness activities adds value to the classroom experience. Offering resources, such as mindfulness recordings and scripts, supports faculty in feeling empowered to offer mindfulness activities during classes to foster quality learning environments. This type of “win-win” practice is mutually beneficial to faculty and students. In addition, practicing mindfulness at home has been found to be beneficial for students and faculty. Decreased feelings of stress and anxiety, increased experience of well-being, and decreased reactivity are all potential outcomes associated with this practice (Schwind et al., 2017).

Limitations

Limitations of the current study include the type of students in the classrooms, faculty self-selection, the small sample size, and the occurrence of the pandemic. This study included classrooms with undergraduates as well as those with graduate students. Understanding more about the difference in experiences between both types of students may be helpful to explore in future research. Faculty self-selection may also have been a bias within the study participant group. It is possible that these faculty participants were more positive as a result of the self-selection process. Future research could look at specific departments and disciplines and differences that might occur. The fact that this research was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic may have influenced faculty in regard to participation decisions. Since the majority of classes likely were conducted online during this study, there may be some differences in our findings compared to future studies focusing on in-classroom experiences.

Recommendations

Past research and this current study indicate that benefits are experienced by faculty and students when brief mindfulness activities are integrated at the beginning of courses. Synergistic effects associated with mutual benefit for students and faculty should provide motivation for other higher education institutions to explore the implementation of similar research and mindfulness practices within their own learning environments. The findings of this study indicate that training faculty to facilitate brief mindfulness activities in the classroom is a supportive strategy within higher education. This is an effective tool that is relatively simple for faculty to implement and is perceived to be beneficial to them and their students. Given the increased awareness of the importance of faculty and student well-being within higher education, further exploration of the outcomes associated with these practices is warranted. It would be helpful for future research to include diverse samples (e.g., undergraduate and graduate students, disciplines, classroom sizes) as well as to study varying lengths of mindfulness activities and utilization of in-class mindfulness activities at varying points during the semester to deepen understanding of faculty perceptions of the experience. Further exploration of the outcomes experienced by faculty when integrating brief mindfulness activities within the classroom is warranted. Additional qualitative research studies are necessary to expand our understanding of the benefits associated with leading mindfulness practices within the classroom.

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APPENDIX A

Focus Group Guide

Hello, everyone. My name is _____ and I want to thank you for agreeing to be part of this discussion today. We're interested in your thoughts and experiences as a [faculty person/ student] who participated in mindfulness practices in the classroom this past semester. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions. In fact, we are doing this research because we think that it is most important for us to understand your unique perspectives as [faculty person/ student]. This understanding will help us to understand how participation in mindfulness practices impacted classroom experience, learning, and well-being. Please try to be as honest and open as you can so we can learn from your experiences. However, if there are questions that you do not feel comfortable answering or discussing, you do not have to answer them. Please tell me and we'll move on to the next question. Before we go on, do you have any questions?

Questions For All Participants

1. To start out, could you share about why you decided to join this focus group today?
2. If someone asked you what mindfulness is, how would you describe it to them?
 1. Probe: What do you think would be the most important thing for them to know?
3. Thinking back to the beginning of this past semester, can you walk me through your decision to first participate in the classroom mindfulness activities?
 1. Probe 1: If you had to describe one main reason you decided to participate, what would that be?
 2. Probe 2 (optional if they bring up the pandemic): It sounds like the pandemic was a factor in your engagement with these mindfulness activities. Can you tell me more about that?"
4. Think about the class you taught/took this semester that included mindfulness activities, and then think about other classes you took that didn't include any mindfulness activities. How did those class experiences compare to each other? I'll remind you all now, too, that there are no right or wrong answers.
5. How do you think that participating in the mindfulness activities impacted, or didn't impact, your experience of that class?
 1. Probe for students: Experiences such as learning/teaching new material, group work, engaging with lectures, writing, engaging with professors or other students.
6. Thinking back through what this semester has been like, what are some things that you think made it feel more **difficult** for you to engage with the mindfulness activities in class?
7. Thinking back through what this semester has been like, what are some things that you think made it feel a little **easier** for you to engage with the mindfulness activities in class?
8. Were there any specific activities that felt easier to engage with this semester? (Examples: breath meditation, body scan, mindful eating, loving kindness)
 1. Probe: What was it about those activities that made them feel a little easier to engage with?
9. How did mindfulness practices in the classroom impact you this semester?
 1. Probe: This might be in any area of your life, in the classroom, outside the classroom or other areas like friendship, families, daily life and sense of well-being.

10. If you had a magic wand and could change anything about your experience of engaging with the mindfulness activities this semester, what would you change?

Question 11 for students only then skip to Question 15. If faculty skip to #12

11. If you heard that someone else was thinking about participating in mindfulness activities that had been added to their classes, what advice would you have/how would you feel?
 1. Probe: If mindfulness was incorporated into another class you were taking how would you feel?

Questions 12, 13, & 14 for faculty only

12. What parts of engaging in these mindfulness practices, if any, have felt most **rewarding** to you?
13. What parts of engaging in these mindfulness practices, if any, have felt most **challenging** to you?
14. 14. If you heard that other faculty were thinking about adding mindfulness activities to their classes, what would you think and how would you feel?
 1. Probe just for faculty: What advice would you give?

Question for all participants (faculty & students)

15. Is there anything else we haven't covered but that you think is important for us to know?

Thank you very much for joining in the discussion. I appreciate your time in talking with us today and your reflections on your mindfulness experience; they will be so helpful in understanding how participation in mindfulness practices impacted classroom experience, learning, and well-being.