

**CENTERING
BELONGING,
AGENCY,
AND COMPASSION
TO BUILD A
LEARNING COMMUNITY**

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FRAMING OUR TIME: BEGINNING AND ENDING TOGETHER

- Committing to one another at the START and END of the session
 - Favorite color- purple
 - Word from your discipline faster
 - Favorite food chocolate

- Land in the _____
 - Room
 - Body/Mind
 - Breath

The challenge these days is to be somewhere, to belong to some particular place, invest in it, draw strength and courage from it, to dwell in a community. – bell hooks

MINI MEDITATION

- Smile-Down
- Imagine a smile
- Feel the openness and vibrancy of a smile in/at the:
 - eyes
 - mouth
 - heart
 - belly
 - legs
 - feet
- One minute of silent practice- rest in the spacious and kind awareness that is engendered by a smile

GOAL AND OUTCOMES

Aim: Empower instructors of all disciplines with tools to build and maintain just and equitable learning communities rooted in Agency, Belonging, and Compassion.

Participants will be able to:

1. **Frame the semester in A,B,C**
 1. Co-create community agreements
 2. Balance of power in grading
2. **Frame each class session in A,B,C**
 1. Check-ins and Check-outs
 2. Use community agreements as a social justice tool.
 3. Mini-meditations
 4. Crossing the Threshold exercises
3. **Situate Assessments in A,B,C**
 1. Co-create rubrics

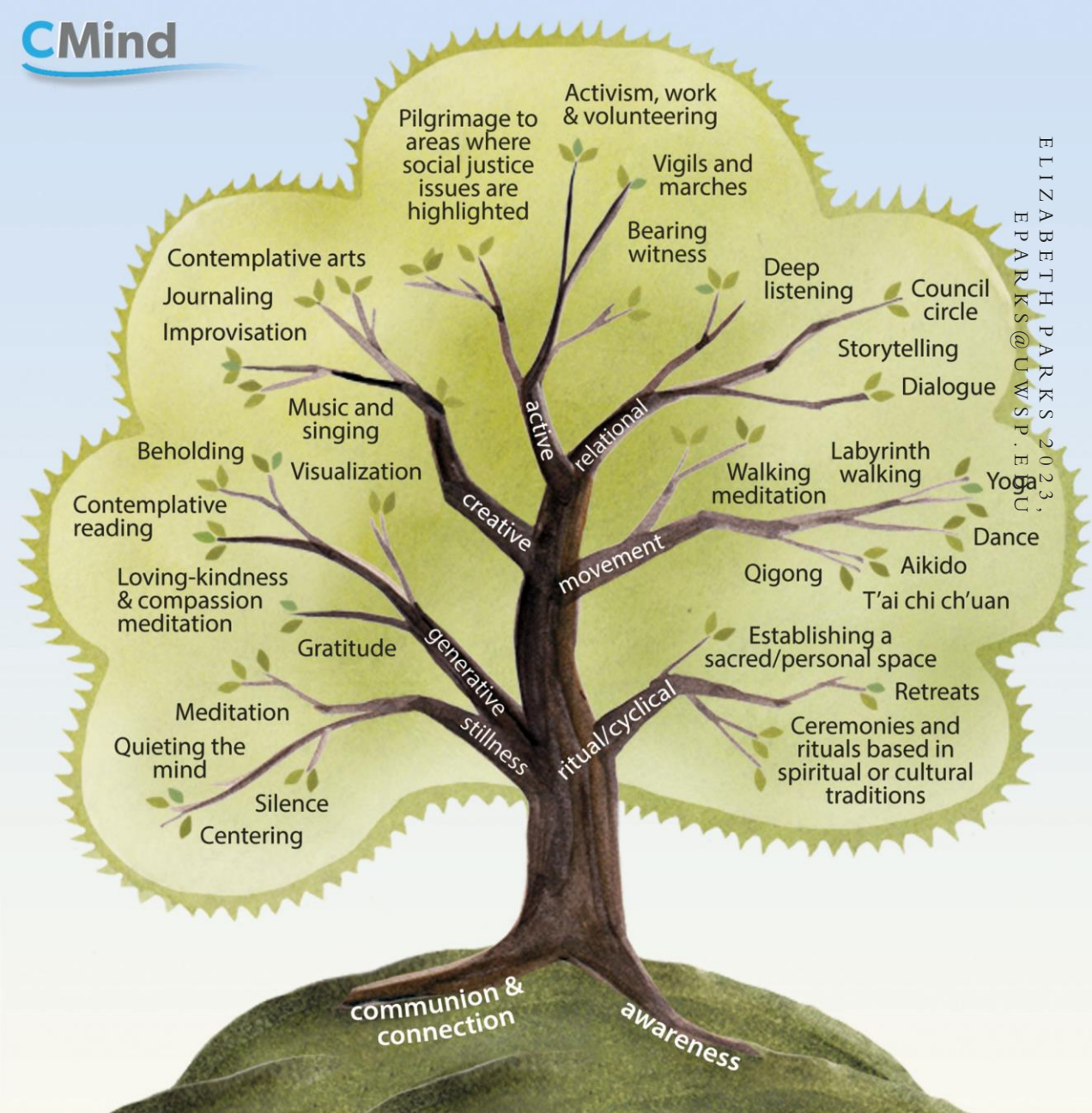
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

CONTEMPLATIVE PEDAGOGY

Teaching methods designed to create expanded ways of knowing, reflecting, and thinking.

- Tobin Hart, Ph.D.:
 - Contemplative practices used to foster “deepened awareness, concentration and insight . . . These approaches cultivate an inner technology of knowing.”
 - Inner Technology- Neurofeedback training, “akin to contemplation”

Center for Contemplative Mind in Society



PEDAGOGY OF COMPASSION

Defining Compassion

“Compassion is not the same as empathy or altruism, pity, or sympathy. While empathy refers more generally to our ability to take the perspective of , imagine and feel the emotions of another person, compassion is when those feelings and thoughts include the desire to help those who are **vulnerable** or in distress.”

The Pedagogy of Compassion at the Heart of Higher Education
- Paul Gibbs

How do we acknowledge vulnerability and distress? How can we?

PEDAGOGY OF COMPASSION

Paul Gibbs Ph.D.

- Compassion Gap
- Attentiveness is compassion's epistemic component
- Willingness is compassion's desire
- Compassion engenders willingness and attentiveness

Tara Brach, Ph.D.

Attune, Attend, and Befriend
instead of fight, flight, or freeze



CROSSING THE
THRESHOLD-
MICHAEL
CHEKHOV

Beginning of Class

1. I am enough
2. I belong
3. I am powerful
4. We are enough
5. We belong
6. We are powerful



FRAMING THE SEMESTER :
CREATING A COMPASSIONATE
COMMUNITY

“TIME WAS JUST ONE OF THE FACTORS THAT
PREVENTED THIS CLASS
FROM BECOMING A LEARNING COMMUNITY”

Teaching to Transgress by bell hooks

COMMUNITY AGREEMENT: BUILDING THE COMMUNITY

- Cannot be done in one class period

First two-three class periods cover:

1. Community
2. Syllabus/Expectations
3. Class content

- RAIN

[Radical Compassion: Learning to Love Yourself and Your World with the Practice of RAIN](#), Tara Brach, Ph.D.

Recognize

Allow

Investigate

Nurture

COMMUNITY AGREEMENT: BUILDING THE COMMUNITY

Day 1: Recognize and Allow

- Why are we here?: “How do you find yourself in this seat?”
- Conditioning Forces- what are they for your discipline?
- Expectations, Hopes, Fears
 - 3-2-1
 - 3 strengths as a student, 2 hopes, 1 fear

Day 2: Investigate

- Build a [Word Cloud](#): “When I think of learning community _____ comes to mind’
enter responses in a Google Sheet
Canvas Course Image
- Learning vs. Grade-seeking Discussion (What does that mean in your discipline?)
 - Questions to prompt discussion:
 - What are 3 things that cause you to panic and grade seek? Or What fears do you have that cause to focus on grade-seeking?
 - What are 3 things that allow you to focus on learning?
 - What would a class focused on learning look and feel like to you?
 - What if you gave yourself permission to learn first? What would that look and feel like?

Day 3: Nurture

Values

Write Community Agreement

What do we Value?

- Belonging
- Agency
- Compassion
- Effort
- Curiosity
- Respect

*To what/whom do
these apply?*

- Self
- Other(s)
- Space

EXAMPLE AGREEMENT

I proposed as a starting point:

- Attune, Attend, and Befriend (vs. Fight, Flight, Freeze)
- RAIN (Recognize, Allow, Investigate, Nurture)
 - a. Recognize: Fears, Feelings, Biases, Preferences, Limitations
- Nothing bad is going to happen when you say “no” and nothing better is going to happen when you say “yes”. Can you ask “Why?” or “How?”

The Students Added :

- Freedom to play and fail
- Boundaries, pace, and effort can change
- Constructive feedback comes from love and care
- Honor your style and skills

481.2 (9/13/22)

USING THE COMMUNITY AGREEMENT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE TEACHING

- Weeks 2-5?
Students read the agreement statements out loud- popcorn style
- Weeks 5-10?
Hold an element of the agreement in your heart
Skip some days or weeks but don't leave it behind
- Weeks 11-16?
What from our community agreement do you need today?

DO POWER STRUCTURES SERVE US?

“understand how considerations of power undergird, frame, and distort educational processes and interactions . . . [and] question assumptions and practices that seem to make our teaching lives easier but actually work against our own best long-term interests”

Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher

Stephen Brookfield

VISIBLE POWER SHIFT

	<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points</u>
Students Grade Themselves	Engagement, Preparedness, and Professionalism	300
	Reading Responses (25 points each x 9)	225
	Three Evaluations of UWSP Productions (50 pts each)	150
	subtotal	(675)
Graded by Professor	Score Paragraph	100
	Score a Scene	100
	Uta Hagan Exercises (50 pts each x 3)	150
	One-on-one meetings (25 points each x4)	100
	Outside of class events (50 points each x 3)	150
	Final Project (analysis and showing)	75
	subtotal	(675)
Total		1350

ENGAGEMENT, PREPAREDNESS, PROFESSIONALISM GRADE

- How well did you Engage?
- How much were you prepared?
- How much did you honor the Community Agreement?

- You have until December 22nd to submit this grade. After which time the Professor will assign you the fairest grade possible.



FRAMING EACH CLASS:
BUILDING BELONGING

BEGINNING AND ENDING TOGETHER

Options

1. Students choose a random phrase
= Peanut Butter Holy Moley

2. Build a phrase
 - a. Favorite Color
 - b. Component of a cell, Famous Author, Type of Plant
 - c. Favorite Food

= Pink Mitochondria Apples

CHECK-INS: ACKNOWLEDGING SELF TO GROUP, GROUP TO SELF

Begin with low-stakes prompts

- If I were an Ice Cream flavor, I would be _____
- Cheese, dog or cat, flower

Self-Oriented

I am ___ **I want** ___ **I need** _____

I feel (sound and movement)

Empathy: Everyone repeats it back all together

Shift to content-oriented

I'm feeling more Molecular or Entangled

I'm more xylem than phloem today

Invite curiosity

- One word or phrase from the reading that I'm curious about

Empower

- I am skilled at Shakespeare because (second to last class)
- I am super skilled at Shakespeare because (last class or final exam)

**Brief affirmations:
snaps, claps, silent applause**

EXAMPLE CHECK-INS

1. I will develop my relationship with _____(Gravity/Breath/my Core) by
2. I will bring joy to my work by
3. I will not let tiredness win by
4. One habit I am working on today is_____
5. I will _____ to enter beast mode
6. What am I working on today?
7. I am going to get out of my own way today by
8. One thing I will not be overcome by today

EXAMPLE CHECK-INS

1. I will be compassionate to myself by
2. I will be compassionate to others by
3. I will channel my inner fearlessness by
4. I will be an actor warrior by
5. I will not be at the mercy of my fear today by
6. I will conquer my fatigue by
7. Today I will grow by
8. Today I will glow by
9. I will stay focused by
10. I am smarter today b/c

CHECK-OUTS

- **I hope**_____ **I realize**_____ **I learned**_____
- I am smarter now because_____
- I am more skilled at _____ because I can_____
- Today I discovered_____
- I surprised myself today by_____

- Lighting round- one takeaway, one discovery

The development of affiliative relationships is crucial to the development of compassion.
– *Creating Conditions for Compassion*
Kathryn Waddington

CROSSING THE THRESHOLD - MICHAEL CHEKHOV

Beginning of Class

1. I am enough
2. I belong
3. I am powerful
4. We are enough
5. We belong
6. We are powerful

End of Class

1. I am not my character/ more than the test
2. I am still enough
3. I still belong
4. I am still powerful
5. We are still enough
6. We still belong
7. We are still powerful

CROSSING THE THRESHOLD

Allow yourself to fill with ease, letting go of anything that is not ease, breathe in flow, clarity- what qualities would you like to breathe in for the day? (confidence, playfulness, love, determination) Access cue- a word or image that allows you to access this state of being, won't feel the same each time, we are beings in process.

- Centered, grounded, expansive, open, empowered...Notice how little effort that takes, can activate it 50 times a day. Imagine performing in this space, teaching, living in this space- not just something you experience during a lengthier meditation.

Michael Ellison Ph.D.

CROSSING THE THRESHOLD

- Coming into the “Space”

Land in

- Room
- Body/Mind
- Breath

MINI-MEDITATION

A. Guided:

30-60 seconds of instruction:

- “This too”
- Smile down
- Breathe into head, heart, will center (Michael Chekhov)
- Pause, relax, open (Insight Dialogue Mediation)
- Give yourself permission to release tensions

1 minute of silent practice

B. Insight dialogue- think, pair, share.

- Separate speaker listener 30, 60, 90 seconds...
 - Don't offer a narrative or retort
 - Silence from the listener
 - Pauses are okay
- Open Dialogue – for _____ minutes

CLASS STRUCTURE

Begin

Check-In

Community Agreement (this may be the Check-In or a moment of silent acknowledgment)

Crossing the Threshold (maybe not every day, important towards the end of the semester)

Mini-Meditation (this may be “Crossing the Threshold”)

Class Content

Check Out

Closing



FRAMING THE
ASSIGNMENT AND ASSESSMENT:
ENSURING AGENCY

CO-CREATING RUBRICS

Exercise or Assignment

1. Student Reflection
 - Why are we doing this?
 - What are the take-aways?
 - What are the skills that the assignment focuses on?
 - What are the tools in our toolbox so far?
 - What should you be able to do? – Is that what you CAN do?
2. FEEDBACK FILTERS (Kari Margolis)
3. Peer/Instructor Feedback based on Filters over _____ class periods.
4. Clearly stating
 1. “We are creating the rubric”
 2. This is YOU having agency in your own assessment
 3. What is important to you
5. Students pick 2 filters
 1. Each students votes for their top two
6. Instructor picks 2 filters
7. I add a Reflection component

OUR TOOL KIT

1. Ease
2. Discoveries
3. Thinking faster ≠ talk faster
4. CAET
5. Telescoping
6. In/voluntary up/down/out/in
7. Packets-
8. Thoughts
9. Linking
10. Private/public
11. Consonant orchestra
12. Energy in two directions
13. Pursuing an Objective
14. Elliptical Energy
15. Use of Language: punctuation, alliteration, lists and ladders, simile/metaphor,

481.2 Scene Performance Rubric

Criteria	Points
Reflection	40
Elliptical Energy	10
Use of Text and Vocal Work Punctuation, Rhetorical Devices and Sounds	10
Cause, Absorb, Effect, Transition	10
Acting PLO2 Analysis and Rehearsal	--
Rehearsal Journal	20
	100

CONCLUSIONS... BUT NOT THE CLOSE...

Situating the semester, each class, and each assignment and its assessment in Agency, Belonging, and Compassion can begin to close the Compassion Gap and “provide the calm in which stakeholders can cocreate a sustainable future for the sector” of higher education (Gibbs, 2017, p. 15).

How can we co-create loving spaces of learning as a practice of teaching for social justice?

- Agency
- Belonging
- Compassion

Learning comes before my own ego.

End of Class

1. I am still enough
2. I still belong
3. I am still powerful
4. We are still enough
5. We still belong
6. We are still powerful

CROSSING THE
THRESHOLD-
MICHAEL
CHEKHOV

TO CLOSE...

Our Phrase: *Purple, Faster, Chocolate*

SOURCES

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THANK YOU!

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