

**Social Change Through Meditation and Community Building in the Classroom  
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**Abstract**

This unit will focus on social justice through the lens of using Asian Meditative Practices to assist with developing and nurturing community and social emotional support for students. Meditation can and has helped students globally and nationally become more thoughtful people as well as agents in managing their own behaviors. Meditation has been reported to be a great emotional self-regulating practice. The practice of meditation develops in one a sense of belonging to a community that not only holds one accountable also supports and assists with the social emotional growth of its members. This unit is intended for social studies teachers in grades 6-8. However, it can be used in all content areas and grade levels. In this unit, students will also work to improve their critical analysis and evaluation skills through the interviews, reading and analysis of research, op-ed articles, and video recordings on the benefits of meditation and community. Learners will improve their speaking and listening skills through practicing meditation techniques, interviews, collaborative practices such as writing, discussion and active listening while critically analyzing text and conversations. Students will also practice their reflective writing skills throughout this unit. Finally, this unit also supports educators with building and nurturing collaborative communities in their classroom.

**Keywords:**

Community, meditation, Three Jewels, meta (Metacognitive thinking) meditation, equanimity, dharma, Buddha, sangha, compassion, empathy, Bhavana

**Rationale & Alignment**

According to a 2021 Medium article by Toby Lowe, community is described as having “a strange power to it that conveys a sense of positivity and togetherness.” Buddha, himself, has been quoted extensively as describing community, not self, as the entirety and the goal of the holy path. There are multiple Zulu proverbs about the importance of community, such as “a person is a person because of other people” or “hands wash each other.” Both proverbs speak to the importance of having the right community of people in one's life to support the spiritual

growth of each other. In South Africa it is called ubuntu, “I am what I am because of who we all are.” The Marpusi people in Ghana, speak to the importance of community by saying “one finger can’t pick up a stone.” All proverbs and quotes speak to the inseparable relationship between community and the individual.

Community or sangha is one of the three central pillars of the Buddhist faith. Sangha does not exist without the Buddha, the teacher, and dharma, the teachings. According to the Buddha, the sangha is the core of the spiritual or right life. When viewing education through the lens of the three pillars of Buddhism, Sangha or community seems to be the core of successful classrooms and schools as well. If one were to study the instructional guides of public school districts in the United States, they might come across the term community a significant number of times in what is usually a 1-3 page document. Classroom community, collaborative classroom communities, or collaborative learning communities are all ubiquitous terms used to describe how the climate of any classroom, whether in a suburban or urban setting, should be. One will see one or all of these terms, as they are often used interchangeably, in the instructional guide for all content areas alongside a brief description of what they are, “students and teachers working together.’ Yet, what is not present alongside the description in the guide is how to actualize community or collaborative learning communities in the classroom. Lacking guidance on how to build community often leads to classroom community or collaborative learning community regularly being conflated with group work. As described above, community is so much more than a group of people; in this case, students working together in a group. Community is the core to the success of members of the classroom learning, teaching, and growing in compassion and empathy for others together.

Meditation in some form or another is part of every major religion and most world cultures. Whether the meditation practice is deep prayer, chanting, rhythm of communal work or deep concentration, it is practice used to help center one’s spirit or regulate self so that one may be communal with others. In Asian cultures, some African cultures and even in Native American cultures varied forms of meditation are used to help nurture community as well as compassionate and considerate individuals. If so many cultures across the world use forms of meditation to nurture community and community is the entirety of the path to mindfulness and equanimity, then it seems meditation in one form or another should be part of nurturing classroom and even school communities.

If community is the entirety, then is it central to classroom learning? Then how do teachers and students truly achieve it in their classrooms? Can we use regular meditative practices to help nurture community in the classroom? What are the benefits of the use of meditative practices in the classroom?

Many schools in nations outside the United States use traditional Asian meditation as practice to build and nurture school communities and compassion as well as empathy for others and their environment within their students. There are even some schools in the United States who have started turning to traditional Asian meditation practices to help their students self regulate their emotions like anger, frustration, fear, and anxiety with the purpose of supporting students with becoming positive and productive members of the classroom communities. The defining differences between schools that implement meditative practices outside the United States and those within is the why. Schools outside tend to use meditation to help students understand the importance of the inseparable role between community and the individual. Whereas schools within the US are more likely to use meditation as restorative or corrective practice for the individual rather than a preventative and nurturing practice for the community. In a nutshell schools outside the US tend to use meditation to focus on community first, while schools within the US use meditation to correct the individual first and support the community second.

This unit seeks to support the teacher and students to reach community through meditation. The purpose is to help teachers and students be more fully present as part of their community by understanding, practicing and aligning with the practices of mindfulness; acceptance, kindness, compassion and equanimity. The focus of the unit will be on improving society, or the community within the classroom, rather than focusing on “fixing the student.”

### **Unit Content**

Initially, I was excited and had apprehension about taking a course on meditation. The idea of taking a course on meditation was exciting because I wanted to learn more about the practices I personally had been engaging in for years and its history. Prior to the course, most of what I learned about meditation and mindfulness came from podcasts, Youtube videos, meditation apps and from people in the entertainment world like Deepak Chopra. This UPenn TIP course did not disappoint. Through the TIP course our class was able to learn about multiple mediation histories and traditions from Asia, including India and China. There are several different types of meditation found in Indian and Chinese cultures. We studied Buddhism, Jainism, Metta meditation, yoga sutra and more. Each class consisted of learning about the histories of an Asian meditation tradition and then practicing a form of meditation. We started with breathing and focusing and eventually moved into Metta meditation. This course also introduced us to a number of practitioners and researchers of meditation including Halvor Eifring’s compendium of research on Asian meditation traditions. Our class read and discussed the epic Bhagavad-Gita and the Yoga Sutras to understand how meditation helps us with being good, compassionate, empathetic and supportive members of our community and doing what is right. Through the course discussions, readings, practices and speakers, I was able to gain understanding about the

purpose, benefits and disadvantages of meditation. I learned meditation can be found in many forms, in all world religions and in a multitude of cultural practices.

My apprehension about the course was rooted in how I was going to create an instructional unit for teachers to implement in their classrooms when they already have a full load of content to teach. It was extremely necessary to not retraumatize students through the quiet exploration of the inner self that happens with meditation. However, learning about the various meditative traditions eventually revealed the main focus of meditation is community, or the Sangha. Community is an integral part of the classroom. Therefore, I decided the focus of the instructional unit will be on developing community in the classroom through meditative practices.

The contents of this unit will mostly cover Asian Meditation traditions. Although students will have the opportunity to learn about other meditation or mindfulness traditions found in other cultures, specifically those from various Native American cultures and cultures from Africa, they will predominantly apply and practice the components of Asian Meditation traditions. The unit helps teachers and students explore building and nurturing collaborative classroom communities through the use of and understanding Meta, Yoga Sutras, Buddhist meditation practices. This unit will guide students to critically think about what community is as well as explore how their actions support or hinder community development and growth. This unit will also seek to assist students with exploring the benefits of meditation to improve their overall wellbeing, personal social emotional growth, and calming anxiety. However, it is important to reiterate here, the goal is to improve their classroom community versus focusing on “fixing the student,” one of the core beliefs of culturally responsive and relative teaching. Because the focus is on improving the community classroom, metta meditation and the Yoga Sutras was chosen as the focus practice. The hope is that upon completion of the unit teachers and students will continue the practices of meditation introduced, continue to nurture their community or seek other practices as well as guide others in their communities and families towards meditation.

Implementation of the unit will take students on a journey of learning experiences to help them understand the value and impact of meditation on our lives in community and education. The class will start their journey by defining community and its importance through interviews of adults and peers. Then they will develop, as a whole class, a “checklist” of criteria for defining the characteristics for community and finally compare and edit that criteria “checklist” with information gathered through interviews, class discussions, readings and other resources provided by researchers and culture groups who practice community. Next students will evaluate or reflect on their school community based on the criteria they have previously created. Students will then gain an understanding of what meditation is through video analysis, readings, discussions and other resources about different meditation traditions and practice some of those traditions. After gaining some understanding of what meditation is, students will then explore the

benefits of meditation, its connections to nurturing community and how non-western schools and schools in the United State use meditative practices. Students will then explore how meditation helps the individual students and the school community. Then students will briefly learn about a particular meditative tradition and practice it. Finally, students will privately reflect on what they are feeling emotionally and physically as well as how they feel about whether the meditation motivates their desire to nurture community in their classroom before and after they implement the meditation technique.

Due to this unit focusing on community building, it is intended to be implemented in the first few weeks of school. The earlier the implementation during the school year, the more likely the community will develop and flourish.

Students will conduct inquiry on the following essential questions:

1. How can we use meditation to create and nurture collaborative communities within our classroom?
2. What are the benefits of meditation for our classroom community?
3. Which meditation technique and why helps me to be most connected to my classroom community? How can meditation help me with being fully present within my classroom community?
4. How does my community support me being a fully present member of my community?
5. How does meditation help with creativity or learning?

### **Teaching Strategies**

For this unit I wanted teachers to have strategies that build empathy, critical thinking and analysis skills, community and deepen students' understanding of content. These skills are transferable and relevant in any content area as well as the world outside their physical classrooms. Therefore I chose interviews, thoughtful question formulation, collaborative classroom practices, gallery walks, meditation practices, reflection.

### **Question Formulation Technique**

Asking the right question is a technique that is critically foundational to literacy. Students' abilities to grow and thrive as learners and continued learners are grounded in their ability to ask the right questions to gain new understandings, perform inquiries and synthesize knowledge. Asking the right questions also helps students build empathy and self-advocacy skills. The Question Formulation Technique is a process that supports students in their skills of developing questions. Through QFT students write questions and improve those questions through the

processes of categorization and iteration. With QFT, students are encouraged to write and ask open-ended questions that will open the door for new and extension of learning.

### **Collaborative Classroom Practices/Discussions**

Collaborative classroom practices are vital to helping students develop deeper understanding of concepts and processes and build empathy, community and critical thinking. All of which will help students fulfill the purpose of learning which is to be able to critically examine the world in which they live and beyond. Collaborative learning is a deeper practice of learning than cooperative learning in which students learn to be dependent as well as interdependent. By the completion of this unit students will have worked with the same group four of students with various perspectives and the whole class interdependently. Students will have shared knowledge and authority in various iterations as a practice throughout the entire unit.

### **Silent Discussion**

A silent discussion is a great technique to help all students, especially quiet or shy students, share their voice and promote critical thinking skills. This technique can be used as a scaffold to the Think, Pair, and Sharing technique. The process for silent discussion is simple. First, students are given a question, document to read, or an image to analyze. Students then write their thoughts or questions either on chart paper or an electronic version of a group chat (e.g. jamboard, Padlet, etc.). Their thoughts and conclusions must be shared in a public yet semi-anonymous way in order for other students to respond by extending the thought or adding a question to extend the thought. The teacher then provides students time to observe the thoughts and questions of their peers. After students have had to observe the thoughts and questions of their peers, they are to respond in writing to at least two to three other student's comments or questions. Their response must be thoughtful by extending the conversation through comment or question. This previous step can be repeated or the teacher can have students repeat it after a whole class or small group discussion. Whether the previous step is repeated at the end, students are to discuss the comments and questions that they find the most compelling, resonate with them, or encourage them to ask more questions in small groups or as a whole class discussion. Their goals of this discussion are to either deepen their understanding, synthesize knowledge and possibly develop new inquiry questions.

### **Actively Listening**

In order for students to have discussions in classrooms that will be impactful to their learning they must practice active listening. Active listening allows students to hear what their peers are really saying by requiring that a person concentrate on listening for what is said rather than

listening to respond. This practice requires paraphrasing, questioning and evaluation of the conversation. Active listening builds empathy and community in the classroom. Active listening also improves students' discourse and critical analysis and thinking skills.

## **Gallery Walks**

Gallery Walks are a great way to help students share knowledge, deepen their understanding of content and processes, build community and active listening skills and have discussions. Gallery walks are suggested in several of the activities in this unit to also help students develop interdependency and provide equity for quiet or shy students or those who might have apprehension about sharing their thoughts with opportunities to be actively engaged in ways that are more comforting for them. It allows the teacher to act as mediator, meet students where they are as well as have full class engagement.

## **Jigsaw**

The Jigsaw strategy supports teachers in facilitating learning with large complex concepts or processes. This strategy also aids students to become “experts” with particular pieces of content as they share their learning and gain new knowledge through the collaborative practice of sharing knowledge. With the Jigsaw students are also able to develop their collaboration and discussion skills. Finally, this strategy also encourages practicing equity in the classroom since it allows the teacher to chunk and scaffold the learning for all students, especially for students who may have challenges with reading and writing.

## **Metacognitive practices**

Metacognitive teaching strategies assist in developing deeper understanding of learning and how one learns. Metacognitive practices are essential aid in developing students' independent and interdependent learning skills through getting the student to think about and evaluate their thinking and learning to find pathways to become better learners. It is a key practice in iteration.

## **Classroom Activities**

### **Lesson 1: Community Criteria - How do I and my class define community**

#### **Guiding Questions**

- How do the adults around us define community?
- How do our peers define community?
- Do their definitions of community align with my own?
- Why is community important to me and to others?
- How does our definition of community agree and diverge?

**Objective:** Students will analyze definitions and text to assist with defining a community in order to create a list of criteria for community.

**Standards:** [Pennsylvania Career Readiness Skills Continuum](#)

### **Learning Experience Progression**

1. The instructor will start the lesson by having students write for 2-3 minutes. They write, based on their prior knowledge, their own definition of *community*. Encourage students to write a list of words and phrases they associate with the term *community* first. The instructor should create a list as well. Have the students write this in their meditation journal for reference later.
2. Next, the instructor and the students should write their words and phrases on post-it notes to be placed on various chart papers around the room. An alternative to the post-it notes is to have the students write their words and phrases directly on the chart paper.
3. Students and teachers should perform a gallery walk in pairs to observe what their peers wrote. As everyone is walking and observing they should be discussing what they are observing while trying to come up with a definition of community.
4. Students should return to their seats with their partners to write out their definition of community based on their prior knowledge and observations.
5. Discuss the definitions as a whole class.
6. Next, tell students they are to conduct interviews with at least 3 adults and 3 of their peers who are not in their class to see how they describe and define the term community.
  - a. Provide them time to create their interview questions. The instructor could do this in a whole group discussion or allow the students to complete it in pairs.
  - b. They must also create a list of interviewees and describe in one sentence why they are interviewing the person.
7. Provide the students a few days to conduct the interviews
8. Finally, as a whole class create a Criteria for Community Checklist based on the gallery walk observation, class discussions, and interviews.

### **Lesson 2: How do others around me define Community?**

#### **Guiding Questions:**

- How do the adults around us define community?
- How do our peers define community?
- Do their definitions of community align with my own?
- Why is community important to me and to others?
- How does our definition of community agree and diverge?



**Objective:** Students will analyze definitions and text to assist with defining a community in order to create a list of criteria for community.

**Standards:** [Pennsylvania Career Readiness Skills Continuum](#)

### **Learning Experience Progression**

1. Tell students they are to conduct interviews with at least 3 adults and 3 of their peers who are not in their class to see how they describe and define the term community.
  - a. Provide them time to create their interview questions. The instructor could do this in a whole group discussion or allow the students to complete it in pairs.
  - b. They must also create a list of interviewees and describe in one sentence why they are interviewing the person.
9. Provide the students a few days to conduct the interviews
10. They should reflect on the following in their Community and Meditation Journal.
  - a. My prior knowledge of the meaning and importance of community was...
  - b. After I conducted interviews I learned the following about the meaning and importance of community.
11. Finally, as a whole class create a Criteria for Community Checklist based on the gallery walk observation, class discussions, and interviews.

### **Lesson 3: Text and Video Analysis of research on Community**

#### **Guiding Questions**

1. How do researchers define community?
2. Why do researchers believe community is important?
3. How does our class understanding and definition of community align and diverge with researchers?
4. How do we build a sense of community in our classroom?

**Objective:** Students will analyze multiple sources in order to continue developing understandings about community.

**Standards:** [Pennsylvania Career Readiness Skills Continuum](#)

### **Learning Experience Progression:**

1. In this lesson students will examine how researchers and various communities have defined or explain the importance of community.
  - a. Quote Analysis - In this four corners activity students will analyze quotes about the meaning and significance of community. Students will analyze quotes from Native American, African and Asian cultures.

- i. Print out or write four quotes from the following [source](#) and place the quotes and chart part.
  - ii. Hang one quote in each corner of the room
  - iii. Divide students into four groups or groups of 4 and assign each group a corner. Alternative would be to allow students to read all the quotes and choose their own corner.
  - iv. In the corner students are to analyze the quote by discussing the meaning and what significance that specific culture groups places on the term *community*.
  - v. Then as a group they are to write a definition that summarizes the meaning of community based on the quote.
  - vi. Share out and discuss as a whole group.
- b. Video Analysis** - In this jigsaw activity students will study and analyze the content of [this video](#) that defines community based on research completed in 1986 by McMillan and Chavis. The instructor should prepare for the learning experience by viewing the video on community and [this video](#) on how to effectively perform a jigsaw activity as a refresher or to enhance knowledge about jigsaw activities. In order to further help the teacher prepare for the lesson, they can also watch [this video](#) on community. This last video is specifically to support the teacher, not the students.
- i. After students have completed their chunk of knowledge, have one from each group go to one of the four corners. While in the four corners, have the students teach each other their chunk of knowledge. Students should ask questions of each member who is teaching to gain a further understanding of the meaning of community and why it is important. Therefore not only should students record notes of the information, they should also write down questions. The instructor should provide them time to review their notes and write questions.
  - ii. When they are finished with the jigsaw in the four corners they should return to their original group to discuss what they learned about the meaning and importance of community. They should also compare and contrast their definition with the definition of researchers?
  - iii. When finished discussing in their smaller groups they should continue their discussion as a whole class with the teacher and students sharing in the facilitation of the conversation.
- c. Text analysis** - In this combination jigsaw and gallery walk activity students will analyze texts describing community and its importance to gain further understanding of the meaning and importance of community. The instructor should prepare for the learning experience by reading the texts provided and use

[this source](#) on how to effectively perform a gallery walk activity as a refresher or to enhance knowledge about gallery activities.

- i. Have the students read the following text via a jigsaw. The teacher should have the students perform this task in groups. Each group should be assigned a portion of a chunk of the reading to analyze.
  1. [What is community and why is it important?](#)
- ii. When finished reading their sections of the jigsaw students should record their analysis, summaries, conclusions, questions on chart paper. Their chunk of the reading should be printed and pasted to the chart paper as well.
- iii. Once finished with the reading analysis students should be provided time to perform the gallery walk. As they perform their gallery walk, students should add comments or questions to add to the conversations on the chart paper. Please allow students to pair up and have discussions as they observe and comment about the information formulated on the gallery pieces.
- d. They should reflect on the following in their Community and Meditation Journal.
  - i. My prior knowledge of the meaning and importance of community was...
  - ii. After I conducted interviews I learned the following about the meaning and importance of community.
  - iii. After conducting the analysis of quotes I learned the following about community..
  - iv. After conducting the video analysis I learned the following about community...
  - v. After reading the research, I learned the following about the meaning and importance of community.
  - vi. How did the information from the quotes, videos and readings differ? How was the information similar?
  - vii. How did my knowledge about the meaning and importance of community shift based on class discussions, interviews and research?

## **Lesson 4: Evaluating Our Community**

### **Guiding Questions**

1. How do researchers define community?
2. Why do researchers believe community is important?
3. How does our class understanding and definition of community align and diverge with researchers?
4. How do we build a sense of community in our classroom?

**Objective:** Students will be able to synthesize knowledge about what community is and why it is important to evaluate their classroom community.

**Standards:** [Pennsylvania Career Readiness Skills Continuum](#)

**Learning Experience Progression:**

1. As a whole class, teachers and students will evaluate all that has been learned about the meaning of community and why it is important.
  - a. Possible questions for evaluating your definition of the term community.
    - i. Definition
      1. Does your definition of community account for all the different kinds of community? Does your definition of community account for the positive feeling people have about being part of a community? Does your definition of community explain the nature of shared identity or belonging? Does your definition of community have a normative force? Does your definition of community explain why a community is different from other types of social group?
    - ii. Editing your class definition and checklist.
      1. How do we edit our own definition and understanding of community based on the experts?
      2. How do we edit our checklist?
2. Using your final definition and checklist evaluate whether a community exists in your class and create a list of what to do to create or improve the community in your classroom.
  - a. Answer the question: Do we have community here in our classroom? Why or why not?
  - b. According to the checklist, what are at least two steps we are doing to build and nurture a community? Second, what are one- two steps we should take under each factor of the definition of community to build it or nurture it in our classroom?
  - c. Provide the class options (i.e. meditation, etc.) for routines that you all are able to do as class to build empathy, compassion, and support for one another in the community.

**Lesson 5: Understanding Meditation and Mindfulness and the Benefits**

**Guiding Questions**

1. What is meditation?
2. Is there a difference between meditation and mindfulness? If so, what is the difference?
3. What are some various types of meditation practices?

4. How are the meditation practices different?
5. Which practice is the most helpful for building community in our classroom?

**Objective:** Students will explore various meditation traditions in order to define meditation and understand why one practice might be more helpful to them versus another.

**Standards:** [Pennsylvania Career Readiness Skills Continuum](#)

**Learning Experience Progression:**

1. Let the class know that they and you will be learning about meditation and mindfulness in this portion of the unit. To begin the learning, ask and as a whole class, discuss the following: *What do you know about meditation? What is mindfulness?*
  - a. This portion of the lesson can be completed through a Think, Pair, Share (and Reflect) strategy.
    - i. First provide everyone one full minute to write independently all they know or have heard about meditation.
    - ii. Next, have them share with a partner or two what they wrote about meditation. Students should be provided one to two minutes per person in the group to share. For example, if there are three people in each group everyone gets two minutes to share with 6 minutes total for whole groups. Each student must share while the others actively listen while jotting notes and questions to ask at the end of the share.
    - iii. After their pairing, students and the teacher should be provided time to reflect on what they already knew and what they learned from the share out.
    - iv. Finally, the whole class will discuss what you all know about meditation.
2. Readings/Research- In this portion of the lesson students will answer the question: *What is meditation? What is mindfulness? How are meditation and mindfulness different? What are the benefits of each*
  - a. Readings- Jigsaw the following readings to analyze how each defines meditation and its benefits. In conjunction with the reading jigsaw, students could conduct a Think, Pair, Share (and Reflect) activity to analyze the texts.
    - i. [Meditation](#) by Psychology Today
    - ii. [Meditation in Education](#) by Edutopia (Benefits Infographic)
    - iii. [Benefits and Challenges of Practicing Mindfulness Meditation](#) by Medium (Use Infographic only)
    - iv. Meta mediation/love and kindness  
[https://www.buddhanet.net/pdf\\_file/seeding.pdf](https://www.buddhanet.net/pdf_file/seeding.pdf)

- v. [https://www.buddhanet.net/pdf\\_file/med-guided2.pdf](https://www.buddhanet.net/pdf_file/med-guided2.pdf) various types of meditation might be good guide for teacher...p4 explains benefits in classroom which is good for next section
- vi. Questions to consider for analysis:
  1. How does the text define meditation?
  2. If the text mentions mindfulness, what connections does it make between mindfulness and meditation?
  3. Based on the readings and in your words, summarize the meaning of meditation.
  4. What are some of the benefits of meditation?
  5. How does meditation help develop the character traits of equanimity, compassion, and empathy?
  6. According to your understanding of the text and what you have learned about community, can meditation help with building and nurturing community? Why or why not?
- b. Readings- Jigsaw the following readings to analyze how each defines mindfulness and its benefits. In conjunction with the reading jigsaw, students could conduct a Think, Pair, Share (and Reflect) activity to analyze the texts.
  - i. [\*Mindfulness\*](#) by Psychology Today
  - ii. [\*Benefits of Mindfulness\*](#) by Harmony Family Yoga (Use only the infographic)
  - iii. [\*Mindfulness Benefits\*](#) (Use only the infographic)
  - iv. Questions to consider for analysis:
    1. How does the text define mindfulness?
    2. If the text mentions meditation, what connections does it make between meditation and mindfulness?
    3. Based on the readings and in your words, summarize the meaning of mindfulness.
    4. What are some of the benefits of mindfulness?
    5. How does mindfulness help develop the character traits of equanimity, compassion, and empathy?
    6. According to your understanding of the text and what you have learned about community, can mindfulness help with building and nurturing community? Why or why not?
- c. Mindfulness vs. Meditation
  - i. [\*The Miracle of Mindfulness\*](#) by Thich Nhat Hanh, pp 3-8
  - ii. [\*The Fundamentals of Meditation Practice\*](#) by Ting Chen, pp 11-14
  - iii. Questions to consider for analysis:
    1. Compare and contrast meditation and mindfulness.
    2. How is concentration related to meditation and mindfulness?

3. How does meditation and mindfulness help develop the character traits of equanimity, compassion, and empathy?
4. According to your understanding of the text and what you have learned about community, how can mindfulness or meditation help with building and nurturing community?

## **Lesson 4: Nurturing Community**

### **Guiding Questions:**

1. How do I help nurture community?

**Objective:** The students will define compassion, empathy, and equanimity in order to understand how important such character traits are to building and nurturing community.

**Standards:** [Pennsylvania Career Readiness Skills Continuum](#)

### **Learning Experience Progression:**

1. As an introduction and review to this learning experience, revisit the quotes on community from earlier in the unit. Also the teacher could also have the class read the following Buddha parable about community:
  - a. [Ananda and Community](#)
2. Revisit and define the following terms: dharma, Buddha, sangha, compassion, empathy, equanimity
  - a. [The Triple Gem](#)
  - b. [Defining Compassion](#), Brene Brown (2 minute video)
  - c. [Empathy vs Sympathy](#) by Brene Brown (3 minute video)
  - d. [Equanimity](#)
  - e. Chapter 6 of the [Bhagavad Gita](#) to understand how to reach equanimity (3:01-5:06)
3. Discuss the following. The teacher should provide a strategy to help students or permit the class to decide how to record their conversations and thoughts.
  - a. How do I nurture the characteristic of compassion in myself and others in my community?
  - b. How do I nurture the characteristic of empathy in myself and others in my community?
  - c. How do I nurture the characteristic of equanimity in myself and others in my community?
  - d. How could compassion, equanimity, and empathy help build community in the classroom?

## **Lesson 5: Practicing Meditation and Reflection**

**Guiding Questions:**

1. What are some ways to practice meditation and mindfulness?
2. What is the best practice for me? Why is this the best practice for me? How does it help me to nurture my classroom community and myself within the community?

**Objective:** Students will explore various meditative practices in order to describe how the benefits of meditation can help nurture community.

**Standards:** [Pennsylvania Career Readiness Skills Continuum](#)

**Learning Experience Progression:**

1. Asian Meditation Traditions - Each of the following meditation practices should be implemented by both the teacher and students 2-3 times with students written a reflection after each implementation.
  - a. Breathing
    - i. [Breathing Meditation](#) or [Breathing Meditation](#) - How to
    - ii. Reflection: How did I feel before and after this mediation practice? Does this practice help to calm me? How do I feel about this meditation practice? Does this practice help me build compassion and empathy for those in my community?
  - b. Meta Meditation
    - i. To help put this form of meditation into perspective as a way of building equanimity and understanding the importance of community, use this video of the [Care Bear stare](#) as an introduction to Meta Meditation.
    - ii. [Metta Meditation/Love and Kindness Meditation](#) - How to
    - iii. Reflection: How did I feel before and after this mediation practice? Does this practice help to calm me? How do I feel about this meditation practice? Does this practice help me build compassion and empathy for those in my community?
  - c. Mindfulness
    - i. To help put this practice into perspective read and discuss the subsection titled Washing the Dishes of [The Miracle of Mindfulness](#). Or discuss the section 6.6 of chapter 6 of the [Bhagavad Gita](#)
    - ii. How to
      1. [Mindfulness Meditation Instructions](#)
      2. [Mindful Coloring](#)
    - iii. Reflection: How did I feel before and after this mediation practice? Does this practice help to calm me? How do I feel about this meditation practice? Does this practice help me build compassion and empathy for those in my community?



- d. Yoga Sutra
  - i. As an introduction to the Yoga Sutra practices, read and discuss [this short introductory article](#) to contextualize the Yoga Sutras.
  - ii. How to
    - 1. [Yoga Sutra 1:33 Slide deck](#)
    - 2. Sanskrit's Detailed explanation of the [Yoga Sutra](#). Sutra 1:33 starts at 1:46-1:49.
  - iii. Reflection: How did I feel before and after this mediation practice? Does this practice help to calm me? How do I feel about this meditation practice? Does this practice help me build compassion and empathy for those in my community?
- 2. Native American
  - a. [Native American Code of Ethics](#)
  - b. [Native American Meditation Traditions](#)
  - c. [All Our Relations: Four Indigenous Lessons on Mindfulness](#)
  - d. Reflect

## References

### **Annotated Resources for Instruction and Instructional Planning**

60 Minutes. (2020). Brené Brown: The secret to having compassion. On YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rCvhOqThYJ4>. This video should be used to help teachers and students understand what compassion is and how it is different from empathy.

Bears, C. (2019). Classic Care Bears | Care Bear Stare (and Cousins Call) Mega

Compilation! On YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYKc-WiKuNI>

*Benefits of Mindfulness Meditation*. (2020, June 8). Harmony Family Yoga | Modern

Yoga Studio. <https://harmonyfamilyyoga.com/benefits-of-mindfulness-meditation/>. This article should only be used to pair the infographic in it with the Psychology Today article on the meaning and benefits of mindfulness. Students and teachers should compare the benefits described in Psychology Today with those shown in the infographic.

Brown, B. (2016). Brené Brown on Empathy vs Sympathy [YouTube Video]. On YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KZBTYViDPIQ>. This video should be used to help students and teachers gain an understanding of what empathy is and how it is different from its near enemy sympathy.

Buddhism. (2022). Guided Loving Kindness Meditation... | Buddhism In English. In *YouTube*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDi40FQcaIU>. This source should be used as a beginner's guide to Metta Meditation or Love and Kindness Meditation. It is twenty-two minutes long.

Buddhism. (2023, October 14). *How To Meditate In A Busy Life | Buddhism In English*. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gXXhSWMqeD8>. The video is how to guide with help tips for practicing mindful meditation and should be used in conjunction with another mindful meditation practice.

Chen, T. (1999). *The Fundamentals of Meditation Practice* [www.buddhanet.net](http://www.buddhanet.net) Buddha Dharma Education Association Inc. (pp. 11–14).

[https://www.buddhanet.net/pdf\\_file/chanmed1.pdf](https://www.buddhanet.net/pdf_file/chanmed1.pdf). This text should be used to help students discern whether there are similarities and differences between mindfulness and meditation.

Clinton, M. (2017, August 21). *9 Fascinating Proverbs to Help You Understand an African Worldview*. International Mission Board; International Mission Board. <https://www.imb.org/2017/08/21/9-fascinating-proverbs-to-help-you-understand-an-african-worldview/>. This source is used to help students understand the importance of community in various cultures.

Cult of Pedagogy. (2015). The Jigsaw Method. On YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=euhtXUgBEts>. This video is only for instructional purposes for the teacher. It should be used to help the teacher gain understanding about how to implement the Jigsaw strategy in their classroom or refresh their knowledge.

Dawson, V. (2021, November 7). *All Our Relations: Four Indigenous Lessons on Mindfulness*. Mindful. <https://www.mindful.org/all-our-relations-four-indigenous-lessons-on-mindfulness/>. This article could be used to perform a deeper inquiry into Native American mindfulness practices.

Driver, M. (2018, June 19). *What are the Yoga Sutras?* Asheville Yoga Center.

<https://youryoga.com/what-are-the-yoga-sutras/#:~:text=In%20a%20nutshell%2C%20the%20Yoga>. Teachers and students should read this article as a brief introduction to the Yoga Sutras.

Ford, S. (2021, June 16). *Yoga and Buddhist Philosophy: The Brahmaviharas and Patanjali's Yoga Sutra 1.33*. Integral Yoga San Francisco.

<https://integralyogasf.org/yoga-and-buddhist-philosophy-the-brahmaviharas-and-patanjalis-yoga-sutra-1-33/>. This source could be used to help explain Yoga Sutra 1:33 in a more accessible way for students.

Forman, C. (2016, January 11). *The Native American Code of Ethics*.

[www.thewayofmeditation.com.au](http://www.thewayofmeditation.com.au). <https://www.thewayofmeditation.com.au/the-native-american-code-of-ethics>. This article could be used as a way to engage in deeper inquiry of meditation traditions in Native American cultures.

*Gallery Walk - The Teacher Toolkit*. (n.d.). [www.theteachertoolkit.com](http://www.theteachertoolkit.com).

<https://www.theteachertoolkit.com/index.php/tool/gallery-walk>. This source should be

used to help teachers only. It is meant to help teachers with understanding how to implement the Gallery Walk strategy in their classroom or refresh their knowledge.

Hanh, T. N. (1976). *The Miracle of Mindfulness* (pp. 3–8).

[https://terebess.hu/zen/mesterek/Thich%20Nhat%20Hanh%20-](https://terebess.hu/zen/mesterek/Thich%20Nhat%20Hanh%20-%20The%20Miracle%20of%20Mindfulness.pdf)

[%20The%20Miracle%20of%20Mindfulness.pdf](https://terebess.hu/zen/mesterek/Thich%20Nhat%20Hanh%20-%20The%20Miracle%20of%20Mindfulness.pdf). This text should be used to help

students gain a deeper understanding of mindfulness and the difference between

mindfulness and meditation. Students and teachers should also understand who the author is and why they are important to understanding mindfulness.

*Infographic: Meditation in Schools Across America.* (2012, February 22). Edutopia.

<https://www.edutopia.org/stw-student-stress-meditation-schools-infographic>. Students

and teachers should pair this infographic with the Psychology Today article defining

meditation and its benefits.

*Introduction To Breathing Meditation / Buddhism In English.* (2023, June).

Www.youtube.com. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-dHOWvFZa4M>. This video

should be used to help with practicing breathing meditation.

Marie, M. (2017, September 5). *Native American Traditions in Meditation.* Medium.

[https://medium.com/@msealymindfulleadership/how-to-meditate-using-native-american-](https://medium.com/@msealymindfulleadership/how-to-meditate-using-native-american-traditions-230c2b1bcc26)

[traditions-230c2b1bcc26](https://medium.com/@msealymindfulleadership/how-to-meditate-using-native-american-traditions-230c2b1bcc26). This article could be used to start the inquiry into Native

American meditation practices.

*Meditation / Psychology Today.* (2019). Psychology Today.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/meditation>. Students and teachers should

use this article to understand what meditation is and what benefits practicing meditation can provide.

Mobe, T. (2022, May 23). *8 African Proverbs That Every Global Citizen Should Know*. Global Citizen. <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/africa-proverbs-global-citizens-action-end-poverty/>. This source was used to create a slide deck with quotes about the importance of community from the perspective of various cultures.

Psychology Today. (2019). *Mindfulness | Psychology Today*. Psychology Today. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/mindfulness>. Students and teachers should read this short article to understand what mindfulness is and what benefits it provides. This article should be accessible to most students and should be paired with an infographic.

Sense Of Community explained. (2016). [YouTube Video]. On YouTube. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ey4wsa4\\_fZg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ey4wsa4_fZg). This video is solely for teacher use. It should be used to help the teacher prepare to discuss, define, and analyze the meaning of community.

*Spiritual Friendship Is the Path*. (2021). Lion's Roar. <https://www.lionsroar.com/spiritual-friendship-is-the-path/>. This source is used to teach the importance of community. It teaches the importance of community through a Buddha parable.

Stinson, K. (2024, April 16). *MGH Guides: Study Breaks: Mindfulness for Healthcare Providers*. Libguides.massgeneral.org. <https://libguides.massgeneral.org/studybreaks/mindfulness>. The use of this article should only be to compare the infographic with the benefits of mindfulness described in the Psychology Today article.

Study Buddhism. (2018). What is Equanimity? | Dr Chönyi Taylor. On YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PX8CY-1eOM0>. This video should be used to spark a conversation to help students and teachers understand equanimity as well as the role it plays in nurturing community.

The Sanskrit Channel. (2020, January 7). *Learn BhagavadGita with Narration of Meanings - Chapter 6*. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sb4UsflFpJ8>. This source, Bhagavad Gita (chapter 6) should be used to help students with understanding how meditation and mindfulness helps nurture compassion and community. The teacher might want to provide students a brief context to the Bhagavad Gita.

The Sanskrit Channel. (2021, June 9). *Detailed Patanjali Yoga Sutras with Pictures - Chapter 1 - States of Meditativeness*. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L1jdEWSEFUo>. This video should be used as a detailed explanation of the Yoga Sutras. Sutra 1:33 starts at 1 hour and 46 minutes.

*The Triple Gem - Intro into Buddhism*. (2023, December). [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y0c0K0Pvmg4>. Only the first 1 minute and 36 seconds of this video on the Triple Gem should be used. It is meant to help with understanding the importance of community in the Buddhist meditation tradition.

Ting, M. (2020). Sense of Community. On YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bYcmg33ydGw>. The purpose of this video is to help students and teachers understand the community. It should be viewed and analyzed through discussion.

Vasundhara Talware. (2021, May 18). *Yoga Sutra 1.33: Four Love Languages of Yoga*.

YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7P0b54i6OkQ>. This source should be used

to help explain Sutra 1:33. It should be paired with the other sources in the lesson to help students understand how to use the sutra.

Washington State Library. (2021). *CHIEF SEATTLE'S LETTER*. Csun.edu.

<https://www.csun.edu/~vcpsy00h/seattle.htm>. This letter written by Chief Seattle's was used for the quote on the importance of community.

Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche. (2011). A Guided Meditation on the Body, Space, and Awareness with Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche. On YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5GSeWdjyr1c>. This video is used to help with practicing breathing meditation.

Youth Focus. (n.d.). *"I have coloured in the MINDFUL COLOURING*.

[https://youthfocus.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/YF\\_Mindful-Colouring\\_FA.pdf](https://youthfocus.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/YF_Mindful-Colouring_FA.pdf).

This source is included as one way to practice mindful meditation.

Zephyrion. (2023, March 29). *The Benefits and Challenges of Practicing Mindfulness Meditation*. Medium. <https://medium.com/@vaqarali387/the-benefits-and-challenges-of-practicing-mindfulness-meditation-7c433f1eb405>. Students and teachers should use this text to study the infographic on the benefits of meditation. The article is useful, however it was only chosen as an infographic to provide an additional layer of accessibility for readers.