# PREPRINT

**Mindfulness as a Foundation for Reflection:
Applying Principles From Dialectical Behavior Therapy to Service-Learning Instruction**

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**Abstract:** Service-learning is a high-impact practice through which students participate in service activities and reflect on those experiences to gain a deeper understanding of course content, as well as of their personal values and civic responsibilities. Critical reflection is crucial for service-learning, and many students require guidance in the process. In this essay, I explore mindfulness as the foundation for the meaningful reflection crucial for service-learning and its instruction. To guide the reflection process, I propose the six core mindfulness skills practiced in dialectical behavior therapy as a framework for service-learning activity prompts. I include examples of how the skills can be applied in the classroom, at service sites, and in postservice reflection assignments. I, additionally, share how mindfulness practice enhanced my development as a new instructor. Finally, I propose mindfulness as not only a foundation to service-learning reflection but also as the keystone of all philanthropic behavior.

High-impact practices (HIP) are a set of 11 pedagogical approaches that have been shown to enhance student learning (Kuh et al., 2008), based on data from the National Survey of Student Engagement. HIPs are particularly beneficial to underrepresented and underserved students, resulting in greater academic success compared to the academic success of students not engaging in HIPs (Finley & McNair, 2013).

One of the 11 HIP approaches is service-learning, a course or competency-based, credit-bearing educational experience in which students

(a)     participate in mutually identified service activities that benefit the community, and

(b)     reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of personal values and civic responsibility (Bringle & Clayton, 2012, p. 105)

A key element of service-learning is the opportunity for students to reflect on their service experiences actively through exercises that foster a synthesis of knowledge about the self, society, and academic concepts (Kuh et al., 2008; Smith et al., 2011). Such reflection is an essential aspect of service-learning (Chupp & Joseph, 2010; Hudson & Hunter, 2014) because learning does not necessarily occur as a result of the service experience itself, but rather "as a result of a reflective component explicitly designed to foster learning and development" (Jacoby, 1996, p. 6). Without a well-designed framework for structured critical reflection on the service experience, students may not consider the broader social and political contexts of their service, nor will they identify implications and future applications (Chupp & Joseph, 2010).

Components of an approach borrowed from cognitive behavior therapy may offer such a framework. Specifically, the six core mindfulness skills used in dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) can help provide a structure that facilitates critical reflection. When integrated into prompts for reflection before, during, and after the service-learning experience, DBT provides students with additional guidance on what to do (observe, describe, and participate) and how to do it (nonjudgmentally, one-mindfully, and effectively). In this essay, I review the elements of service-learning instruction, explore the role of mindfulness as a foundation for critical reflection in service-learning, and offer suggestions for how instructors can integrate the six core mindfulness skills into the classroom, at service sites, and in postservice reflection assignments. I share how mindfulness practice has enhanced my development as a new instructor. Finally, I propose mindfulness not only as foundational to service-learning reflection but also as the keystone of all philanthropic behavior.

**The Role of Reflection in Service-Learning**

Through service-learning, students connect with nonprofit organizations, government agencies, service associations, or other volunteer groups and apply their emerging skills and knowledge to real social problems in ways designed to benefit community partners (Olberding & Hacker, 2016). Students' direct participation with community service programs provides them with opportunities to gain both experiential knowledge and theoretical knowledge (Hunter & Brisbin, 2000; Lucy-Bouler, 2012). Prior research points to positive relationships between

students' engagement in service-learning and their skill development and academic learning (e.g., Ahmed & Olberding, 2007; Dicke et al., 2004; Olberding, 2009; Olberding & Hacker, 2016). Service-learning projects that connect adolescents with others in the community can enhance their development as leaders and can contribute to their social and emotional learning (Chung & McBride, 2015; Flanagan & Christens, 2011; Zeldin et al., 2005).

Effective service-learning courses integrate critical reflection into student learning. In this context, instructors increase students' capacity to critically reflect, link service-learning to course content, analyze social issues, recognize systems of power, and induce new action (Hahn et al., 2016). Reflection should be self-referent, meaning that students should examine their experience within the context of their values, attitudes, and goals (Kaye, 2010). The heightened awareness of current and potential realities generated by service experiences can then lead to a refinement of individual values, identity, and purpose (Hudson & Hunter, 2014).

## Clinical Approaches Applied in the Classroom

Various principles of psychotherapy, particularly those from evidence-based cognitive behavior approaches, have long informed strategies outside the clinical context. Interventions used in clinical populations have successfully bolstered behavioral motivation and change in classrooms and workplaces (Reich et al., 2015). The focus of much of this research and application has been motivational interviewing, an approach that aims to increase motivation to change problem behavior by highlighting discrepancies between the behavior and the individual's goals (Miller, 1996). Motivational interviewing has been described as a "way of being" that conveys empathy, respect, and curiosity by drawing out an individual's thoughts and ideas through the use of open-ended questions, reflective listening, summaries, and affirmations (Miller & Rollnick, 2013; Miller & Rose, 2009). Although motivational interviewing improves student motivation, integrating a second comprehensive cognitive behavior approach, DBT, may be particularly useful in helping students navigate and reflect on their service-learning experiences.

## Dialectical Behavior Therapy

DBT, developed by Marsha Linehan at the University of Washington, is an evidence-based intervention that teaches clients reappraisal, problem-solving, and acceptance-based emotion regulation skills (Linehan, 2015). DBT was created to help individuals diagnosed with chronic suicidal ideation, but it has been adapted and used to treat other psychological conditions, including eating disorders, substance abuse, posttraumatic stress disorder, and depression (Kliem et al., 2010; Lynch et al., 2006; Panos et al., 2014; Robins & Rosenthal, 2012). The central dialectic within DBT is the balance of acceptance and change, that is, the client's acceptance of their feelings in the moment and their efforts to bring about change by increasing adaptive functioning and decreasing maladaptive behavior (Linehan, 2015).

The foundation of DBT is its comprehensive skills training in four areas: mindful- ness, emotion regulation, distress tolerance, and interpersonal effectiveness. Through group work, daily practice, and individual coaching with a DBT therapist, clients learn and gain mastery in these skillsets to improve their ability to regulate emotions, to interact effectively with others,

and to tolerate distress rather than engaging in self- destructive attempts to escape it (Linehan, 2015). DBT explicitly integrates cognitive behavior principles and strategies with Zen Buddhist principles and mindfulness practices (Robins, 2002). Mindfulness, as practiced within the DBT program, is based in Eastern Zen philosophy and includes several Western contemplative practices. It is described as an awareness of thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and behavioral urges. By learning and practicing mindfulness, clients empower themselves to be in charge of their thoughts, reactions, and behaviors (Linehan, 2015; Lynch et al., 2006). Mindfulness is the first step to being present with and noticing internal experiences, rather than automatically reacting to them. It is the crucial first step in any meaningful reflection.

**Mindfulness as the Core Principle of Dialectical Behavior Therapy**

Over the past few decades, interest in applying mindfulness as a clinical intervention has expanded (Hayes, 2004; Kabat-Zinn, 1994). Mindfulness began as a behavioral intervention with the development of mindfulness-based stress reduction, a program to treat patients with chronic pain. Since then, mindfulness practice has been adopted as an intervention for other populations as well (Keng et al., 2011).

The term "mindfulness" describes a state of awareness, a psychological process, a psychological trait, and the practice of cultivating mindfulness (Keng et al., 2011). A more commonly cited definition of mindfulness is an awareness that results from "paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally" (Kabat-Zinn, 1994, p. 4). Within DBT, Linehan (2015) describes mind-fulness as the act of consciously focusing the mind on the present moment, without judgment and without attachment to the moment, in contrast to automatic, habitual, or rote behavior or activities. Mindfulness is the "quality of awareness or the quality of presence that a person brings to everyday living. It's a way of living awake, with eyes wide open" (Linehan, 2015, p. 151).

Meditation is often mistakenly thought to be central to mindfulness. Although meditation does involve mindfulness, mindfulness does not require meditation. Mindfulness practice can take several forms beyond meditation, as outlined in the skills described in this section. Similarly, although mindfulness practice was and is central to contemplative spiritual practices, the mindfulness skills training provided through DBT is designed to be nondenominational and to be provided in a secular format (Linehan, 2015).

In DBT, both clients and therapists learn and practice the six core mindfulness skills and apply mindfulness meditation to everyday life (Linehan, 2015). The ultimate goal of mindfulness skills practice is to develop a lifestyle of participating with awareness (Linehan, 2015, p. 157). For clinicians, the benefits of mindfulness training include increased ability to observe and describe the patient's behavior in a nonjudgmental manner, to regulate emotion, and to observe self-judgments (Robins, 2002). Even the most experienced practitioner is not mindful at all times, but such a goal is not necessary. A person can experience the benefits of mindfulness by noticing when they are not mindful and choosing to return their mind to the present.

**Applying Dialectical Behavior Therapy Mindfulness Skills to Service-Learning**

Effective reflection can help students understand the meaning of their service work by assisting them in critically examining their experiences (Bringle & Hatcher, 2009). The core mindfulness skills of DBT help students to remain fully engaged in an experience by directing their attention through the process of observing, describing, and participating from a nonjudgmental perspective. This process allows for a more objective and meaningful recollection of experiences that foster a more thorough reflection. Learning to be more aware of, and not react to, internal states is a crucial therapeutic process. In DBT, these skills are taught through the "what" skills of mindfulness (observe, describe, and participate) and the "how" skills of mindfulness (nonjudgmentally, one-mindfully, and effectively). The practice of these six mindfulness skills involves an intentional process of observing, describing, and participating in the current reality nonjudgmentally, in the moment, and with effectiveness (Linehan, 2015).

The application of mindfulness to foster meaningful reflection before, during, and after service-learning activities complements existing critical reflection frameworks. The four Cs of critical reflection prescribe reflection that is continuous throughout the semester, that is connected to activities that inform service-learning projects, that challenges students to think critically about how service-learning experiences relate to course content and to their roles as engaged citizens, and that is contextualized to be consistent and complementary to other course content (Eyler et al., 1996). The six DBT core mindfulness skills, in particular, complement the DEAL model, a critical reflection framework in which students describe, examine, and articulate learning (Ash & Clayton, 2009). The how skills offer further guidance on how the DEAL process might be performed effectively.

In the following sections, I describe the six DBT core mindfulness skills as a potential supporting framework that guides service-learning and its instruction. Because reflection is best incorporated into the course before, during, and after the service experience (Smith et al., 2011), I share how they might be included in the classroom and at service sites to help students engage more fully with service-learning and with corresponding reflection.

**The "What" Skills**

Within DBT, mindfulness skills coaching begins with the what skills of core mindfulness: observe, describe, and participate. These refer to ways of practicing mindfulness, or what students can do to manage their attention and internal reactions when facing unfamiliar experiences in service-learning. Strong internal responses can be expected during service-learning activities, particularly among students participating in service-learning for the first time. Service-learning programs that "place students in contexts where their prejudices, previous experiences, and assumptions about the world are challenged may create the circumstances necessary for growth" (Eyler & Giles, 1999, p. 17). Such growth often involves a sense of internal dissonance resulting from the individual developing an awareness that challenges prior beliefs and assumptions, leading some students to begin to reassess their personal values.

**Observe**

The first what skill is observing, that is, simply noticing thoughts, emotions, and other behavioral responses without attempting to end them when painful or to prolong them when

pleasant. Practitioners allow themselves awareness of their internal reactions in a given moment without trying to assess them, to indulge in them, or to push them away. This ability to attend to a thought or emotion requires a corresponding ability to step back from it. Emotional responses occur for a reason and, with practice, can be tolerated. It is a paradoxical approach, but the process results in emotional experiences that are less disturbing and of shorter duration. When a person permits emotional responses to exist, these responses take form as natural dynamic sensations that fleetingly leave the person's awareness as fleetingly as they had entered it (Linehan, 2015).

The ability to take note of emotional thoughts, behaviors, and reactions—rather than fighting them or indulging in them—allows students to be attentive to the present and better remember their responses to permit later reflection and learning. For example, one of my students shared that he began his service-learning activity with a presumption that "all homeless people are lazy, and they just don't want to work. But I talked to one guy for quite a while. He does have a job, but it just isn't enough. I feel really bad that I thought that he was lazy." The student had questioned an assumption while noting the secondary reaction—a sense of guilt. His observation was the first step in examining previous assumptions and considering how his new perspectives may influence his philanthropic decisions in the future.

Encouraging students to note and later record their internal reactions during service-learning activities can serve as stepping stones to guide them to reflect on the experience critically (Ambrose, 2010). To do this, ask students to write a log for each week of the service-learning project. Encourage them to record what they experienced through their five senses and the thoughts and emotions they experienced. Students should also log any noteworthy events, such as a critical decision being made, a conflict occurring, or a challenge being resolved. In this capacity, the log also serves as a means for students to communicate any difficulties they experience during their service-learning projects. Explain to students that the log will help them enhance their observational and communication skills, explore emotions, and assess progress. Prompts to aid students with the skill of observation include the following: What happened? What issue is being addressed or population is being served? What did you observe? and What were the results of your participation?

**Describe**

The second skill of core mindfulness is describing what has been observed and experienced, being careful to note facts rather than interpretations. The describe skill mirrors the "What?" cognitive description prompt of the Objective, Reflective, Interpretive, and Decisional (ORID) model, more commonly referred to as the "What, Gut, So What, Now What" model (Stanfield & Canadian Institute of Cultural Affairs, 2013). The describe skill engages affective expression, analysis, and application of new knowledge seen in the later stages of the ORID model. Mindfully describing teaches practitioners to not take emotions and thoughts as accurate reflections of environmental events. For example, a student may express their interpretation by thinking, "I'm too stupid to complete this project," whereas a factual reframing of the experience would be "I am feeling frustrated with the complexity of this project." The former increases

negative emotions that may prevent students from asking for help, whereas the latter provides a factual assessment of a situation more likely to result in the student reaching out for support.

The weekly logbook helps students begin to observe and note aspects of the service-learning experiences, but reflective journaling (either in addition to or integrated into the logbook) can further their practice of recognizing and trusting their direct experiences, rather than reacting to unchecked assumptions and interpretations. Prior research has suggested that journaling throughout the service-learning experience can help students provide a more nuanced reflection on the meaning of their experiences. This insight has helped students gain an appreciation of the socioeconomic disparities in their communities as well as commonalities between themselves and those they serve, thus increasing the students' valuing of the community (Bringle & Hatcher, 2009; Eyler & Giles, 1999). Other research has noted the transformative nature of journaling thoughts and feelings about those served throughout service-learning experiences as a means of increasing social awareness (Chung & McBride, 2015; Flanagan & Christens, 2011; Zeldin et al., 2013).

The benefits of journaling may be increased when combined with class discussions based on students' voluntary sharing of their reflective writing. Sharing stories of successes and frustrations contributes to group cohesion (Fine, 2012). Such sharing helps model the critical thinking required for meaningful reflection and can demonstrate how students need to take responsibility for their learning. Taking on these responsibilities helps students to build fellowship among other students and with on-site partner organizations (Appe et al., 2016).

Journaling can be completed individually before class or together in the classroom. In my second semester teaching a service-learning course, I provided students with an opportunity to freewrite for 5 minutes about their recently completed service experience. After I encouraged students to share their reflections in a setting that was nonjudgmental and one-mindful (see The "How" Skills section), those students whose prior reflections had not met expectations soon provided work with more nuanced insight into the relationship between the service-learning activity and course materials. One example of sharing comes from a student who used the observe and describe skills to share with the class that contrary to what she had expected, the clientele of the food pantry where she completed her service-learning project was diverse. The student described that "there were white people, black people, lots and lots of women with little children. I didn't expect to see so many kids. That was hard." Describing what she observed was crucial to the student's ability to more objectively acknowledge her reactions to seeing children in need. By the end of the semester, the student identified food insecurity among children as her personal philanthropic priority.

Instructors may encourage practice of the describe skill by prompting students with journaling questions such as the following: What surprised me about the agency, about the people I work with, or about myself? What impact did today's visit have on me? What did I do that was effective? Why was it effective? How will my efforts working with this agency contribute to social change? My career? Is it important to me to stay involved in the community? What changes would I make in this experience if it were repeated? and Will I continue to be of service and, if so, how?

**Participate**

The third what skill in mindfulness refers to participating fully in the activities of the present moment and holding focus on the current activity rather than ruminating about past incidents or future possibilities. An example is a skillful athlete remaining alert and flexible to changing conditions on the field. Some participation, of course, can be mindless, such as driving a familiar route home without full awareness. Whereas mindlessness is participating without attention to the task, mindfulness is participating with focused attention (Linehan, 2015).

Participation is fundamental to peer-led reflection, which has been shown to increase student understanding of service-learning and to increase the quality of their integration of the service experience and coursework (Hudson & Hunter, 2014). When sharing service experiences with peers, students increase awareness of the social issues affecting their community and of the range of organizations striving to address needs (Tavanti & Wilp, 2018). Research from multiple disciplines points to beneficial outcomes from peer-driven reflective practice (Burton, 2000; Ikpeze, 2007; Tollison et al., 2008). Findings highlight the importance of democratic participation and a sense of safety in the sharing of perceptions among peers (Hudson & Hunter, 2014; Walker et al., 2013).

Students can report on their experiences in pairs, small cohorts, class discussions, or formal presentations. By writing and sharing parts of their reflections and then attentively integrating each other's experiences into the broader discussion, students practice the skills of notice, describe, and participate. In my experience, having students model mindful reflection fosters insights among their peers. For example, one student spoke about serving meals at a homeless shelter, noting,

I was afraid they might be mean, like the people you see yelling and cursing on street corners. But several [clients] looked right at me and said how much they appreciated it. It was just soup and bread, but it was like it meant something.

She practiced the participate skill by remaining attentive during her service-learning task despite her initial hesitations. By sharing this experience, she launched a class discussion on topics of stereotypes, gratitude, the notion of "worthy" and "unworthy" recipients, and the impact of service-learning on the way students view themselves.

**The "How" Skills**

The second aspect of core mindfulness reminds a person how to practice: non-judgmentally, one-mindfully, and effectively. Like the what skills, the how skills can be applied at the site during service, modeled and guided by instructors during classroom discussions, and given through feedback on individual written reflections.

**Nonjudgmentally**

"Nonjudgmentally" means taking a nonevaluative approach, considering a situation as neither good nor bad, and, instead, exploring the consequences of behaviors and events. For example, a student may engage in conduct that leads to undesirable consequences for themself or

others. A nonjudgmental approach recognizes the consequences of the behavior, rather than labeling the student as "good" or "bad." Modeling and enforcing a nonjudgmental stance are critical to creating a classroom environment that is conducive for shared reflection. Such reflection, whether done in large or small groups, requires an assurance of trust, comfort, and safety (Williams & Walker, 2003). Service-learning experiences with community partners and clients offer students ample opportunities to practice a nonjudgmental stance. With their first exposure to poverty, for example, some students may consider such a broad social problem in terms of individual failings. However, after more personal connections, information, and thought, some students may begin to grasp the complexity of systemic factors that fuel social problems. Although not every student will experience such a transformation, for some the service-learning experience can serve as a catalyst for redirection (Eyler & Giles, 1999).

Students can practice taking a nonjudgmental stance in classroom activities such as peer interviews. By asking each other about their service-learning experiences (including any challenges, regrets, and insights for future service), interviewees articulate their learning while interviewers practice noticing and redirecting any internal judgments when they occur.

**One-Mindfully**

The second how skill, one-mindfully, refers to the quality of awareness brought to activities. Practitioners focus awareness on the current moment, rather than splitting attention among several tasks or engaging in an activity while thinking about something else. By practicing this skill, thoughts or emotions are not permitted to influence the task at hand (Linehan, 2015). The one-mindfully skill urges individuals to learn how to focus attention on one task at a time and to engage in it with alertness, awareness, and wakefulness. Achieving such a focus requires control of attention. It is a capability that many people lack, especially in a culture that erroneously values multitasking. Research has found that multitasking tends to reduce cognitive performance, such as recall, comprehension, and task performance (Jeong & Hwang, 2016).

One student's experience illustrates this practice. She did her service at a local homeless shelter, where she was assigned to fold laundry and organize donations of toiletries. She heard shouting shortly after beginning her shift. An argument had erupted between two clients in the next room, prompting the volunteer coordinator to leave the student alone with her task. The student described the effective application of working one-mindfully, saying she noticed her reaction of fear, reminded herself that the shelter staff were addressing the situation, and then redirected her attention to the task at hand. She did not indulge in or become preoccupied with anxiety. By the end of her scheduled shift, she had completed the tasks assigned to her and "felt really good that [she had] stuck it out and helped them." By noticing thoughts and feelings as they arose, and then choosing to turn her attention back to the task at hand, this student demonstrated a one-mindful approach.

This skill can be practiced during any activity in which minds might wander, but it may be especially helpful during students' orientation with the service-learning agency. When becoming acquainted with staff, volunteers, and clients, and when learning the tasks they are

expected to perform, students may naturally experience intrusive thoughts and judgments that prevent them from being one-mindful. By diligently noticing intrusive thoughts when they occur and redirecting attention to the person speaking, students will be better able to retain important information that will enrich their service-learning experience.

**Effectively**

The final how skill of mindfulness is doing what works, or understanding and acting toward a goal rather than doing what is deemed as "right" or "fair." It aims to reduce a person's concern for being right and to increase their skill in making a decision based on the given situation. Being effective empowers a person to act in accordance with their goals and objectives rather than based on their judgments (Linehan, 2015). Some students learn to trust and honor their perceptions, judgments, and decisions. However, when principle over outcome is emphasized to the extreme, students often become disappointed or alienate others. Many find it easier to exchange being right for being effective when it is portrayed as a skillful response rather than as "giving in."

The practice of being effective is particularly helpful for establishing expectations in service-learning. Just as nonprofit professionals must hold realistic expectations about what students might be able to accomplish during a given time (Olberding & Hacker, 2016), so too must students. When the process of scheduling service or completing preservice training for an agency is not as smooth or convenient as students think it should be, their frustrations serve as valuable teaching moments when approached through the how skill of effectiveness.

Instructors can model this skill in classroom discussions by gently pointing out when "should" language blocks problem solving in the moment. Once beyond the grip of what is "right" or "should be," students can then begin to consider the reasons why an organization may not be operating at idealized efficiency, such as resource limitations. Case studies allow students to further practice this skill; case studies also enhance students' decision making. Instructors can offer a case of an agency or a client in a challenging situation, such as a loss of state grant funding or a reduction in hours at a job. By evaluating environmental factors outside of their control—a change in state legislature or a new manager at work—students can recognize situations that may be unfair but still require a plan of action using existing resources.

**Benefits and Outcomes**

Together, the what and how skills offer students a means of practicing the mind- fulness skills crucial to service-learning reflection. In my three semesters of teaching a service-learning course, I noticed that incorporating what and how skills into my assignment prompts helped students better understand expectations for reflections. Over time, I observed increased personal development, increased critical thinking, and increased depth of reflections in my students. They described their growth through service-learning in multiple ways: "knowing how rewarding it is to help," "realizing I can make a difference, even by myself," "knowing what I can and can't put up with," "being able to speak up about the issue and feel confident doing it," "I feel good about myself when I work [at the agency]," and "seeing that I can offer something of value."

For some students, service-learning increased awareness of civic action. One student who worked with individuals living with mental illness explained,

Getting to know some real people in that situation had a big effect on me. Now, I question what some media reports say, and I want to know how legislation may affect this person or that person. I want to vote for someone who can help them.

Another group of students delivered a presentation on homeless veterans. They not only discussed causes of the problem but also articulated how they navigated conflicting messages and sources of information on the issue and how they justified their own position and recommendations for advocacy.

In addition to improving student learning, mindfulness may also benefit instructors. Many doctoral students, myself included, find themselves caught in the immobilizing grip of imposter syndrome. Self-doubt, hesitation, and uncertainty can affect a person's performance both in and out of the classroom. Through mindfulness practice, I increased my awareness of when and how doubt or fear negatively influenced my teaching: the lively classroom debate I redirected too soon, inconsistent policy enforcement, not being sufficiently direct in correcting a student's misunderstanding of a concept. Although evaluation is imperative for growth in instructors, unchecked self-judgment does little but immobilize. Only after I began to nonjudgmentally observe when I allowed my thoughts and emotions to influence my behavior did I end this problematic cycle. By the end of my first semester teaching college students, I had become more genuine, relaxed, and authentic in the classroom and during office hours, and my student evaluations improved with each subsequent semester.

## Mindfulness as a Foundation for Philanthropic Action

Moore (1999) described volunteers as actively being in the midst of life, whereas others, nestled safely behind screens and other electronic gadgets, tend to see and experience life at a distance. Although Moore does not explicitly use the term "mindfulness," his concern echoes that of thought leaders on the topic, such as Zen Buddhist teachers Philip Kapleau, Thích Nhất Hạnh, and Seung Sahn, who have said that most people tend to spend a very small portion of their days mindfully engaged in their lives. Rather than keeping their awareness on the experience, people become habitually distracted by thoughts and feelings about the experience. When they focus more on their internal responses than on their direct experience, it becomes easy for people to lose sight of what is happening to and around them and, consequently, of how best to respond to what they observe.

Unfortunately, many individuals have suffered experiences in which their wants, needs, thoughts, or feelings were invalidated by others who minimized and dismissed— unconsciously or not—their concerns. Those who face persistent external invalidation may learn to invalidate their own experiences and, over time, may become disengaged with their experience, intuition, and options (Lynch et al., 2006). For these individuals, mindfulness serves to illuminate values and goals without judgment or influence from others. Whether a person fails to acknowledge their direct experience or fails to trust their perceptions of those experiences, mindfulness can aid in decision making by fostering an awareness of their internal reactions. That increased

awareness inevitably affects the way a person sees the world around them and how they respond to what they see.

Philanthropic behavior is driven in part by internal factors, including awareness of a need, a desire to act on individual values, and concern for another's wellbeing (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). An objective understanding of those reactions can illuminate steps a person might take to honor their unique values, which, in turn, inform their philanthropic goals.

**Conclusion**

The HIP of service-learning aims to "connect the personal and intellectual, to help students acquire knowledge that is useful in understanding the world, build critical thinking capacities, and perhaps lead to fundamental questions about learning and about society and to a commitment to improve both" (Eyler & Giles, 1999, p. 14). Reflection on service-learning activities encourages students to identify relationships between the course content and the dynamics observed in the real world (Johnson & O'Grady, 2006). Students increase their awareness of being part of a community and realize that they will always be a part of a community. They realize either they can do nothing about the problems they see or they can make a difference (Eyler, 2009; Kenny et al., 2002).

Service-learning instructors can prompt and provide space for reflection, and agency partners can provide opportunities for service-learning experiences, but many students also require modeling and guidelines on how to reflect critically about their experience as well as about any questions about themselves and society that arise from it. Service-learning is inherently risky due to the unknown journey it promotes. Students may find themselves disillusioned or uncertain about previously held values and assumptions. Their experience may leave them with unresolved questions and feelings. Learning through service requires openness, honesty, and change—change that often involves some element of discomfort.

Both students and instructors must accept this potential discomfort as part of the learning process. Mindfulness skills training, as described in DBT, can provide a useful framework through which instructors approach service-learning instruction and the range of reactions it may elicit in students. By incorporating the six core mindfulness skills before, during, and after service, students may engage more meaningfully in the service-learning process. When instructed to direct their attention through observing, describing, and participating from a nonjudgmental perspective, students may participate more fully in their experiences, which allows for more critical reflection. Similarly, when we as instructors practice mindfulness, we nurture our own development, allowing us to think deeply as reflective practitioners ready for improved action (Schon, 1983).

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