

# Investigate blue and green space mindfulness abilities in high school and college students

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## Background

According to Mayo Clinic, mindfulness is the complete awareness of the present time, one's thoughts and surroundings while acknowledging thoughts without bringing judgement to them [1]. Green space includes trees and grass, where blue space holds bodies of water [2]. Green space has varying benefits across the lifespan [2]. Hedonic wellbeing is linked to green space [3]. Walks along water or in blue space have been associated with increased focus and happiness [4].

## Methods

### Field Experience 1 (FE1)

Create three mindfulness tracking activities and a drawing activity that last 10 minutes. Implement blue space tracking at Lake superior. Introduce nature drawing activity with green space tracking. Complete final green space tracking activity. Collect journals from students.

### Field Experience 2 (FE2)

Split students into nature drawing and non-nature drawing activity groups. Implement blue space tracking with or without drawing activity. Finally, complete green space tracking with or without drawing activity. Collect journals from students.

## References

Figure 1. Students practicing mindfulness



Figure 2. Nature drawing in greenspace

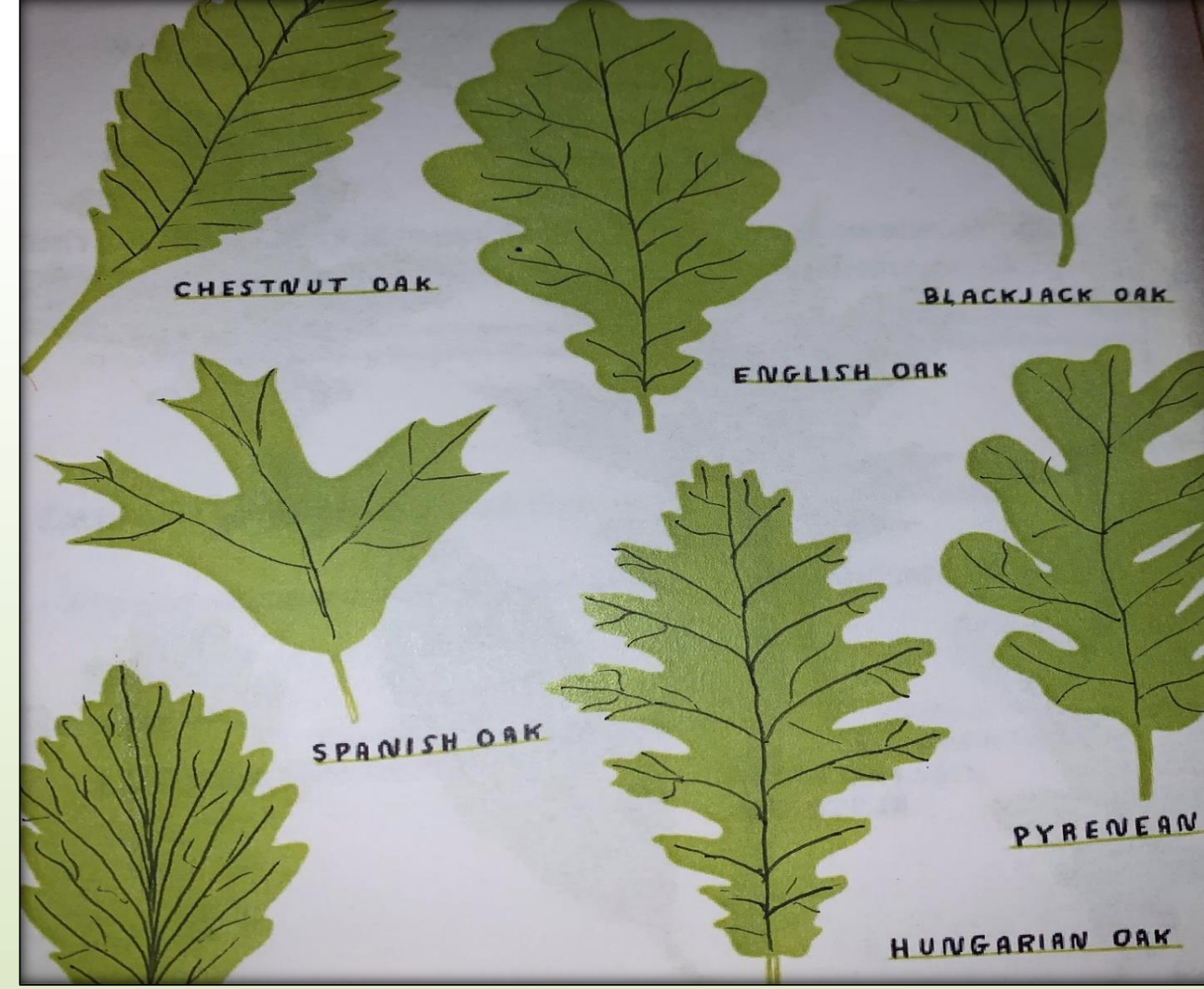


Figure 3. FE1 mindfulness tracking activity

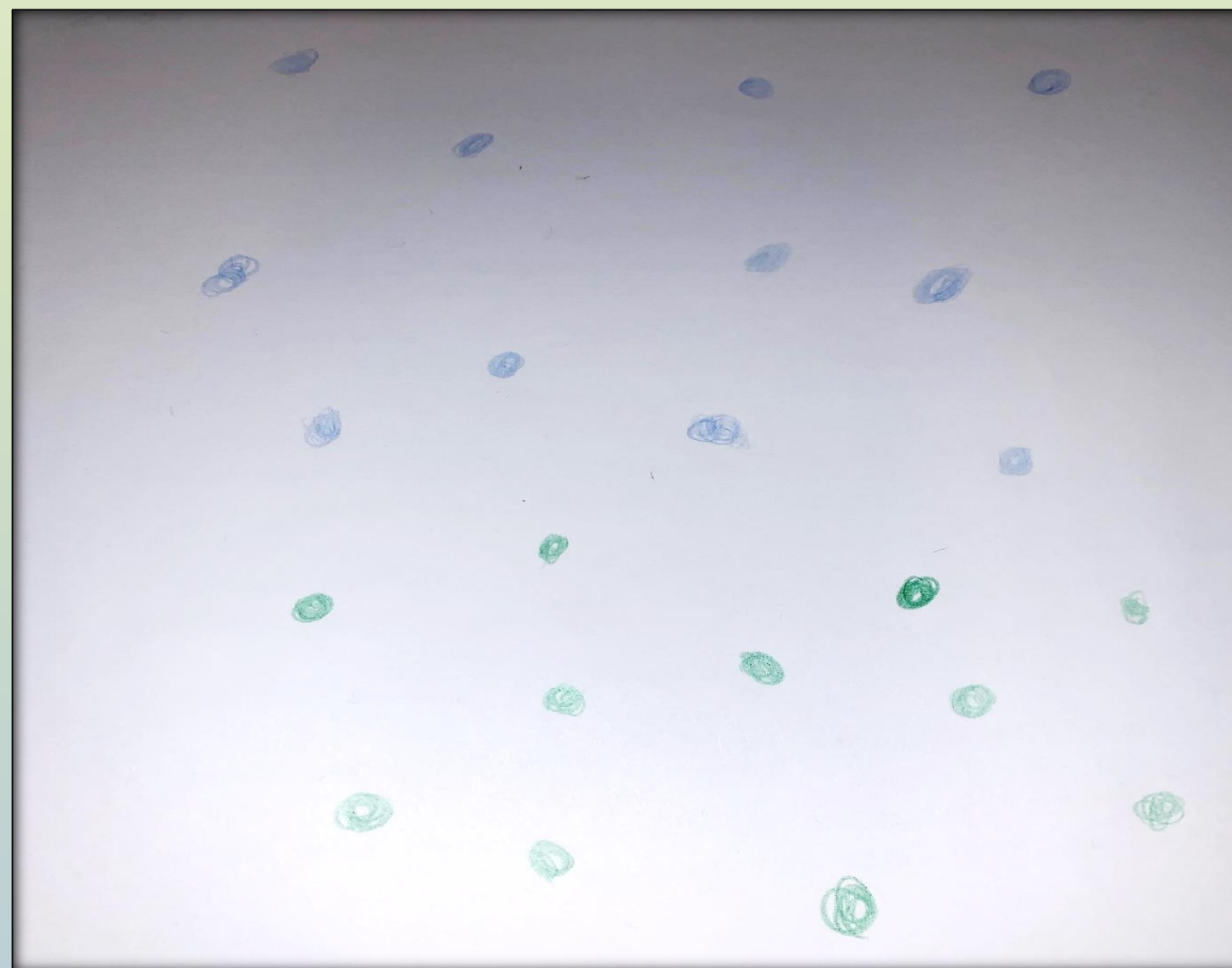
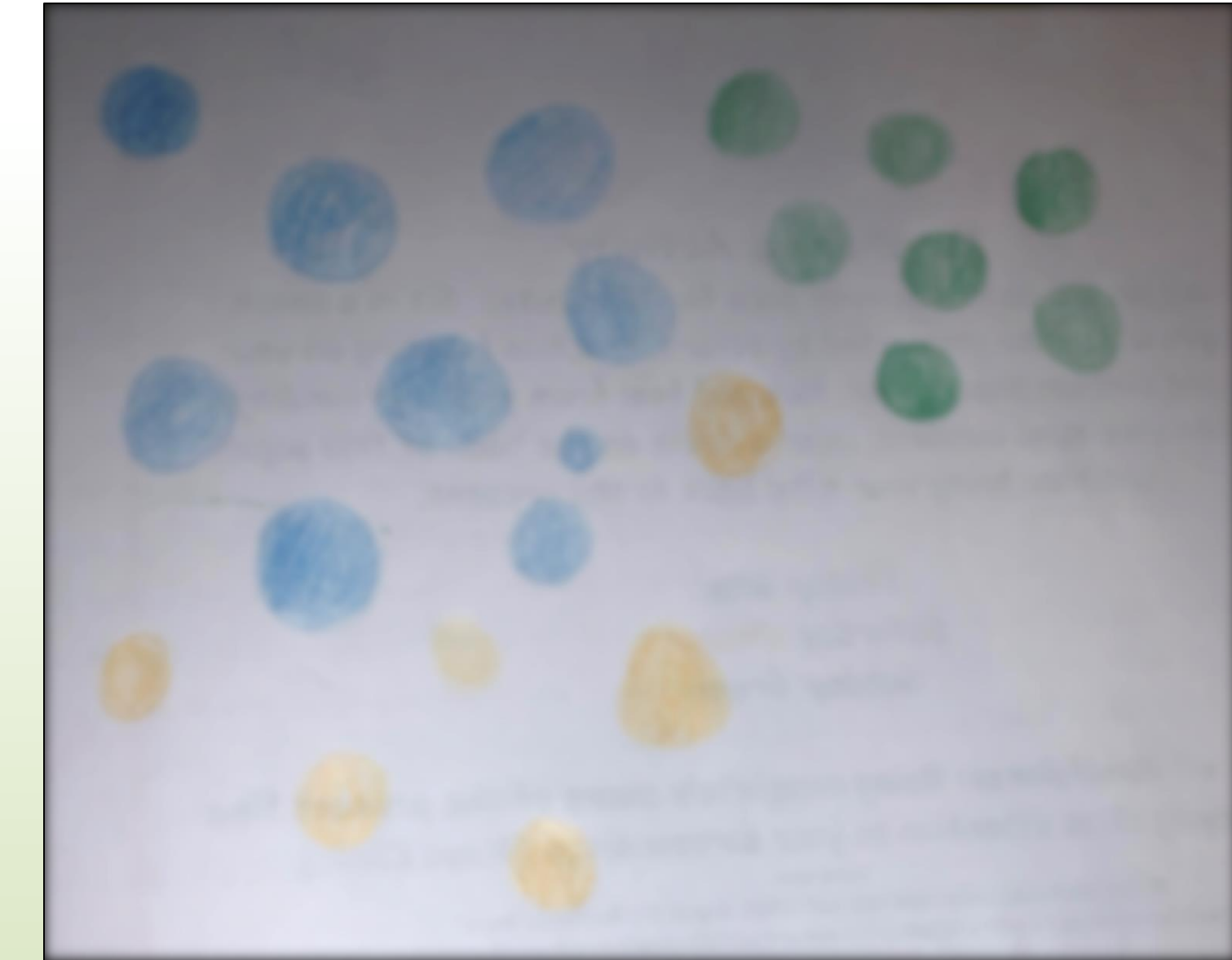


Figure 4. FE2 mindfulness tracking activity



Figure 5. Nature drawing in greenspace



Figure 6.: Students practicing mindfulness

## Discussion

From FE1 to FE2 students improved in their mindfulness tracking abilities. Throughout both experiences, drawing reduced distractions. Blue space held more distractions than green space in FE1 and FE2. This shows green spaces may be more important than blue space for students. Drawing may also help students focus when attempting homework, in class or taking a break. These findings may explain why there is more research on green space compared to blue space. Some limitations include the short amount of time to implement activities and the many distractions on public land. Future suggestions include carrying extra activities and asking for feedback from peers. It will also be important to develop activities for students to complete before each experience. Also, look at how different types of art influence mindfulness abilities. Finally, collaboration with another leader to compare their topic and mindfulness could be useful.

[1] Can mindfulness exercises help me? (2018, August 17). Retrieved from <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/consumer-health/in-depth/mindfulness-exercises/art-20046356>  
 [2] Astell-Burt, T., Mitchell, R., & Hartig, T. (2014). The association between green space and mental health varies across the lifecycle: A longitudinal study. *Epidemiol Community Health*, 68, 578-583.  
 [3] Houlden, V., Weich, S., Porto de Albuquerque, J., Jarvis, S., Rees, K. (2018) The relationship between greenspace and the mental wellbeing of adults: A systematic review. *PLoS ONE* 13(9). doi: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0203000>  
 [4] Nisbet, E. & Lem, M. (2015). Prescribing a dose of nature: Modern medicine is rediscovering the simple healing power of being outdoors. *Alternatives Journal*, 41(2), 36-39.