

Center for Systems Awareness



Certification Program for Compassionate Systems Master Practitioners

Amidst all the signs of breakdown and growing social and ecological imbalance in the world, there is simultaneously a sort of renaissance unfolding in key sectors like education. New ideas and practices – like project-based learning, mindfulness, social-emotional learning, relational competencies, design thinking, systems thinking, maker spaces and flipped classrooms – are taking root around the world. Indeed, these changes may be arising, paradoxically, from the breakdowns themselves, or, more precisely, from ever deepening understanding that the industrial age school model that has spread around the world may be a significant contributing factor to the imbalances and breakdowns. A consensus is building among students and adults alike that the mainstream education model, which mostly ignores our connection to one another and to the larger living systems of our planet in favor of developing technical skills, is woefully inadequate for today, let alone the future in which our students will live. Even national governments are acknowledging publicly that it makes little sense to train people for jobs that may no longer exist by the time they enter the work force.

We believe that facing today's extraordinary social, ecological and economic imbalances requires an approach to teaching and learning based on the transcendent importance of interconnectedness and that cultivates the innate and multi-faceted systemic intelligence ignored by the industrial-age model of education.



For the past several years, we have been working with a global network of education innovators to develop and test a new synthesis of head, heart and hand, the Compassionate Systems Framework, which is part of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Abdul Latif Jameel World Education Lab (MIT J-WEL) initiative.

The project focuses on *cultivating three interconnected facets of “systems awareness”¹* for adults and students alike:

- the mind-heart-body system: understanding and developing *self*
- immediate social systems of relationships, families, teams and groups and social networks: understanding and caring for *others*, and
- the larger systems of society, economy and ecology: understanding and caring for *our world*.

Shifting the system of education requires much more than innovation in the “classroom.” It requires developing an organization climate and culture that

- fosters deep aspiration and ongoing reflection and learning;
- develops leaders at all levels (classroom, school, school system, community) adept at integrating the inner and outer dimensions of systems awareness; and
- engages diverse stakeholders in building shared visions and shared responsibility for change.

This is true for schools, larger administrative structures like school districts and education departments or ministries, and for community-based organizations working with students and young people outside of school.

This initiative has now reached a point where its continued expansion depends on developing master practitioners – teachers, administrators, students, local stakeholders – who can shepherd its continued growth locally and globally, as well as better understand how this capacity building can become coherent and self-sustaining in diverse cultural and organizational contexts. This is the purpose of our certification program.

¹ The term systems awareness refers to the orientation which *combines systems thinking* and *systems sensing*. Whereas “systems thinking” points to a set of skills associated with analytical and conceptual capacities for using specific tools and practices to understand complex interdependent phenomena, “system sensing” is about our intuitive understanding of these complex interdependencies.



Program Structure

The certification program is a one-year blended learning design organized around:

- Three face-to-face workshops in the US
- Monthly virtual learning community calls (guest speakers, peer learning)
- A buddy system of peer support
- An application project
- A final graduation based on assessing evidence of work and learning developed during the process, including the application project and evidence of coaching others. Working with a group of program faculty and outside faculty (e.g., other MIT faculty), there will be a joint determination if a participant has qualified to be certificated as a MIT-JWEL Compassionate Systems Trainer or if further work is needed. Those certified will be expected to assist with the next cycle of participants in the certification process.

The program is prioritized for individuals who are alumni of Compassionate Systems introductory workshops. Each participant is expected to have been engaged in using the tools and approaches of the framework and is now interested in being able to help others along the same journey. We prioritize those who attend with a team: one or more colleagues from a site or hub in the budding Compassionate Systems global community. This will enable smoother transition between the capacity building core of the program and practical application. In addition, the buddy system will connect participants across sites and help to both support each participant and to strengthen the overall practitioner community.

As part of the process, each participant will design an application project that will afford translating the tools and methods they are working with into their own work context.

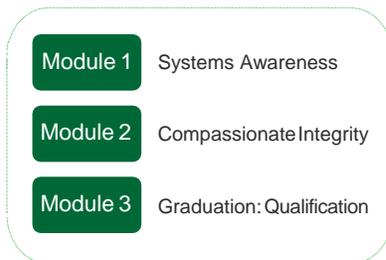
We recommend that, as far as possible, these projects be part of the participant's normal work requirements rather than something that is an "add on" and could become extraneous. We expect to review proposed projects prior to commencing the year-long process and to finalize them after the first workshop.



Program Dates & Locations



Face-to-Face Workshops



Virtual Learning Community Calls

Our learning community will meet virtually once per month in between the three week-long, face-to-face workshops to continue learning from guest speakers and one another. Calls will start at 9:00 am Eastern Standard Time, last 3 hours, and be held via Zoom conferencing with each participant sharing his/her video. Each call will have a theme and some required pre-work.

Participant Commitments

Participants agree to:

- Be present at all three face-to-face sessions (15 days total).
- Be present on the monthly 3-hour virtual learning community calls.
- Undertake an application project within their organization or worksite: participants will define their own project, subject to approval by the program faculty. The project should be part of their normal work duties rather than being an "add on", and as a way to explore doing something they would want to do anyway but doing it with sharper focus and more support.
- Prepare a portfolio of work over the course of the year, including their application project which will be assessed by the program faculty as part of the qualification process at the end of the year.
- Maintain a regular check-in routine with his/her buddy or buddies.



- Maintain a daily personal cultivation practice: this can take many forms, but must provide a regular and disciplined way to observe their mental states and the flow of thought and emotion stirred while participating in the year-long process. The program faculty will be happy to sort out any questions participants may have regarding what qualifies as a suitable cultivation practice. There will also be a series of special audio recordings with guided Compassionate Systems meditations designed for participants in the program.

Benefits

Participants will receive:

- An overview of the scientific underpinnings of the framework, including latest findings in neuroscience, science of learning and development, cognitive and emotional psychology, science of well-being, and advances in applied system dynamics.
- Introduction to theory and practice of personal mastery, organizational learning and the 17 world sustainable development goals.
- Direct experience with facilitation and holding space for a generative social field to unfold.
- When ready, opportunities to co-host and co-facilitate introductory workshops in Compassionate Systems around the world, working with other members of the cohort.
- A meditation program developed specifically to the Compassionate Systems Framework including guided mindfulness, compassion and well-being meditations.
- Further training in systems mapping and system dynamics.
- An exclusive MIT-JWEL associated certificate if qualified based on the growth and development during the program.



Faculty

Facilitators

Peter M. Senge • Center for Systems Awareness and MIT

Mette Miriam Boell • Center for Systems Awareness and MIT

Contemplative Faculty

Hanneli Aagotsdatter • Center for Systems Awareness and Kontemplation

Project Coordinator

Julie Diaz • Center for Systems Awareness

Guest Faculty

Mark Greenberg • Professor of Human Development and Psychology

Steen Hildebrandt • Professor Emeritus in organizational and management theory

Andrew Jones • Co-Founder and Co-Director of Climate Interactive

Rhonda Magee • Professor, University of San Francisco, Co-Director of the University's Center for Teaching Excellence

John Milton • Pioneering ecologist, spiritual teacher, vision quest leader and shaman

Kim Schonert-Reichl • Applied Developmental Psychologist, Professor in the Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, and Special Education at UBC

Dan Siegel • Clinical professor of psychiatry at the UCLA School of Medicine, the founding co-director of the Mindful Awareness Research Center at UCLA, Executive Director of the Mindsight Institute

+ *many more*

Cost: \$14,000 per participant. Participants are responsible for their own travel, accommodations and meals costs. Limited scholarship options available; students eligible for 50% discount.

Application Deadline: July 30, 2020

Dates for Module 1:

Sun, September 27, 2020 at 2:00 pm; ends Fri, October 2, 2020 at 12:30 pm

Location: MIT - Cambridge, Massachusetts

