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**SUGGESTED STANDARDS FOR TEACHING MEDITATION IN THE CLASSROOM**

**Introduction**

The Contemplative Studies Initiative Core Faculty has discussed the standards or credentials necessary for teaching contemplative practices in the higher education classroom. We have the following suggestions.

**The Teaching Parameters**

To be absolutely clear: we are NOT in the business of training clerics or professional meditators in the classroom; all we are doing is introducing students to some basic techniques to help them focus their attention more fully in the classroom or to complement their critical study of contemplative traditions in our courses.

In some courses this consists of only a very short period of 3-8 minutes of a simple attention focusing exercise, such as counting breaths or focusing on a word at the beginning of a course devoted to a non-contemplative topic.

In other courses the contemplative practices will occupy 20-35 minutes of devoted class time (meditation labs). We suggest that we call the former category “Secondary Contemplative Teaching” and the latter category “Primary Contemplative Teaching.” We think it advisable to differentiate between backgrounds necessary for each of these.

**Backgrounds of our Teachers**

In surveying our colleagues who fall into the category of Secondary Contemplative Teaching (SCT), the backgrounds varied from 3 years of training (but including certification in the “Mindfulness for Educators” program) to 40 years. It also included anywhere from 45 hours of intensive (mostly silent) retreat practice to over 500 hours.

Among the Primary Contemplative Teaching (PCT) category the backgrounds of teachers were very extensive, ranging from 10-45 years of practice in a tradition and including from 500 to almost 10,000 hours of intensive (mostly silent) retreat practice. This includes colleagues who have been certified as teachers of Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR).

**Recommendations**

We advise that our Contemplative Studies Faculty who teach any form of meditation in the classroom have the following training::

1. Secondary Contemplative Teaching (3-8 minutes/class):
2. 3 years of practice in a well- recognized and well-established contemplative practice tradition (e.g. Centering Prayer, Insight Meditation Zen Buddhism, Yoga) or contemplative educational program (e.g.“Mindfulness for Educators”)
3. 50 hours of intensive (usually silent) retreat practice
4. Basic Training in the Integrative Contemplative Pedagogy we have developed here in the Brown Contemplative Studies Initiative
5. Primary Contemplative Teaching (20-35 minutes/class):
6. 5 years of practice in a well-recognized and well-established contemplative practice tradition (e.g. Centering Prayer, Insight Meditation, Zen Buddhism, Yoga) or contemplative educational program (e.g. “MBSR”).
7. 500 hours of intensive (usually silent) retreat practice
8. Basic Training in the Integrative Contemplative Pedagogy we have developed here in the Brown Contemplative Studies Initiative