

Certificate in Meditation Teaching and Holistic Human Development.

Module 6 Teaching

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- Talking to groups
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ACTIVITY

Please continue to practice the muscle relaxation exercise and Zen Meditation every day. The personal experience you gain through this practice will be immeasurable to you when it comes to instructing other people about managing stress and teaching Meditation.

Please continue to use your Gratitude Journal this week.

ACTIVITY

In Module 8 you will be required to have attended (and answer questions about attending) a meditation or Yoga class. The purpose of this exercise is to observe how the teacher facilitates the class from a student's perspective. Please start researching where you can attend this class and arrange to attend before the completion of Module 8.

Talking to groups

As a Meditation teacher you will spend a great deal of time talking to groups of people. You will speak to groups of students in your classes, you may speak to groups at corporate training sessions and you may also choose to address community groups as a public speaker.

Depending on individual personalities and previous experience, speaking to groups is easier for some people than it is for others.

Being able to present yourself confidently while addressing all types of groups in an endless range of situations is an important role. Important pointers are listed below:

1. Know the room

Be familiar with the place where you will speak. Arrive early, walk around the speaking area and practice using any equipment (microphone, audio and visual aids, if required).

2. Know the audience

Greet some of your audience as they arrive.

It's easier to speak to a group of friends than to a group of strangers. Providing name stickers at the door is a great way to meet your students in a new class or people at a seminar or workshop you are facilitating. This will also help you if you need to address people during the session without struggling to remember names.

3. Know your material

If you're not familiar with your material or are uncomfortable with it, your nervousness will increase. Go over your material and use a highlighter to mark key words. While you should not read directly from a script unless you are quoting someone else, it is acceptable to glance at your notes when you need reminding or prompting.

4. Relax

Ease tension by doing relaxation and breathing exercises before you begin. You are teaching people how to be calm, peaceful, stress-free and confident so appearing anxious will undermine everything you have to say.

5. Visualize yourself giving your speech

Imagine yourself speaking, your voice loud, clear, and assured. When you visualize yourself as successful, you will be successful.

Visualizing yourself in this way gives your brain a model to replicate, in the same way as sports people are trained to visualize themselves winning.

6. Realize that people want you to succeed

They don't want you to fail. Audiences want you to be interesting, stimulating, informative, and entertaining.

7. Don't apologize

If you mention your nervousness or apologize for any problems you think you have with your speech, you may be calling the audience's attention to something they hadn't even noticed. Keep silent. Move forward.

8. Concentrate on the message - not the medium

Focus your attention away from your own anxieties and outwardly toward your message and your audience. Your nervousness will dissipate.

9. Turn nervousness into positive energy

Harness your nervous energy and transform it into vitality and enthusiasm.

10. Experience

Experience builds confidence, which is the key to effective speaking. In time speaking in front of groups will be second nature to you.

11. Breath!

Take time to pause and focus on your breath for a moment or two if you need to.

Presentation

The following information is about presentation skills, when you take centre stage to talk to, or teach, a group of students.

- Dress appropriately. In a classroom situation neat casual dress is important with an emphasis on comfort. You may wish to wear Yoga clothing or gym wear. It is important that you look well-groomed and project an image of confidence. In a more formal environment (e.g. conducting corporate training sessions or public speaking) professional, business attire is more suitable.
- Establish your authority. Introduce yourself and talk briefly about your work and your qualifications.
- Appear confident, even if you are not; convince the students you have something useful to say. Convey enthusiasm for the topic, be open and approachable to your students, but not 'best buddies' as this undermines the teacher/student relationship. Your students want to look up to you.
- Project your voice – make sure everyone can hear you.
- Face your audience as much as possible, not your visual aid and when writing on a board, think about how you maintain and regain student attention.
- Make some eye contact with your students. Smile a lot.
- Get them listening to you, do not carry on regardless of whether or not you have their attention.
- Before you start make sure any equipment you are using is working.
- Make sure any aids or demonstrations you use can be seen.
- Think about the size, colour and purpose of visual aids and don't overcrowd them.
- Prepare for and structure any planned period of talk you anticipate in advance (eg giving feedback on work or giving instructions). A disorganised ramble, or mumble, will soon lose the respect and attention of your students – but don't plan every word in advance.
- If you can, you should feel free to move furniture into the most appropriate format for the task at hand and to maximise opportunities for everyone to see you as clearly as possible.

Points to consider when teaching

- You will often find yourself needing to talk to groups of students where advance planning is not possible, for example if during a session most of the class make a common mistake, you need to stop them and explain to the whole group. You cannot prepare for this type of thing, but you should still try to apply the sort of skills and techniques mentioned above.
- The purpose of any talk is to help students learn, so think how you make what you say have maximum impact and meaning for students.
- Don't wander too far away or for too long a time from the syllabus script.
- Make sure students know what they should be learning by telling them their learning objectives/outcomes.
- Repeat key messages and explain the relevance/purpose of what you are talking about.
- Make it clear when you will welcome student questions, eg by polite interruption, raised hands or that you will give time at the end.
- Appearing condescending, disinterested in students, uninterested in your subject matter and underprepared are among the worst turn-offs for students.

Group discussion plays a valuable role in the all-round training of your students. Some students will ask more questions than others and for many people asking questions is part of their inherent learning style.

It is important that you encourage your students to ask questions. It is also important that you are efficient at answering questions and that you can maintain control of the group so that positive student interaction does not get out of hand.

DO

- Ask questions rather than make statements, when interacting with students
- Ask non-directive questions
- Realise the importance of students asking and answering questions, to learning
- Probe for links between what they are learning and what they already know
- Seek examples from students' own experience and give examples from yours (without getting too personal about your own life and experience)
- Ask exploratory questions (to encourage students to elaborate points made)
- Ask clarifying questions (to determine exactly what is puzzling your students)
- Wait - give students time to think before they answer your questions

- Ask if anyone has questions before moving on to a new topic
- When asking questions and handling answers in a group/class situation:
 - take one at a time
 - welcome all answers (within reason)
 - take care not to embarrass anyone who gives a wrong answer
 - build on answers
 - resolve apparent contradictions (to help students to learn)

When answering questions from a group/class:

- accept questions at any time, or tell students when you will accept questions
- treat all questions as equally important
- deal with relevant questions immediately and others later (remember – make notes)
- if you don't know the answer, don't bluff; say you will find out, or don't know and ask the student to find out.
- Be sympathetic and attentive if students want to talk about any personal problems without letting them take over the class as this is not fair to your other students. This is often best handled by allowing them a few minutes, acknowledging what they are saying with sincerity and then asking them to talk to you at the end of the session, if they would like to.
- Smile: it is the best icebreaker!

DON'T

- Do your students work for them
- Talk down to, or patronise students
- Make students feel awkward, ignorant, embarrassed or in any way uncomfortable
- Ask leading questions (which expect students to agree with you)
- Ask begging questions (which require students to ask you what you mean)
- Ask questions with built-in answers (x is bigger than y, isn't it? Because.....)
- Ask multiple questions
- Use traps or trick questions

- Ask aggressive questions (which put students on the spot)

In a relaxed teaching environment, students should feel free to interact (ask questions, make comments, speak freely to the teacher and to each other, or disagree.)

At the same time it is important that the teacher maintains control of the class otherwise some students will monopolise the class time, this will put the class behind and annoy other students who will feel they have not paid good money to listen to a class mates problems or opinions (bearing in mind that this type of student input is extremely valuable in creating a mutually supportive environment and encouraging students to open up, share and realise they are not alone in many of their individual problems.)

We must therefore encourage student interaction but maintain control.

- Let your students know the rules from the beginning. Some teachers welcome and use student interaction at any time and do not consider it to be an interruption but an important part of the class.

Others prefer to have students wait until designated question times and maintain a timeframe for student interaction, before moving on to the next part of the class.

Some teachers use talking sticks (this is an old tribal method using a stick or other object to control how many people are speaking at once – only the person holding the stick can speak. When another person wishes to speak they hold out their hand and when the speaker is finished talking they hand the talking stick to the next person).

- Do not become involved in irrelevant chatter
- Monitor where the student discussion is going and decide when to close it down and get back on to the topic.
- Keep it light. Do not make students feel they are not supposed to speak or that it annoys you.
- One suggestion for regaining control of a class is to interrupt by saying “This is an interesting and important topic and I would like us to spend more time talking about it so let’s do that after this class”.

Providing time at the end of each class, say half an hour, for students to have a cup of tea, mingle with each other and ask you questions in a less formal environment, is worthwhile as it allows students to debrief and socialise and helps you get to know your students on a more personal level.

FAQs: ANSWERING QUESTIONS ABOUT MEDITATION

1. How do I actually meditate?

There are many ways to meditate. The most common is to sit in a comfortable position, keeping your spine straight while sitting upright on a chair or crossed legged on the floor.

It is commonly considered that you will experience a better Meditation before a meal rather than after a meal.

Focus on something until your attention transcends the random thoughts and mental chatter that may be occurring in your head. The thing that you focus on could be one of the following:

- A solid object (*usually a candle flame or flower*)
- A picture (*usually a mandala which is a highly coloured symmetrical painting*)
- A mantra (*words or a sound repeated out loud or in your mind*)
- Your breath (*observing not altering the rhythm of your breathing*)
- A guided visualisation (*picturing images and situations as guided by a voice or that you imagine for yourself*)

Guided visualization is very useful for bringing you into a meditative state quickly. Alternatively, visualization may be used once a meditative state has been reached to produce specific results.

You are often not aware of all the mental activity that you are engaged in. Meditation asks you to focus and allow your mental activity to settle down. If you find yourself caught up in a thought pattern while trying to meditate gently bring yourself back to the object of your focus. It is normal to experience itches and other body sensations, if this occurs relax and simply observe.

Regularly practicing Meditation will result in you becoming more peaceful, calm and focused.

2. What are the benefits of Meditation?

Meditation is great for stress management. With regular practice, you will experience relaxation, increased awareness, mental focus, clarity and a sense of peace.

As Meditation involves becoming more aware and more sensitive to what is within you, facing unpleasant parts of yourself is sometimes part of Meditation. This added awareness and clarity can help you advance your spiritual growth and clear negative emotional patterns you are attached to. This can be a catalyst to positive changes in many areas of your life.

The following physiological effects of Meditation have been proved through clinical research. Meditation assists in:

- Reducing blood pressure
- Lowering pulse rate
- Decreasing metabolic rate

3. When is the best time to Meditate?

Meditation will benefit you at any time.

Many people believe that first thing in the morning is the best time to meditate. They believe that the hectic pace of the world has not yet begun, so it is easier to establish the right ambience. Meditating in the morning also lets you carry some of the energy and peace of the Meditation into your day.

Meditation practiced at other times allows you to throw off some of the accumulated stress of the day and rejuvenate yourself for the next activity.

It is best to choose times that suit your personal schedule. Having a specific time of the day or week set aside for Meditation helps with your self-discipline and maintains regularity.

4. How long should I Meditate for?

When you first learn to Meditate, you might find it is not possible to do it for more than 1015 minutes. After some practice you will be able to meditate for longer periods.

Many people meditate for 20 - 60 minutes each day, but the right duration and frequency must be an individual choice.

5. Is Meditation affiliated with religion?

For some people, Meditation is primarily a spiritual practice, or it may be closely tied to the practice of a religion such as, Hinduism or Buddhism. Meditation is a fundamental practice in most eastern religions, used for contacting 'God' or your Higher Self.

The Christian religion touches upon Meditation with Biblical statements such as "The kingdom of heaven is within you".

"If prayer is talking to God, Meditation is listening to God" - Anon

On the other hand, Meditation is also used in the business, medical and sporting worlds, for stress management, to develop positive mindsets and as a relaxation technique. Meditation involves contacting that place within you that is calm, peaceful and rejuvenating.

Depending on your own beliefs, the type or structure you choose for your Meditation and the style of Meditation you choose, you can be in touch with the following:

- Your inner child
- Your higher self

- Your soul
- God
- The spirit world
- Differing brain wave activity
- The silence within you

Almost everyone has already meditated in one form or another. Every time you wash the dishes and are off dreaming and unaware of your surroundings you are in a meditative state. The same applies to when you are driving your car on autopilot and arrive at your destination without really remembering how you got there; you were in a type of meditative state.

6. Why do some people listen to music when they meditate?

Peaceful music can help establishing the right atmosphere. Especially if you find it difficult to actually sit still and start your Meditation. You can use music to mask the noise of the outside world (traffic or neighbours).

Some people use music every time they meditate, or often, while others prefer silent Meditation and never use it at all. It is a personal choice.

7. Why do I need a teacher?

You will find a teacher to be an invaluable aid in learning Meditation techniques and ensuring you are practicing correctly. When you are beginning Meditation, you will usually have questions which a teacher will be able to answer for you.

A Meditation class allows you to experience the benefit of meditating with a group of people. Most people find they have some of their best Meditations while meditating in a group, because there is a collective energy and focus present.

Numerous individuals and groups teach Meditation. Some charge money and others do not. Many different techniques are taught, some more spiritual in nature and others mainly concerned with stress management and relaxation. It is important that you find what works for **you**.

8. What is the difference between Meditation and concentration?

Concentration can be a part of Meditation. You concentrate when you begin your Meditation. After the initial period, as your thoughts subside, you keep your awareness spontaneously, this is Meditation without concentration.

9. What's the difference between Meditation and my thought process?

Your thinking process requires energy and is the result of stimuli in your environment. Meditation attempts to transcend the activity of thinking. After regular Meditation you will

become aware that you are separate from your thoughts and that there is an awareness that exists independent of thought.

10. What's the difference between Meditation and relaxation?

Relaxation is a benefit of Meditation. You can relax in many ways such as a hot bath or playing sport. Often, relaxation still engages the thought process; Meditation attempts to transcend the thought process.

Meditation often produces deep relaxation and is much more effective at reducing mental and physical stress than general relaxation techniques.

11. What are the rules of Meditation?

Meditation styles that have deep traditional and religious roots often have strict guidelines. More contemporary styles are more concerned with individuality and so rather than rules, there are a few recommended guidelines for best results:

- Meditation practice should be done every day, preferably at the same time
- Meditation is best done before a meal rather than after a meal
- A special place should be set aside for Meditation, if possible, which should be quiet and private
- Sit (or lay) with the spine straight
- Some teachers argue that a vertical position is better (a chair is ok to use).

Leading guided Meditations

When you lead a guided Meditation, it is best to use a script.

As you become more experienced you may become comfortable diverting from or adding to a script or you may even feel confident in making visualisations up as you go. In the beginning, however, it is best to read from the script.

The following pointers will help you present effective guided Meditations:

- Set the scene – Make sure the environment is comfortable and quiet; turn down lights (you might use a lamp so that you can read and to add mood to the room). Make sure the room is not too hot or too cold.

You might burn relaxing, subtle oils to create a calming atmosphere. Ensure phones are turned off (especially your own). Make sure you will not be interrupted (a 'Meditation in progress – please do not disturb' sign on the door can help).

- Make sure your students are comfortably in position and that all of them can hear you easily without you needing to yell.

- Make sure your music is ready to play and that it will play for the full length of time of the visualisation (if it does end early just keep going – do not stop and clutter around trying to restart music).
- Make sure your students can hear the music but that it does not drown out your voice.
- Bring your students into a state of deep relaxation with guided relaxation exercises and focus on breathing before you begin any visualisations.
- Take your time while reading the visualisation. Do not read too quickly – it is intended to be slow, calm and relaxing.
- Keep your voice relaxed, rhythmic and calm. Place emphasis on words like RELAX. This will have a slightly hypnotic effect on your students and help them relax more deeply.
- If you cough or have another interruption, do not apologise or stop. Just keep going. Your students will tune back in more easily if you don't make too much of it.
- When there are breaks in you speaking/reading, look at your students. Take note of which ones look completely relaxed and which are scratching and twitching. This will help you assess how well each of your students is doing with the course material.
- When you have finished reading the visualisation, allow at least 3-5 minutes for students to relax before bringing their attention back to the room.
- Remember when your students wake, they will usually be deeply relaxed and slow to move and think. Treat them gently. Give your students the opportunity to discuss their experience afterwards, if they wish, in a group discussion format.

You will have received a link to listen to the guided relaxation exercise in Module 1 along with the script to the exercise. The relaxation exercise (full body relaxation or progressive relaxation exercise as it is also known) is used at the beginning of every Meditation and guided visualisation you will teach.

Your students will become very familiar with it and will learn to relax more and more deeply with it. All other Meditations and visualisations you teach will always begin at the end of this exercise.

The relaxation exercise is about 18 minutes in duration and it is the first guided Meditation you will teach your students. Your Practitioners Kit will include all of your lesson plans and you will also receive several scripts for guided Meditations.

Overcoming obstacles to Meditation practice

Most beginners have trouble finding the discipline to meditate on a regular basis and will come up with excuses to avoid taking the time out for their practice (avoidance).

Buddhists have written a lot about overcoming the obstacles to a Meditation practice, because people have been encountering these obstacles for around 2500 years!

Traditional obstacles include:

- *Laziness* - there are 3 kinds: regular, becoming disheartened, being too busy
- *Lack of confidence* – losing sight of the goal
- *Distraction* - laxity/elation (being too sleepy and dull or getting carried away by some exciting experience while meditating—both are distractions)
- *Time* – Feeling like there is insufficient time available in a busy day to meditate.

Suggestions for your students to overcome these obstacles include:

- 1. Trust.** At some point, you had an insight that Meditation was valuable. That's what made you decide to try it out. You can trust that insight. Recall it to yourself before you practice.
- 2. Take it slow.** Don't commit to a lifelong Meditation practice and then beat yourself up when you screw up on day three; the only thing worse than not practicing is beating yourself up for not practicing.

So instead of diving in head first, commit to a weeklong Meditation practice. Say "I'm just going to sit for 10 minutes a day for one week." (Or 20, or 30 or whatever you choose!) "At the end of that time, I'm going to re-evaluate."

Then you can do anything you want. You can commit to another week, or a month. Don't decide about the next phase until you complete the current one. Just make the commitment doable, for you.
- 3. Define.** Before you sit down to practice, say to yourself: "Now I'm going to Meditate. Everything else can wait. Nothing is going to be more important for the next ten minutes (or five, or twenty, or whatever you decide).
- 4. Create critical mass.** If you practice for a few minutes every day, this is better than more time on a few days. Routine is the key. Continuity is more important than duration. At some point your practice will reach the kind of critical mass that brushing your teeth has. It will become something you 'just do' and it will feel wrong if you don't do it. It will become a habit.
- 5. Don't give up.** The more you practice the easier it will become and the more benefits you will recognise.
- 6. You time.** Prioritise your health and wellbeing. Know that by developing a regular Meditation routine you will have more energy and feel more capable in all areas of your life. This will mean that everything else you do will benefit rather than suffer for the time you give yourself to meditate.

Meditation is a practice and practice is in the doing. Just like getting fit. You can't think yourself fit. You have to put in the time and energy...consistently. And then the results creep up on you slowly but surely.

Creating safe and effective teaching environments

It is very important that you choose venues for classes very carefully. Below are aspects to consider.

1. Location

How easy is the venue to get to, for you and for your students? Can seniors access the venue on public transport? Is there enough car parking? Is the location safe enough for people to feel at ease attending night classes? Is it close enough to a high school for your teenaged students to walk to after school?

2. Size

In this case size is important! It is recommended that you have a minimum and maximum class size. This means you will not be running financially draining classes that are too small and you will not end up with classes that are too large to teach effectively.

Generally, a minimum class size of six students and a maximum of twenty works best. Some classes will naturally attract more students than others.

When choosing your venue consider how many people you want to be able to spread out comfortably in the room but also remember that heat, your voice and a connected environment are all lost in a space that is too large

3. Facilities

Consider the facilities you want to offer your students. Are toilets clean and close to the Meditation room? Can you provide drinking water and make tea if you want to? Is the room private? Are there enough power points in the room? Are there chairs and tables you can use? Some centres offer child care -do you want to offer child minding for your daytime classes? Is there disabled access?

4. Cost

This is very important from your prospective. You need a great venue in order to succeed but you also need to be minimising your expenditure. So, cost counts!

Some venues are ridiculously priced so don't be disheartened, just keep looking. Some venues are more willing than others to negotiate when they know you are just starting out and they can see you will be a long-term tenant.

CWA halls, scout/guide halls, churches, neighbourhood and community centres are usually among the most affordable venues. Consider what percentage of your income you are willing to spend on venue hire and estimate how many students you expect for each class.

5. Ambiance, comfort and suitability

The feeling of the space is very important when teaching Meditation. Is there enough natural light? Can the light be dimmed during Meditation? Is there sufficient heating/cooling? Is the room quiet enough? Is the room clean? Does it smell fresh? Is there enough fresh air flow with doors closed? Does the space have any character or charm? Is the room comfortable? Are the acoustics suitable?

Check to see who else will be using the building at the same time as you - an amateur drumming group in the next room can really ruin a Meditation class!

6. Security

Think about these things: Will you have to lock up alone when your class is finished at night? Will you have to walk across an empty car park to your car alone at night? Will your students feel safe coming and going at night? Is the area frequented by groups of youth after school (that's great if you want to fill a teenage class but might be off putting to students in your over 50s class).

7. Inspect

Definitely look at the venue before you make any kind of commitment. It might sound great over the phone and the photos on the internet may look fantastic, but you must stand in the room. This space will be your class room. It will be a representation of your business. This is going to be your work space and you have to know it will suit your purposes.

Do not settle for a space you know won't be very good out of desperation as you will inevitably do your business more damage than good.

Running classes in two or more different locations will provide you with more students and allow you to expand your income. Some venues charge by the hour and some charge by the day or half day.

If you choose to run classes in a location you need to travel to, it is a good idea to run several classes back to back in the same venue on the same day. However, be careful not to exhaust yourself. The students in your last class for the evening deserve to have your attention and energy as much as those in your first class of the day.

Three classes in one day is the recommended maximum. You could also use space between lessons to hold private Holistic Counselling sessions.

Venue ideas

- Church halls
- Scout halls and guide huts
- School halls

- CWA halls
- Town halls and community centres
- Leisure centres, sports facilities and recreation centres
- Yoga schools, gymnasiums and health clubs
- Neighbourhood houses
- Natural therapies centres

Some community centres or neighbourhood houses may be interested in doing a trade so that you could run one free class for them each week in exchange for using their facilities free for the rest of the day. This can work particularly well if you focus your free class toward a particular minority group or disadvantaged sector.

For example, you might run a one-hour Meditation class each week for migrant women, or single mothers, or teens in trouble, depending on the area you work in and the focus of the centre you are approaching. This kind of teaching for room hire trade off can save you a great deal in venue hire fees.

There are also a few other benefits to be enjoyed with this type of deal:

1. You will gain publicity - you will meet people who are involved in community activities and they will talk about you and what you do.
2. You will often be able to promote your paying classes alongside your free, community class in places you would not normally be able to place commercial advertising
3. You will be doing something charitable and very positive in your community and helping people who might otherwise miss out and that is a great feeling and a worthwhile experience.

How to find venues

Finding suitable venues in your own local area is usually quite easy as you generally know what is available and you may even already have some ideas. Talk to people - find out what is available and ask questions about obtainable times and costs.

When you are looking for venues outside of your local area you can use several resources to compile a list of possibilities, such as:

- Telephone directory
- Internet search engines (eg Google – type: ‘halls for hire’ and the locality you are looking for)

Space for hire is often advertised in local papers and on internet directories like www.livingnow.com.au and www.usenature.com.au. Most areas also have online local community directories.

You could also put notices on community notice boards requesting space to hire. Many businesses are looking at diversifying and hiring out some space to you on a regular basis could be a great idea for them.

A WORD OF WARNING

Unless you have the ideal space for it, it is not recommended for you to run your classes from your home. Pushing the sofa aside and running classes from your living room will save you venue hire fees and travel cost, **but** you will lack professionalism and that will certainly affect your earning ability.

We also strongly recommend against borrowing space from friends as business and friendship rarely works. You will have greater long-term success and seriously far less hassle if you keep your venues professional and separate from your personal life.

GROUP LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Before you teach: Get to know your class

- Find out as much as you can about the group; their prior knowledge and experience of Meditation and personal development.
- Learn names. If you are able to speak to your students as individuals, you increase the speed with which you can build rapport. Use name tags in the beginning to assist yourself as well as your students to remember each other's names.

Plan ahead

- Be familiar with the subject matter and activities of the class ahead of time.
- Anticipate culture, gender and disability issues.

For some cultures, confronting or arguing (or debating) with a tutor is unacceptable behaviour. You will need to use inclusive language and avoid stereotypes. It requires some self-reflection to identify your own stereotypes so that you don't fall into the trap of using them.

- Prepare an outline of ground rules.

This may seem unnecessary in adult teaching however the whole group is disrupted when students turn up late, have mobile phones ringing in class or chatter with other students. It is important that each student knows what is expected of him or her.

Ground rules work best, and a democratic environment is better maintained when students participate in the rule making process by suggesting their own rules. For this reason, the first class of each new course includes a rule making session.

Rules can cover anything from punctuality, contribution, mobile phones, confidentiality, and so on. Your lesson plans will include a prepared list of suggestions.

- Have contingency plans.

If your classes are on a Monday, consider the impact of bank holidays. Will students who have children be unable to attend every class if the course runs through the school holidays? Build in flexibility so that students don't suffer when a class is lost.

Starting your group session

Your teaching syllabus for each of the courses you will be qualified to teach, will include activities to assist you in getting to know your students, introducing yourself to them, breaking the ice, creating ground rules, building a solid class environment and introducing the course material.

The following pointers will assist you in the presentation of these exercises, activities and materials. (You will not have to invent activities yourself; they will all be clearly outlined for you).

- Introduce yourself so students know how to address you and give the students a glimpse of who you are (e.g. talk about how you first became interested in learning Meditation so they see you as having been in a similar place to themselves).
- Avoid apologies about your authority to teach. Do not be too humble. The students want to have confidence in you. Do not undermine it.
- Use icebreaker techniques, especially in early classes, to build a sense of group identity and awareness of each other.
- Provide orientation. Tell them what to expect. Explain your role and why you are facilitating the group.
- Make initial tasks easy. Anticipate that students will need to be warmed up.

ACTIVITY

Go online or visit your local library and compile a list of icebreaker games.

Online you can search for 'ice breakers' and see what you find.

Create a list of ice breakers you can use in your future classes.

Managing the group

- Don't be afraid of silence. Give the students time to think and let them know they have permission to take time to think.
- When using quizzes and questionnaires, give the answers, or seek them from the class, and have students correct each other's quiz sheet. Use the quiz answers as the basis of discussion.
- Use humour to help defuse situations but not at the expense of a student.
- Try to have some contact outside of the class to break down barriers, especially with quiet students. Tea and chat time after class is ideal for this.
- Develop some ways of rescuing fragile students who are floundering during group discussions (e.g. "ok, so am I right to think that what you are leading up to is X"?)

Do not do the student's work for them but provide face-saving ways of getting over hurdles. Sometimes, a bit of prompting or a smile of reassurance is all that is needed from the teacher to get the student back on track, especially in group discussions. Nodding while they are answering/speaking is a signal that they are on the right track.

Managing the physical space

Visit the teaching space before your first session to see how the group might be set up in that space. If furniture needs moving, plan how/who/when.

Check the timetable to see whether the space is free prior to your session for setting up. Book enough time when hiring venues to allow for setting up and packing up.

Educational philosophies for teaching

- Allow students to participate in different ways: this also avoids boredom and keeps the class lively and interesting.
- Consider the individual learning styles of your students.
- Your teaching methods will include lecturing, group work, writing, talking, debating, role play, brainstorming, presentations, question and answer, quick quizzes, posters scrawled on A4 sheets, post-it note comments to each other, physical models, audio presentations and flash card presentations.

Finishing a session

- Make sure you have time to finish the session. Cut off other activities so the summary and take-home messages can be given.
- If there is time, ask the students to sum up what they feel has been achieved in the session or what they need to do for the next session.
- Make a note of queries, incidents or successes that you want to think about outside of your class. Fill in a teaching log or teaching diary for yourself, making notes of what worked well, what can be improved and how you might effect that improvement.
- Make good any promises to students to provide an answer to a question they asked that was beyond your immediate knowledge.

ACTIVITY

This is a practical assignment designed to assist you in preparing for running your own Meditation classes and holistic counselling practice.

Research the availability of venues for hire in three different localities you might run your classes and counselling practice from. These maybe your own area of residence and two other areas that are within fair travelling distance for you.

Make a list of **three** possible venues in each of the three different areas. Include the following information:

- Type of venue
- Venue address
- Hire cost
- Availability of regular days and times
- Facilities
- Parking and public transport
- Any other information you feel is relevant
- Your assessment of the venues; suitability for your classes

Materials and support

You are now halfway through your Certificate in Meditation Teaching and Holistic Human Development!

Once you graduate, you will be invited to join the IMTTA (free for the first year). As a member of the IMTTA you will receive your digital Practitioner Kit, which includes a great deal of material to assist you in running your Meditation and Holistic Counselling practice. You will also be able to network with other graduates and access support and additional resources through the IMTTA.

Now is a good time to start getting really excited about your future!

ACTIVITY

Start visualising that you are living your perfect lifestyle. Clearly see yourself as a holistic practitioner, teaching Meditation, seeing counselling clients, teaching chair yoga. Perhaps you want to do all or just some of these things. Perhaps you have a special area of interest you want to work in or an existing modality you wish to combine. Spend as much time as possible really feeling what it might be like for you to be earning a good income in this way. Think too about what sort of income you want to earn.

End of Module.