



Six Areas for Teacher Development and Assessment

1. Meditation: Individual and Relational
2. Dhamma
3. Sangha: Relational Capacity/ Relatedness
4. Character, Personal Maturity and Psychological Knowledge
5. Teacher Formation and Roles
6. Teaching Insight Dialogue

1. Meditation: Individual and Relational

Insight Dialogue is the relational meditation component of a whole life path. It rests on a foundation of traditional silent meditation. In silence and silent practice one becomes familiar with awareness itself and with establishing mindfulness and concentration with subtlety and stability. Vipassana is a good foundation but other practices are also valued. Dedication to silent meditation as integral to one's life is foundational.

Likewise, an ongoing commitment to Insight Dialogue practice, including regular participation in Insight Dialogue retreats, is essential to becoming an Insight Dialogue teacher. One learns the practice from the inside but, more importantly, one directly experiences the key insights of not-self, the nature of tanha and its cessation and the manifestation of kindness and compassion in full relational awareness.

Teacher Development:

The fostering of depth experience in silent and relational meditation requires regular retreat attendance. The core concern is meditative insight, and the integration of such insight into the life and character of the individual. An additional dimension is the benefit of and experience with a variety of meditation techniques, particularly those that may be drawn upon while teaching relational Dhamma and Insight Dialogue. Even in traditional meditation practices, a specific link to relational understanding and practice is sought.

Reference Points for Learning Objectives:

The following practices provide a beginning reference point. Individual practices will likely vary, but a significant portion of these should be familiar and many should be deeply engaged.

- Developed mindfulness practice in Satipatthana: body, feelings, mind states, phenomena
- Specific practices involving rising and vanishing, internal-external-both
- Body as foundation includes:
 - Scan
 - Breath
 - Postures
 - Non-beautiful, the body as organism
- Feelings: Vedana with contact; ubiquity of vedana
- Mind states: Including mood but most importantly including awareness of awareness

- Phenomena: Contemplation and direct experiencing of phenomena using the guiding frameworks of essential Buddhaddhamma.
- Spacious: Open awareness, dzogchen, zen formless or shikentaza
- Technical contemplation meditations, e.g. impermanence, suffering, and non-self of the aggregates
- Loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, equanimity; both relational practice and intra-personal
- Insight Dialogue in a variety of formats, with a variety of practice themes, and with a variety of teachers
- Dharma Contemplation

Areas of Evaluation

Please reflect on these deeply. Then please write your observations as concretely and specifically as possible. Include specific examples of your practice as well as its manifestation in your life.

Silence and silent meditation:

What, specifically, is your daily, weekly, monthly and yearly practice with silence and silent meditation? Please include a description of the ways that you make space for silence and for formal silent practice in your daily life.

In what ways do the meditative qualities cultivated in silence and silent meditation manifest in your daily life and teaching?

What are your learning and practice challenges, your “edges,” with respect to silence and silent meditation?

Insight Dialogue:

During the past year, how frequently and in what forms have you engaged in Insight Dialogue practice?

In what ways do the meditative qualities cultivated through Insight Dialogue practice manifest in your daily life and teaching?

What are your learning and practice challenges, your “edges,” with respect to Insight Dialogue practice? Challenges could include contexts in which you find it difficult to bring the meditative qualities cultivated in Insight Dialogue to your interactions with others as well as difficulties with the practice itself.

Intention/Plan:

What are your intentions for silent practice in the coming year?

What are your intentions for Insight Dialogue practice?

What resources or supports would you like from your cohort, mentors, and from the IDTC?

2. Dhamma

Insight Dialogue has grown out of early Buddhist teachings; this remains the ground of the Dhamma and the heart of the meditation practices we learn and teach. The texts, and the monastic tradition rooted in these texts, are our deepest well of wisdom and meditative practice. Building on this ground, our intellectual knowledge must be accompanied by insight born of practice. In this way, our teaching is emergent from our lived experience and our particular cultural milieu.

Teacher Development:

The basic aim is a well-rounded teacher, with a broad and personal knowledge base within contemporary culture, a person who is able to maintain and live with depth and integrity the reference point of Buddhadhamma from the earliest sources. The Dhamma goals of Teacher development are:

- To demonstrate intellectual and verbal understanding of the Dhamma and be able to speak from this understanding in a clear and integrated way.
- To demonstrate a comprehension of the Dhamma such that it provides the foundation for one's formal teachings, talks, and Insight Dialogue contemplations.
- To demonstrate embodied and internalized learning: one lives the Dhamma in all aspects of one's life.

Core Topics of Buddhadhamma:

It is expected that ID teachers will become extremely familiar with most of these core topics, with varying degrees of emphasis.

1. Four Noble Truths
 - a. Three characteristics
 - b. Aggregates
 - c. Three hungers
 - d. Wholesome and unwholesome roots of thought
 - e. Intoxicants
 - f. Dependent origination
 - g. Eightfold path
2. Satipatthana as practice and framework for uniting personal and interpersonal meditation
 - a. Five hindrances
 - b. Seven factors of awakening
 - c. Five faculties
3. Dana
4. Sila

Additional Dhamma topics:

A breadth of Dhamma knowledge will also include other topics, with ID teachers engaging deeply with these and other Dhamma studies as drawn by personal interest: an understanding of Nibanna as a goal of practice, cultivation of the Jhanas, understanding the arising of the ten fetters and conditions that support the abandonment, four spiritual powers, study of the Nikayas, renunciation as it applies to modern life, ten paramitas, four brahma viharas, Buddhist history, basic teachings of other Buddhist traditions, the life of the

Buddha as a human being in a cultural setting, lay and monastic Buddhist practice and life, the value and application of devotional practices, **(precepts?)**

Area of Assessment

Please reflect on these deeply. Then please write your observations as concretely and specifically as possible. Include specific examples of your practice as well as its manifestation in your life.

- What areas or topics of Dhamma study have you engaged in during the past year?
- What methods of study have you engaged in?
- Direct engagements with the suttas?
- Dharma Contemplation?
- Books about the Dhamma?
- Visiting teachers, having discussions with knowledgeable friends?

Please give particular attention to the topics listed above. For each topic identified, please describe your approach to study, including any experiential learning.

During this past year, what has been the frequency of your practice with respect to Dhamma study: daily, weekly, monthly, yearly?

In what ways has your study of the Dhamma during the past year manifested in your day-to-day life?

As you have been teaching Insight Dialogue, please describe the impact of your study on your teaching and on how you are relating to students. Feel free to focus on one or two salient examples if this seems appropriate. Challenges can pertain to content areas or texts you find difficult, forms of study or ways of engaging with the Dhamma, and/or applications of study in teaching.

Intention/Plan:

What areas of Dhamma study do you plan for the upcoming year?

What resources or supports would you like from your cohort, mentors, and the IDTC?

3. Sangha: Relational Capacity/ Relatedness

Depth awareness and practice of relationship itself is central to the efficacy of Insight Dialogue. Teaching Insight Dialogue is an ongoing relational and emergent process among co-teachers and with teachers and all participants. Particularly important are developed and personal understandings and practice in the following areas: constructed and unconstructed intimacy; managing personal reactivity and interpersonal ruptures while remaining in relationship; navigating basic fears and desires; sharing peer-to-peer learning – especially Dhamma exchange – and understanding the roles of relational dynamics such as mirroring,

induction and transmission. The seasoned ID teacher understands that the power of relationship in meditation can itself be thought of as a source of teaching skills essential to offering Insight Dialogue retreats.

Developmental Concerns:

- engaging the power of relationship and Sangha in the service of awakening together
- appreciating and sustaining awareness of non-separation and practicing “seeing” through Sangha eyes
- intention and cultivation of true refuge in Sangha in teaching and in life
- developing capacities for Noble (Spiritual) Friendship including turning toward relationship for feedback, mutual reflection, guidance and support
- engaging in learning cohorts and co-teaching as relational practice with other ID teachers and non ID teachers
- participating in creating inclusive, beloved community through differences of race, class, culture, gender, age, sexuality, etc.
- generosity and active engagement in flow of Dana and service in Sangha-specifically in the IDTC

Areas of Evaluation

In engaging in teaching relationships, in community and in offering practice please indicate:
(a) which specific skills in each of these areas are strengths
(b) which are confusing or challenging and
(c) which need development

Intention/Plan:

What are your intentions and plans for further development in the areas of personal and community relatedness in the coming year?

4. Character, Personal Maturity and Psychological Knowledge

As in all teacher development, we aim to foster psychological maturity and to bring psychological knowledge as well as relational experience and sensitivity to our teaching and to our community processes.

Insight Dialogue teaching provides perhaps even greater opportunity than silent practice alone for teachers to transmit the Dhamma through one’s human, relational behavior and for students to respond to that. Similarly, as an interpersonal practice, that is less controlled and predictable than an exclusively silent practice, Insight Dialogue presents students with a more public and perhaps more challenging relational context than might be encountered on a silent retreat. As a result, there may be a greater potential for students to express emotional reactivity and/or unwholesome behavior with their contemplation partners or in the group as a whole. As teachers, we are cultivating the discernment and the courage to

immediately turn toward suffering and to directly inquire into both our personal development and our interpersonal skill and understanding. We continually cultivate together, in community, an ongoing maturation.

Teacher Development:

- To foster personal maturity among all ID teachers and to provide a strong community for the ongoing assessment and peer accountability of all.
- To cultivate wholesome skills with psychological issues as they manifest in teaching and in group processes.
- To strengthen relational capacities to identify needs and to share the benefits of psychological skills and resources in an ongoing way among all members of the ID teaching community.

Character and Personal Maturity:

Character development can be defined by *dana*, our actions of giving; by *sila*, the ethical integrity with which we live; and by *bhavana*, the level of insight and calm we bring to every moment. Held in awareness with compassion (*karuna*) and loving-kindness (*metta*), these are foundational for ongoing teacher development. There is generosity of heart; one offers one's knowledge, one's presence, one's time and energy. There is the ability to make and follow through with commitments. There is wholesome response when conflict arises and when in the presence of others who have different backgrounds, cultural perspectives or views. There is steadiness and clarity of mind and the capacity to attend to the needs of the group from a vantage point of stillness. At the same time, there is the ability to set clear boundaries, to self-nurture and self-regulate. Character is shown in the ability to engage in mutual reflection, receive feedback about areas that need greater attention and in what happens during inevitable personal and interpersonal struggles.

Psychological Knowledge:

We are cultivating a balance between cognitive understanding and experiential insight in this area. From the cognitive perspective, familiarity with key elements of western psychology and psychotherapy is of value in teacher development. In particular, knowledge of stages of human development, interpersonal attachment processes and interpersonal neuroscience can be helpful. Recognition of signs of various forms of emotional dysregulation, as well as recognition of traumatic stress reactions is important. As a teacher, it is necessary to understand the manifestations of ordinary group dynamics as well as the various forms of unconscious reactivity on the part of both student and teacher. These can be activated and amplified by a teacher's own personal struggles, by their relationship with a co-teacher or simply by a being in the role of leader sitting in a seat of authority.

Personally, it is expected that all teachers are committed to being aware of their own psychological issues, and to cultivating the capacity to work effectively with these. In this way, we continually integrate this work into our ongoing and personal investigation of wisdom, ethics, compassion and renunciation. There are many ways that integration and individuation can occur, and yet there needs to be a willingness to work with a

psychotherapist as a client, to be part of group work and to receive consultation regarding one's own teaching and group management as appropriate.

Areas of Evaluation

Character and Personal Maturity:

During the past year, what qualities have you worked to address or develop in the areas of personal character, maturity and ethics? How have you engaged in this work?

Please comment on your contributions to the maturity, harmony, and clarity of our ID community during this past year. Do you feel at peace with your participation, generosity, and care?

At present, what do you consider your primary challenge(s) in the area of personal character and maturity? Please include challenges related to your participation in the Insight Dialogue Community as well as those that might impact your effectiveness as an Insight Dialogue teacher.

Psychological Knowledge:

To what extent do you feel capable of effectively dealing with students' reactivity (e.g. expressions of strong emotion, unskillful behavior toward other students and you in the role of teacher)? Please provide examples of how you dealt with this type of situation during the past year, being sure to note any situations you found especially challenging. If you are not teaching Insight Dialogue or teaching very little, please touch on how you have responded in similar situations and note any challenges you experience or anticipate in this regard as an ID teacher. For both, please also include your skills and challenges with respect to participation in the Insight Dialogue teaching community and community meetings.

Please describe the extent to which you are knowledgeable about the various content areas outlined in the section on "Psychological Knowledge" above. Please describe an area of psychological knowledge that you would like to strengthen. Please describe resources that you already find helpful in this area.

Intention/Plan:

What are your intentions and plans for further development in the areas of personal character and maturity in the coming year?

What are your intentions and plans for further development of psychological knowledge in the coming year?

What resources or supports would you like from your cohort, mentor, from the Insight Dialogue Teachers' community or from outside our own community?

5. Teacher Formation and Roles

In Insight Dialogue, one teaches from embodied experience; we understand the strength of all of the teacher's behaviors in every moment as expressions of our relational practice and teaching. How teaching and learning actually take place come to be understood both theoretically and in action. Teachers develop skill with group dynamics. The role of the teacher, in and out of retreat, is carefully considered and managed. Skill is developed with talks, questions and answers, interviews, ritual and other elements involved in the flow of

teaching. We commit to full integrity and ethical behavior in all circumstances-in the whole of our lives. All in all, we live the teachings. We recognize that our engagements with participants, volunteers, and all managers and hosts - before, during and after formal teachings - are all part of the path of sharing the Dhamma.

Teacher Development:

- To be accomplished at the art and science of teaching while simultaneously being mature within the material and practice of relational Dhamma.
- To conduct oneself in the role of teacher with humility, self-awareness, professionalism, integrity and skill.
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Reference Points for Evaluation:

Group process management: One establishes and maintains a clear group container, one that offers individual and group safety and inclusiveness. One learns to teach sensitively to particular people and groups. This involves cultivating awareness of individual and group characteristics, attuning to varying learning styles, careful and appropriate use of language in different settings, teaching to those whose first language is different from one's own, and the pacing, and careful listening to, and response to questions. Sensitivity and skill with people of different ages, ethnicities, skill levels, education, and cultural inclinations are important. Retreat management and group skills such as working with emergence, working with difficult people or situations, identifying and managing interpersonal ruptures and skillful use of ritual are important.

Role of the teacher:

One understands what it means to sit in the seat of "teacher." We work skillfully with dual roles, e.g. as a teacher to friends, clients, relatives and professional associates. We cultivate skill and flexibility in meeting situations in which we are not familiar with the meditative experiences or group dynamics that are unfolding. We learn how to manage when we do not yet know the Dhamma that is unfolding or we lack other background essential to what is arising. We learn how to skillfully co-teach with partners whose styles, knowledge and experience differ from our own. We cultivate continued humility, and personal growth and, at the same time, the ability to teach with strength and confidence. We offer all we are capable of offering regardless of venue, group size or demographic. At the same time, we maintain deliberate self-care in scheduling and travelling.

Skill in teaching:

The teacher of relational Dhamma and Insight Dialogue may be called upon to teach in a variety of circumstances and a variety of audiences. Comfort in, skill with, and appreciation for different formats is essential, including online and in-person formats. We cultivate skill and flexibility with groups of various sizes and with teaching in various settings. Giving talks and formal teaching is an ability to be developed, including emergent talks and those carefully prepared.

Ethical commitments:

We cultivate skill and integrity in all areas of ethics as we manage money, the authority given to teachers, sexuality, physical touch and wholesome speech and action in all of our contacts before, during and after retreats. We respond in timely ways and with skill and sensitivity when we receive invitations to teach. We are appropriate in seeking teaching

engagements. Kind attention is brought to all aspects of ethics with hosts, retreatants, other teachers, and IDC support staff.

Living the Teachings:

The skilled teacher is authentic, empowering and respectful. We understand the importance of transparency, induction, transmission, and other dynamics. We cultivate skill in restraining from excessive self concern, as well as self-disclosure as appropriate and timely. We explore and manage our own shadows as we handle conflict and our own interpersonal reactivity.

Areas of Evaluation

Which specific skills in each of these areas are strengths? Which need development? (see above)

- Group process management
- Role of the teacher
- Skill in teaching
- Ethical commitments
- Living the teachings

Please comment on your commitment to developing excellence in all teaching venues and media. These may include daylong or weekend retreats, distance-learning offerings, web based written and oral offerings, teacher meetings and peer group activities.

What are you currently doing to develop your teaching skills?

Intention/Plan:

Please outline ways or styles of learning that will address your teaching development needs as you go forward.

Please also outline teaching skills you already have and might share with the teaching community – as we all go forward.

6. Teaching Insight Dialogue

There are three effective factors or bases that combine to make Insight Dialogue such a powerful practice: meditative qualities of the mind as supported by the guidelines; the Dhamma as introduced in the contemplations and Dhamma talks; and relationship itself. Understanding each of these areas in depth plus how they interact with each other is essential to skillful teaching of Insight Dialogue. When these three elements are brought together in combination with other, more general elements, the powerful synergy of Insight Dialogue is the natural result.

Teaching Insight Dialogue well, then, includes how to best bring all of these together for this particular group of meditators here and now. What guidelines should be emphasized with specific contemplations? What group sizes are best for certain contemplations, and how can the guidelines support strong practice in those groups? Additional skills include learning the impact of different group sizes on practice, and the reasoning behind the changing and

combining of groups. The Insight Dialogue teacher also learns to work with the large group of all practitioners, including when and why to respond directly to more conceptual practice questions and understanding how to unfold contemplations in a fresh way over the course of an offering.

With all of these woven together, the meditative development of Insight Dialogue is conveyed to others through a transmission of the Insight Dialogue guidelines and how these guidelines are lived and manifested in action by the teacher. The Dhamma is conveyed through the contemplations. The relational essence is fostered by the mutuality and genuineness of the teacher(s), by the skillful use of language in one's teaching, in modeling relatedness, and in the use of contemplations that foster a sense of the shared human experience. All of this learning is understood as essential to both online programs and face-to-face retreats, with teachers expected to be comfortable in both forms, although they may specialize in one form or another.

Teacher Development areas:

- To understand and become skillful in the specific Insight Dialogue skills, knowledge, and meditative experience as expressed in action.
- To be able to manifest these skills through theoretical understanding of, and ability to teach from, the inter-relationships among the three bases of Insight Dialogue: meditative qualities of mind, Dhamma wisdom, and mature and balanced relationality.

Reference Points for Assessment:

- Insight Dialogue theory and practice related to a specific and nuanced understanding of the Insight Dialogue Guidelines, the kernel of offering ID.
- Each guideline has many layers and many modes of expression and each links to all of the knowledge bases referenced across the other five areas of teacher development: Meditation, Dhamma, Relationship, Character, Personal Maturity and Psychological Knowledge, and General Teaching Skills. Of these five areas, the closest link is to the teacher's actual meditative development and a clear and formal understanding of that development. The ID teacher learns to speak about the guidelines, while practicing them, in wise and fluid ways. We also understand how the guidelines relate to each other and to other meditative experience and are able to teach these relationships skillfully.
- An understanding how Contemplations are sequenced and layered and how they can be developed throughout the offering.
- We learn from experience the ways in which contemplations of different sorts might impact the mind states of meditators. We understand how to balance open contemplations – e.g. of simply this moment of sensory experience – with more content-rich contemplations. We learn how much explanation is helpful and how much is too much. We recognize what contemplations are too subtle for a certain group and which are too grossly intellectual or incline the mind towards identification. We gain skill in combining contemplations for breadth and in unfolding them for depth.
- We learn to draw contemplations from the suttas and to integrate the formal Buddhaddamma into retreat themes and the unfolding content.
- Cultivation of Other Elements of teaching Insight Dialogue including the use of body awareness and bodily movement, the integration of the natural world, including time

outside and contemplations offered in nature, and the use of humor and gravitas. Added to these are more subtle teaching qualities of humility, of embodying the practice oneself, of confidence and of deep care. All of these can be actively cultivated in the Insight Dialogue teacher developmental process.

Areas of Evaluation

In teaching Insight Dialogue, please indicate:

(a) which specific skills in each of these areas are strengths,

(b) which are confusing or challenging and

(c) which need development. (see above)

- Guidelines
- Contemplations
- Other aspects of Insight Dialogue teaching

In what ways do you have or need to develop a nuanced understanding of how the guidelines relate to traditional silent meditation?

Do you need instruction in teaching silent meditation practice?

Overall, what are you currently doing to develop your Insight Dialogue teaching skills?

Please also outline ways or styles of learning that will address your Insight Dialogue teaching development needs as you go forward.