

Developing the skills to become a mindfulness teacher requires a continual process of self-assessment. A thoughtful teacher should leave the session with questions as to the quality and efficacy of the session. Without objective criteria, it can be difficult for the mindfulness teacher to gauge their practice and progress as a teacher.

We now have research on the teaching of mindfulness that provides clarity as to the critical aspects of the teaching process and levels of competence. This research was used by a team to author the Bangor, Exeter & Oxford Mindfulness-Based Interventions Teaching Assessment Criteria. You may download it and visit it often to study the criteria to check your development as a mindfulness teacher.

Go to: <http://mbitac.bangor.ac.uk/>

Why Assess?

The purpose of assessment is to improve learning – your learning, as a teacher of mindfulness. An assessment is a tool for supporting learners to achieve their goals. A quality assessment clarifies the purpose of the learning and shapes next steps in the learning process.

“Self-evaluation directs us to prepare our next performance from the past and today’s experiences.”

~Auliq Ice

Identify the ways you may use a self-assessment to improve your teaching.

Levels of Competence

Treat a competence rating as feedback that can serve as a marker of your progress.

"To be a teacher in the right sense is to be a learner. I am not a teacher, only a fellow student."

~Soren Kierkegaard

There are six developmental stages defined as levels of competence. A beginner or advanced beginner teacher should be working with a mentor. Once a teacher is competent, they may train on their own. The advanced level is typically for teacher trainers. It is common to be stronger in some areas than others.

Let us review these levels of competence together.

Competence Band	Description of Evidence of Competence
Incompetent	Absence of key features, or highly inappropriate performance
Beginner	Aspects of competence demonstrated but significant problems evident
Advanced Beginner	Evidence of some competence, but numerous problems and lack of consistency
Competent	Competent, with some problems and/or inconsistencies
Proficient	Sustained competence demonstrated with few or minor problems and/or inconsistencies
Advanced	Excellent teaching practice, or very good even in the face of participant difficulties

Six Domains of Mindfulness Teaching Criteria

The six domains of mindfulness teaching assessment criteria are comprehensive in depicting the critical features to a teaching session. Begin the development of your self-assessment with the probing question that accompanies each domain.

Domain 1: Coverage, Pacing, Organization of the Session Curriculum

A teaching session must have a curriculum that is appropriate for the participants. It is the responsibility of the teacher to be organized, adhere to the themes and content of the session and to ensure the session has a flow or pacing that is optimal for student learning.

- Did I provide a well-paced and organized curriculum in this session?*

Domain 2: Relational Skills

The effective teacher has the relational and interpersonal skills that conveys their authenticity and communicates acceptance, compassion and warmth to their students. The teacher displays an interest in students that encourages their curiosity and builds a climate of mutuality.

- Am I actively listening to participants and authentic in my relationship with them?*

Domain 3: Embodiment of Mindfulness

Your embodiment of mindfulness in your teaching will evolve from your commitment to your own mindfulness practice. The teacher who embodies mindfulness is able to maintain a present moment focus and responsiveness with a calm alertness.

- Am I being mindful during my teaching?*

Domain 4: Guiding Mindfulness Practices

This domain has three key features

1. Language is clear, precise, accurate and accessible whilst conveying spaciousness
2. The teacher guides the practice in a way which makes the key learning for each practice available to participants
3. The particular elements to consider when guiding each practice are appropriately present

- Does my guidance in mindfulness practices provide clarity with key elements that are accessible to participants?*

Domain 5: Conveying Course Themes Through Interactive Inquiry and Didactic Teaching

The skillful teacher links teaching themes to the participants' direct experience, using inquiry processes to deepen and expand understanding. Teaching skills include being familiar and confident with your knowledge of material and having skills to convey learning and content in a responsive and participatory manner.

- How well am I using inquiry to make connections between participant experience and the themes of the teaching session?*
- How would I rate my confidence and competence in my knowledge and skill in conveying this material to participants?*

Domain 6: Facilitating the Group Learning Environment

The development and facilitation of group processes can be complex. The teacher must establish the norms for behavior and confidentiality while making participants feel safe to take risks. There are stages to group processes that must be managed from beginnings, to difficulties to endings. Simultaneously, as a teacher of mindfulness, the learning environment must move the group from personal to universals of our shared humanity while holding an authority that does not impose values on participants.

- Where, in this teaching session, am I providing the appropriate structure and non-judgmental guidance for the group to be a safe learning environment for the exploration of personal and universal experience?*

Notes

Assessing Your Skills as a Mindfulness Teacher

Here are some tips for identifying sources of evidence for your self-assessment

- Observe and record feedback from participants
- Journal your inner thoughts and experiences that occurred in the session
- Review your planning, resources, and organization of the session
- Record the session
- Ask an experienced teacher or critical friend to attend the session and take notes
- Immediately following the session, take notes to review later
- Put a pin in something that you are working on as a focal point for collecting evidence
- Set an objective for what you are working on improving and define the attributes you will demonstrate, then check for them in your self-assessment
- Connect with other mindfulness teachers on specific skills within the domains

Mindfulness Teaching Self-Assessment Rubric

On the following page, you will find a copy of the Mindfulness Teaching Self-Assessment Rubric. You will also find a copy of this among the resources you can download as a separate document.

Directions: Use this rubric to record your evidence, identify your strengths and learning needs and rate your level of competence in each domain. You don't have to do it all at once. Maybe just pick one domain or one aspect that you are going to work on. Set little goals for yourself.

Use this tool to document your teaching experiences, collect evidence of your performance as a teacher and to assess the development of your competencies as a mindfulness teacher.

Meditation Exercise: _____ Dare: _____ Setting: _____

Domain	Probing Question	Evidence	Strengths	Learning Needs	Competence Rating
Coverage, Pacing, Organization of Curriculum	<i>Did I provide a well-paced and organized curriculum in this session?</i>				
Relational Skills	<i>Am I actively listening to participants and authentic in my relationship with them?</i>				
Embodiment of Mindfulness	<i>Am I being mindful during my teaching?</i>				
Guiding Mindfulness Practices	<i>Does my guidance in mindfulness practices provide clarity with key elements that are accessible to participants?</i>				
Interactive Inquiry and Didactic Teaching	<i>How well am I using inquiry to make connections between participant experience and the themes of the teaching session?</i>				
Facilitating the Group Learning Environment	<i>Where, in this teaching session, am I providing the appropriate structure and non-judgmental guidance for the group to be a safe learning environment for the exploration of personal and universal experience?</i>				

Competence Ratings: Incompetent, Beginner, Advanced Beginner, Competent, Proficient, Advanced