



# A Guide to Skilful Feedback in Mindfulness-based Programs Training and Assessment

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## Introduction

This document offers practical guidance for giving both written and verbal feedback when using the Mindfulness Based Intervention: Teaching Assessment Criteria (MBI:TAC) tool for the training and assessment of mindfulness-based program (MBP) teachers. There are currently no established guidelines or training around how to offer feedback, therefore trainers and supervisors may feel unclear about the best way to support the growth of trainee and trained MBP teachers.

The purpose of feedback is to help the trainee develop a clear understanding of MBP teaching skills, how these differ from their current level, and what they can do to bridge the gap (Hattie, 2007). In the context of MBI:TAC, this would mean that feedback helps trainees, supervisees and mentees to have a clear understanding of the domains and key features, where the trainee currently sits in relation to these, and, if there is a gap, how to build skills going forward.

## Principles of effective feedback using the MBI:TAC

Generally, feedback to students occurs in one of two ways, 1) Formative, informal, verbal feedback within a teacher training context, or, 2) Summative, written feedback following formal MBI-TAC assessment. The following principles of effective feedback are applicable to both. Specific recommendations for each are considered separately in later sections.

- **Experiential Feedback**

When offering either verbal or written feedback, the personal experience of the trainer during the trainees' teaching is a key source of information. It can be helpful to think about the giving of feedback as another mindfulness practice, inviting the trainer and trainee to approach the process from a grounded, embodied, mindful perspective. This then supports trainers to comment on how it felt to be taught by the trainee, what supported and what hindered the teaching. It is useful to begin sentences with wording such as, "*It felt to me*" or "*my experience was*" rather than "*I think*" or "*I liked*" which convey view and opinion.

Assessing while grounded in practice also supports recognition of personal patterns that may become activated during the formulation of feedback. Trainers may not feel inspired by every trainee, or may get 'snagged' on certain phrasing or language, but this may be particular to one's own filters. In these instances, it is critical to recognize personal biases, to hold these with awareness and sensitivity, and when appropriate, to seek another trainers' input. This can be of particular importance in situations where the trainee is known to the assessor, and positive or negative bias is therefore more likely.

- **Specific feedback, grounded in key features and observable behaviours**

Feedback should be specific rather than general and should offer examples of observable behaviour to demonstrate learning points. Written feedback should ideally be organised under key features. It is helpful to anchor comments to relevant sessions, practices, activities or didactic course elements. This enables trainees to refer to segments of the recording, when referencing trainer comments.

- **Supportive, strengths-based feedback**

Supportive feedback focuses on what was done well, and highlights examples of competent teaching. Where did the teacher feel at ease? What strengths and qualities were demonstrated? What was skilful and why? What supported the deepening of the experience or of the practice?

Examples:

*“During the sitting meditation, when you named the wandering mind and normalized it, it helped me to remember this is normal, rather than judging myself for this”*

*“The periods of silence in the practice helped me to practice by myself, and the moments of guidance supported me in not being lost in the wandering mind, it felt very balanced.”*

- **Constructive feedback**

Constructive feedback points to areas for development and should be offered with sensitivity and compassion as well as clarity and courage. Comments given on the piece of teaching, rather than on the teacher themselves, can make learning edges feel less personal. Overly critical feedback can have a lasting, detrimental impact on a trainee’s confidence. It is equally unhelpful to be overly complimentary.

Consider ways in which positive phrasing can encourage a teacher while still getting the message across. For example,

*“your voice was too quiet when guiding so I disconnected from the practice”*

could also be expressed as,

*“Greater volume when guiding practice would have helped me to stay engaged.”*

An example of where a key feature is demonstrated can be used to highlight a general deficit.

For example,

*“In moments when you are more relaxed, such as .....(reference session, element, time range if recorded), you are able to bring humour in to your teaching. More of this would foster effective working relationships with the participants.”*

If the teacher is present, inquiry can be useful: ‘How was it in the moments when you were at ease? Can you call to mind, right now, how it was in the body? What thoughts were present?’

- **Pragmatic Feedback**

Feedback needs to be of practical use, providing a clear learning plan for the trainee to take forward. It therefore helps if feedback can be skills based (which skills need to be honed?) and learning, rather than performance, focused (what they need to do to improve, rather than what they did wrong). Clear learning goals, with examples of teaching, relevant key features or pages from within the MBI-TAC, can be then be explored and consolidated in supervision. Using the language of the key features helps trainees to cross-reference their feedback with the domain descriptions.

In cases where a trainee has not reached competency in the full MBI-TAC assessment process, it is good practice to offer a debrief and forward planning session to put practical next steps in place. It is important to communicate that the view given in the assessment reflects a 'single point in time', and this phrasing should be used when informing trainees of the outcome. If a trainee does not reach competency, the training organisation should have a process in place that enables re-submission.

## Feedback in Training

Trainers need to create an optimal learning environment that engages, motivates, and supports students. The MBI:TAC can provoke anxiety, so it is important to make this process as transparent and useful as possible. Trainees bring both positive and negative past learning experiences to their teacher-training. Giving space to name what might be brought up by this can support a greater sense of engagement, curiosity, and recognition of one's personal learning style, and the willingness to approach training with more openness. Some useful guidelines are below:

- Where possible, introduce trainees to the MBI:TAC and the key features in early stages of training, as a way of naming and recognizing core teaching skills. This can provide a foundation for skill acquisition and reduce potential anxiety relating to the use of the tool in formal assessment.
- The MBI:TAC emphasizes strengths (i.e. skills that are present rather than absent). Keeping this principle in mind can help to support both trainers and trainees in this process.
- Establish a supportive learning environment (non-judgmental, honest, respectful, trustworthy), and create a 'learning focus' rather than a 'performance focus'. This allows the learner to concentrate on cultivating their skills, as opposed to trying to appear competent by covering up difficulties.
- Take time to describe the feedback process and the purpose of it (i.e. that it is to help the trainee understand what they do well and how to improve further), so the trainee knows what to expect. Encourage trainees to discuss difficulties and ask questions regarding the feedback.
- When appropriate, it can be helpful to ask the trainee to give feedback on the teaching first, and to establish a norm they give themselves both supportive and constructive feedback, enabling them to build on strengths.

## Feedback in Formal Assessment

Formal MBI-TAC assessment rating should be supplemented with written feedback. A sample of how we offer written feedback can be found below, with general comments included. The table is split between 'teaching strengths' and 'learning needs'. It is not necessary to include the same amount of strengths and needs – but it is important - particularly for early stage trainees – to hear what is going well as well as guidance for development. The balance here will shift depending on level of competence. If I read the comments - would I be able to guess the level of competence? At competent level, one would expect there to be a balance of feedback in strengths and learning needs – the proportion of comments for teachers of higher skill will be tilted towards strengths, and of lower skill towards learning needs. At any level, however it is important that there are comments in both sides.

Markers offer comments for teaching reviewed, making it clear which key features are referred to. Comments can either be organised by session, listing key features within that session, or, by key features, with examples of sessions where strengths or learning needs were observed. The qualitative comments for a final assessment of an 8-week course should be about 3+ sheets of A4 using 12 font.

Examples of Formal MBI:TAC Assessment Feedback

Example 1

MBSR Assessment: Proficient

Domain	Key features	Not competent				Beginner			Advanced beginner			Competent			Proficient			Advanced			
	<b>Marking Range for students being assessed as part of Mindfulness-Based Approaches post graduate programmes at Bangor University</b>	0%	5%	15%	25%	32%	35%	38%	42%	45%	48%	52%	55%	58%	62%	65%	68%	74%	80%	87%	95%
		F4	F3	F2	F1	E-	E	E+	D-	D	D+	C-	C	C	B-	B	B+	A-	A	A+	A*
<b>1. Coverage, pacing and organisation of session curriculum</b>	<i>Adherence to curriculum</i> <i>Organisation of teacher, room and materials</i> <i>Responsiveness and flexibility in adhering</i> <i>Appropriateness of themes and content</i> <i>Session flow and pacing</i>														*						
<b>2. Relational skills</b>	<i>Authenticity and potency</i> <i>Connection and acceptance</i> <i>Compassion and warmth</i> <i>Curiosity and respect</i> <i>Mutuality</i>														*						
<b>3. Embodiment of mindfulness</b>	<i>Present moment focus</i> <i>Calm and alertness</i> <i>Present moment responsiveness</i> <i>Attitudinal foundations</i> <i>Person of the teacher</i>													*							

<b>4. Guiding mindfulness practices</b>	<i>Language – precise and spacious</i> <i>Elements to consider when guiding</i> <i>Key learning for each practice available</i>															
<b>5. Conveying course themes through interactive teaching</b>	<i>Experiential focus</i> <i>Layers within the inquiry process</i> <i>Conveying learning</i> <i>Teaching skills</i> <i>Fluency</i>															
<b>6. Holding of group learning environment</b>	<i>Learning container</i> <i>Group Development</i> <i>Common humanity</i> <i>Leadership style</i>															
	<b>Final Average Mark (Mean of all six domain scores):</b>	62% B-														

**MINDFULNESS-BASED INTERVENTIONS: TEACHING ASSESSMENT CRITERIA – COMMENTARY SHEET (please anchor comments to key features and to session)**

Domain	Teaching strengths	Learning needs
<p><b>1. Coverage, pacing and organisation of session curriculum</b></p> <p>Adherence to curriculum                      Responsiveness and flexibility within adherence                      Appropriateness of themes and content                      Organisation of teacher, room and materials                      Session flow and pacing</p>	<p>KF1 MBSR (CFM, 2017) Curriculum; observed sessions 4 and 5 in detail                      KF2 Adherence did not give impression of being rigidly adhered to; standing stretches prior to sitting practice in session 4;                      Your guidance of bringing an unpleasant experience to mind before exploring this within the group was very helpful for those who may not have recorded an unpleasant calendar prior to session 4. The exploration of stress reactivity (particularly re. behaviours) with the ‘Sea of Reactions’ spoke to this theme well. It was very helpful to keep the focus here on the body’s reaction to the feeling/behaviour.                      KF3 Themes and territory of stress were appropriate to the sessions observed. The exploration of stress in session 4 worked well and introduced a noticeable change in energy within the group through getting down on the floor to complete their stress diagrams. It was so important that you emphasised when going through the home practice in relation to stress reactions that the encouragement was to ‘just notice’ this week and ‘not to change anything.’ This speaks to your understanding of the layout of the programme and the importance of ‘holding’ the theme of responding to stress until session 5.                      KF4 Teaching aids, flipchart with session theme and home practice review were prepared in advance; appeared to have extra meditation equipment and cushions also for participants. You gave good attention to the temperature in the room, particularly mid-way during session 5, as it appeared particularly chilly. The invitation to movement also helped in this regard.(1:32:00)                      KF5 The sequence of each session observed followed the MBSR curriculum and appeared to flow naturally; you were able to</p>	<p>KF4 Although you were well prepared and clearly had a definite ‘timed’ session plan, I noticed there was a tendency to rely quite a lot on this plan during the session. For example, when presenting on stress reactivity in session 4, you had to manage both your session plan and flipchart markers at the same time (2:14:00). I wondered if you could have perhaps referred a little less to your ‘crib sheet’ or internalise this more (or indeed to let go of this and go with whatever seems most immediate from what you had prepared).                      KF5 There were a number of occasions where you seemed to set the group or small groups a task but had yet to complete instructions for the task at hand. This had a tendency of disrupting the flow and also necessitated raising your voice to be heard. For example the talking-listening exercise in session 4 exploration of home practice, as well as exploring stress. This only requires a small tweak in terms of the clarity of the assigned task and clear instructions around when to begin.</p>

	<p>bridge and move between curriculum elements of the programme with ease which demonstrated good understanding of the curriculum and the deeper structure of the programme. During times of pairs work or small group discussion, you appeared to be focused on preparing and ensuring you had materials to hand for the next content item. Time keeping appeared to be well managed and appropriate to the items in the sessions where teaching was observed.</p>	
<p><b>2. Relational skills</b>  <i>Authenticity and potency</i>  <i>Connection and acceptance</i>  <i>Compassion and warmth</i>  <i>Curiosity and respect</i>  <i>Mutuality</i></p>	<p>KF1 There did not appear to be any forcing or lack of authenticity in your presentation of the sessions or material observed. Your natural teaching style appears to be borne from a deep understanding of the programme and lived experience of this. The example you gave within the ‘Sea of Reactions’ of ‘irritability’ in the body was very immediate and powerful.</p> <p>KF2 There were some lovely examples of connection and acceptance within the sessions observed such as how you dealt with lateness (session 4) and holding a good level of eye contact at the end of the formal practices.</p> <p>KF3 There was a nice moment where one participant was curious as to why she wasn’t experiencing more physical sensations associated with stress. You kindly reminded her that it is very individual response and that she needn’t expect to experience all of these. She appeared relieved to hear this.</p> <p>Your kindly invitation towards the group to have a lovely week and to enjoy ‘the peace of wild things’ was a lovely moment at the end of session 4 and demonstrated your clear warmth and care for the group.</p> <p>Your natural warmth and compassion were also very evident not only in your skilful guidance of the practices but also in your care-taking in the transitions into and out of the practices e.g. at the end of the sitting practice in session 5.</p> <p>KF4 There were plenty of moments where you either shared your own personal experience of vulnerability or validated instances of others vulnerability in a way that consistently acknowledged the mutuality of the learning and developing a</p>	<p>KF2 There were some moments of disconnection in session 4; for example asking about ‘thoughts’ in relation to stress reactions and then going ahead and answering your own question by giving an example. (2:03:00) Although your teaching points were always relevant to the themes being explored, at times the amount of information you were offering led to a sense of disconnection with the group (session 5; 2:27:00). I wondered if you were aware of this and whether it would be possible to inquire more and teach less.</p>



	mindfulness practice. For example when giving examples of typical thoughts in relation to stress reactivity in session 4.	
<b>3. Embodiment of mindfulness</b> <i>Present moment focus</i> <i>Present moment responsiveness</i> <i>Calmness and vitality</i> <i>Attitudinal qualities</i> <i>Natural presence of the teacher</i>	<p>KF1 You demonstrated good self-care by choosing to sit for some of the (session 4) movements and invited others to do the same at any time, which at least one participant chose to do</p> <p>KF2 There was a lovely moment in session 4 inquiry (1:02:00) when you caught yourself and paused and said ‘what I am trying to say is to allow yourself to notice whatever is there’. This was good modelling of mindful communication and responsiveness to noticing that you were beginning to drift off-theme</p> <p>KF3 Guidance around more dominant sensations within the sitting practice (session 4) again encouraged curiosity (e.g. shape/movement) and openness (i.e. turning towards). This was guided with spaciousness and calmness.</p>	<p>KF1 I wonder if remembering to keep both feet on the floor might be helpful in staying in greater connection to the body when you teach? This might also help to recognise when pulled into more conceptual discussions with the group.</p> <p>KF2 There was quite a lot of ground covered in the inquiry following the main sitting practice in session 5. I wondered if there might have been an opportunity to pause, to perhaps take a breathing space before carrying on with inquiring into the home practice. This might have allowed a greater sense of spaciousness and ease. So perhaps more of a focus on process over content at this stage in the evening.</p>
<b>4. Guiding mindfulness practices</b> <i>Precise, spacious, accessible language</i> <i>Key learning for each practice available</i> <i>Considers elements when guiding</i>	<p>KF1 Your guidance and language throughout the different practices (movement and sitting) was clear, precise and generally spacious. Invitations to bring awareness to more subtle aspects such as breath-holding and suggestions of physical sensations were evidence of your embodiment whilst guiding. You offered a helpful distinction in your language use in the guidance between ‘thinking about’ and ‘feeling the sensations of the breath from the inside’ within the sitting practice (session 4); also of mind wandering and simply coming back, starting again – embodied guidance as projected by your tone of voice and physical posture. Turns of phrase in the formal sitting practice (session 5) such as ‘noticing the point at which the breath becomes air and at which the air becomes breath once again’ were lovely and served to capture and hold attention and interest. Similarly, your guidance ‘not to get into a story about this (emotion)’ but the invitation rather to bring awareness to where this emotion was felt in the body was clear, spacious and potentially a radically helpful way of being.</p> <p>KF2 The essential aspect of ‘choice’ within the formal sitting practice (session 5) was well communicated through your</p>	<p>KF2 The 3-step breathing space (responsive) was briefly alluded to toward the end of session 5, having explored the ‘Sea of Reactions’. Given that this was the first time the 3-Step Breathing Space was introduced, it would have been helpful to have presented this on the flipchart and guided it in a very deliberate and step-wise fashion. Helpfully, you had prepared mini cards to act as reminders of the 3-steps, which you invited participants to take home with them. (Although the breathing space is traditionally an MBCT practice, it is often first introduced in session 3 and then evolves with the progression of the course to a responsive (session 5) and then action-step in session 7).</p> <p>KF3 Although you demonstrated good safety awareness in guiding standing mindful movement (session 4) you invited people to notice where their limit was; adopting language of ‘exploring and working up to the edge of/first signs of your limit’ would allow just a slight shift of emphasis towards more safety here.</p> <p>Although you remembered to offer cautions during the movement practice at the beginning of session 5, this was not</p>

	<p>guidance and giving options of working with physical difficulty – the key practice within this session and a pivotal point within the course as a whole. Your care, ease and sensitivity to guiding around this demonstrated your understanding of the practice and programme very well.</p> <p>KF3 It was very evident that you were aware of the group at all times when guiding, as you skilfully managed to open your eyes and look around the group to ensure knowledge of the group could inform your guidance. It was important too that you remembered to give participants the option of adapting the movements you guided or indeed to practice them in their ‘mind’s eye’. These choices are an important part of people taking responsibility for their own experience of the practices. Also finished the sequence by inviting the group to perform individual movements based on their own body’s needs, promoting agency, attunement and self-care. Your guidance at the beginning of the formal sitting practice (session 5) around posture and intention were helpful reminders in terms of setting up the practice and orientation to the practice. Your language was also very forgiving and allowing of mind wandering during this practice, which is such an important aspect of the practice to convey.</p>	<p>until the first balancing posture had already been guided (and one participant wobbled).</p>
<p><b>5. Conveying course themes through interactive inquiry and didactic teaching</b></p> <p><i>Experiential focus</i> <i>Layers within the inquiry process</i> <i>Teaching skills/ conveying learning</i> <i>Fluency, confidence, ease</i></p>	<p>KF1 Through staying with a participant’s example of experiencing difficult shoulder pain and discomfort in session 5 inquiry, there was</p> <p>KF2 In session 4 there was a very natural, unhurried exploration of boredom and irritation with one participant who shared her not experiencing body sensations in the body scan and who was consequently finding body scanning very difficult and ‘boring’ and irritating. There was a tendency to frame mindful movement in contrast to body scanning in terms of ‘better’ or ‘good’. You made explicit what this participant was experiencing implicitly ‘this should be enjoyable, this should be relaxing’ and named these as thoughts and assumptions which you encouraged her to notice. Then you encouraged her to maybe try shortening the</p>	<p>KF1 With the 3<sup>rd</sup> person to speak (session 4 sitting practice) in response to your question about how it was to ‘turn toward’ physical discomfort within the practice, it would have been interesting to hear what thoughts were around in relation to noticing heat and restless legs in the body; she acknowledged ‘wanting to fidget’ which you acknowledged and validated in a very warm and encouraging way; however there may have been a shift in relation to her understanding of the practice if her thoughts about her experience were made more salient; you then very helpfully asked if she did in fact fidget and what happened next – this demonstrated good experiential inquiry and a willingness to stay with the uncomfortable experience. Though you attempted to stay with thoughts, feelings and body</p>

	<p>practice...(1:13:00)  Similarly there was a very skilful exploration of irritation and pain following the sitting practice in session 5. Here you were able to name your interest in 'this idea that if it's relaxing it's a good meditation'. You stayed close to this person's direct experience and in this she was able to identify that perhaps what she needed to bring to it was more patience. This was an excellent example of clarity arising through your willingness to stay open and to help this participant to explore their experience.</p> <p>KF3 Early in session 4 inquiry, you very skilfully picked up on one person's experience how she felt 'being up against a wall of physical discomfort' was difficult; you asked permission to follow up on this to which she further clarified was 'emotional as well as physical'; she described very insightfully the 'see-saw' effect of being more relaxed (during the practice) and then really angry. The inquiry around unpleasant experiences (session 4) was very rich and you emphasised the importance of noticing patterns (of thoughts, feelings and physical sensations) well. You also were clear that you wanted to stay away from 'the story' or content of what each person was contributing. This was very skilful and potentially communicated the importance of how easy it can be to get 'lost' in the story of experience.</p> <p>The inclusion of 'behaviours' when exploring stress reactivity was an important addition and you presented this very clearly with the aid of the flipchart diagram.</p> <p>You gave a very clear teaching around the value of mind wandering, including mention of neural pathways, towards the end of the home practice discussion in session 5 (1:29:00). This was directly in response to a general struggle within the group around body scanning and a tendency to favour sitting meditation with the breath. You kindly encouraged continuing practice with the breath if this was easier to focus attention on and yet you were also able to normalise and bring interest to mind wandering. The 'gym' analogy in terms of mind training was very helpful.</p> <p>KF4 Your presentation around stress reactions in response to the</p>	<p>sensations associated with a 'dreaded' half sleep/wake state with one participant (session 5), there was perhaps an opportunity missed to explore the effects of recalling this in the act of inquiry. (1:34:00)</p> <p>There was quite a lot talking about practice following the formal sitting practice in session 5. Although everything you said was relevant and accurate, and in response to what was coming from the group, this was mostly 'talking about' the practice rather than experientially focused (1:18:00) and inquiring into experience. An example of this came during the home practice inquiry (1:24:00) with one participant who spoke about how her perfectionism and 'wanting to do everything really well' made her angry and frustrated within the practice. Rather than exploring her experience of anger (thoughts, impulses, physical sensations) you asked 'so what's your definition of doing it really well?' Although this is a fine question, it moved away from the possibility of a more immediate experiential inquiry. You did go on to make an important point in relation to the value of 'just noticing'.</p> <p>Again I wondered if you needed to say as much as you did following the 'pause' after the 'Sea of Reactions' discussion (session 5; 2:23:00). You spent some minutes explaining the value of pausing and checking in with the body following a stress reaction, even though the group had already shared their experience of the value of having just taken a pause. So less is more here.</p> <p>KF2 Within the session 4 home practice enquiry there was also another participant who expressed lovely integration of mindful breathing when walking during the day and who was benefitting tremendously from this, also on return to a yoga class. You importantly validated this integration of the practice into everyday life and even though you encouraged continuing with the formal practice which she was struggling with, I wondered if there wasn't something missed in exploring why she wasn't continuing with the formal practice.</p> <p>I wondered if the learning from the unpleasant experiences in</p>
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	<p>completed stress diagrams was educational, interesting and accurate. This was presented with fluency and ease.</p>	<p>session 4 might not have been better captured through presenting these on the flipchart, or perhaps referring to the flipchart in a more deliberate way when unpacking participants' reactions? (Interestingly this came up again when there was some confusion expressed by a participant about the difference between thoughts and emotions when completing the stress diagrams). You did however ask a key question, which was to do with the commonality across unpleasant experiences and what makes them unpleasant.</p> <p>At one point in the home practice inquiry (session 5; 1:24:00) there was an opportunity to explore 'anger' in relation to 'wanting to do the practice really well'. Although you responded accurately to this participant, this was again an opportunity to inquire more and to encourage bringing curiosity and interest to 'anger' as the practice for this participant in the body scan.</p> <p>KF3 As can so easily happen when transitioning into pairs or small group discussion, there was a moment when setting up pairs to discuss the unpleasant experiences where you lost the group as they were already beginning to work together. Your intention was for their discussions to take place in the context of mindful listening-speaking. (maybe fits better below?) This could have benefitted from a clearer setting up and perhaps from use of the bell to start, to pause and to finish these exchanges – you said 'so start'.</p> <p>The general exploration of stress reactivity was excellent and you covered a huge amount of ground in session 4. There were a number of times during the discussion where you explicitly mentioned you were aware of time and needing to do this briefly or quickly. I wonder if you could have made a choice to either cover less in this session or given yourself more opportunities to pause and take stock of the resonance of the territory you were exploring, which you referred to on a number of occasions. (When you finally did this before exploring behaviours, it did seem to have a settling effect but would perhaps have been even more powerful immediately after looking at stress in the body.) I think the rule of 'less is more'</p>
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		<p>could apply to this session generally.</p> <p>KF4 There was some confusion around the ‘Sea of Reactions’ exercise (session 5) and I wondered if you had demonstrated writing a single word on a sheet of paper and putting this on the floor, whether this would have clarified what you were looking for.</p>
<p><b>6. Holding the group learning environment</b></p> <p><i>Learning container</i></p> <p><i>Group development</i></p> <p><i>Personal to universal</i></p> <p><i>Leadership style</i></p>	<p>KF1 As mentioned above in ‘guiding’ domain, your awareness of the group when guiding through opening your eyes and looking around the group was very evident.</p> <p>You also managed to create a fun though industrious learning environment in which you covered a lot of ground but did so in an oftentimes light way. For example, there was a lot of fun and laughter when comparing behaviours in response to stress toward the end of session 4.</p> <p>KF2 In terms of recognising and holding the group, it was important to recognise those who were unable to attend, which you did before the start of session 5. There were some really important themes shared arising out of the half-way review discussion, which underpins the importance of giving time to it in this session. You brought out and summarised these points very effectively.</p> <p>KF3 It was interesting that there was a strong theme of using the practice to make things better (so quite a ‘doing’ mode focus within the practice) rather than a being with. For example it came out quite clearly in the session 5 inquiry how different members of the group either ‘got it’ or ‘weren’t getting it’ by virtue of whether what they were experiencing was pleasant or unpleasant/challenging to be with. There seems to be some parallel here with your tendency to explain over inquire, or to speak about rather than allow experience to lead the way during the sessions.</p> <p>KF4 You communicated a gentle style and natural care for the group. For example, whenever you had to bring dyads or small group interactions to a close, you apologised for understanding</p>	<p>KF1 Although you ran over time-wise in session 4, it was great that you checked-in with the group to know if they could stay the extra 5 minutes to allow you to end with a practice and a poem. However, in the context of the amount of information presented up to this point, it was in sharp contrast to the previous didactic input.</p> <p>In terms of transitioning from ‘doing’ to ‘being’ mode, a very short practice to begin sessions can help to communicate this at the very start of each session after session 1. You invited questions at the start of session 5 which although helpful, could have come after a short settling/arriving practice. You then did guide a short practice but offered literally ‘on arrival’ might have been more helpful.</p> <p>Opportunities for mindful listening and speaking helped to build the learning container, such as following the half-way review reflection in session 5. It did appear that the group interpreted this as engaging in whispering conversation, rather than actual mindful communication – so perhaps greater time dedicated to giving instructions around this might be helpful.</p> <p>In general, although inquiry and group discussion felt very open and conversational, I wondered if staying in closer connection to the body might have allowed these interactions to be more infused with mindful listening and speaking. (This is mentioned above as well and might have made it less likely that participants would be pulled into ‘story’ as you noticed with one participant in particular. See KF4 in column opposite)</p> <p>KF2 It was important to give time to the half-way review, which you did, in session 5. Your guided reflection was fine, though I</p>

	<p>that they would probably need more time. You also took charge and lead the group in a clear and directive way. For example, there was a moment within session 4 inquiry where you said both warmly and firmly 'Let's not focus too much on the story of this' in response to a participant who was interested to ask about a fellow participant's experience of something unpleasant. Interestingly this arose again (I think with the same participant) in session 5 during the mid-way review (1:48:00) and I wondered how the participant might have felt following your intervention.</p>	<p>wondered about reconnecting with intention from session 1 and re-setting intention for the remaining weeks of the course. In some ways placing the focus on intention over outcomes might reinforce a shift from doing to being. The example you gave of planting seeds was also helpful.</p> <p>KF3 Even though you shared examples of your own thoughts in reaction to stress, you quickly went on to make the link between personal and universal reactions to stress as a universal phenomenon. This is helpful and accurate and also I wondered about somehow trusting the group to offer this insight in dialogue or following posing them a question around what they are taking from the sharing of experiences in this way; so something here about working less hard yourself and waiting for the learning to emerge or land within the group.</p>
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Example 2

MBCT Assessment Session 5: Proficient

Domain	Key features	Not competent				Beginner			Advanced beginner			Competent			Proficient			Advanced			
		0%	5%	15%	25%	32%	35%	38%	42%	45%	48%	52%	55%	58%	62%	65%	68%	74%	80%	87%	95%
	<i>Marking Range for students being assessed as part of Mindfulness-Based Approaches post graduate programmes at Bangor University</i>	F4	F3	F2	F1	E-	E	E+	D-	D	D+	C-	C	C	B-	B	B+	A-	A	A+	A*
<b>1. Coverage, pacing and organisation of session curriculum</b>	<i>Adherence to curriculum                      Organisation of teacher, room and materials                      Responsiveness and flexibility in adhering                      Appropriateness of themes and content                      Session flow and pacing</i>														*						
<b>2. Relational skills</b>	<i>Authenticity and potency                      Connection and acceptance                      Compassion and warmth                      Curiosity and respect                      Mutuality</i>														*						
<b>3. Embodiment of mindfulness</b>	<i>Present moment focus                      Calm and alertness                      Present moment responsiveness                      Attitudinal foundations                      Person of the teacher</i>													*							

<b>4. Guiding mindfulness practices</b>	<i>Language – precise and spacious</i> <i>Elements to consider when guiding</i> <i>Key learning for each practice available</i>															
<b>5. Conveying course themes through interactive teaching</b>	<i>Experiential focus</i> <i>Layers within the inquiry process</i> <i>Conveying learning</i> <i>Teaching skills</i> <i>Fluency</i>															
<b>6. Holding of group learning environment</b>	<i>Learning container</i> <i>Group Development</i> <i>Common humanity</i> <i>Leadership style</i>															
	<b>Final Average Mark (Mean of all six domain scores):</b>															



**MINDFULNESS-BASED INTERVENTIONS: TEACHING ASSESSMENT CRITERIA – COMMENTARY SHEET (please anchor comments to key features and to session)**

Domain	Teaching strengths	Learning needs
<p><b>2. Coverage, pacing and organisation of session curriculum</b></p> <p>Adherence to curriculum</p> <p>Responsiveness and flexibility within adherence</p> <p>Appropriateness of themes and content</p> <p>Organisation of teacher, room and materials</p> <p>Session flow and pacing</p>	<p>The story of the king and his three sons set an interesting theme for this session. The overview you offered was brief, clear and invited curiosity to this new way of being.</p> <p>Inviting the group to break into pairs to discuss the home practice allowed a change in focus and energy in the room.</p> <p>The discussion around The Guest House poem was very appropriate to the session theme. You helpfully clarified the intention with one group member who was tempted to see this as ‘turning a negative into a positive’, as one more of allowing without necessarily changing it. This is a crucial aspect which you did well to point out.</p> <p>The room and materials seemed well organised, with chairs not in use neatly stacked. The theme for the session was clearly visible and home practice for the previous week was available as a reminder on the flipchart. Quotes in relation to difficulty were well chosen and clearly presented on the flipchart. I also particularly appreciated your invitation to think of ourselves as having ‘Learner’ plates on, when beginning to turn toward difficulty in the practice.</p>	<p>The main sitting practice here was 20 minutes and I wondered what the rationale may have been for shortening this?</p> <p>This had the effect of not feeling particularly spacious, as you guided a full practice – posture, breath, body, sounds, thoughts and ‘choiceless’ awareness – all within 20 minutes.</p> <p>Rumi’s poem The Guest House is very fitting for this session, however I wondered if it might have been more impactful after the sitting with difficulty practice. It seemed that you planned to convey this theme intellectually before experientially, within the working with difficulty practice. (There was also one important word which was incorrect in the version of the poem you read – the word ‘smiling’ should in fact be ‘laughing’ – which conveys a more radical approach to being with difficulty than ‘smiling’ suggests!)</p> <p>Although the theme of ‘allowing’ was consistent throughout the session, this was conveyed conceptually/intellectually (e.g. 1:23:00) before being experientially guided. There was a long discussion around this in the group and some confusion. My sense is that your teaching on this theme would have been even more powerful if this was reversed. This was rather ironic, in that the theme you were speaking to, warranted a ‘being mode’ experiential approach.</p>

<p><b>3. Relational skills</b>  <i>Authenticity and potency</i>  <i>Connection and acceptance</i>  <i>Compassion and warmth</i>  <i>Curiosity and respect</i>  <i>Mutuality</i></p>	<p>You used an inquiry from a group member re. 'is it ok to use a cushion when sitting on a chair?' as an opportunity to notice judgements and 'there is a right way' to sit.</p> <p>There was a nice moment where you said, 'I'm glad several of you have cushions' before commencing the main practice.</p> <p>A late-comer got a lovely, warm welcome from you, having arrived over an hour into the session (1:05:00).</p> <p>Invitations to 'ask your body what it needs and responding if you can' following the main sitting practice again demonstrated good awareness and modelling of self-care.</p> <p>Your responsiveness in inquiry seemed authentic and attuned.</p> <p>For example, during the home practice inquiry your empathy in relation to a participant's experience of discomfort during sitting practice was evident.</p> <p>Moments when you shared your own experience, e.g. within home practice inquiry of rushing to bring your children to school (1:02:40), give your teaching and the practice a real sense of mutuality.</p>	<p>Relational skills were generally excellent and this is a strong domain in your teaching.</p> <p>There was one interaction just before you guided the sitting practice with a group member who was speaking at the same time as you. You said 'Sorry, NAME.' I wonder if rather than making this personal whether it may have been possible to more generally say, 'can we come back, there is a question about posture from NAME' that I'd like to hear.' I realise the smaller group may have made this more difficult.</p> <p>There was a moment in home practice inquiry (1:04:00) which again was lovely – a woman noticing how she habitually read newspaper articles. You brought her attention to her body which seemed to be following an agenda of your own, rather than simply celebrating the wonderful noticing the lady herself was sharing.</p> <p>Perhaps in an attempt to summarise the themes for one person who was speaking, you had to speak over her (1:21:40). This seemed a little pressured. By this point the discussion had moved away from direct experience of the poem to a discussion about the workplace. This interaction in some way points to staying with direct experience as much as possible.</p>
<p><b>4. Embodiment of mindfulness</b>  <i>Present moment focus</i>  <i>Present moment responsiveness</i>  <i>Calmness and vitality</i>  <i>Attitudinal qualities</i>  <i>Natural presence of the teacher</i></p>	<p>The interruption at the beginning of the session was very unfortunate. Your response was calm and authentic. I wondered whether it was necessary to tell the group about the sign you usually have there but there was some lovely modelling of noticing your own reactions which in a way was a bigger teaching point and sign of embodiment. The skill and presence to be able to use these moments in a session (albeit unbidden) to enhance the teaching is a real skilfulness.</p> <p>Your response to the first person to speak following the 'working with difficulty' practice was a beautiful example of embodiment in the face of distress (1:59:00). You embodied calm and core qualities of kindness and responsiveness, connecting back once again to the theme of the session of 'allowing and letting be'.</p>	<p>The discussion around turning towards difficulty was primarily conceptual (1:23:00 – 1:35:00), which was ironic given its intent. I wonder if greater embodiment/connection to self might have allowed you to recognize that this was attempting to do too much by anticipating themes that would more helpfully emerge in inquiry around this.</p>

	<p>Similarly, your kindly response to normalise the third person's experience following this practice (2:02:00) was very embodied and containing of her distress. This was embodiment in action.</p>	
<p><b>5. Guiding mindfulness practices</b>  <i>Precise, spacious, accessible language</i>  <i>Key learning for each practice available</i>  <i>Considers elements when guiding</i></p>	<p>Language use such as 'the anchor of the breath in the body' was very helpful in settling at the beginning of the session, having taken some time to acknowledge experience. Nice turns of phrase such as 'almost as though the ears are just radar picking up sounds, so there is no need to make any effort' were again supportive and helpful in connecting to experience.</p> <p>The metaphor of thoughts as clouds in the sky of the mind was guided clearly and succinctly, which demonstrated your understanding of this helpful metaphor.</p> <p>You invited the group to notice their own reactions to the interruption at the beginning of the session, using it as a focal point for settling.</p> <p>Language of choiceless awareness was also helpful and clear, again demonstrating your understanding and practice.</p> <p>Paid good attention to settling and to posture at the beginning of the main practice, encouraging the group to make any final adjustments (to which one person removed her shoes).</p> <p>There was a helpful reminder regarding 'intention' and you offered to bring a kindly attention to whatever is noticed at the beginning of the formal practice.</p> <p>The option to 'tune out' from the guidance at any time is also a helpful reminder.</p> <p>Again there was good awareness of group during the practice, checking in with your gaze around the group as you guided.</p> <p>Encouragement and normalising mind wandering was important</p>	<p>Although your awareness of the group while guiding was excellent, I wondered whether you needed to check in as much as you were doing and if you were aware of this and/or whether there was something about the group that warranted such regular attentiveness to the group?</p> <p>There was a slight tendency for your voice to trail off (e.g. 26:00) during the practice guidance, making it difficult to hear (the recording) at times.</p> <p>The idea of the breath 'turning a tiny corner' between in/out-breaths brought me into my head and out of my experience of the breath. As you know, guidance around noticing a slight pause or gap between the in/out-breaths is more usual language here. Having widened attention from the breath to the body as a whole, there was relatively little time given to this aspect of the practice before moving on to sounds. This again brings attention to the total duration of the practice, which was rather short.</p>

	<p>and helpful during the sitting practice.          In your guidance around thoughts, you helpfully communicated that this could also take the form of images or words.          The ‘being with a difficulty’ meditation was expertly guided, with options of bringing a difficulty to mind and dropping beneath thoughts and emotions to its physical resonance in the body.</p>	
<p><b>6. Conveying course themes through interactive inquiry and didactic teaching</b>  <i>Experiential focus</i>  <i>Layers within the inquiry process</i>  <i>Teaching skills/ conveying learning</i>  <i>Fluency, confidence, ease</i></p>	<p>There was another helpful moment at the beginning of the sitting practice where a group member said she was very tired and may sleep. You kindly responded to this by referring to the theme of the session and ‘allowing ourselves to be just as we are’. You then encouraged the group to notice how they are without anticipating this too much. This was again very skilful teaching based on the theme of the session and the territory of depression.</p> <p>You were able to pick up on the idea of anticipating how the practice would be at the beginning of the inquiry following the main sitting practice.</p> <p>You asked the first person to speak in inquiry ‘how it was’ to notice a ‘dreamy’ state and to have a jumble of thoughts? You were then able to validate her response to being able to ‘allow it to be so’ – the theme of the session – which you pointed out. This was all very skilful.</p> <p>There was a nice moment when you corrected yourself in gathering the home practice practice inquiry when you clarified there was ‘no such thing as failure’, which is important to communicate.</p> <p>The home practice inquiry was very useful in validating group members practice during the week. You were able to hold the balance between a tendency toward shorter practices and yet to encourage curiosity with the longer sitting practice. (This is again where a full 40mins practice within the session can offer useful experience and encouragement.)</p> <p>You were helpfully able to point out the analysis the second person to speak following the ‘working with difficulty’ practice was engaging in. Although desirous of being more expressive,</p>	<p>Your question to the second person to speak in inquiry (41:00) ‘how did you feel about that, what did you do with that?’ invites the person into a more analytical perspective. This may have been more of an opportunity to ask how it was to ‘manufacture some thoughts’ which she offered in response to ‘having no thoughts’.</p> <p>In the discussion around being guided to notice thoughts within the practice (44:30) there was a sense that this was ‘a distraction’ from the practice and was interfering with it in some way. As you know however, noticing this sense of distraction is the practice.</p> <p>Inquiry although generally helpful and clarifying tended to explain rather than explore. Allowing inquiry to be more informed by a spirit of curiosity and openness, spaciousness might allow you to notice the tendency to explain.</p> <p>There were times in inquiry (e.g. 46:30; 58:40) when simply acknowledging the contribution would have been enough, as the point was evident, rather than to inquire more. This is where trusting your own felt sense and natural curiosity, rather than perhaps a more ‘doing mode’ analysis, may be helpful.</p>

	<p>you were able to encourage her continued noticing of where it is in the body – a key aspect of turning towards in this session.</p>	
<p><b>7. Holding the group learning environment</b>  <i>Learning container</i>  <i>Group development</i>  <i>Personal to universal</i>  <i>Leadership style</i></p>	<p>Although this was a small group of just 4 participants, their level of engagement reflected well on your active holding and movement through the session curriculum with the group. Your attentiveness to the home practice discussions was very evident and reflected skilful holding and sensitive attunement to the groups' readiness to return to the full group.</p> <p>During the home practice inquiry there was a moment when you acknowledged shared experience throughout the group of 'rushing', which you skilfully named (1:01:30). These moments help to build a sense of group and are very skilful.</p> <p>It was skilful to place another chair outside in case of further interruptions before you commenced the longer sitting practice.</p> <p>There was one group member to your right who seemed quite restless and fidgety. I believe she was the participant who spoke initially about having come directly from settling her children and about missing meals because of her focus on them.</p>	

This is generally very skilful teaching. The main point to communicate is to practice embodiment more during inquiry and to inquire more (if/when appropriate) and teach less. There was a sense at times of inquiry being led from a more analytical/doing mode perspective; sometimes less is more. There is of course always a balance to be struck here, which is sometimes difficult to find. Staying embodied (close to the body) will likely support you in this more and also slow the pace within inquiry somewhat. There were moments when this was evident however if approached as a practice in its own right, this could lead to a different level of inquiry and ultimately learning for the group.

There was also a lot of discussion before guiding the 'being with difficulty' practice. My suggestion would be to reverse this and allow the teaching points to emerge from inquiry following the practice. Your ability to hold the space and the group in response to difficulty was a lovely example of embodiment. Well done.

**Example 3:**  
**MBCT Assessment**

<b>MINDFULNESS-BASED INTERVENTIONS: TEACHING ASSESSMENT CRITERIA – SUMMARY SHEET</b>							
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Key features (use following page to offer qualitative feedback)</b>	<b>Incompetent 1</b>	<b>Beginner 2</b>	<b>Advanced Beginner 3</b>	<b>Competent 4</b>	<b>Proficient 5</b>	<b>Advanced 6</b>
<b>Coverage, pacing and organisation of session curriculum</b>	<i>Adherence to curriculum Responsiveness and flexibility in adhering Appropriateness of themes and content Organisation of teacher, room and materials Session flow and pacing</i>					X	
<b>Relational skills</b>	<i>Authenticity and potency Connection and acceptance Compassion and warmth Curiosity and respect Mutuality</i>				X		
<b>Embodiment of mindfulness</b>	<i>Present moment focus Present moment responsiveness Calm and alertness Attitudinal foundations Person of the teacher</i>				X		
<b>Guiding mindfulness practices</b>	<i>Language – precise and spacious Key learning for each practice available Elements to consider when guiding</i>					X	
<b>Conveying course themes through interactive inquiry and didactic teaching</b>	<i>Experiential focus Layers within the inquiry process Conveying learning Teaching skills Fluency</i>				X		
<b>Holding the group learning environment</b>	<i>Learning container Group development Common humanity Leadership style</i>					X	

**MINDFULNESS-BASED INTERVENTIONS: TEACHING ASSESSMENT CRITERIA – COMMENTARY SHEET**

Domain	Teaching strengths	Learning needs
<p><b>1. Coverage, pacing and organisation of session curriculum</b></p>	<p>KF1 This domain is evidently one of your strengths. Adherence to curriculum was good, the MBCT session format was followed and all components of the sessions viewed were covered.</p> <p>KF2 The comment under KF3 learning needs adjacent is paradoxically also a good an example of how you are able to be responsive and flexible in adhering to the curriculum.</p> <p>KF3 There were many times where the teaching was appropriate to the stage of the programme and experience of the participants e.g. the discussion around discrepancy based processing in session 3.</p> <p>KF4 You seem to be a well organized teacher, with a well laid out room and all necessary items/materials to hand.</p> <p>KF5 The timing of the various segments was good, you made reference to time a few times to indicate to participants you needed to move on.</p>	<p>KF3 There were times when you moved a little ahead of the curriculum, for example in session 3 when a participant was speaking about discomfort in the ankle, you spoke about resistance and aversion and allowing discomfort to be present without adding extra which is covered in sessions 4 and 5. Whilst this was responsive I had a sense that you might be moving too quickly for the group who at session 3 are still learning to gather and stabilise attention. Maybe it would have been enough to encourage the participant to notice and label discomfort, to explore the sensations and to invite them to notice any resistance to it, investigating whether resistance and discomfort interact.</p>
<p><b>2. Relational skills</b></p>	<p>KF1 You came across as authentic and yourself during the sessions and there was a sense of you as an authority in the room.</p> <p>KF2 There was a sense of connection with participants and attending to their experiences and often a clear sense that you understood them.</p> <p>KF3 There was a warmth and sense of humour evident in your</p>	<p>KF1 and KF5. This domain refers to a sense of openness, ease and naturalness and whilst there was a clear sense of you as a teacher, there also seemed to be a certain amount of holding back. This is understandable when in the position of leading a group and to a certain extent is very appropriate. The danger with this combination could be that we start to come across as a guru, rather than there being an enhanced sense of mutuality. Would you agree? Might this be explored as an area for development? Might practice showing a little more of yourself as a human being and</p>

	<p>teaching. An example of this was when you warmly welcomed the group to Session 5 and acknowledged the break in a shared moment of reciprocal warmth and reconnection.</p> <p>KF4 Curiosity was conveyed by comments such as interesting during the guidance. You were respectful towards participants' contributions.</p> <p>KF5 There was a sense that you and the participants were exploring together e.g. during the pleasant experiences calendar review This was also strong in the latter part of the S5 practice inquiry demonstrated by the active questioning and curiosity offered by the group.</p>	<p>your own vulnerability?</p> <p>KF2, KF3 &amp; KF4 There were a few times where you stopped a participant speaking or corrected them about the task at hand. E.g. during the pleasant experiences review in session 3. There was a sense of jarring at these moments. Did you feel this? These moments are perhaps inevitable and it can be helpful to be very aware of how such an intervention maybe received by a participant and to validate their misunderstanding or desire to contribute, or to take care to return to them at a later moment.</p> <p>KF4 Curiosity and respect could be further conveyed by more questions during the enquiry. Pausing regularly, asking for permission to explore further and giving space to remain with participant experience without knowing what might arise can convey these qualities also.</p>
<p><b>3. Embodiment of mindfulness</b></p>	<p>KF1 Present moment focus was well demonstrated through body language. There was a steadiness about your being and posture during much of the classes I watched. I had a strong sense that your teaching is embedded within personal practice, particularly during the guiding of meditations e.g. the sitting practices in session 5.</p> <p>KF2 You were generally responsive to the group and to individuals within it.</p> <p>KF3. You conveyed a sense of calmness and alertness.</p> <p>KF4. Your behaviour generally conveyed a sense of allowing, letting be and non-judging.</p> <p>KF5. You seemed very much yourself in the classroom and at ease in your role.</p>	<p>In the future, and in keeping with the relational domain above, you could explore how to bring in a felt knowing of your own human vulnerability during interactions with participants.</p> <p>KF1 You could focus upon developing a greater sense of present moment focus through verbal communication. At times when participants asked questions e.g. during the home practice review for session 3, and you answered them, there was a sense of the exploration becoming very 'heady'. Present moment focus at such times could be demonstrated through enquiring about the participants direct personal experience.</p> <p>KF2 You might also like to explore demonstrating greater present moment responsiveness through inviting participants to informally practice mindfulness during moments of transition.</p> <p>KF4. Explore how to more strongly convey patience and non-</p>



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<p><b>4. Guiding mindfulness practices</b></p>	<p>This domain was another real strength for you.</p> <p>KF1. Your guidance was clear, precise, skillful and accessible e.g. 'just breathing knowing that you're breathing' 'expanding the attention ... the whole of the body out to the skin'. There was a sense of spaciousness and time to practice. Participants were directed towards where to place attention and how to skillfully work with mind wandering e.g. knowing that you can always acknowledge where your mind has gone to you can always bring it back...' ' a moment of noticing is a moment of awareness'. The attitudinal qualities clearly conveyed through the guidance e.g. during the being with difficulty practice in session 5. 'friendly curiosity' 'allowing' 'remembering to bring a warmth to your experience'.</p> <p>KF2. The key learning for each of the practices were very available, you clearly understand the intentions behind the various practices e.g. breathing space in session 3 steps were clearly articulated and during being with difficulty practice in session.</p> <p>KF3. The elements to consider when guiding were present during all the practices. E.g. The breathing space in session 3 was beautifully led with the steps being very clear.</p> <p>There was generally a sense from the guidance that you understand the aims and intentions of the various practices.</p>	<p>KF1. Continue to explore how to give creative and inspiring guidance on how to work with emotional and physical edges and boundaries.</p> <p>KF2. Remember to give alternatives when you suggest appreciation, warmth, peaceful, ease, friendliness/befriending, or at least to acknowledge that it's Ok if something different is being experienced.</p>
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<p><b>5. Conveying course themes through interactive inquiry and didactic teaching</b></p>	<p>KF1. You opened enquiries with open questions about participants' direct experience E.g. 'would anyone like to say something about what they experienced' and were skillful at linking in the teaching themes emerging e.g. discrepancy based processing in session 3, aversion in session 5. There were times when you explored things further with participants e.g. 'what happened next', 'what happened in the body' – enquiry session 5.</p> <p>KF2. Layers of enquiry were apparent particularly linking experience to theory and there was also some noticing thoughts, feelings and sensations and dialoguing about immediate experience. e.g. 'if you give the head a problem it will try to fix it, whereas the body...'</p> <p>KF3. You clearly know the programme well and are very skillful at conveying learning themes/teaching points through didactic teaching, poems etc. e.g. the poem at end of session 3, whilst using everyday language.</p> <p>KF4. There was a clear sense that you understand the programme and the intentions of the practices/exercises. The sessions/teaching felt fluent, you seemed at ease with the material</p>	<p>KF1. Although there was evidence of an experiential focus and participants were asked about their direct experience and this was linked to teaching themes, there was a tendency at times to move away from enquiry and straight into a teaching point which meant there was less time for participants to learn through live exploration and themes that might have emerged through the participants were taught more didactically by you. Similarly, sometimes you asked closed questions e.g. during the enquiry in session 5 after the first sit 'might that have been due to the aversion lessoning?'. Explore focusing more on process rather than content, allowing the participants to uncover more through gentle questioning about their experience. e.g. when participant speak about discomfort and you label it as reactivity, or when the person was speaking about a lessoning of discomfort, you could enquire about their thoughts, feelings, urges to help them discover their process of reactivity for themselves.</p> <p>KF2. Practice and inviting participants to continue to explore what they are learning, giving them ideas for how to take experiences forward in their practice.</p> <p>KF4 See KF1 above. Practice placing greater confidence in the process, and not knowing, moving into uncertainty, not knowing what teaching point will emerge from exploration. Watch out for words/phrases that might not be accessible to all e.g. 'Cartesian error' during the sitting in session 5.</p> <p>Practice noticing instructional and predictive language like 'you will' and using more invitational language, particularly during transitions, enquiry and exercises, so that you can further convey the attitudinal foundations of the practice at other times as well as during the mindfulness practice guidance.</p>
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<p><b>6. Holding the group learning environment</b></p>	<p>KF1. The group felt safe and the learning container built e,g, session 1, group guidelines, introductions were skillfully led and the learning container was sustained, facilitating the groups ability to learn from one another. Participants seemed consistently willing to share their experiences with a sense of interest and curiosity reflecting the environment of safety created.</p> <p>KF2. You managed challenges within the group including participants speaking over one and another.</p> <p>KF3. You were involving the whole group – horizontal enquiry was apparent and asking for both similar and different experiences, skillfully building a sense of common humanity through shared experiences and relating the personal to the universal. You were looking round the room at times during the enquiry.</p> <p>KF4. You have a strong leadership style.</p>	<p>KF3. There were times when common humanity could have been further emphasized. Practice using more ‘we’ language.</p>
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**MBI-TAC Summary Sheet: Teacher Certification in MBSR**

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Teaching Strengths</b>	<b>Teaching Areas to Develop</b>
<p><b>Coverage, pacing and organization of session curriculum</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adherence to curriculum</li> <li>• Responsiveness &amp; flexibility within adherence</li> <li>• Appropriateness of themes and content</li> <li>• Organization of teacher, room and materials</li> <li>• Session flow and pacing</li> </ul>	<p>The practices are solidly class 5—but I missed the dialogue that is specific to class 4 home practice: What happened when you brought attention to automatic, habitual stress reactivity, without trying to change it? This is a key theme as people begin to explore how mindfulness interrupts automaticity.</p> <p>The other notes on class plans are in the narrative above.</p>	<p>Is there an option or invitation for sitting on the floor at all? And was this configuration designed for filming? There is a lot of space between you and the participants. As much of a circle as possible is ideal, rather than setting you apart. And sometimes this is unavoidable.</p> <p>You bring up the open awareness practice at the end of class—what would it be to ask closer to the actual practice? It was a lively discussion and could have fueled more connection throughout the rest of the class.</p>
<p><b>Relational skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authenticity &amp; potency</li> <li>• Connection &amp; acceptance</li> <li>• Compassion &amp; warmth</li> <li>• Curiosity, interest &amp; respect</li> <li>• Mutuality</li> </ul>	<p>Warm presence. Honest and welcome relating. You especially convey a compassionate stance in relation to the challenges of practice. Patient and unremitting in your acceptance of it all.</p>	
<p><b>Embodiment of mindfulness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present moment focus</li> <li>• Present moment responsiveness</li> <li>• Calmness and alertness</li> <li>• Allowing: non-judging, trust, acceptance, non-striving</li> <li>• Natural presence of the teacher</li> </ul>	<p>Solid in presence, accepting. You feel authentic and real—the same “David” who I might meet for lunch is here in the class. Of course, this is just a sense but you present consistently throughout the video, and I feel it in the notes on classes and the review of your supervision.</p>	
<p><b>Guiding mindfulness practices</b></p>	<p>Opening practice: Nice spaciousness in your</p>	<p>When you’re doing the balance pose, you</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Precise and spacious language</li> <li>• Key learning for each practice available</li> <li>• Considers elements when guiding</li> </ul>	<p>guidance; just enough, clear, simple language, invitational.</p> <p>Yoga is precise, clear, and invitational. Include cautions appropriately.</p> <p>Nice pausing after the movement to feel the impact, if there is one.</p> <p>I appreciate that you recognize that we will all look differently as we do these poses; it's a nice acknowledgement of how visual we are—and not to copy what you're seeing.</p> <p>Forward bend: Good cautions around bending knees.</p> <p>Choiceless awareness: Your intro was just the right touch: An indicator that this practice was different, but not so much information as to get heady. You could also add to stay close to your guidance. In general, excellent pacing and language use .Some examples below:</p> <p>Nice looping back to earlier in the class about the breath—connecting the experience of the practice to the understanding.</p> <p>Acknowledges pleasant, unpleasant and neutral—and the impermanence of sensation. Highlights curiosity.</p> <p>Sounds: <i>"How awareness holds all the sounds.</i></p>	<p>could suggest someone take hold of the wall or chair if needed.</p> <p>In the series in FCL, warrior pose is not included. This pose can be more challenging in many ways—including balance.</p> <p>Forward bend: High blood pressure may be contraindicated for this pose. Having the hands rest on the legs, floor, or a chair gives more stability than allowing the hands to dangle. This can be challenging for older folks, or anyone with balance issues. Also, rolling up can be contra-indicated for anyone with back issues. Can offer the option of straight back.</p> <p><i>"Feeling yourself grounded whole and strong."</i> What if someone doesn't feel strong?</p> <p>Likely there will be unpleasant sensations during the long sit, but you don't offer ways to work with this: Change position, return to a neutral area, or directly explore as the object of awareness, but with care. This is a key element of this practice (and begins in class 4 sit).</p> <p>Might be helpful to separate thoughts and emotions to begin. Start with just thoughts, and once that's been explored, move to emotions.</p>
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<p><b>Conveying course themes through interactive inquiry and didactic teaching</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experiential focus</li> <li>• Layers within the inquiry process</li> <li>• Teaching skills/ conveying learning</li> <li>• Fluency</li> </ul>	<p>"Noticing the changing sensation of the breath" nice response.</p> <p>Great to support the woman who talked about the video game—that she chose this consciously. Might have asked her how she worked with the intrusive thoughts.</p>	<p>9:44: Woman who speaks about thinking and the breath. Knowing that the thinking is going on is <i>awareness</i>. It's not like we are trying to get the mind to stop thinking—but knowing that there's thinking. You might have inquired about what her thoughts about the breath were? Counting and noting is still a mind activity. Could you offer some</p>

	<p>In general, your style of teaching relies more on answering questions than a deeper inquiry. Your answers are sincere and often helpful, but with the addition of inquiry, this could be a richer resource for the participants, allowing their own knowing to unfold more directly.</p>	<p>ways to feel the breath? Possibly describe some of the sensations: pressure, expanding, etc.</p> <p>An example of inquiry additions/ options: The first gentleman to speak says that while it's difficult "it's doing what I'd hoped it would." Maybe you already knew the answer—but I was curious-- what was the program "doing"? Might have been a good place to inquire about what he—and everyone—is noticing, the impact of the program and their effort. He says it later, "where I want to be..." I'm so curious about that.</p> <p>See below for some specific possibilities around inquiry to develop.</p>
<p><b>Holding the group learning environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning container</li> <li>• Group Development</li> <li>• Personal to universal</li> <li>• Leadership style</li> </ul>	<p>The way you assigned first and second speaker invites an ease and some lightness. Nice to keep things easy and light.</p> <p>Class seems engaged and interested, and their small group work seems lively, and after the small group work they were more relaxed and open.</p> <p>The group felt comfortable with you and were forthcoming—especially towards the end of the class.</p>	<p>I see there is a flipchart in the classroom. You offer a lot of questions for reflection and to speak together about, if you had them written, they could refer to them.</p>



### Notes on inquiry and group dialogue:

Good to acknowledge strong emotions and the full range of emotions, but perhaps with the caveat that *sometimes* there can be a new sense of space to choose. Even if there isn't the space of awareness can be recognized. As people grow more familiar with their patterns and continue to practice, sometimes creative responding also arises naturally. This is best captured when someone shares that this has happened.

In general, your words are very supportive: This is hard work, and the mind doing what it does is just what the mind does—we don't have to get upset about it. We don't even have to force anything. Is there the possibility of just knowing oneself better, without any forcing?

**25 min:** Man who speaks about the pressure of the practice—good advice to reconnect to the intention of the program. AND: could you inquire more rather than just answering? You add good information—but you could inquire more to allow him to own the experience—and the power to get curious and energized—to the process?

It's a great moment of connecting to the universal and letting everyone know this is shared, when you refer to the group after someone shares, "Do others of you feel this way?" But you don't wait to get any responses. It would be a rich discussion to see what else is arising for folks.

Some possible questions to consider: How is that? Is that familiar? What is it like in the body? Thoughts? Emotions? What are you noticing in response to the practice? There is a lot of awareness here—for example, knowing the quality of "not being good enough," is being directly in touch with one's critical nature, and how is it to make some space for that—to bring kindness? These are all possible if you give some space and time for responses.

Woman who talked about "working" on the breath—could you inquire more? The point of the practice is not to relax—but to see what is actually there. Also, counting is not a part of MBSR. It absolutely can be suggested for those struggling, and as you heard, one woman really didn't like the counting. We can be quite individual in helping people meet themselves in practice. You are very welcome and encouraging.

The "goal" conversation at the end of class is really important—and fits right into this class, but I can't help wonder what might have emerged if you'd inquired directly about their experience of meeting reactivity without trying to change it.

You go on to ask, "Is my awareness angry?" And then you answer—"the answer is no." Could you wait and engage with the participants more deeply, letting them feel if their awareness is angry? This takes time—especially for beginners.

Nice reminder about this not being about the breath, objects, etc. You have the embodiment and knowledge—and some support about how to inquire and draw this from the participants would be enriching for you and your participants.

I'm curious how teaching is for you: When does it feel hard or challenging for you?

When you are talking about the research at the very end, you review it, but how could you loop these concepts into the participants' experience? There are missed opportunities for deepening.