

MY LEARNING RECORD

NOTE:

There are several ways to organize this Learning Record concept. For print, I suggest a looseleaf notebook with dividers in 5 sections:

1. Contact information, Part A.1 and A.2
2. Observations
3. Work samples
4. Analysis and observation (Interim analysis and evaluation and final analysis and evaluation)
5. Related materials (reader responses, handouts from class, notes, journals etc.)

In a one-year program, if you keep one observation a week, you will need 50 observation pages. However, you may find you would like to make observations more often. Make copies as you need them.

COMPLETING THE LEARNING RECORD

Please follow the instructions for each section. Here is the sequence:

Part A. 1 and A.2: *Completed at the start of the course.* Please complete these two sections within the first two weeks of the course.

Mindful Observations: *Ongoing throughout the course.* These are intended to help us hone our skills for observing. They provide a framework for focusing and organizing the particular aspects you observed. There is a page of guidelines as a reference for these. Please complete at least one per week, but you may do as many as you wish, and your instructor may have more specific assignments for the observations. It is a helpful practice.

Work Samples: *Ongoing throughout the course.* Include here anything that will serve to illuminate your development during the course: freewriting, journal pieces, photos, poems, blog posts, video, or anything at all that is generated from the work you do for the course.

Part B.1 and C.1 *Completed halfway through the course.* These are opportunities to “take stock,” usually somewhere in the middle of the course, workshop, or learning experience, by reviewing at the evidence so far (observations and work samples) and interpreting it (in Part B.1) in the light of the Dimensions of Awakening (found at the end of this set of forms) and your aspirations for learning (in Part C.1), as you expressed them at the beginning of the course in Part A.2. You write a brief (½-1 page) response to the questions in B.1 and C.1.

Part B.2 and C.2 *Completed at the end of the course.* These are opportunities to once again review the evidence (observations and work samples) and take stock of your learning. You interpret it (in Part B.2) in the light of the Dimensions of Awakening (found at the end of this set of forms) and your aspirations for learning (in Part C.2), as you expressed them at the beginning of the course in Part A.2. You write a brief (½-1 page) response to the questions in B.2 and C.2.

The results should provide a useful account of your learning over time. You may find it helpful to discuss it with your instructor from time to time, but it is your personal record to use as you wish.

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IF FOUND, PLEASE RETURN TO:

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

CONTACT INFORMATION: _____

APPAMADA

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NAME: _____ Date: _____

Instructor/Teacher/Facilitator: _____

Teaching or training: _____

Taking stock: Prior experiences with meditation, psychotherapy, spiritual practice, or other relevant learning:

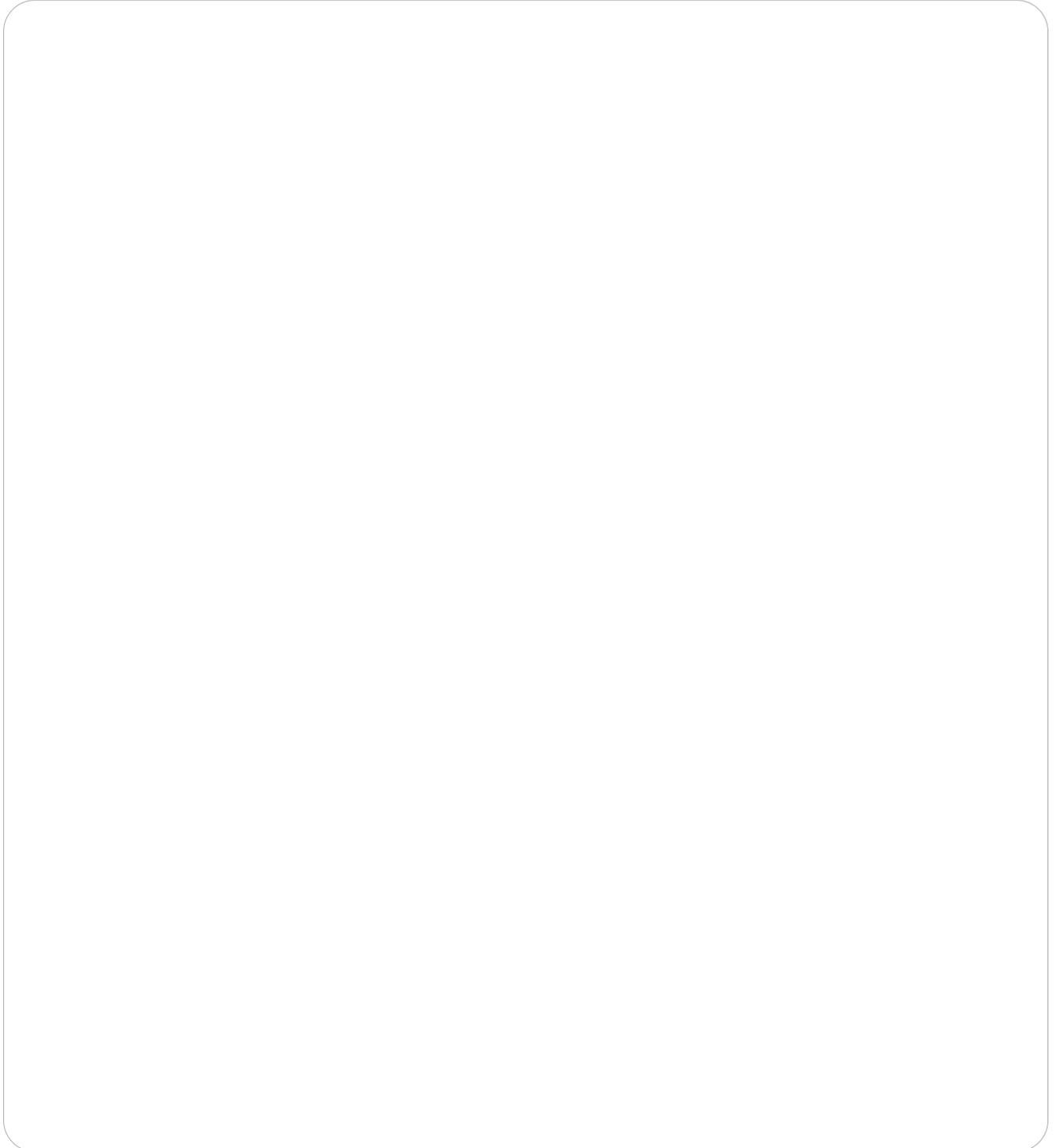
Special needs or considerations:

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Part A1: Reflections on your own development

Take some time to reflect on your own development as a human being up to this point. Focus on positive indicators, capacities, and developments, rather than what you consider your deficits or difficulties or shortcomings. Include any reflections that might specifically relate to the subject of this particular learning experience (class, workshop, seminar, program, retreat, etc.)

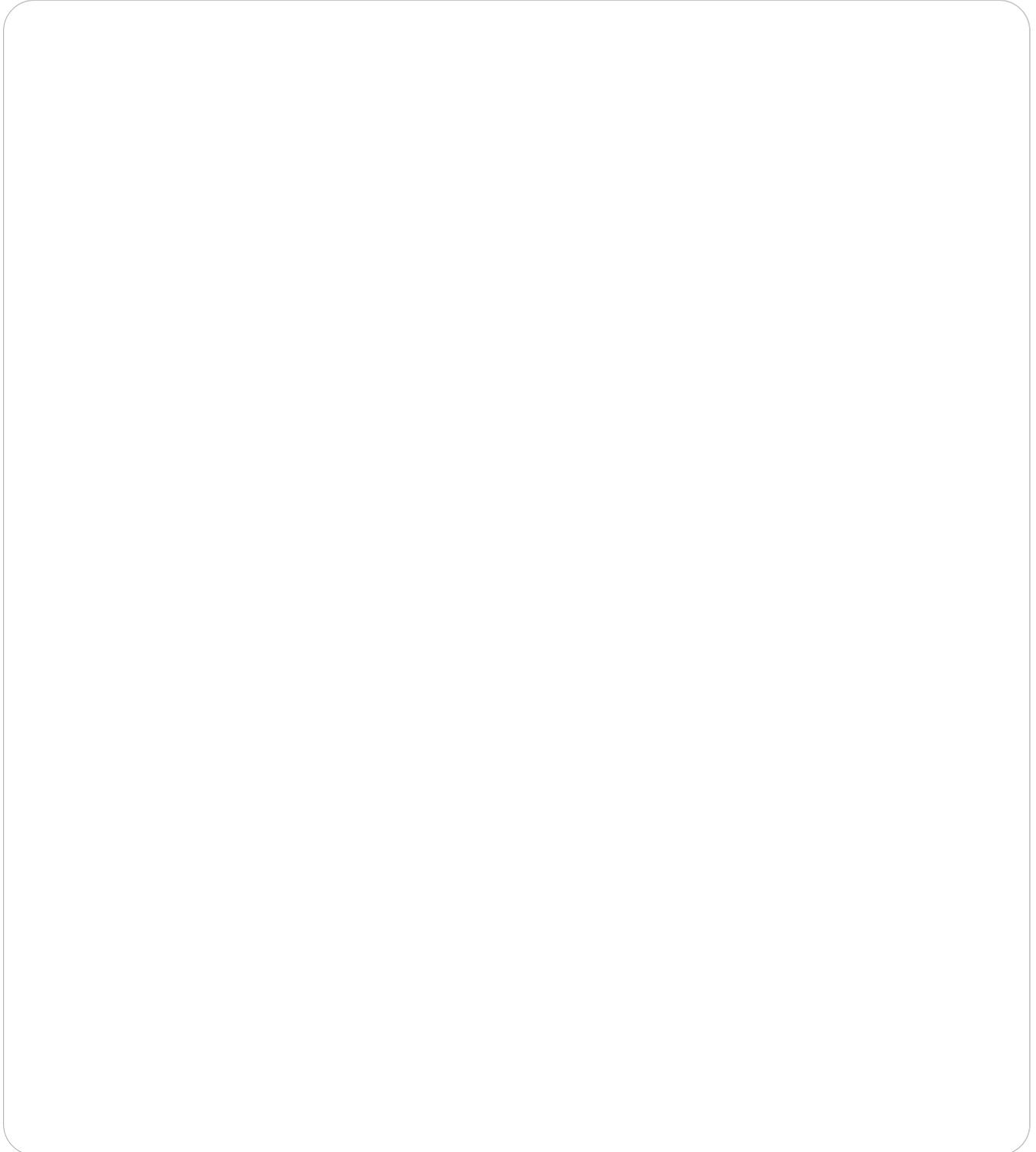


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Part A2: Aspirations for Development

Take some time to become mindful of your purposes for entering into this learning experience. What are your aspirations for your own learning? What might help or hinder you in realizing your aspirations? What will you need to keep in mind in support of your own learning? How will you monitor or evaluate the learning process in terms of your unfolding aspirations? What relationships will affect the work?



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Part B1: Interim Analysis

Review Part A.1 and A.2, your observations and any work samples you've included in the LR so far. Develop your summary interpretation of your development in terms of the dimensions attached below. You will want to connect your interpretations with specific examples included in the mindfulness observations and samples of work. This will help ground your interpretation in actual evidence.



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Part C1: Interim evaluation

Take some time to reflect on the ways this learning experience is unfolding with respect to your aspirations expressed in part A.2. Are you content and energized about the work? Include here any comments you'd like to add about how your learning process is going, especially concerning:

- Suggestions for yourself, about your own further development.
- Suggestions for specific activities or for the teacher(s) that you believe will support your development.
- You may want share this page with your teacher(s), or send along your suggestions.



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Part B2: Final Analysis

Review Part A.1 and A.2, the interim analysis and evaluation, your observations and any work samples you've included in the LR. Write a summary of your development in terms of the dimensions of learning attached below. You will want to connect your interpretations with specific examples from the mindfulness observations and samples of work.



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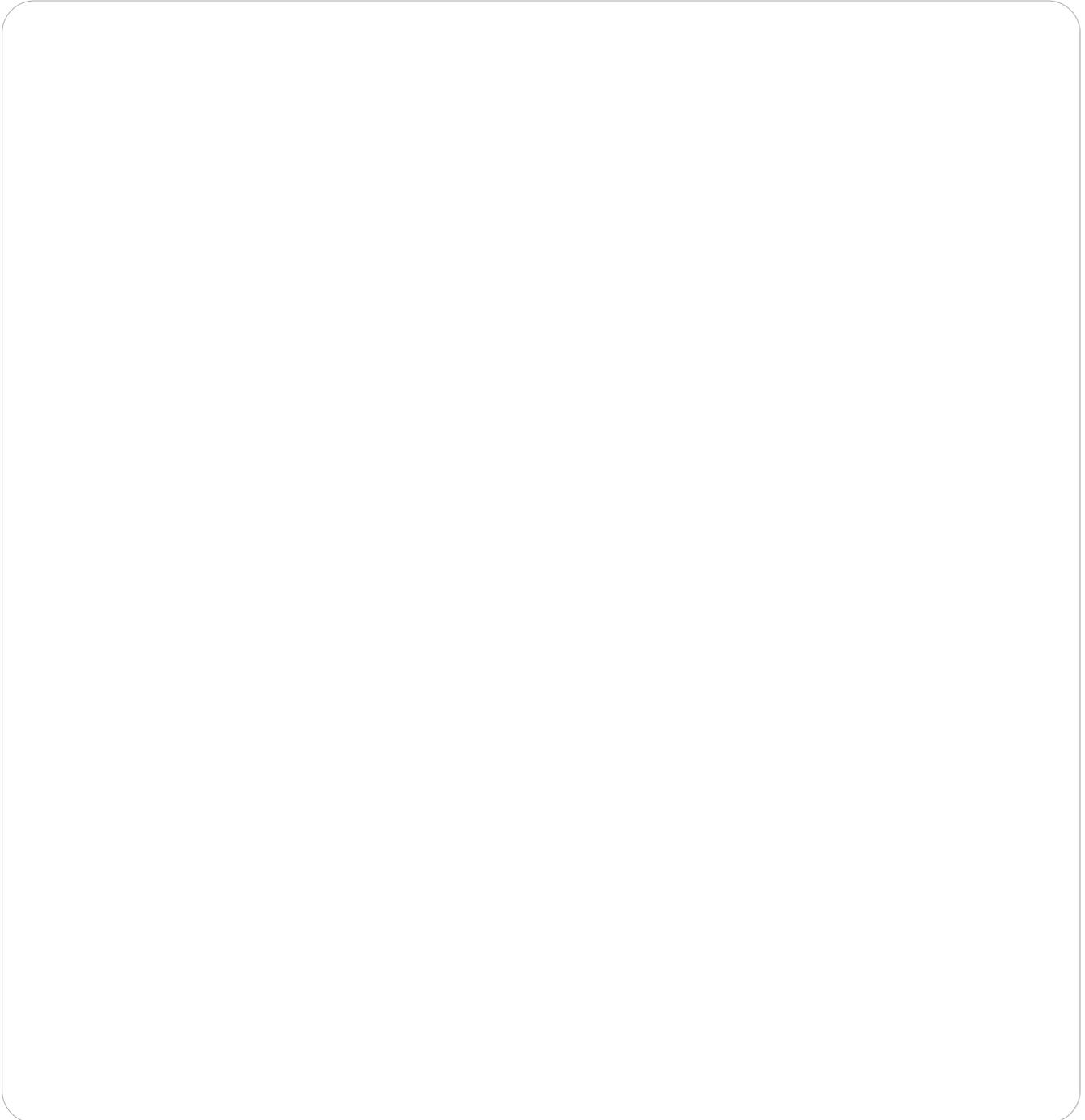
Part C2: Final evaluation

Take some time to reflect on the ways this learning experience has unfolded with respect to your aspirations for it in part A.2. Do you feel your aspirations for this work have been realized? Include here any comments you'd like to add, especially concerning:

Reflections on your learning experience in the course.

Any suggestions for the instructor for future teaching or future offerings.

You may want to share this page with your teacher(s)



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Comments by readers. Reader's name: _____

If you share your Learning Record with other readers, such as your teacher, fellow students, or anyone else, make copies of this blank page so each reader can provide comments for you.



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MINDFUL OBSERVATIONS:

Observation for _____ (date)

Form	Questions or reflections
Sensations	
Perceptions	
Thoughts and emotions	
Consciousness	
Relationality	

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DIMENSIONS OF WAKING UP AND GROWING UP

Wisdom: "Wisdom is not a matter of knowing about the nature of things or realizing the cessation of unhealthy influences, but of *responsive virtuosity*. Huineng asks, 'If sitting in meditation without moving is good, why did Vimalkirti scold Sariputra for sitting in meditation in the woods? If the function of meditation is wisdom, how can meditation consist of sitting alone in the forest, absorbed in contemplation?'" (Hershock, *Chan Buddhism*, 103-04)

Compassion: Compassion is the capacity for "being with," the activity of liberating intimacy and care.

Spontaneity: Social virtuosity, creativity, and imagination, liberating improvisation. Independent of conventions, fixed perspectives, or pre-existing frameworks.

Relationality: The capacity for liberating attachment and attunement, and for cultivating this capacity in others. The potential and ability to be intimate with all things.

Openness and curiosity: Liberating vulnerability. Unhindered by preconceptions or expectations.

Equanimity: The capacity to fully meet all circumstances, experiences, and beings; liberating ease.

Skillful means (upaya): The capacity to use skillful means for liberation of self and others..

Dan Siegel's set of the qualities of a healthy complex system, as they map onto these dimensions:

Flexible (openness and curiosity)

Adaptive (upaya)

Coherent (wisdom)

Energized (spontaneity)

Stable (equanimity)

Siegel writes: The ancient and universal practice of mindfulness has been shown recently to improve physiological, mental, and relational well-being. Mindfulness is often thought of as a way of being aware of one's present moment sensory experience without judgments. An Interpersonal Neurobiology (IPNB) exploration of mindful awareness suggests that mindfulness can be considered a relational process in which you become your own best friend. The social circuitry of the brain is harnessed by mindful awareness practices that promote health in our minds, brains, and relationships. He notes nine functions of mindfulness and healthy human functioning that are relational:

An intriguing overlap of several independent domains of knowledge illuminates this relational aspect of mindfulness. The research outcomes for mindfulness correlate with the integrative functions of the prefrontal cortex; and to a large degree they are consistent with the scientifically established results of secure parent child relationships. Furthermore, this same set of functions is a common wish list for psychotherapists in describing mental health. And finally, spiritual teachers and community leaders have suggested that this list overlaps with thousands of years of teachings from tribal elders about the nature of wisdom.

1. **Body regulation:** coordination of the "brakes" and "accelerator" functions of the nervous system
2. **Attuned communication:** the capacity to relate to or coordinate with another interactively
3. **Emotional balance:** capacity of limbic areas to be allowed to have enough activation so that life has meaning and vitality but not so much that life becomes chaotic.
4. **Response flexibility:** the ability to vary responses depending on circumstances, to pause before reacting.
5. **Empathy:** the capacity to imagine what might be going on inside someone else
6. **Insight:** self-knowing awareness
7. **Fear modulation:** the capacity to recognize when fear is an appropriate response and regulate it
8. **Intuition:** the body's wisdom, registered from neural networks in the viscera
9. **Morality:** The ability to imagine and act on what is best for the whole, not just oneself, even when alone

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DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

Learning theorists have argued that learning and development are not like an assembly-line which can be broken down into discrete steps occurring with machine-time precision, but an organic process that unfolds in complex ways according to its own pace and rhythm. Teaching and learning occurs in complex ecosystems, dynamic environments where teachers, students, materials and supplies, texts, technologies, concepts, social structures, and architectures are interdependently related and interactive. Using the Learning Record, we are actively searching for, and documenting, positive evidence of a person's development across these dimensions: *confidence and independence, knowledge and understanding, skills and strategies, use of prior and emerging experience, critical reflection, and originality or creativity*. These dimensions cannot be "separated out" and treated individually; rather, they are dynamically interwoven. Our goals for a particular experience should describe a trajectory of learning across multiple dimensions, and our measurements should be able to identify the paths taken by learners, and their progress from their individual starting points along that trajectory. Individually, learners can expect to make progress across these dimensions:

Confidence and independence

We see growth and development when learners' confidence and independence become congruent with their actual abilities and skills, content knowledge, use of experience, and reflectiveness about their own learning. It is not a simple case of "more (confidence and independence) is better." In a science class, for example, an overconfident student who has relied on faulty or underdeveloped skills and strategies learns to seek help when facing an obstacle; or a shy student begins to trust her own abilities, and to insist on presenting her own point of view in discussion. In both cases, students are developing along the dimension of confidence and independence.

Skills and strategies

Skills and strategies represent the "know-how" aspect of learning. When we speak of "performance" or "mastery," we generally mean that learners have developed skills and strategies to function successfully in certain situations. Skills and strategies are not only specific to particular disciplines, but often cross disciplinary boundaries. In a writing class, for example, students develop many specific skills and strategies involved in composing and communicating effectively, from research to concept development to organization to polishing grammar and correctness, and often including technological skills for computer communication.

Knowledge and understanding

Knowledge and understanding refers to the "content" knowledge gained in particular subject areas. Knowledge and understanding is the most familiar dimension, focusing on the "know-what" aspect of learning. In a psychology class, knowledge and understanding might answer a wide range of questions such as, What is Freud's concept of ego? Who was Carl Jung? What is "behaviorism"? These are typical content questions. Knowledge and understanding in such classes includes what students are learning about the topics; research methods; the theories, concepts, and practices of a discipline; the methods of organizing and presenting our ideas to others, and so on.

Use of prior and emerging experience

The use of prior and emerging experience involves learners' abilities to draw on their own experience and connect it to their work. A crucial but often unrecognized dimension of learning is the capacity to make use of prior experience as well as emerging experience in new situations. It is necessary to observe learners over a period of time while they engage in a variety of activities in order to account for the development of this important capability, which is at the heart of creative thinking and its application. With traditional methods of evaluating learning, we cannot discover just how a learner's prior experience might be brought to bear to help scaffold new understandings, or how ongoing experience shapes the content knowledge or skills and strategies the learner is developing. In a math class, students scaffold new knowledge through applying the principles and procedures they've already learned: algebra depends on the capacity to apply basic arithmetic procedures, for example.

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Reflection

Reflection refers to the developing awareness of the learner's own learning process, as well as more analytical approaches to the subject being studied. When we speak of reflection as a crucial component of learning, we are not using the term in its commonsense meaning of reverie or abstract introspection. We are referring to the development of the learner's ability to step back and consider a situation critically and analytically, with growing insight into his or her own learning processes, a kind of metacognition. It provides the "big picture" for the specific details. For example, students in a history class examining fragmentary documents and researching an era or event use reflection to discover patterns in the evidence and construct a historical narrative. Learners need to develop this capability in order to use what they are learning in other contexts, to recognize the limitations or obstacles confronting them in a given situation, to take advantage of their prior knowledge and experience, and to strengthen their own performance.

Creativity, originality, imagination

As learners gain confidence and independence, knowledge and understanding, skills and strategies, ability to use prior and emerging experience in new situations, and reflectiveness, they generally become more playful and experimental, more creative in the expression of that learning. This is true not only in "creative" domains such as the arts, but in nearly all domains: research, argumentation, history, psychology. In all fields the primary contributions to the field are the result of creative or imaginative work. This optional dimension may be adopted by teachers or schools to make explicit the value of creativity, originality, and imagination in students' development and achievement. Among other things, it recognizes the value of creative experimentation even when the final result of the work may not succeed as the student may hope.

WORK SAMPLES

What are work samples?

They might be any kind of thing: notes, journal entries, prompts provided by the workshop or training leaders or teachers, poems, reflections, questions, written articles, works of art, music, or responses to talks or activities. They are gathered in a portfolio (called Work Samples in the original student LR, but perhaps something like "Related material" in this LR), that accompanies the LR. You may also want to save in another section any handouts or readings provided, or selections of others' work you wish to include.

LRs might be shared and commented on by other people in a training. There might be a kind of "powers of three" exercise with the LR, or some kind of sharing with the whole group on a voluntary basis. There should be an opportunity for a thoughtful read by one or two other people at least, at some point.