Session 10 Teacher Deep Dive
Adapting for Online Classes

A variety of reasons may lead you to offering Everyday Mindfulness online. You may want to reach a wider geographical area, accommodate individuals with mobility issues, better fit more schedules, or simply offer a preferred meeting style. Whatever the reason you may want to adapt this curriculum to an online format, here are several tips and best practices for organizing the class, presenting materials, engaging students, and offering a rich online learning experience.

Synchronous Courses
Meeting with students online can be as intimate and gratifying as meeting in person. A regularly scheduled meeting on a video platform can cover all the same materials in roughly the same amount of time as a live class.

Considerations for synchronous online classes:

- Establish a regular, consistent meeting time and duration (always use time zone indicators for individuals in different regions).

- Pick a meeting platform that is 1) free for participants; 2) reliable and consistent in service; 3) able to accommodate the number of students in your course; 4) offers screen sharing, recording, and messaging; 5) has privacy and security policies that protect students; 6) has dial-in options for students who may have trouble with video, internet reliability, or other computer issues; 7) offers break out rooms where pairs or small groups can work privately.

- Consider increasing frequency of breaks and transitions. It's harder to stay focused on a screen, without a classroom ambiance to help with resonance. Shorter and more frequent breaks can be built into an online class meeting to help everyone reset their attention.

- Check for understanding more frequently. Audio quality, distraction, or lack of environmental feedback may all hinder online comprehension more than during live classes. Ask for feedback and make space for questions more frequently, especially during didactic presentations.

    - Tools like Poll Everywhere and Kahoot can also help check understanding and engagement. Basically, you ask the class a question and students use their phones or tablets to submit answers. Answers gets aggregated immediately so you can see how many students understood the question, what percentage of the class got a comprehension check right, etc.

- Practice your didactic presentations and meditation scripts. Make presentations run smoothly by rehearsing your script *and* practicing clicking through slides, clicking over to any other media, and returning to the video of yourself.

- Practice creating break out rooms for partners and small groups to share privately and in a quieter space.

- Speak with more conscious clarity, precision, and a slower pace.

- Be mindful of minimizing interruptions and disruptions. Ask students to mute themselves when not speaking, ask everyone to clear their space of visual and audio distractions, and mute yourself when necessary.

- You can still use slides and visual material while speaking by sharing your screen. You also have the added benefit of showing short video clips or websites and playing music during a practice.

- A good (and safe) practice to keep in mind, especially when presenting from your personal computer, is to be conscious of what's open and visible on your screen. This includes browser tabs, bookmarks, photos, downloads, apps, and other documents or windows. Consider both your privacy and credibility.

Asynchronous Courses

Also known as self-paced courses, this kind online version requires that you prepare course materials ahead of time and then allow students to complete the work at their own pace, *without any live meetings*. This doesn't mean you must plan the entire course of all 10 sessions in advance. You can create one session at a time, then allow students to complete the work at their own pace during the week. You can set weekly release dates and deadlines. For example, you release the week's course material on Sunday morning and practices, journals, reflections, etc., are due by Saturday night.

Considerations for asynchronous courses:

- Choose a platform that can house all your materials, including video clips. A platform that can also send messages and post announcements may be helpful. Google Drive or Microsoft One Share are simple options. There are also many paid and free learning platforms you can choose from, depending on price, complexity, features, accessibility, or student preference.

- Record yourself giving didactic presentations. Keep each video around 5 minutes long and vary the camera between yourself and the slides. Tools like Loom, Jing, and other free video creation software allow you to click through slides while a side box shows you giving the presentation.

- Agendas and roadmaps should precede every video. Before you launch into the material, give students a clear sense of the topic, your goals, and what you want students to walk away with.

- Break up even short video presentations with a pause for students to reflect, perform a task, look up some information, or answer a question. Even pre-recorded lectures can be a little interactive.

- Record guided meditations with consistent pacing, clear articulation, and no noise distractions. Students should plan to meditate along with your recording.

- Add options to pause in recorded meditations. Indicate when students can pause the audio to delve deeply into a moment.

- Know that self-paced courses will have more variation in student experience, gains, and outcomes without in-class teacher feedback and class discussion. Focus assessment more on student reflection, descriptions of their experiences, and self-assessment.

- Make yourself more available via email, phone, message board, or video conferencing. Students need a consistent way to contact you with questions and requests for feedback.

- Consider setting up a way for students to chat with each other, either with or without your participation. This can be a private message board, group email thread, text thread, etc.