

T'ai Chi Chih® Teacher Preparation Suggested Curriculum

Introduction

T'ai Chi Chih (TCC) is a healing force in this world because you responded to the inner call to become a teacher to share and spread the gifts of this loving and joyful practice. The future and growth of TCC is dependent on our teaching community to come together to identify, support and prepare students to become confident and inspiring TCC Teachers.

The Inspiration for creating this Curriculum came from observing our community and the current state of teacher preparation/accreditation. Two observations that we have seen and experienced are:

1. The number of teacher candidates has decreased. Teacher Accreditations went from three a year to one a year. One of the reasons for this may be the after-effects of Covid. As a community we are still building back our momentum. It may also be true that we have lost teachers and that some teachers did not return to teaching after the pandemic.
2. Teacher candidates do not all come to Accreditation equally prepared. This can cause undue stress on not only the candidate but everyone involved in the Accreditation course. Preparing and coaching candidates is not the same skill or knowledge as teaching beginner or even continuing students and not all teachers have this skill or have the desire to develop this skill.

The questions that arise from these observations are:

1. How can we as a community of teachers attract and inspire more students to become teacher candidates?
2. How can we as a community come together to help teachers develop the skills/knowledge to prepare candidates?
3. If teachers do not have the desire or comfort in preparing teacher candidates, where can they go in our community to get their student the support they need to be successfully prepared?

This curriculum is a start in addressing these questions. There are three parts:

- I. Inspiring and Identifying Teacher Candidates
- II. Introduction to Teacher Prep Coaches – A Community Support and Resource
- III. Curriculum for Preparing T'ai Chi Chih Teacher Candidates
 - A. Preparation for the TCC Intensive Course (Starting six months before the Intensive)

B. Preparation for the TCC Teacher Accreditation Course (Post Intensive)

The more prepared a teacher candidate is the more the Accreditation Course can help build their confidence in teaching and inspire them to begin sharing TCC. It is a living document and as our community grows and we learn more about teacher candidate preparation it will also evolve.

In the words of Justin:

"The great treasure of TCC lies in the sincere and capable teachers. TCC's brilliant future depends upon them."

I. Inspiring and Identifying Teacher Candidates

Students need to know early on that it is possible for sincere students to become a TCC teacher. There are many ways that you can open the door to let students know of the possibility. One way is sharing that the growth of TCC worldwide has happened because of the hearts of sincere students wanting to share the benefits they have received with others. You might remind students that Justin said, "T'ai Chi Chih is a service to humanity. It is a form of love." The key is to have the intention of inspiring students to become teachers.

Justin has often shared that it is no accident one is teaching TCC. It is like the seed of becoming a teacher is already in our hearts before we even knew about TCC. As a teacher you may see that seed in a student before they do. In fact, the thought of teaching could be overwhelming to them. You could gently encourage them. Sometimes it is helpful to let students know that the process of going through Accreditation will take their practice to the next level. Many of our most active teachers went through Accreditation initially not having clarity about how much they wanted to teach.

The next step for inspiring and identifying teacher candidates is to let them know about the process in more detail. See the sample one-page handout "Overview T'ai Chi Chih® Teacher Candidate Preparation" written by Marie Dotts on tcccommunity.net that you can use for your students giving them an overview of what is involved in becoming a teacher. It will need to be personalized to reflect your situation and needs. It is recommended that you offer this handout to your students that have been practicing at least a year. It is also good to hand it out at least six months prior to an upcoming Intensive so they can begin preparing for the Intensive.

II. Introduction to Teacher Prep Coaches – A Community Support and Resource

A Teacher Prep Coach is a new role in our community. A Teacher Prep Coach is an experienced TCC teacher who is passionate about preparing teacher candidates for accreditation. We envision that Teacher Prep Coaches will be a resource in our community to provide consistent, reliable support for teacher candidates when needed. Over the years, we have noted that not all candidates arrive at the Accreditation Course with enough preparation to get the most out of the Teacher Accreditation Course. We recognize that in some cases, a candidate's teacher does not have the time, experience or interest in preparing their student for teacher accreditation. In this case, a teacher may ask a Teacher Prep Coach to serve as the First and/or Second Referring Teacher. A list of Teacher Prep Coaches in our community is located on tcccommunity.net. More information about each Teacher Prep Coach can be found in their teacher listing on taichichih.org.

Experienced teachers who have demonstrated expertise in preparing candidates for accreditation and are willing to spend one-on-one time to offer their skill and expertise to our community should consider becoming a Teacher Prep Coach. It is our hope that the marshaling of resources that already exist in our community will result in a more enjoyable and productive teacher accreditation experience and ultimately lead to more teachers actively teaching. If you are interested, please see the separate document on tcccommunity.net describing the role and required skills needed for a Teacher Prep Coach, and how to apply.

III. Curriculum for Preparing T'ai Chi Chih Teacher Candidates

In the first session it is important to go over with the candidate the teacher guidelines on taichichih.org under "Become a Teacher/Guidelines" <https://taichichih.org/guidelines/> and "Become a Teacher/Accreditation" <https://taichichih.org/accreditation/>. These guidelines are summarized on the back of the Teacher Referral Sheet. It is important that both referring teachers understand these so they can go over them with the teacher candidate.

The goal is not to reach perfection as there is no such thing as a perfect practice. Our practice is an unending journey into the ever-deepening embodiment of the principles of TCC. The intention for teacher preparation is to help the teacher candidate's practice deepen to a level that they can guide a new student in the practice. The best way for both referring teachers to understand the level required of a teacher candidate is for the referring teachers to attend an Intensive and audit an Accreditation.

A. Preparation for the T'ai Chi Chih® Intensive Course (Starting 6 months before the Intensive)

Focus: *How to Move Well, integrating the Principles of Movement*

Learning Objective for Candidate	Suggested activities for Teacher and Candidate	Suggested resources	Candidate and Teacher Outcomes
<p>Learn and know the names and sequence of all the movements.</p> <p>Know how many repetitions and sets for each movement.</p>	<p>First Referring Teacher leads candidate through suggested activities as appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use pictorial handout to learn sequence, thinking of memorable links from one move to the next to aid learning by heart. • First Referring teacher cuts up pictorial sheet of sequence into separate moves, mix up out of order, place in envelope. Candidate to place in order – regular self-assessment plus Teacher assessment. • Candidate makes a table of movements and how many repetitions /sets of each. Keep testing yourself until you know it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pictorial handout by Francis Gurtz (tcccommunity.net) • List of all movements in sequence • Stick diagrams by Evangeline Bratt (tcccommunity.net) • Handout of repetitions by Lesley Nell (tcccommunity.net) • T'ai Chi Chih photo text https://justinstonetcc.com/shop/tai-chi-chih-books/tai-chi-chih-joy-thru-movement-photo-text/ 	<p>Candidate is able to do a full personal practice independently without reference to a prompt sheet, video or First Referring Teacher, demonstrating knowledge of the correct sequence and names of the movements plus correct repetitions.</p>
<p>Know and understand fully “Principles of How to Move” and</p>	<p>Guided by the handout written by Pam and Sandy “TCC Principles of How to Move”, practice with the candidate discussing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TCC Principles of How to Move by Teacher Trainers Pam Towne and Sandy McAlister (tcccommunity.net) 	<p>Candidate knows and understands the TCC principles of how to move</p>

<p>apply to your movements.</p> <p>Know that TCC is done primarily from the waist down emphasising the importance of grounding and a full weight shift.</p> <p>Understand the correct mechanics of each movement. This includes the beginning, middle and end.</p>	<p>how the Principles apply to the movements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flowing from the Center • Softness and Continuity • Yinnging and Yanging • Focusing in the soles of the feet/grounding • Circularity • Polarity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At this point it is crucial to focus on grounding and experiencing full, smooth, low weight shifts. • Work on Flowing from the Center in all the movements so that the upper body is in sync with the weight shift. • Work with the candidate to relax and let go of the effort in the arms and shoulders. • Consult the photo text • Watch Justin Stone's videos and Accredited TCC teachers suggested by Teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T'ai Chi Chih photo text page 16 General Instructions – Body Posture for Successful Practice, Preliminary Movements, Leg Motions, Function and Essence • Supplement teaching with articles from The Vital Force Journal on Principles of Movement • Handout “Allow the Chi to do the work.” By Ed Altman (tcccommunity.net) • Justin Stone's videos (justinstonetcc.com) • Teaching Tips for Teachers (also valuable for students) https://justinstonetcc.com/teaching-tips-for-teachers-also-valuable-for-students/ 	<p>The First Referring Teacher uses all the bullet points in the handout “T'ai Chi Chih principles of How to Move” to assess the candidate's movement.</p> <p>Candidate demonstrates correct mechanics of each movement including beginning, middle and end independently.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidate leads movement(s) you are working on and referring teacher observes candidate from different angles and gives feedback <p>Throughout this process, taking videos of the candidate moving from the front, back and side or moving in front of a mirror will be very helpful so that the candidate can see how they are moving, how their posture is aligned – so that they can refine movements, when necessary, with the Teacher’s help.</p>		
Establish a daily personal T’ai Chi Chih practice for their joy, health and wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Referring Teacher takes candidate through the “TCC Establishing a home practice” handout. • First Referring Teacher shares their experience of establishing their own practice. • Candidate makes an initial plan and experiments with ideas presented in the handout to develop a practice that suits their lifestyle and personality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TCC Establishing a home practice (tcccommunity.net) • T’ai Chi Chih photo text, page 18 Practice Program and page 19 Additional Tips 	Candidate can discuss how their personal practice has evolved. First Referring Teacher is likely to notice the positive change.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidate to read sections of photo text assigned to this aspect • Candidate is strongly advised to use a notebook to record notes about their daily practice – time of day, where moves done, length of practice, how it makes you feel, the effect it has on your life - to help you develop a meaningful personal practice. 		
Establish a working practice at least weekly where the candidate implements what they are learning from their teacher and the resources.	<p>Candidate reviews and works with refinements given to them by their teacher:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in front of a mirror, • video of candidate by family/friends front and sideways view • in front of patio doors at night <p>First Referring Teacher keeps track of progress given to teacher candidate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidate is strongly advised to use a notebook to record refinements, observations and questions 	<p>Candidate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrates that they have integrated the refinements given by Teacher • Share evidence of learning in notebook
Have mind and body fully open to learning and refinement during The Intensive Course.	<p>Candidate and First Referring Teacher to have a heart to heart, encouraging the candidate to be fully present and open to receiving feedback.</p> <p>Encourage the candidate to be actively engaged at the Intensive and to ask any questions that come up.</p>	<p>Candidate should bring the following to the Intensive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T'ai Chi Chih photo text • Spiritual Odyssey https://justinstonetcc.com/shop/tai-chi-chih-books/spiritual-odyssey-selected-writings-1985-1997/ 	<p>Candidate has a positive and enriching experience at the Intensive.</p>

	Candidate is strongly advised to use a notebook to record new learnings and advice on refining movements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidate's notebook 	
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Tasks for completion by the Teacher Trainer who led the Intensive Course:

- 1. Teacher Trainer provides formal feedback to First Referring Teacher and candidate regarding movement refinements to work on before attending the Accreditation Course.**
- 2. Teacher Trainer advises candidate on how to choose a Second Referring Teacher ensuring that the candidate has the necessary support and resources to successfully prepare for the Accreditation**

B. Preparation for the T'ai Chi Chih® Teacher Accreditation Course (Post Intensive)

Focus: *Continue Refinement of Movements and Develop Teaching Skills*

It is important that the First and Second Referring Teachers work together to prepare and support the Teacher Candidate. When the Second Referring Teacher comes on board it would be helpful to review with the First Referring Teacher the refinements the Candidate is working on from the Intensive and from working with the First Referring Teacher. It would also be helpful for both Referring Teachers to review the Curriculum and discuss how to work together to implement the objectives.

Often candidates lose the joy in their practice while preparing for accreditation. It is imperative that both Referring Teachers encourage the candidate to continue a consistent personal practice for their joy, health and wellbeing.

Learning Objective for the Candidate	Suggested Activities for Teachers and Candidate	Suggested Resources	Candidate and Teacher Outcome
<p>How to move and flow well</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporating personal feedback into personal practice following the Intensive • Move from the center with softness and continuity emphasising relaxed wrists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin working with Second Referring Teacher or Teacher Prep Coach in addition to First Referring Teacher • Discuss feedback the candidate received from the Teacher Trainer at the Intensive Course • Candidate will review their personal notes from Intensive with both Teachers • Candidate and Teacher practice, focusing on the feedback received from the Teacher Trainer • Encourage candidate to continue with own daily personal practice and regular working practice as defined in the Intensive Curriculum • Suggest to candidate that they can use a mirror or self-videos for their working practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T'ai Chi Chih photo text • Videos of Justin Stone • Continue using a notebook 	<p>Candidate moves with the effort of no effort – sequence flows from the center with grace and ease.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend as many different classes as possible in the TCC Community in person and on Zoom • Continue to watch videos of Justin Stone to appreciate his softness of movement, especially in the wrists 		
<p>Find and develop your confidence in your teaching voice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know and speak clearly the correct names of each movement in order • Know and convey unique aspects of each movement • Know and convey the general 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers of candidates attending the same Intensive may like to set up a regular Zoom practice to enable candidates to lead sections of the practice so that they can develop their voice and ability to lead (and keep count of repetitions) in a safe space, not worrying about making mistakes. • Have candidate write down: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A list of the names of the movements in correct order 2. Instructions/phrases that are unique to each movement 3. General instructions/phrases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend other teachers' classes to observe language and phrases used. • Watch videos of Justin Stone • Watch videos of accredited teachers • Record findings and progress in notebook • Teaching Tips for Teachers (also valuable for students) https://justinstonetcc.com/teaching-tips-for-teachers-also-valuable-for-students/ 	<p>Candidate knows the correct names of the movements in order and is able to lead a full practice including reciting the names, counting, giving brief cogent instructions while moving.</p>

principles that apply to all movements	<p>that apply to all the movements</p> <p>Then practice saying the above out loud while moving.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the candidate gains confidence in their ability to lead a movement, continue to add instructions/phrases to the lists they are using and have prepared. • Encourage candidate to attend other teachers' classes and observe different teaching styles • Encourage the candidate to practice teaching friends/family to get more comfortable with teaching. • Teacher supervises candidate leading a class through the full sequence 		
Analyse other people's movements with intent to offer advice for refinements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help candidate to begin developing skill of observing others' movement in order to refine. Encourage candidate to observe students in class in an unobtrusive position and discuss with Teacher afterwards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending classes live and on Zoom • Teacher/candidate Zoom group created from Intensive • Teacher and candidate watching and analysing videos together 	Candidate demonstrates an awareness of other people's movements, can identify possible refinements and offer suggestions for better

Recognise that this skill will deepen over time, mainly through teaching.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss with candidate how to give refinements in a positive way 		flow of movement in a positive manner.
Consider and explore different ways of demonstrating the movements to students, including mirroring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher discusses with candidate the ways they demonstrate the movements including mirroring. • Candidate practices standing at different angles as they demonstrate the movements • Candidate practices mirroring at home so that their confidence evolves 		Candidates can demonstrate they are working on this skill to their teachers.
Put together a presentation and practice delivering it.	<p>Teacher to help candidate think about and prepare a presentation ready for the Accreditation Course.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher to go through the presentation section in the Accreditation Manual with the candidate • Discuss what they did for theirs and share how they delivered it, including the importance of demonstrating movements and guiding the audience through a movement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation section in Accreditation Manual • Mirror • Friends/family 	Candidate demonstrates their presentation to their teacher.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidate to choose an audience for their presentation • Encourage candidate to write out presentation and to time it (no more than 12-15 minutes) • Encourage candidate to outline presentation on note cards with bullet points • Encourage candidate to practice until they are comfortable and natural giving it to another person • Encourage candidate to practice in front of a mirror to observe facial expressions and tone of voice • Practice presentation with family/friends 		
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Prepared by Lesley Nell, Marie Dotts and Lisa Otero.

Endorsed by TCC Teacher Trainers Sandy McAlister, Pam Towne, Daniel Pienciak and April Leffler, June 2025

To be reviewed annually by the Teacher Trainers with input from the teacher community.