



Learning How to Learn through Learning How to Move: Using the *Zhong Xin Dao* Curriculum from *I Liq Chuan*—the Martial Art of Awareness in Academic Contexts



Introduction.

Higher education today longs for pedagogies that embrace diverse learning styles, multiple intelligences, and differentiated instruction that will empower learners in the classroom, influence life-long learning, and prepare students to become ever more globally aware. How, though, to introduce such innovative practices intentionally? Some colleges and universities use experiential, community-based, and service learning approaches while others turn to contemplative education and mindfulness studies to influence attitudes, knowledge, skills, and behaviors that help students negotiate the complexities of living in a pluralistic world.

Our Aims: To further students' (and our own) understanding about *how* we learn, *how* we move, and *how* to use this processual knowledge and heightened awareness in everyday life. To do so by foregrounding meta-cognitive exercises and teaching and learning processes provided by the **Zhong Xin Dao** Approach to Neutral Viewpoint, the central essence of the internal art known as *I Liq Chuan: The Martial Art of Awareness*.™

Guiding Questions: how can we best help students learn:

- 1.. To recognize and realize that learning is a process?
2. To understand the nature of attention through metacognitive and kinesthetic exercises?
3. To connect their mind and body so they can literally feel their own transformation (a.k.a. interoception)

Our approach? Fostering a dynamic, learner-centered, processual approach to cultivating attention and mindfulness. Specifically, we accentuated learning how to feel one's body in the present moment—even as each moment unfolds—or, as GM Sam S.F. Chin explains the concept: “Changing with the changes.” (*I Liq Chuan System Guide*).

Understanding the Geography of the Body: Self as Point of Reference



I Liq Chuan (ILC) articulates a whole body “grammar”—a shared ILC vocabulary. 6-3-1 ~ 6 Physical points, 3 Mental factors, 1 ‘suchness feel.’

Zhong Xin Dao helps students learn how to learn (“meta-cognition”). ZXD is not a style, it’s a process that:

1. Gives students tools to recognize how to learn
2. Provides the chance to get immediate and direct feedback through body-based interaction
3. Orients us to what it means to be PRESENT in the moment
4. Teaches awareness of ourselves and others
5. Provides insight into different cultures’ traditions, practices, and viewpoints
6. Helps cultivate the wisdom to be a better person.

Nancy Watterson & Lan Tran
Cabrini University / Dept. of History & Political Science
nlw724@cabrini.edu | kt488@cabrini.edu

Learning How to Learn through Learning How to Move



Practicing Mindfulness and Interoception through Cooperative Partner Training

Zhong Xin Dao Path of Learning

1. Through the integrative and interdisciplinary ZXD Academic Approach, students experience many benefits. Students will improve their skills in **10 key areas**:
2. Seeing the big picture and open-mindedness (change with the change; change to maintain) – go through a process of training that allow one to centrally position one’s self to learn how be open to learning.
3. Learning how to place themselves at the center of growth and fixed mindset to gain a balance (school/study and life balance)-being at the neutral point between growth and fixed.
4. Cultivating cooperation while suspending assumptions and judgment.
5. Enabling authentic spontaneity and enjoyment - Students learn how to engage—how to get into that self-motivated spot—of wanting to learn.
6. Developing commitment to learning while recognizing bias and past references.
7. Getting introduced to meta-cognition (learning how to learn) through a fun, movement-based way of learning that ‘hooks’ their interest; the Martial Art of Awareness provides the immediacy of learning in the moment with the safety of cooperative partner exercises.
8. Working on deep listening and exploring what it means to be a ‘Reflective Receiver’.
9. Understanding a processual way of approaching something by observing, sensing, and feeling—without self judgment.
10. Becoming better at recognizing body sensations and mental blocks—recognizing the conditions of cause and effect in innovative ways based on realizing structure, alignment, balance, effortless and efficiency of movement.
11. Experiencing how to place themselves in the present moment so they can better express themselves from a neutral standpoint.



Teaching and Learning Together

Discussion. Research Process, Methods

Through personal faculty development and intensive immersion in **Zhong Xin Dao Curriculum** of *I Liq Chuan: the Martial Art of Awareness*, the two researchers (co-teachers and co-investigators) have designed, refined, and taught three innovative full-credit academic courses based on the philosophy, concepts, and principles of this training system (*literally translated: Mental-Physical martial art*). The heart of this process is learning to pay attention to the nature of mind and body based on Tai Chi and Zen principles: non-assertion, non-resistance, harmony of yin yang, oneness and the present moment. (Chin 2006).

Assessment: Data have been gathered through pre- and-post test surveys, focus groups, video-documenting of learning processes, ethnographic participant-observation, reflexive mid-term projects, meta-cognitive exercises, cooperative partner training, and a Rubric of concrete observables related to the *I Liq Chuan* system.

References.

“Becoming One – The Story of Sifu Lan Tran” Loquitur Dec. 2015.
Broderick, P. C. & Metz, S. (2009). Learning to BREATHE: A pilot trial of a mindfulness curriculum for adolescents. *Advances in School Mental Health Promotion*, 2, pp. 35-46.
Channon, A. & Jennings, G. (2014). Exploring embodiment through martial arts and combat sports: a review of empirical research. *Sport in Society* 17(6), 773-789.
Chin, F.S. (2006). *I Liq Chuan: Martial art of awareness*. Family I Liq Chuan Assoc. P. O. Box 374, Mount Kisco, NY. 10549.
Daubenmier J. et al. “Follow your breath: Respiratory interoceptive accuracy in experienced meditators.” *Psychophysiology*, 50 (2013), 777–789. DOI: 10.1111/psyp.12057
Farb,N.,et al.(2015). Interoception, contemplative practice, and health. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 6, 763. <http://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.00763>
I Liq Chuan: The Martial Art of Awareness. System Guide available through: <http://iliqchuan.com/>
I Liq Chuan martial art in Ukraine. Lecture 09.09.2016 –Internal Fusion Martial Arts
“Kung Fu Abroad”- a 90 min. documentary on Grand Master Sam Chin, founder of Zhong Xin Dao curriculum. CCTV. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CmozVFIK6QI&feature=youtu.be>
Levine, D. N. (1989). *The liberal arts and the martial arts*. The Overlook martial arts reader: An anthology of historical and philosophical writings. Overlook P.
Martial Arts Studies - Interview Lan Tran (at the international Martial Arts Studies Conference at Cardiff University, held in Wales, UK July 2016)
Tran, L. Founder, Internal Fusion Martial Arts. www.internalfusion.net.
ZXD Academic Approach. *I Liq Chuan*. <http://www.iliqchuan.com/academic-program>

Acknowledgements: The researchers are grateful for the Teagle Foundation’s grant, “Building Faculty Capacity for 21st Century Teaching,” awarded through S.E.P.C.H.E., for providing our faculty development, specifically training in *I Liq Chuan: The Martial Art of Awareness*. We wish to thank Grandmaster Sam Chin for encouraging us to integrate *I Liq Chuan* into our full-credit academic course s at Cabrini University. Thanks also to the Office of Academic Affairs and the support of the Cabrini University Faculty Summer grants.

