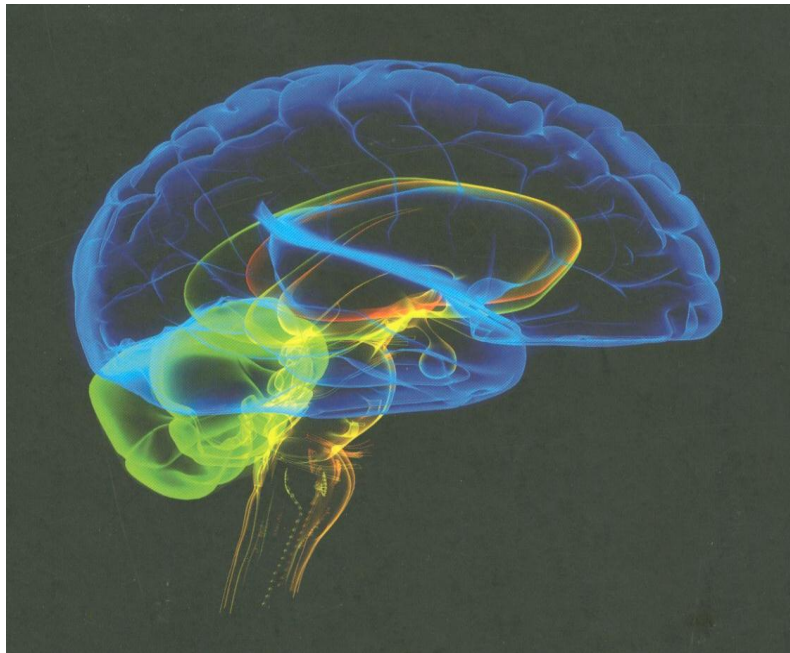


**FIELDING GRADUATE UNIVERSITY
HOD DOCTORAL PROGRAM
ASSESSMENT CONTRACT**

KA*753C

INTEGRATING RESEARCH & PRACTICE



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ASSESSMENT BEGIN DATE: 21 MAY 2012

ASSESSMENT COMPLETION DATE: 21 AUGUST 2012

AGREEMENT IS FOR CREDIT

LEARNING GOALS

Through the course of this study, I will:

- Thoroughly investigate first-person methodologies to the study of consciousness, contrasting and comparing these various methodologies
- Apply first-person methodologies to different modes of practice, developing my own ways of categorizing and modeling these alternatives
- Explore a sense of “fit” between certain forms of first-person research and traditions of practice
- Identify and experience alternative traditions of practice that are best approached using first person methodologies of research

LEARNING PLAN

I will use the outline offered by Varela and Shear (1999, p. 7), presenting a range of first-person methodologies to the study of consciousness, as a point of departure for this study. Here is their presentation:

	<i>Method</i>	<i>Procedure</i>	<i>Validation</i>
1	Introspection	Attention during a defined task	Verbal accounts, mediated
2	Phenomenology	Reduction-suspension	Descriptive invariants
3	Meditation: Samatha; Mahamudra; Zen; TM	Sustained attention; uncontrived awareness; suspension of mental activity	Traditional accounts, scientific accounts

Beginning with Methodology #2, Phenomenology:

The foundation of this 753C study will be a “Writing Phenomenology” workshop facilitated by Professor Bentz. According to the syllabus: “The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the practice and art of writing phenomenological descriptions. A second – though no less important – purpose is to help students develop a phenomenological approach to the world.” Each student will write 8 short essays navigating the following topics: 1) Lived

Experience, 2) Etymology, 3) Existentials, 4) Earliest Most, 5) Not Present Opposite, 6) Essential Structure, 7) Techniques, and 8) Lifeworld. Since this is phenomenological writing, we will be attempting to capture the ‘essence’ of these phenomena; as such, the essays will not be protracted and deliberative but rather spontaneous and irruptive. Such a first-person style has the potential to reveal dispositions, qualities, and characteristics of consciousness. Each student will address the 8 essays based on a recurring focus, a predetermined subject of attention. The focus I will choose is “Transformation of Consciousness,” which leads to Varela and Shear’s Methodology #3: Meditation:

Concurrently with the “Writing Phenomenology” workshop, I will undertake what I am calling a “Transformation Intensive.” This will be a disciplined and ambitious schedule of practices that have the reputation for advancing, enhancing, and/or transforming consciousness. I enclose the proposed schedule for this Intensive in the Appendices to this Contract. Varela and Shear, in the body of their article, describe the precision that can be achieved with the practice of meditation in the study of consciousness. I will augment this position by following the framework defined by Patanjali (Satchidananda, 2010), where meditation is understood as the seventh stage of a comprehensive practice of Yoga; thus, the Transformation Intensive also could be called a Yoga Intensive. Since I am approaching the Intensive as a researcher within the context of a KA*753C study, I will provide detailed documentation of the progress using a calendrical chart. This approach has the benefit of establishing objective third-person data that may then later be correlated with first-person accounts, which brings up Varela and Shear’s Methodology #1, Introspection:

Within the dynamics of the Phenomenological Writing workshop and the Yoga Intensive, and as a technique for capturing insights to consciousness amidst the flurry of these intense practices, I will maintain a couple of journals: The first journal will practice Introspection as I attempt to record thoughtfully the transformations and fluctuations of consciousness as they may appear. Since, once again, I am approaching this study of consciousness as a researcher utilizing first-person methodologies, it will be practical to make an extended entry at the outset, to be used as a baseline. The second journal will be a dream journal as I endeavor to include within this study of consciousness activity at the astral level.

DEMONSTRATION OF LEARNING

With the combination of these activities – various first-person methodologies to the study of consciousness – I hope to achieve the goals of KA-753C, integrating research and practice.

Deliverables will include:

- Phenomenology: Eight short phenomenological descriptive essays plus a summation essay describing the learning that transpired through the course of the workshop
- Yoga Intensive: Copies of the calendrical charts recording progress
- Introspection: Edited transcriptions of the most insightful or revealing highlights of the two journals
- A final short essay encapsulating the learning within the context of KA*753C; in particular, proposing a fit between first-person methodologies to the study of consciousness and alternative forms of practice

I also thought that it might be interesting to have an objective in mind. I mean, what is a transformation of consciousness for? Simply transformation for its own sake? By placing an objective at some point in the future, an intentional attractor toward which all this activity is directed, an energetic destination that seems not quite realizable as the study begins, we will have additional third-person objective data by which to measure the effectiveness of the study. The objective is a mode of consciousness that does not exist at the present moment, and may only come into being as a consequence of transformation. With all that said, here is my objective: I want to be funded for my dissertation research through a fellowship or grant; I don't want to have to take out any more student loans to complete my doctoral degree.

REFERENCE MATERIALS

The following sources will be read, contemplated, and integrated in this experiential exploration of the associations between research and practice, in process providing definition to first-person approaches to the study of consciousness:

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APPENDIX 1

Daily Schedule

4:00 AM – Awake
4:00 – 4:30 – Pranayama
4:30 – 6:30 – Meditation
6:30 – 7:30 – Yoga
7:30 – 9:00 – Shower/Breakfast
9:00 – 2:00 – Writing
2:00 – 3:00 – Afternoon Yoga
3:00 – 4:00 – Afternoon Meal
4:00 – 6:00 – Drawing
6:00 – 9:00 – Reading
9:00 – 10:00 – Meditation
10:00 PM – To Bed

Note: This schedule is an idealization. For example, there are periods when no writing is pressing, so the time from 9am to 2pm might be better invested reading. It seems to be a matter of habit that Drawing gets consistently neglected, though this is the activity that perhaps needs the most attention, in the interest of bi-hemispheric balance.

APPENDIX 2

Morning Routine

- I) (4:00 AM) UPON WAKING, while still lying in bed...
- 1) Carefully recall and record dream sequences.¹
 - 2) Afri-I routine:²
 - A) Eye exercises: First stretch face. Then: Move eyes in the vertical dimension, up and down, 12 times; move eyes in the horizontal direction, side to side, 12 times; move eyes in the diagonal direction, top to bottom, 12 times each side; fix eyes above the forehead, then rotate in semi-circle, top to bottom, first right then left, 12 times each; finally, fix eyes again above the forehead, then perform complete circular rotations, first clockwise then counter-clockwise, 12 times each. In all these movements, stretch the edge of comfort so that the eye muscles are exercised thus increasing their range and flexibility.
 - B) Place soles of feet together close to the perineum, lower knees as much as possible; rub hands together vigorously to generate energy; place palms over eyes to let warm energy be absorbed; then, using both ring fingers, gently massage meridians around circumference of eyes, top and bottom.
 - C) Raise up on coccyx, feet about 18 inches high, head about 12 inches high, arms outstretched forward, palms face down – Naukasana (Boat pose). Once set, do 120 Fire Breaths; focus intensity of breathing movement on taut stomach muscles.
 - 3) Come down and move into Sethu Bandhasana (Bridge pose). Hold and stretch spine upward, raising chest toward sky. Now do 120 quick intentional breaths, emphasizing the out-breath, moving the belly button up and down, with the purpose of massaging the viscera.
 - 4) Bring legs up to chest and lock with forearms, raise head and squeeze into tight ball – Supta Pawanmuktasana – a counter-pose for the spine; hold

¹ Set intention with subconscious before going to sleep to remember dreams, thus practicing the potential of “lucid dreaming.”

² Afri-I (Gentle Spirit) was the name of an early yogic mentor, who wrote a workbook entitled “Self-Transformation Intensive Manual,” from which these exercises were taken. I attended several “Rebirthing” workshops, which would take place over the course of a week, hosted by Afri-I on his land in Eastern Washington, overlooking the Columbia Valley.

for 30 seconds, then rock back and forth 20 times massaging organs and, in the process, expelling gas.

- 5) Now do 80 alternate sit-ups, hands locked behind the head, touching right elbow to left knee and then left elbow to right knee, once again emphasizing out-breath. Then, bring head straight forward in a 'crunch,' touching forehead to knees, 10 times, emphasizing out-breath and taut stomach muscles.
 - 6) Finish with Jathara Parivartanasana (Supine twist); while lying on back, bring right knee up and over outstretched left leg while head and upper body twist to the right; with left arm, push down on right knee to accentuate twist while right arm reaches out to its side. Repeat by mirroring this process on other side of body; 2 times each side.
- II) Come down onto floor; get into Vajrasana (Kneeling pose), facing altar.
- 1) Place hands in heart mudra; bow and offer prayer of thanks to Divine Mercy, Heavenly Blessing, for such an incredible and beautiful life, and for this opportunity at spiritual growth and transformation; raise head, straighten spine and do three deep OMs...
 - 2) Place hands gently on thighs and do 240 Fire Breaths, emphasizing in-breath, pulling the pelvic plexus (Swadhisthana chakra) up against the spine affirmatively on each in-breath. On last breath raise shoulders high and perform Jalandhara Bandha (chin lock), Uddiyana Bandha (abdominal contraction), and Moola Bandha (anus lock) simultaneously. Hold for as long as is comfortable; release by bending forward and audibly expelling any tension or discomfort, emotional or otherwise; and then rest for short time.
 - 3) Still in Vajrasana, raise hands over head, interlock fingers, join index fingers pointing to sky; chant Sat Nam while affirmatively pulling belly-button (Manipura chakra) toward spine. Repeat until breath fades (approximately 20 times).
 - 4) Shift into Simhasana (Lion pose); repeat 6 times.
- III) (4:30 AM) Now get onto meditation cushion:
- 1) Perform Paschimottanasana (Head-knee pose) to loosen up legs for meditation.
 - 2) Perform Ardha Matsyendrasana (Half spinal twist), once each side, to loosen up spine for meditation.
 - 3) Now sit in Half-lotus (Ardha Padmasana) with left leg on top of right thigh; perform Vipassana meditation for 1 hour, beginning with Anapana.
- IV) (5:30 AM) Still on meditation cushion:

- 1) Perform Paschimottanasana (Head-knee pose) to loosen up legs for meditation.
 - 2) Perform Ardha Matsyendrasana (Half spinal twist), once each side, to loosen up spine for meditation.
 - 3) Now sit in Half-lotus (Ardha Padmasana) with right leg on top of left thigh; perform chanting meditation for 1 hour; variations include chanting OM, chanting vowels, chakra chanting (lum, vum, rum, yum, hum, aum, om); alternatively, perform Anuloma Viloma Pranayama (Alternate nostril breathing).
 - 4) Upon completion of meditation sequence, program receptive subconscious with autosuggestion (dhyana), a positive affirmation for the day.
 - 5) Chant Gyatri Mantra, 3 times; chant Mahamrityunjaya Mantra, 3 times. Rest and absorb.
- V) (6:30 AM) Move onto yoga mat for Morning Yoga Routine:
- 1) Surya Namaskara (Sun salutation), 3 rounds.
 - 2) Full and flowing hip rotation, 12 times each side.
 - 3) Virabhadrasana I (Warrior I), 12 breath count, twice each side.
 - 4) Virabhadrasana II (Warrior II), 12 breath count, twice each side.
 - 5) Trikonasana (Triangle pose), 12 breath count, twice each side; plus 2 variations, 6 breath count.
 - 6) Standing Forward bend, 2 minutes.
 - 7) Sirsha Angustha Yogasana (Head to toe pose), 12 breath count, twice each side.
 - 8) Eka Padasana (One foot pose), 12 breath count, twice each side.
 - 9) Bakrasana (Crane pose), 12 breath count, twice each side.
 - 10) Vrikasana (Tree pose), 48 breath count, twice each side.
 - 11) Sirshasana (Headstand), 48 breath count; working up to 5 minutes.
 - 12) Shavasana (Corpse pose), 3 minutes.
- VI) (7:30 AM) Go to shower.

Afternoon Routine

Version 1

- 1) Paschimottanasana (Back stretching pose), 3 reaches forward, 12 breath count.
- 2) Ushtrasana (Camel pose), 3 times, 12 breath count.
- 3) Shashankasana (Hare pose), stretch back long in counter pose.

- 4) Meru Wakrasana (Spinal twist), 3 times each side 12 breath count.
- 5) Bhu Namanasana (Spinal twist prostration), 3 times each side 12 breath count.
- 6) Ardha Matsyendrasana (Half spinal twist), 3 times each side, 12 breath count.
- 7) Navasana (Balance pose), raise 3 times, 12 breath count.
- 8) Utthita Hasta Merudandasana (Raised hand and spine pose), raise 2 times, 24 breath count.
- 9) Merudandasana (Spinal column pose), raise 2 times, 24 breath count.
- 10) Pada Angushthasana (Tiptoe pose), practice 3 times each side
- 11) Matsyasana (Fish pose), hold for slow and easy 36 breath count; practice sheetkari pranayama on last 12 breaths.
- 12) Halasana (Plough pose), hold for 24 breath count – plus 2 variations, one on each shoulder for 12 breath count.
- 13) Sarvangasana (Shoulder stand), 108 breath count; close with Padma Sarvangasana (Shoulder stand lotus pose) for 12 more breaths.
- 14) Shavasana (Corpse pose), 3 minutes.

Version 2

- 1) Tadasana (Palm tree pose), raise 12 times.
- 2) Tiryaka Tadasana (Swaying palm tree pose), 6 times each side.
- 3) Kati Chakrasana (Waist rotating pose), 6 times each side.
- 4) Utthanpadasana (Raised legs pose), practice variations at 30 degree, 60 degrees, and 90 degrees, holding long enough to push comfort edge.
- 5) Chakra Padasana (Leg rotation), rotate each leg 10 times in each direction; then hold both legs together and rotate 10 times each direction.
- 6) Pada Sanchalanasana (Cycling), 10 times forward and then 10 times backward with each leg.
- 7) Supta Vajrasana (Sleeping thunderbolt pose), slow and easy 36 breath count.
- 8) Shashankasana (Hare pose), stretch back long in counter pose.
- 9) Dhanurasana (Bow pose), raise 3 times, 12 breath count.

- 10)Yogamudrasana (Psychic union pose), bend forward and touch forehead to floor 3 times, holding for as long as is comfortable.
- 11)Matsyasana (Fish pose), hold for slow and easy 36 breath count; practice sheetkari pranayama on last 12 breaths.
- 12)Halasana (Plough pose), hold for 24 breath count – plus 2 variations, one on each shoulder for 12 breath count
- 13)Sarvangasana (Shoulder stand), 108 breath count; close with Padma Sarvangasana (Shoulder stand lotus pose) for 12 more breaths.
- 14)Shavasana (Corpse pose), 3minutes.