

The Alternative Clinic

The Importance of Clinical Observation

Chinese medicine was traditionally learned through teacher-disciple relationships, immersing the next generation of practitioners in day to day clinical practice with old and experienced doctors. An old doctor required discipline, diligence, and maturity from the younger generation in order to accept them as a student and welcome them into their clinic, as the endeavor to teach and mentor was not undertaken lightly. It is only through observing and assisting treatments for a wide variety of ailments over an extended period of time one gains confidence and skill.

Historically, teachers were in charge of determining when the student's training was sufficient to *xing yi* 行醫; leave mentorship and begin private practice. This process was expected to take many years. The learning and relationship gained leading to passing on one's lineage cannot be underestimated.

Today, most formal educational programs in Chinese medicine do not provide exposure to skilled practitioners who treat, explain, and struggle with difficult cases in front of students as a tool for learning and competency. In most programs, first and second year students learn predominantly from following third and fourth year students in the clinic. This lack of meaningful exposure to experienced practitioners leaves graduates without the training they need to be effective or successful. This greatly affects clinical efficacy and the reputation of a medicine with the potential to make profound changes. As of 2022, statistics show that 50% of the graduates of Chinese medicine programs are not in practice 5 years post-graduation, with an average student loan debt exceeding \$70,000. The current state of formally organized education in the classroom and in the clinical setting results in a lack of true understanding of Chinese medicine, and thus lack of adept application of its tools.

For thirty years, the 501c3 not for profit organization Association for Traditional Studies has worked to document, preserve and disseminate traditional Chinese medicine. To ensure the knowledge gained from the last 30 years of work is valued and preserved for future generations, the Alternative Clinic in Asheville, NC offers clinical immersion programs to replicate the mentor-disciple style training JulieAnn and Andrew Nugent-Head received during their combined 30+ years in China. Seeking to identify and train a next generation of exceptionally skilled practitioners, clinical observation participants will observe acupuncture, bodywork and herbs deftly and flexibly applied for a wide variety of conditions across a range of patient demographics. Program attendees benefit each day from discussion with seasoned practitioners to elucidate treatment and

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strategy. The Association for Traditional Studies is excited to spend the next thirty years offering this incredible training to foster the next generation of scholars-practitioners and raise the bar of medicine in their field.

Who are my teachers?

Observers will be following Andrew Nugent-Head (MSOM) and JulieAnn Nugent-Head (MD, MSOM). Andrew spent 28 years in China learning in traditional mentor-disciple relationships under Wang Jinhuai, Xie Pieqi and Li Hongxiang, while JulieAnn spent 8.5 years in China studying with traditional teachers Li Hongxiang, Chen Tongyun as well as doctorate studies at the Zhejiang University of Chinese Medicine, Hangzhou, China and mentorship under doctoral advisor Wen Chenping.

Who can attend?

Short term and long term clinical observation is open to licensed practitioners, or students of Chinese medicine who are able to earn externship credits for their time in the clinic.

Is this approved for continuing education credit?

Yes! The NCCAOM allows 10 hours of clinical observation to be applied toward professional development and continuing education requirements. For international practitioners, please confirm CE requirements with your country's governing boards.

What does the program cost?

Weekly observation is \$750. Payment must be made at time of booking and is non-refundable unless cancelled by the clinic due to circumstances beyond its control. Payment is due in full at time of booking. Multi-week participants receive a \$250 discount on the weekly rate. Dates must be contiguous to receive a discount.

What does the program look like?

Observers will observe patients Monday through Thursday, following Andrew Nugent-Head and JulieAnn Nugent-Head. The day begins at 9:00am with a brief introduction to cases, followed by

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treatments through the end of the day with a brief 40 minute lunch break. End of day case discussion will provide the dedicated time for participants to ask questions to clarify treatments & formulas.

Application Process:

Observation is limited. To sign up, please send an e-mail with requested dates of attendance to confirm availability.

Travel:

Asheville airport (AVL) is 20 minutes from the clinic and very easy to navigate. However, as a small airport, flights are much more expensive compared to flying into Greenville or Charlotte. For international flights, Newark or Chicago are excellent hubs to consider as they both offer direct flights into Asheville.

Accommodations:

The clinic is in the heart of downtown on the south slope. The city is hilly, but quite walkable. Numerous premium hotels are available within walking distance to the clinic. West Asheville and East Asheville have many airbnb choices, but will require car / bike or uber service.

Parking:

There is limited parking in the downtown area. Metered street parking in downtown has a two hour time limit and is strictly enforced. Parking garages in the downtown area are available for \$12 per day. Our front desk staff will be happy to answer any parking or logistic questions you may have.

Personal Belongings Storage:

We have very limited storage. Please minimize what you bring to the clinic.

Shift Times:

Treatment hours are typically 9 - 4:30pm, however JulieAnn and Andrew often see patients before or after clinic hours and during lunch. Please plan to arrive at the clinic by 8:30 am to get settled and

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have a brief introduction to cases. Lunch break typically begins around noon. There are many restaurants with lunch and snack options in downtown, but we recommend bringing a packed lunch for convenience. Please note, we do not have facilities to refrigerate or heat up food. Please dispose of any food waste in the garbage cans **outside of the clinic** to minimize aromas in the treatment area.

Hygiene:

Please be aware of personal hygiene, come to the clinic clean and showered, and do not apply strong essential oils or perfumes.

Clinic Dress Code:

- Men: business casual black collared shirt, dark colored or khaki pants and closed toe shoes. Hoodies and t-shirts are not acceptable. In winter sweaters or jackets should also be solid black or dark in color.
- Women: business casual black top, black or khaki pants and conservative jewelry. Closed toe black shoes. In winter, sweaters or cover-ups should also be solid black or dark in color.

Please note, we are a professional medical clinic and conduct ourselves accordingly. Participants are required to have clean and pressed professional looking clothing. No exceptions. If you arrive improperly attired, you will not be permitted to observe.

Conduct:

We work to ensure that your time at The Alternative Clinic is an invaluable learning experience. However, we do ask you maintain quiet observation. It is often inappropriate to answer questions while in the treatment room and in front of the patient.

If the practitioner is chatting with a patient in a casual manner, that does not invite you to join in the conversation. If you have comments or questions, write them down. If you feel you have beneficial suggestions, diagnoses or treatment strategies for either practitioner or patient, please keep them to yourself. Please remember that the patients are in our clinic to see our clinic's practitioners. If you feel

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we are missing something or you have a solution you feel we have overlooked, or you feel your experience is valuable, we still ask that you to blend into the background and stay silent. We discuss cases at the end of the day and will provide you with time to ask questions or offer comments. This is first and foremost meant to be a learning lesson for you, and is not an opportunity for us to learn what you know or how you run your practice.

Please turn off your cell phone and store with your belongings. While it may seem acceptable to utilize the phone to look up points and herbs, looking at your phone conveys an image of non-professionalism to both practitioner and patient. If you feel you need to take notes, paper and pen is preferable, but we strongly advise letting go of the desire to document and simply watch and listen.

We do ask participants to complete a clinic reflection sheet prior to receiving their certificate of completion.. It is helpful for us to hear your feedback in order for us to improve the program for others. Clinic reflection prompts are found on the last page of this document.

I have read and accept these guidelines for my clinical training while at the Alternative Clinic. I understand this is an opportunity for my learning and advancement, and I may receive continuing education credit for this time. Please sign this form and return to the clinic.

Signed By _____

Date _____

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Clinic Observation Reflections

We hope your time at the Alternative Clinic was a valuable training opportunity for you. Please write down or film your thoughts on being in our clinic to assist us in improving the experience as well as to better inform others on what to expect.

We have created a list of questions below as a guideline, but you are certainly welcome to write any comments or observations you feel are helpful. Please complete this form and submit via email to receive your clinical observation certificate of completion.

Part 01 – A brief description of yourself

- where are you from
- how long have you been in practice
- what kind of previous training you have had
- have you taken any courses from JulieAnn / Andrew before, and have they affected your practice

Part 02 – Your experience in the clinic

- impression of the range of illnesses and diversity of patients coming in
- impression of quality of treatments given
- explanations of treatment decisions and patient cases
- what was most interesting to you
- what was most surprising to you
- do you feel you will be able to integrate what you have seen at The Alternative Clinic into your practice

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Part 03 – General impressions of the program

- how was organizing your clinical training dates and payment?
- how helpful was the staff once you arrived?
- how was your experience in Asheville?
- what more would you want from this program?
- any advice for future observers?