

## Naropa helps bring contemplation to mainstream classrooms



By **BRITTANY ANAS**  
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Educators from mainstream universities will convene at Boulder's Buddhist-inspired college to learn how to weave meditation, contemplation and perhaps even gongs into their own classrooms.

Naropa University will host the seminar, which begins Tuesday and will draw professors from 17 colleges and universities across the United States and Mexico. Naropa will draw on its three decades of experience and faculty expertise to train other teachers in contemplative education practices which are an emerging trend in higher education, organizers say.

"Higher education is increasingly recognizing the role that colleges and universities play in students' development as socially engaged, moral human beings," said Stuart Sigman, vice president for academic affairs at Naropa.

He said the school's contemplative approach to education provides a "missing link" in many liberal-arts education programs: adding self-reflection with traditional critical and analytical research skills.

The symposium will include practice discussions, and when they start to get controversial, a member of the session will use a bell or gong to signal that it's time for self-reflection. Sigman said the practice adds another level of critical thinking – it's not to avoid conflict, but rather help train students and educators to share alternative viewpoints and listen compassionately.

Carol Foust, a professor from Colorado State University's Pueblo campus, will be attending the conference and said it's important for educators to create a classroom environment that nurtures the dichotomies of individuality and community, as well as silence and sharing.

"Class dynamics make or break learning," she said.

Naropa's Annual Contemplative Pedagogy Seminar is partially funded by the Frederick P. Lenz Foundation for American Buddhism. It runs through Aug. 4.