The integration of the Interactive Teaching Method (ITM) of the Alexander Technique in vocal pedagogy

Susan Gouthro

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The Integration of the Interactive Teaching Method (ITM)
of the Alexander Technique in Vocal Pedagogy

Susan Deanne Gouthro

A Doctor of Musical Arts Document submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

In

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Dedication

I dedicate this document to my father, Paul Gouthro. He has encouraged his five children to strive for excellence in education throughout their lives. When I decided to pursue doctoral studies after being out of academia for sixteen years, he was my continual and unfailing support during the entire journey. Thank you, Dad, for always believing in me, always encouraging me, and for doing everything in your power to ensure I succeed.
Acknowledgments

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I cannot thank my committee enough for their support and expertise throughout this process. Professor Kevin McMillan and Dr. Carrie Stevens were extremely helpful during the discussions we had about how this document would take shape and, of course, by providing careful scrutiny during the editing phase. This document would not exist at all without the supreme efforts cheerfully and expertly given by Dr. Jo-Anne van der Vat-Chromy. She went above and beyond what any committee member could be expected to do, and for that, I am eternally grateful.

To my parents, Paul and Eileen, thank you for your endless support, love, and encouragement. To my partner, Reggie, thank you for making my schoolwork your priority and for your abundance of patience, love, and support. These last few months have presented all communities; familial, academic, and global, with unprecedented challenges. I remain forever grateful for the infinite support I have received during this time.
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Abstract

The work of F.M. Alexander (1869-1955) has become renowned in the realm of bodywork. Instrumental in furthering Alexander’s teachings is the work of Donald Weed, American Alexander Technique (AT) teacher and developer of the Interactive Teaching Method (ITM), his unique method for delivering the Alexander Technique and training teachers.

This study investigates how certified ITM instructors apply the ITM principles into their music teaching pedagogy, with a specific focus on applied voice lessons. Six practitioner interviews, as well as multiple class interviews with Weed were conducted from July 5 – 9, 2019, in Darmstadt, Germany during a five-day ITM Workshop. Analysis of the data from two sets of interviews delineate important teaching concepts and strategies that serve to support the creation of ‘critical moments’ of ease and freedom in the music-making process, for the greater awareness of both student and teacher. The goal of this study is, through the data synthesis, to identify behavioral guidelines that will facilitate the research’s further understanding of how to more effectively deliver AT concepts through the ITM in applied voice lessons.

A brief overview of the development of the Alexander Technique and summary of the life and work of F.M. Alexander, with a specific focus on his four books is presented. Included is a short synopsis of the work of three recent AT practitioners (Wragg, Weiss, and Heirich) who have a specific interest in the use of the AT and the singing voice. Also included is a Review of Literature detailing Weed’s development of the ITM and its major principles. The collected interview data is sorted and analyzed by seventeen emergent codeword/categories. Tallies of codeword/categories and indicators of significance are analyzed and discussed. A summary of behavioral guidelines pertinent to the ITM, and for teacher implementation of ITM-oriented vocal study, as well as implications for further research, are presented.
Chapter 1

Introduction and Purpose

My Experience with the Alexander Technique

My first encounters with the acclaimed Alexander Technique began as fleeting moments while an undergraduate voice student. The first of these experiences was in a masterclass situation where I watched an Alexander teacher adjust an undergraduate pianist’s head and arm positions while playing a selection on piano; when they played again, it sounded better. Although the actions were interesting to observe, the improvement did not register with me as something comprehensible or replicable.

Several years later I was a participant in a voice workshop where we had Alexander treatments that involved lying on a table and receiving adjustments, which at that time seemed to me to be a type of massage. Then, while we performed, the teacher would stand behind us and adjust our necks, head, or shoulders. It seemed like a sort of secret magic was happening that I did not understand at all. I was able to sing more freely but did not know why and was unable to duplicate those conditions and results on my own. Therefore, I did not give it further thought once the workshop ended.

Fast forward many years, during which I had the opportunity to complete advanced degrees in singing, garner input from many excellent teachers and coaches, and start working professionally as an opera singer. However, I found myself time and time again in a state of confusion as I tried to come to terms with all the different thoughts and ideas I had about singing. The more input I sought, the worse it got. I was still performing regularly and was even regarded
as successful, yet I did not feel secure that I knew what I was doing, and I felt that my singing reflected that fundamental lack of security.

While working in a German opera house as a soloist, I was introduced to Donald Weed, a renowned Alexander Technique teacher and author, who developed his own way of teaching the AT called the Interactive Teaching Method (ITM). He was in town to present a weekend introductory workshop. One of our orchestra members who had trained with him encouraged me to attend the introductory lecture, which included sample lessons given by Weed. One of the vivid memories I have from that lecture was laughing so hard that I had tears running down my face and could hardly breathe. Weed, who is American, was giving the lecture in English to a German audience. The jokes he was making were not understood by most of the attendees except for me and the fellow Canadian sitting next to me. This resulted in fits of giggles that we could barely contain. I know now that this was no accident. Weed equates learning with fun and uses humor regularly in his lectures.

My curiosity was piqued enough to begin taking lessons with the orchestra member who had completed his training with Weed, as well as with another one of Weed’s advanced trainees who decided to spend some time teaching in our location. A year or so later, as a birthday present to myself, I registered for Weed’s next one-week workshop, which was in Ireland. What appealed to me was the psychological aspect involved in learning how to practice the Interactive Teaching Method (ITM). This approach deals with our mental involvement in every activity we do and focuses on learning to become more self-aware about our thought processes and habits of movement.

This approach offered me a new way to think about singing. During a lesson, Weed's most frequent question is, "Did you think about your head in relation to your body?" It was
incredibly refreshing to not worry about my breathing, my jaw, my tongue, or the placement of my singing tone. Learning to focus on my head in relation to my body to become more self-aware proved to be beneficial to my singing. The idea is once your body is aligned correctly and you have developed the mental discipline to recognize and inhibit\(^1\) bad habits, then the body is free to work in the natural way it was made to function.

Over the next several years I continued to take workshops with Weed as I found continued benefit for both my body and voice, given the demands of working as a professional singer. One experience remains ingrained in my mind. In 2008, after finishing a week-long ITM workshop with Weed in Darmstadt, Germany, I went directly afterward to Berlin, where I had an audition for an opera agent. I sang two arias for the agent after which he approached the stage to speak to me. He said that when he read on my form that I would sing Mimi’s aria, “Si, mi chiamano Mimi” from Puccini’s La bohème, his thought was, “Oh great, another person singing Mimi, which I have heard a hundred times and have no interest in hearing again.” He then went on to explain that when I began to sing, something caught his attention and the way that I stood there so simply and naturally allowed him to really listen to what I was singing about, and he believed me. He said that he wished he could have had all the younger, less-experienced singers that were waiting in the hall come in to watch and learn from what he just witnessed.

The remarkable thing about this experience was that, because I had just left the ITM course, I had, in fact, been thinking about my head in relation to my body while singing. This thinking translated into a body alignment that enhanced my performance and allowed me to deliver my message directly and honestly. I was therefore able to touch the heart of the listener.

\(^1\) Inhibit: See definition p. 10.
As a result of these several years with Weed, and the incremental but evident changes in my vocal technique, I began to hypothesize about the use of The Interactive Teaching Method of the Alexander Technique in terms of vocal instruction. I began to realize that I was not only acquiring skills to conduct myself optimally in daily activities but was also developing a self-awareness and way of thinking that would translate into how I could interact with students while teaching. I wondered how I could incorporate this thinking into teaching voice lessons. I saw many parallels between how this work was taught and how one could teach voice students.

Need for the Study

The Interactive Teaching Method (ITM)

As the title suggests, The Interactive Teaching Method (ITM) is a method that teaches one how to teach the Alexander Technique; and, in fact, anything else. As Weed states,

In the Interactive Teaching Method, we focus on the active study and application of the principles which form the foundations of, and provide the power for, Alexander’s technique. Throughout the course, we emphasize personal development as it relates to success in life by appealing to the student’s originality and powers of reasoning. In time, the Interactive Teaching Method gives students the tools to realize an on-going and increasing flexibility in thought and movement as they learn to direct their lives more efficiently to reach their dreams.²

Thinking about Alexander as a voice user, who had problems he learned to solve as he developed his technique, makes it seem like an obvious avenue to explore when working with the voice. Throughout the exposure I had to the ITM, I came into contact with many other musicians and performers who were either current students or already certified ITM teachers. I wanted to know how the musicians who taught music lessons and Alexander lessons in the ITM

² Donald Weed, The Interactive Teaching Method: Course Prospectus, Alexander Technique Teacher Training Cycle.
combined those two worlds. Gathering this information would enable me to present it, and use it to prepare my thoughts about how one could integrate the principles of the ITM into the pedagogy of teaching voice lessons, whether in a one-on-one or group situation.

Currently, there are endless resources available about vocal pedagogy and different methods of teaching voice. Using the ITM as a lens through which to approach vocal pedagogy is useful because although not specifically for singing, the ITM can be used for teaching singing through the optimization of the body and mind. There have been several books written about the Alexander Technique and performing music, a few of which deal specifically with the Alexander Technique and singing. The ITM approach differs from more conventional approaches to the Alexander technique and this document explores those differences and outlines how the ITM can be incorporated into teaching applied voice lessons.

Guiding Question

My Guiding Question for the study manifests itself quite strongly in my interview with Practitioner B.

SG: How does one do their task of teaching voice lessons (in my case) or teaching whatever else – how does one implement the ITM principles?

B: Most of the students come to the ITM…

SG: I know what you’re going to say…

B: …because of the struggles they are having in what they’re currently doing. Some like me, fall into it accidentally, but I recognize that I am in a minority there. Many people come to it because they have a passion and there is something significant going on that’s preventing them doing it. My partner at the time loved playing cello - her shoulder hurt so much, she couldn’t. That’s a much more common route for people to come to the Alexander technique – whatever the specialist activity might be. And within ‘specialist,’ I might say simply doing a day’s work sitting in front of a computer without doing things that bring about significant discomfort.
SG: Can I rephrase my question?

B: Please do.

SG: I became very interested in the ITM because it was a new way of thinking and a new way of approaching a problem that I found that I could possibly latch on to and go with easier than with some of the other ideas I had. So, with that in mind, and if I were in a position to take the ITM training and I do teach voice… I’ve kind of answered my own question.

B: Don’t let that stop you speaking, do go on.

SG: Yeah, well, I guess my question didn’t really change. So how can I teach voice with the benefits of the ITM lifestyle, let’s say? Or how best does one combine these two worlds?

B: Yep. So, on my training course from 1999-2003 there were several teachers there. Some were in mainstream education, some were music teachers, general music teachers to kids, some were specialist teachers. And a very common question they had was, how can I continue to do what I do with what I now know. How can I bring those together? And, they each had to find their own answer to that. But what the training course gave them was the ability to critically examine what they were doing in their day job. And to revise what they did and how they did it.³

Purpose Statement

As such, the purpose of this study is to investigate how certified ITM instructors apply the ITM principles to their music teaching pedagogy, with a specific focus on applied voice lessons. Analysis of the data from two sets of interviews will delineate important teaching concepts and strategies which, when implemented in an organic, use-oriented manner, will serve to support the experience of ‘critical moments,’ resulting in ease and freedom in the music-making process, for the greater awareness of both student and teacher. The goal of this study is, through the data synthesis, to identify behavioral guidelines that will facilitate this researcher’s further understanding of the AT concepts, the ITM teaching model, and assist in more effectively delivering AT concepts through the ITM in applied voice lessons.

³ Practitioner B Interview Transcript, p. 155.
Chapter 2, a Review of Literature, is a brief overview of the development of the Alexander Technique and summary of the life and work of its founder, F.M. Alexander. This chapter will survey his four books which serve as curricular entry points in the ITM program. This chapter also includes information about the nature of breathing from an Alexander Technique perspective, specifically in the work of F.M. Alexander and Jessica Wolf. This chapter concludes with a synopsis of the work of three recent Alexander Technique practitioners (Wragg, Weiss, and Heirich), who have focused on the use of the Alexander Technique and the singing voice. Chapter 3 is a Review of Literature detailing Donald Weed’s development of the Interactive Teaching Method (ITM). This chapter presents information pertaining to Weed’s AT teacher Marjorie Barstow, as well as delineates the major principles of his teaching technique. Chapter 4 presents the data from multiple class interviews with Donald Weed, collected during his ITM Workshop in Darmstadt, Germany, during the summer of 2019. Chapter 5 presents the interview summaries and data from six study participants from the same ITM Workshop. Chapter 6 presents findings and discussions of the study data; congruencies, differences, and significances are analyzed and discussed. Chapter 7 summarizes conclusions and presents behavioral guidelines pertinent and applicable to vocal study, as well as delineates recommendations for further research.

Study Design

Practitioner Interview Questions

In the design phase of this document, I made the decision to attend Donald Weed’s 2019 ITM Workshop in Darmstadt, Germany, with the express purpose of conducting field research with Weed pertaining to how certified ITM instructors apply the ITM principles in their
specialist activity of music teaching. However, after a day on-site, I decided to widen the scope of the study to include a second data set; and, in addition to Weed, to also interview ITM practitioners who were applying ITM principles in their music teaching. In the process of selecting workshop participants for these interviews, I searched for subjects who were either a) expert ITM teachers; b) ITM teachers who were musicians and music teachers; c) ITM teachers who were singers and voice teachers; or d) musicians who were new to the ITM.

The demographics of the 6 interview subjects are as follows:

Practitioner A: An American professional trumpet player and teacher who is a certified AT teacher. This was his first workshop in the ITM.

Practitioner B: A British accomplished ITM teacher, who has completed both 4-year training programs and trains trainers. He is not a musician.

Practitioner C: A German singer and teacher who is a certified ITM teacher and graduate of the Trainer’s Training Program and has completed both 4-year training programs.

Practitioner D: A German singer and teacher who is a certified ITM teacher and graduate of the Trainer’s Training Program and has completed both 4-year training programs.

Practitioner E: A German undergraduate violinist who has had numerous ITM lessons. This was his first ITM Workshop.

Practitioner F: A German cellist and university cello professor who is an accomplished teacher of the ITM and has completed both 4-year training programs and trains trainers.

The Practitioner Interview Questions were as follows:

1. What is your affiliation with the AT or the ITM?
2. What brought you to this work?
3. Have you had experiences with the AT other than the ITM? If so, what was different about them?
4. What do you think the fundamental differences are between the ITM and more conventional approaches to the AT?
5. Do you incorporate the ITM/AT into your music teaching lessons? How?
6. Can you speak about breathing and how using the ITM or the AT can improve it?
7. Do you use hands-on work with your music students? When and how?
Data Collection and Analysis

The raw data from both data sets (Weed Workshop Interviews and Practitioner Interviews) were sorted to eliminate rhetoric and process from the individual stories, thus bringing to light essential AT and ITM concepts and principles. Themes and concepts were identified and the emergent data was sorted into seventeen codeword/categories. These codeword/categories are: ‘Application of the ITM in Lessons,’ ‘Art of Questioning,’ ‘Breath Use,’ ‘Critical Moment,’ ‘General/Basic Principles,’ ‘Group Teaching,’ ‘Hands-on Techniques,’ ‘Interactive,’ ‘Lengthening the Spine/Flexibility,’ ‘Mastery,’ ‘Mental Processes/Thinking,’ ‘Natural System,’ ‘Original Sources,’ ‘Responsibility of the Student,’ ‘Self-Awareness/Awareness,’ ‘Table Work,’ and ‘Use of Mirrors.’

Discussions of the seventeen codeword/categories by individual participants in the two data sets was completed, as well as comparisons and contrasts between the two data sets in terms of similarities and indications of category significance. From the cumulative results, behavioral guidelines for facilitating deeper understanding of the AT concepts, the ITM teaching model, and for more effectively delivering AT concepts through the ITM in applied voice lessons were identified.

Definition of Terms

For this study, the following terms are defined as:

**Alexander Technique:** The study of thinking in relation to movement in order to learn how to develop the mental disciplines necessary to realize all of our potentialities.4

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Application of the ITM in Lessons: The manner of incorporating the principles of the ITM while teaching music lessons.5

Art of Questioning: The act of questioning students to stimulate thought processes as opposed to giving directions.6

Breath Use: Many Alexander Technique teachers deal specifically with breath use and vocalizing, i.e. with the whispered ‘ah’ exercise. In the ITM breath is not dealt with specifically, only as part of the whole system.7

Category Significance Indicator: An indication of either yes or no was given to each of the seventeen codeword/categories in reference to the relative importance of that category to either the AT or the ITM or both.

Conscious Control: The application of inhibition of the subconscious animal powers in everyday life demonstrates the principle of conscious control.8

Critical Moment: A technical term that defines what you are going to think at the moment you go into an activity – the moment when you go from planning to do something to actually doing it.9

End-gaining: A direct procedure on the part of the person endeavoring to gain the desired “end.”10

General/Basic Principles: In the ITM, general or basic principles are inherent to the method. All other ideas can be reduced to the principles defined by Alexander in his books.11

Inhibit: Refusing to respond to some stimulus (or stimuli) to psycho-physical action. What we refuse to do, what we wish to prevent.12 The mental discipline by which we can stop the thinking

5 Practitioner C Interview Transcript, p. 159.

6 Practitioner F Interview Transcript, p. 174.

7 Weed Interview Transcript, p. 122.


9 Weed Class Interview Transcripts, p. 117.


11 Weed Interview Transcript, p. 125.

12 F.M. Alexander, Constructive Conscious Control, 103.
that creates our usual manner of response in order to gain the time necessary to accomplish the
thinking required to dominate our old manner of habitual misdirection.\textsuperscript{13}

**ITM:** Interactive Teaching Method of the Alexander Technique designed by Donald Weed in
which the main thought is that the poise of the head in relation to the body in movement is the
key to freedom and ease of motion.\textsuperscript{14}

**Means-whereby:** The manner of the functioning of the human organism. A reasoned
consideration of the causes of the conditions present, and indirect instead of a direct procedure
on the part of the person endeavoring to gain the desired ‘end.’\textsuperscript{15}

**Mental Processes/Thinking:** “The process involved in projecting messages from the brain to the
mechanisms that make the movement, is what Alexander labelled directing oneself in activity. In
the ITM, they call this thinking.”\textsuperscript{16}

**Hands-on Technique:** Inherent to the Alexander Technique is the act of placing hands on a
pupil to help them become aware of unnecessary tension, and to learn to release it. In some
approaches to the AT, using hands is of significant importance. In the ITM using hands is only
used to enhance the students thinking.\textsuperscript{17}

**Interactive:** A crucial element of the ITM which is cultivated by working in groups and
encouraging discussion between teacher and student and within the group as a whole.\textsuperscript{18}

**Mastery:** The act of improving the desired activity of the student through direct attention to the
process employed. The students’ capacity to focus on directing themselves in an activity, rather
than on their concern for a specific outcome (end-gaining), defines the true essence of ‘Mastery’
in terms of both the AT and ITM.\textsuperscript{19}

**Natural System:** The state in which our bodies are able to function when there are no external
muscular interferences. The goal of AT study is to strive to allow our bodies to work as they
were naturally created. “If you stop doing the wrong thing, the right thing does itself.”\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{13} Donald Weed, \textit{What You Think is What You Get} (Bristol: ITM Publications, 2004), 116.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 33.

\textsuperscript{15} F.M. Alexander, \textit{Constructive Conscious Control}, 29.

\textsuperscript{16} Donald Weed, \textit{Reach Your Dreams}, 31.

\textsuperscript{17} Practitioner F Interview Transcript, p. 173.

\textsuperscript{18} Weed Interview Transcript, p. 116.

\textsuperscript{19} Practitioner E Interview Transcript, p. 167.

\textsuperscript{20} Practitioner B Interview Transcript, p. 153.
**Original Sources:** The ITM is unique in the extent to which they study and use the original texts written by F.M. Alexander. Everything studied in the ITM can be directly traced back to something Alexander said or wrote.²¹

**Primary control:** “In every movement you make there is a change in the relationship of your head with your body that precedes and accompanies the movement (which goes before and goes with the movement) and which either helps you or gets in your way.”²²

**Self-Awareness/Awareness:** The goal of the Alexander Technique is to create a heightened awareness in the student so they can notice and reduce external physical tension.²³

**Specialist Activity:** “It should be realized here, that during the course of this work a process of building is going on, fundamental sensory building, on a general and not a specific basis.”²⁴ “Alexander would counsel us very strongly to be a generalist first and a specialist second.”²⁵

**Table Work:** Table work using hands is common among many Alexander Technique teachers. In the ITM, table work is not performed.²⁶

**Use of Mirrors:** Alexander himself used mirrors to notice behaviors so that he could diagnose his vocal issues. In the ITM, however, the use of mirrors is discouraged.²⁷

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**Delimitations**

The Alexander Technique is a process-oriented movement-awareness method. It allows the organizing principles of organic movement to be experienced and integrated into every manner of daily use. Core to the experience of the Alexander Technique and the teaching purported by the ITM, is that this is not a result-oriented methodology. As such, this study does

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²¹ Practitioner B Interview Transcript, p. 150.
²³ Practitioner A Interview Transcript, p. 147.
²⁴ F.M. Alexander, *Constructive Conscious Control*, 118.
²⁵ Practitioner B Interview Transcript, p. 155.
²⁶ Weed Interview Transcript, p. 117.
²⁷ Ibid., 120.
not attempt in any way to create a handbook of use for vocal pedagogues, but rather, is an attempt to synthesize AT teaching strategies and behavioral guidelines which, when implemented in an organic, use-oriented manner in specialist activities, create ‘critical moments’ resulting in ease and freedom in the music-making process, for the greater awareness of both student and teacher.
Chapter 2

Review of Literature: The Development of the Alexander Technique

About F.M. Alexander

Frederick Matthias (F.M.) Alexander (1869-1955) was an Australian actor who developed an increasingly troublesome condition of hoarseness while performing. Sometimes this hoarseness would get so severe he would lose his voice in the middle of a performance. After consulting with voice doctors and vocal coaches and being reassured everything looked fine physiologically and seemed to be working normally, he deduced it must be something he was doing to himself while performing, which resulted in him losing his voice. Thus began Alexander's life-long study of thinking in relation to movement and human performance.

He began a process of self-examination with mirrors to see if he could determine the cause of his vocal problems. With time, he found that by using conscious control of his actions, by inhibiting wrong movements rather than trying to do correct ones, and by focusing on the ‘means-whereby’ rather than the end to be gained, his vocal issues and longstanding respiratory problems disappeared. Initially focused on instruction in breathing and vocal production, Alexander’s work expanded over the years. He found that the principles he articulated and the disciplines he employed so successfully in teaching voice, also brought about an improvement in a student's general condition and a higher quality of performance in all human activity.

When Alexander’s teaching approach impressed a leading Sydney surgeon, he began to expand his focus to include medical issues, specifically tuberculosis. This development resulted in him moving in 1904 to London, where he found success in his teaching, built essential contacts, and gained financial security. Ten years later, he began spending time regularly in the
United States, cultivating an impressive student following, which resulted in his brother, A.R., setting up a semi-permanent practice. After 1924 however, their regular visits to the US ceased, and they resided permanently in London.

By learning to direct the power of his conscious mind reasonably, fluidly, and creatively, Alexander was able to incorporate his principles in all his endeavors and impart this learning to his students. He published four important books detailing his theories and life’s work and ran continuous training courses until his death in 1955 at the age of eighty-six.

The Writings of F.M. Alexander

F.M. Alexander wrote four influential books that fully articulate the development and application of his technique. Alexander’s first book, *Man’s Supreme Inheritance* (1910)²⁸, opens with an introduction by the prominent American philosopher, psychologist, and educational reformer Professor John Dewey, who was a student of Alexander’s. The book addresses habits of thought and body, as well as evolutionary standards. Part One focuses specifically on the subconscious mind and the act of inhibition. It discusses in detail the concept of ‘conscious control,’ what exactly it is, and how one can work on achieving and applying it. In Part Two, Alexander goes into more detail about conscious guidance and control, outlining the processes and practices. The following passage sums up the idea of ‘conscious control:’

By and through consciousness and the application of a reasoning intelligence, man may rise above the powers of all disease and physical disabilities. This triumph is not to be won in sleep, in trance, in submission, in paralysis, or in anesthesia, but in a clear, open-eyed, reasoning, deliberate consciousness, and apprehension of the wonderful potentialities possessed by mankind, the transcendent inheritance of a conscious mind.²⁹

²⁸ F.M. Alexander, *Man’s Supreme Inheritance*.

In Part Three, Alexander addresses respiratory re-education. Since his method was born out of his attempt to eradicate his own vocal and respiratory problems, Alexander expresses his technique from a respiratory, vocal, and general health point of view. For over ten years, Alexander taught his method to patients suffering from various respiratory issues which were recommended to him by medical doctors.

In Alexander’s second book, *Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual,* he delves even further into the concept of ‘conscious control.’ This 280-page book is divided into four sections dealing with sensory appreciation and its relation to developing, learning, human needs, and happiness. Within these categories, he addresses incorrect perceptions and imperfect sensory appreciation, our respiratory mechanism, fear reflexes and fixed prejudices, imitation, memory and feeling, and behaviors relating to stress. In conclusion, Alexander states that people continue to rush from one extreme to the other, on the end-gaining principle in an attempt at improvement, yet “…only when we have solved the problem of the functioning of man’s organism itself can we solve the problems of society.”

*The Use of the Self,* Alexander’s third and shortest book, is split into five chapters. These chapters address the evolution of his technique, use in relation to reaction, end-gaining and the ‘means-whereby,’ and diagnosis and medical training. Particularly fascinating is Alexander’s recounting of the process he went through in developing his technique. Through his painstaking experiments in observing his movements and breathing while using his voice, he was eventually

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30 F.M. Alexander, *Creative Conscious Control of the Individual.*

31 F.M. Alexander, Authorized Summaries of F.M. Alexander’s Four Books, 73.

able to re-direct his thoughts and movements, which resulted in the eradication of his vocal and breathing problems. Equally enlightening is the explanation of how Alexander applied the same methods to help both a golfer keep his eye on the ball, and a stutterer overcome their speech impediment. In the appendix to this book, Alexander describes his Training Course for Teachers of the Alexander Technique and invites interested students to study.

Alexander’s fourth and final book, *The Universal Constant in Living*,\(^{33}\) attempts to clarify misconceptions and misinterpretations generated from some of his previous writings. It also cites cases of people treated by Alexander who were suffering from epilepsy, stuttering, asthma, arthritis, and respiratory and heart trouble, among others. The theme of the book focuses on how to achieve a fundamental change in guidance and control of the self. Alexander states, “If man is to gain a better understanding of the nature of the aims and characteristics of the people of other nations, as well as his own, he must have a new “means-whereby” for living in the future. There must be a re-orientation of our viewpoint…”\(^{34}\) Extensive appendices are present, which include papers, public addresses, and letters written by respected authors championing Alexander’s work.

**The Alexander Technique and Aspects of Breathing**

One topic most, if not all, vocal pedagogues will agree upon is the importance of proper breath support while singing. Through Alexander’s initial work with patients and success with improving their breathing, many Alexander teachers are inspired to work with specific exercises designed to improve a student’s use of the breath. The ITM, however, does not deal specifically


\(^{34}\) F.M. Alexander, *Authorized Summaries of F.M. Alexander’s Four Books*, 140-141.
with the use of the breath, as ITM teachers are trained to look at the system as a whole. Several of Alexander’s ideas on breathing are outlined below, as well as those from a current breathing specialist, Jessica Wolf, a long-time Alexander Technique teacher.

_F.M. Alexander_

Through his work in the medical field treating patients with respiratory conditions, Alexander gained recognition as an expert “breathing-man.”\(^35\) Through the work Alexander did observing his own breathing and vocal problems and working with the tuberculosis patients, he concluded many people had incorrect ideas about how to breathe. He discovered by re-training people to breathe correctly, he was able to reduce the symptoms of their illnesses such as shortness of breath and other difficulties. He first taught his method of respiratory re-education to patients recommended to him by doctors in Australia. After that, he moved to England and introduced this method to leading doctors in London.

Alexander found that “most people when practicing breathing exercises have one fixed idea, that of causing a great expansion of the chest, whereas its proper and adequate contraction is equally important.”\(^36\) Was it no wonder then, he discovered, that people experienced great difficulty with breath control in speech and singing, when they did not realize that if a proper expansion was essential for the intake of air, then it was equally essential to control the power during expiration. This resulted in inadequate use of breathing power. In this case, the capacity and mobility of the chest was decreased, its shape (particularly in the lumbar region) was changed in a harmful way, and vital organs were displaced and allowed to drop below their

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\(^{35}\) Practitioner B Interview Transcript, p. 152.

\(^{36}\) F.M. Alexander, _Authorized Summaries of F.M. Alexander’s Four Books_, 32.
regular positions. This, in turn, “produced distinct deterioration in the condition of the different organs of the body, and an organ’s power of resistance to disease upon its functioning power which depends upon adequate activity.”

Alexander pointed out that respiratory education will not be successful unless the pupil understands the “true principles which apply to atmospheric pressure, the equilibrium of the body, the center of gravity and to positions of mechanical advantage where the alternate expansions and contractions of the thorax are concerned.” If a deep breath is taken through the nose, then there will be a loud sniffing sound and collapse of the nostrils, and if taken through the mouth, then a gasping sound results. If the thorax is expanded correctly, Alexander explained, then the lungs will fill at once with air by atmospheric pressure. Most people, if asked to take a deep breath, will suck air into the lungs to expand the chest. Alexander outlined what happens during this over-exaggerated sniffing:

a. The larynx is unduly depressed, as is the diaphragm
b. The upper chest is unduly raised and likely the shoulders also
c. The back is unduly hollowed in the lumbar region
d. The abdomen protrudes, and intra-abdominal pressure is changed
e. The head is thrown back and the neck unduly tensed and shortened
f. Parts of the chest are unduly expanded while others that should expand are contracted, such as parts of the back and lumbar region
g. During expiration, there is undue falling of the upper chest which increases intrathoracic pressure and hampers the heart’s action
h. Undue larynx depression prevents the natural movements of the tongue and the correct opening of the mouth for the formation of the resonance cavity necessary for the vocalization of the true ‘ah.’
i. The head is thrown back to open the mouth

38 Ibid., 31.
39 Ibid., 32.
Alexander reminded us, where the human body is concerned, “nature does not work in parts, but treats everything as a whole.” Therefore, a proper mental attitude regarding breathing must be achieved, so every respiratory act becomes the direct result of a purposeful awareness. There follows “an immediate improvement in the pose of the body and poise of the chest” which will gradually become a habit with the correct attention and approach.

In the conclusion to Alexander’s writings on the practice of respiratory re-education in his book *Man’s Supreme Inheritance*, he stated:

This method makes for the maintenance and restoration of those physical conditions possessed by every normal child at birth, the presence of which ensures a proper standard of health, adequate resistance to disease, and a reserve power which, if a serious illness should occur, will serve to turn the tide at the critical moment towards recovery.

Alexander believed this method would help overcome the disadvantages of modern civilized life and become the most significant factor in preventing the physical degradation of mankind.

*Jessica Wolf*

Jessica Wolf has been actively teaching the Alexander Technique in the United States for over thirty-five years. She also researched respiratory function and breath throughout her career. Wolf established the Alexander Program at the Yale School of Drama, where she has been teaching since 1998. In 2002, she became the founder and director of the first post-graduate training program for Alexander teachers, *The Art of Breathing*. Her book, titled *Jessica Wolf’s*

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41 Ibid., 33.

42 Ibid., 33.
Art of Breathing, published in 2013, is a collection of six articles she has written on the topic of educating people on the art of breathing from an Alexander Technique standpoint.

Wolf’s innovative program brings together the previous life’s work and research of two important men: F.M. Alexander and Carl Stough (1926-2000), a pioneer in the science of respiration. Stough’s work, similar to Alexander’s, identified a particular coordination that allowed the respiratory system to function at maximum efficiency with minimum effort. His revolutionary discovery was a way to redevelop the involuntary movement of the diaphragm, which facilitated the reorganization of the whole respiratory system. Wolf studied with and assisted Stough in his work for twenty years.

The last article in Wolf’s book is called Alexander Technique-Based Vocal Exercises and is meant to be done in conjunction with an Alexander teacher. They include detailed instructions for breathing and simple vocal exercises to be done in semi-supine, sitting, and standing positions. The book includes a CD containing what she claims to be the first-ever three-dimensional animation of the skeletal system which exhibits all of the muscles, bones, and organs of respiration. The animation video indicates the location of the respiratory system and its relationship to the pelvis and other vital organs of the body.

The Alexander Technique Applied to Vocal Study

Gerald Wragg

Published in 2017, Wragg’s book, Towards Vocal Freedom: Alexander Technique and the Use of the Singing Voice, describes his voice teaching, which incorporates the principles of the Alexander Technique. He promotes a manner of using the whole self towards building a secure vocal technique. By applying the Alexander Technique, the singer can identify when
unnecessary habits get in the way of natural breathing and vocal freedom, and they learn how to prevent these habits. Many short chapters deal with various aspects of singing, including posture, breathing and support, the vocal attack, legato, vibrato, intonation, resonance, placement and projection, and acoustics.

In Chapter 5, *Posture, Breathing and Support*, Wragg outlines step-by-step instructions for creating an optimal body alignment which supports the production of a relaxed tone, for what is known in the Alexander world as the whispered ‘*ah*.’ Chapter 6, *The Vocal Attack*, contains detailed instructions along with some notated exercises, again using the vowel ‘*ah*.’ In his chapter on vocal registers, he offers specific instructions and exercises to isolate chest and head registers for both males and females. He uses the mental approach taught by the Alexander Technique as the basis for discussing the topics pertaining to vocal development. He reminds his students that “Singing is 99 percent mental and that almost all the important work is done before you open your mouth.”

**Maria Weiss**

Maria Weiss’ book, *The Alexander Technique and the Art of Teaching Voice*[^44], published in 2009, addresses the Alexander Technique in the first section and reserves the second section for singing-related topics. The first section includes chapters on F.M. Alexander, a description of his five principles, and applications of the work in activities such as chair work, table work, the monkey, the lunge, and walking. The second section discusses posture, breathing, the application


of the whispered ‘ah,’ and advice for practicing and performing. The book includes many references to other musicians writing about the Alexander Technique and compares the work to more traditional vocal pedagogy. It also includes a comparison of elements of the Alexander Technique with the Feldenkrais Method and other body-mind systems.

Jane Heirich

Jane Heirich’s book, *Voice and the Alexander Technique: Active Explorations for Speaking and Singing*, was first published in 2005, with a second edition that came out in 2011. The book includes an instructional CD and a large notation, pitch name, and frequency correlation chart. Heirich, who teaches voice and the Alexander Technique, has a particular interest in the integration of two pedagogical traditions: the Italian *bel canto* vocal teaching tradition with more than 100 years of Alexander Technique teaching. As the subtitle of the book suggests, there are regular prompts for the reader to engage in ‘to do’ activities. These activities are incorporated into each chapter, and include physical exercises, simple speaking and singing exercises, thinking and writing assignments, and activities leading to physical awareness.

Heirich examines the nature of habits, F.M. Alexander and his discoveries, vocal sound, postural and vocal problems, breathing, and games and explorations using principles of the Alexander Technique to support the voice. The author also intersperses stories and anecdotes from individuals she has worked with throughout the book, which relate to the various chapter topics. Many drawings are included, which show typical Alexander-informed ways of moving and contrast them with those showing less optimal ways of moving. Various vocal and physical anatomy diagrams are also included, which help illustrate the accompanying text. Information on

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the International Phonetic Alphabet, an Alexander exercise using hands on the back of a chair, and contact information for Alexander organizations worldwide, all appear in the appendices.
Chapter 3

Review of Literature: An Overview of the ITM

Marjorie Barstow

Master AT teacher Marjorie Barstow was born in 1899 in Lincoln, Nebraska, where she maintained her residence until she died in 1995. She graduated in 1921 from the University of Nebraska and began teaching ballet and ballroom dancing. Barstow became dissatisfied with her students’ progress and observed that after a certain point in their training, nothing she could teach them seemed to improve their coordination. Then one day, while in New York studying dance, she came across an article written by J. Harvey Robinson in the *Atlantic Monthly* about this man Alexander and the work he was doing in London. Barstow decided after reading this article that she would like to study with this man.

In 1927, she had the opportunity to go to London and have six months of lessons with both F.M. Alexander and his brother Albert Redden Alexander, after which she returned home to Nebraska to take care of the family business and farm. However, when she heard about Alexander starting his first official Teacher Training Course, which was to begin in 1931, she was the first person to sign up and got back on the boat to England. She was viewed as being particularly skilled and somewhat ahead of her classmates on the course, and graduated as Alexander’s first student after three years of study while the others went on to complete an extra year.

Upon her return to the United States, she worked in Boston and New York for six years as an assistant to Alexander’s brother, A.R., who had relocated to the U.S. after working with his brother for many years in London. After this time, Barstow returned to her home in Nebraska.
and began teaching in the 1950s. By the time she was in her seventies, she had developed an unconventional approach to teaching the AT which included teaching in groups. She described her approach in a panel discussion at the 1988 Brighton Congress, “I am a ‘preservationist’ in the sense that I don’t think any sort of work or training is any good unless we stick to what F.M. did. In other words, unless we work as he worked before he had the benefit of ‘hands.’” From the 1970’s onward, Barstow was a highly sought-after and celebrated teacher in the Alexander world and traveled extensively, giving workshops. She taught up until her death at age ninety-five.

The core tenets of Donald Weed’s Interactive Teaching Method evolved from his over twenty-three years of study with Marjorie Barstow in Nebraska. Her teaching style was viewed as contrary to how most other AT teachers were working at the time. The Alexander world viewed her as someone who went off the authentic path because she worked with people in activities rather than on a table and also worked with people in groups. This was significantly different from what was going on with Alexander Technique instruction in London at the time. Later in her life, she integrated the concept of the student’s responsibility to themselves into her teaching, believing that the teacher’s main job was to get the student thinking.

It is important to note that on that same first training course given by Alexander in London, was another participant with a very similar name, and the two women have often been confused with each other. Marjory Barlow (1915-2006), F.M. Alexander’s niece, also became a very famous Alexander teacher and had her career in London. She opened an Alexander Technique Training Course at the London based Alexander Institute in 1950. She taught for over seventy years as a leading teacher of the Alexander Technique. Barlow was considered to be a traditional Alexander Technique teacher who emphasized the ‘directions’ of F.M. Alexander.

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These directions are “to allow the neck to be free, to allow the head to go forward and up, to allow the back to lengthen and widen, to send the knees forward and away.”

Donald Weed and the Development of the Interactive Teaching Method (ITM)

Donald Weed holds graduate degrees in Music and Drama and Human Biology, as well as a Doctor of Chiropractic degree. In 1971, he began studying the Alexander Technique with Marjorie Barstow. Weed started his apprenticeship training as a teacher in 1972 and continued working with her until 1993. He has also studied with other notable teachers, including Frank Pierce Jones and Margaret Goldie. In December 1974, Weed ended his formal apprenticeship with Marjorie Barstow, and in January of 1975, began his professional work as a teacher of the Alexander Technique.

Since 1975, Weed has taught Alexander’s work at numerous universities, music conservatories, acting schools, at The Performance School in Seattle (which he helped to co-found in 1986), and on other Alexander Technique training programs. His extensive experience as an actor, singer, director, and performance coach, has provided the basis for the performance workshops he has taught throughout the United States and Europe.

Weed’s major contribution as a teacher, however, has been to revive interest in a closer study of Alexander’s writings. This study has been focused on determining the true nature of Alexander’s work and has enabled him to create on-going classes for the general public in this vein. He has also expanded the training in these introductory courses for the general public, creating a non-residential Teacher Training Course to become qualified as a teacher of the Interactive Teaching Method for the teaching of the F.M. Alexander Technique. He has

completed eight full training courses in Switzerland, Germany, and the U.K., and in 2020 will complete his ninth.

As an author, Weed has written five textbooks for the training of teachers. He continues to work on *The Alexander Commentaries*, which is a detailed analysis of selected writings of F.M. Alexander and Frank Pierce Jones, and he has written a beginner’s book titled, *Reach Your Dreams: an ITM introduction to the Alexander Technique*.

In addition to being an Alexander teacher, author, and creator of the Interactive Teaching Method with its four-year training course, Donald Weed, in his work as a chiropractor, has worked for more than thirty years as a neuromuscular rehabilitation specialist helping clients acquire a greater youthfulness, attractiveness, and energy in their daily lives. More recently, he has also created the four-year ITM Trainers Training Course to develop trainers who can teach others to become certified ITM teachers. This is the first training course in the Alexander Technique teaching profession dedicated to the training of trainers. By the end of the course, graduates can qualify to train others to become ITM teachers. The personal trainers in the new ITM Teacher Training Cycle format are all graduates of the ITM Trainers Training Course.

Principles of the ITM

Weed has authored four introductory books on the Alexander Technique. However, he considers his book *Reach Your Dreams* to be “the starting point in any study of Alexander’s work from the point of view of the Interactive Teaching Method.”

*Reach Your Dreams* is intended to place the main concepts involved in the Alexander Technique firmly into focus. For this reason, the book is filled with principles of the ITM. Selected and explained below are those principles.

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48 Donald Weed, *Reach Your Dreams*, 151.
principles which I deem most appropriate in illustrating the uniqueness of the approach to the ITM.

The Importance of Study

The approach of the Interactive Teaching Method in teaching the discoveries of F.M. Alexander starts with a definition of the Alexander Technique. In the ITM, they say, “the Alexander Technique is the study of thinking in relation to movement.” Sometimes in a lesson, incredible transformations can take place, which give the student a sense of how quickly change can occur. Other times, when people are working on their own, away from the support of classmates and a teacher, they may experience their changes in the gradual, day-to-day manner to which Alexander refers. He writes in his fourth book, The Universal Constant in Living, that “if a person is to make this change successfully, it must be by gradual process of changes from day to day… Hence common sense dictates that changes such as these cannot be made in a single lesson or in a month of lessons.” Actually, Weed explains, most of the time students have more success working on their own than while they are in lessons, but have not learned the most appropriate way to judge their progress. Although change can happen at the speed of thought (and often does), this does not mean that the student is doing something wrong while working on their own and finding that changes seem to come slower.

This concept of study is one of the two ways Alexander said that someone could learn his method. One of the ways to learn his Technique is to work with experienced teachers, and the other is from independent self-study over a long period, as Alexander did for himself; obviously,

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49 Donald Weed, Reach Your Dreams, 26-27.

50 F.M. Alexander, The Universal Constant in Living, 78.
he did not have an experienced teacher with whom to work! Thus, the ITM teacher asks, “What would happen if a person were to learn the work through interactions with experienced teachers AND from such long study as Alexander gave to it?” This is why study is one of the most important ways to learn Alexander’s work in the ITM.

*The Importance of Laughter in Learning*

When Weed is discussing the concept of study in the ITM, and teaching in countries where the first language is not English, he will often say the closest English word to ‘study’ is the word ‘fun.’ This statement is often met with puzzlement, but he goes on to ask the students to think about the last time they learned something or learned how to do something which they had been trying to do for a long time but could not. He asks them what they did once they learned it. When they think about this, they smile, or occasionally even laugh out loud. He explains, “Study is the active and focused pursuit of learning something about a topic for which you have a passion or interest. And that’s fun!” Consequently, Weed is constantly telling jokes and humorous stories while working with his students. He does this simply because he believes when you are enjoying yourself you are more likely to learn.

*The Importance of Thinking in Movement*

Students and practitioners of the ITM study thinking in relation to movement. They study the relationship between thinking and moving, and the impact the understanding of this relationship, and the ability to control it indirectly, can have on the quality of their lives. Weed

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51 Donald Weed, *Reach Your Dreams*, 4.

52 Donald Weed, *Reach Your Dreams*, 29.
tells us that thinking can mean any kind of nervous activity. Nervous activity is the process of carrying messages throughout the physical system. In every movement, the nerves carry messages to make the muscles contract to provide the power to move the body parts involved. All movements are dependent on some kind of nervous activity to send and receive messages. Without these messages (some sort of nervous activity) we would not move.

“The process involved in projecting messages from the brain to the mechanisms that make the movement” is what Alexander labeled ‘directing oneself in activity.’ In the ITM, they call this ‘thinking.’ This ‘thinking’ process occurs in both reflexive (involuntary) and voluntary movements. In the Alexander Technique, it is the voluntary movements which are most interesting, because a voluntary movement is one we choose to make. Almost all of our movements are voluntary ones.

Weed explains, “For every voluntary movement, there must be a thought that precedes, designs, directs, and accompanies the movement. Without this kind of thought, the movement will not take place.” All of our activities and behaviors – even our specialized performances, such as sports, or dancing, or singing, or playing an instrument – are made up of movements large and small. Therefore, if we are going to change the quality and nature of our behaviors and performances, we have to find a way to change the quality and nature of our movements. Typically, Weed notes, people try to make these kinds of changes by changing their movements directly. They try to make different movements while performing the same task, or they try to make the same movements in different ways.

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54 Ibid., 31.
According to the tenets of the Alexander Technique, if thinking causes movement, then all anyone needs to do to change their movements (and thereby change the quality of their performance) is to change their manner of thinking. This idea that “people can change their manner of performance simply by changing the manner in which they mentally direct themselves in activity” is one of Alexander’s greatest discoveries.

The One Thought

The singularly most important thought in the ITM approach to the Alexander Technique is the following:

the poise of the head
in relation with the body
in movement
is the key
to freedom
and
ease of motion.

Weed spends a fair amount of time explaining each of the terms in this definition and always writes it out as written above. He chooses the word ‘poise’ instead of the more common words ‘posture’ or ‘position’ because ideas of each are static concepts. One cannot move and at the same time be in a certain position or posture, whereas the concept of ‘poise’ has motion built into it. Weed elaborates, “Poise is about relationships of body parts in motion with respect to one another rather than being about parts being stuck in one relationship in one place for all time.”

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55 Donald Weed, *Reach your Dreams*, 33.
56 Ibid., 33.
57 Ibid., 35.
The importance of the relationship of the head with the body is another one of Alexander’s discoveries. In his fourth book, he wrote there was “a particular relativity of the head to the neck and the head and neck to the other parts of the organism that tended to improve general use and functioning of the organism as a whole, and that the motivation for this use was from the head downwards.”\textsuperscript{58} Weed further elaborates, “What you do with your head in relation to your body in movement either has a beneficial effect on the quality of your entire performance or it gets in the way.”\textsuperscript{59} When you learn to have indirect control over this relationship through discipline and application of your conscious mind, then you will achieve two of the most significant benefits of Alexander's work: freedom and ease of motion. This concept stems from the physiological fact that all animals with spines are put together neurologically in such a way that the general organization of the system is expressed from the head end of the structure downward toward the tail. The head leads, and the body follows.

Alexander defined this concept as “primary control” and Weed simplifies this idea by explaining, “In every movement you make there is a change in the relationship of your head with your body that precedes and accompanies the movement (which goes before and goes with the movement) and which either helps you or gets in your way.”\textsuperscript{60}

\textit{Realizing Your Potential}

In Weed’s book \textit{Reach your Dreams}, he explains if you can learn to discipline your thinking so you can take advantage of this simple physiological fact (that the head leads and the

\textsuperscript{58} F.M. Alexander, \textit{The Universe in Constant Living}, 114.

\textsuperscript{59} Donald Weed, \textit{Reach Your Dreams}, 36.

\textsuperscript{60} Donald Weed, \textit{What You Think is What You Get}, 36.
body follows), then you will have learned a mental discipline which you can apply to every part of your life, including the designing of your life and the reaching of your dreams. He suggests, “it is as if the Alexander Technique is the study – the fun – of thinking in relation to movement, in order to develop the mental disciplines necessary to realize all of your potential.”61

In Alexander’s first book, *Man’s Supreme Inheritance*, he pointed out how our current processes of directing ourselves in activity are failing, and suggested what our supreme inheritance could be: “the physical, mental and spiritual potentialities of the human being are greater than we have ever realized, greater, perhaps, than the human mind in its present evolutionary stage is capable of realizing.”62 Alexander wanted to move the human mind to a new evolutionary stage in which we could enjoy increased levels of success and happiness. He was clear about how we could achieve this. As Weed explains, “Alexander claimed that we would only be able to develop our potentialities to the full when we were guided by conscious, reasoned guidance and control, and this brings us back into the so-called mental realm while doing Alexander’s work.”63

*It’s All Mental*

In *Man’s Supreme Inheritance*, Alexander tells us, “In the mind… lies the secret of the ability to resist, to conquer and finally to govern the circumstances of your life.”64 Alexander wanted us to learn how to take reasoned control of our mental abilities in order to learn how to

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61 Donald Weed, *Reach Your Dreams*, 41.
63 Donald Weed, *Reach Your Dreams*, 93.
direct ourselves more effectively and efficiently in activity. He points out several problems created when humans direct themselves unconsciously in activity.

Alexander believed many of us have the idea that the best way to direct ourselves in activity, is to learn how to do something so well it can become automatic and unconscious in performance; that we should think about how to do something for so long that it becomes a habit. After we have conditioned ourselves to do these things without having to think about them we believe we can leave these habits alone to direct themselves. Although many people believe this automatic approach to self-direction is a good idea, Alexander found it a detrimental idea because it took reason and planning out of the process. “He thought this approach to living deadened the process of reasoning – the most precious of all our faculties. He even believed that this automatic and unconscious approach to life contributed to a lack of happiness in our lives.”

65 Donald Weed, *Reach Your Dreams*, 96.

**Stopping the Wrong Thing versus Correcting the Fault**

Another generally adopted idea with which Alexander disagreed, was making corrections to fix a fault. Alexander pointed out it was generally thought that if we have been told we are doing something wrong, then we should be told something new to do to correct the fault. But, he conjectured, what if our problems are being caused by the way we organize ourselves while carrying out our activities, rather than by the activities themselves? His point was if the way someone was doing an activity was causing the problem, giving the person a new activity to do could not solve the problem, because the person would use the same way of doing things ineffectively to carry out the new activity. He claimed that unless something is done to change
the way a person does things, they will continue to do everything – even their new corrections – in the same old way, ineffectively.

This is a crucial concept to understand in the Alexander Technique. Let's use Weed's example of a person who inadvertently pulls their shoulders up, and to correct this is told to ‘relax,’ or to ‘let their shoulders go down.’ Their attempt at ‘relaxing’ or ‘letting their shoulders go down’ would often result in these people pulling their shoulders down in some fashion. As Weed explained, this process of correction, created by pulling the shoulders down would only work well as long as the ‘corrective’ movement exactly balances the original defect. Even when the suggested correction is appropriate, it will only work as long as the original fault remains. If the original fault disappears or diminishes, then the application of the previously successful correction will create a new and opposite fault. As such, this correction model fails, exacerbating the original error, creating a second error of movement, as well as wasting energy through incorrect use.

Alexander claimed most problems are caused by unnecessary muscular activity leading to undue rigidity throughout the body. If a person’s problem is being caused by the use of too much muscular effort, adding more muscular effort into the equation by turning on additional muscles to perform ‘corrective’ movements is unlikely to be the right solution. Alexander taught if you have correctly identified a problem to be that you are unnecessarily pulling your shoulders up, there is a simple and elegant solution to this problem: stop pulling them up! However, Weed recognizes, this line of reasoning does not convince the vast majority of students.

*Hands-on Techniques*
To ‘disrupt’ a student’s habitual way of thinking and moving, the trained Alexander teacher may use his or her hands with the student as an aid while working on the Alexander Technique. Many people think this work is about adjusting someone’s posture or fixing some kind of physical pain. Some Alexander Technique teachers focus their work on relieving pain, while others do only table work, using an almost constant hands-on approach. In the ITM, hands are used, but only as a supplement to the other processes of observation, questioning, challenging, and narrative.

Ironically, according to Alexander’s first book, his intention in using his hands while teaching, had nothing to do with his student's posture. He wrote, “In our attempts (in teaching) we are, at the outset, confronted with the difficulty of mental rigidity. The preconceptions and habits of thought concerning the use of the muscular mechanisms are the first if not the only stumbling blocks to the teaching of conscious control.”\(^66\) Alexander claimed “it is often necessary to break down these preconceptions of mind,”\(^67\) by the teacher using his or her hands to work with the student while the student is performing familiar acts.

Hands-on work can often seem mysterious and magical. The first task of the teacher while placing hands on a student is one of information gathering only. As Weed puts it,

Putting hands-on in a truly neutral manner gathers information more easily without a pre-planned intention or hidden agenda for change… The ability to touch the student initially in this kind of truly neutral manner also greatly enhances the student's ability to sense and react to even the slightest changes of suggestive pressure in the teacher's hands.\(^68\)

\(^{66}\) F.M. Alexander, *Man’s Supreme Inheritance*, 131.

\(^{67}\) Ibid., 132.

\(^{68}\) Donald Weed, *Reach Your Dreams*, 111-112.
Weed then explains that with his hands, he feels for extra muscular activity, and then he invites something different. He will suggest, with very light pressure from his hands, the taking away of unnecessary muscular activity. The hands will suggest a slight change; they will ask, “Can you do it in a different sequence?” What often results is that people are rendered speechless because they are experiencing something for the first time; a sensation unknown to them. They often cannot describe what has happened but can describe a feeling of being lighter, feeling more space within their body, or a sense of newly-found freedom.

*Feelings*

The number one reason people come to the Alexander Technique is because they hope it will help them get rid of some troubling symptoms, usually some type of pain. Very often, it is a pain in the neck, shoulders, or back. They have tried many other remedies and are hoping the Alexander Technique will provide some sort of help.

After working with a teacher for just a short period of time, many people experience relief that is so seductive they suddenly claim to believe in the Technique and are willing to do anything to keep the changes that have taken place; anything that is, except the one thing that made the change happen. In the vast majority of circumstances, people are unwilling to continue to think differently about how to direct themselves in activity; to stop doing things in their habituated manner. As a result, they almost always revert to their old ways of thinking and habituated movements.

Alexander realized if he was ever going to ensure his reactions would be satisfactory, he must “cease to rely upon the feeling associated with (his) instinctive direction, and in its place
employ (his) reasoning processes.” During the lengthy trial and error phase of his experimentation, Alexander realized in trying to make changes in this new way, he had not only tried to rely on his feelings for guidance, but had also relied on his feelings for an immediate judgment about how well he was doing in his experiments. To make a judgment about how well he was using his new way of thinking, he reverted to his old way of thinking and feeling to make that judgment. Every time this happened, he failed in his attempts at making changes in his speech. Alexander discovered he had to subject himself to a new experience of directing himself in activity, if he was going to change how he did things. As he put it, he had to subject himself to "the experience… of being dominated by reasoning instead of by feeling.” As hard as it sounds, Weed remarked, what Alexander was saying is we cannot trust our feelings.

The Pursuit of Happiness

The last two sections of Alexander’s second book, Constructive Conscious Control, deal with what is needed to bring about self-improvement and happiness in the individual. Here, Alexander defined happiness by saying, “The characteristic note of true happiness is struck when the healthy child is busily engaged in doing something which interests it.” He believed to achieve a similar condition in ourselves, “We must cultivate…the deliberate habit of taking up every occupation with the whole mind, with a living desire to carry each action through to a successful accomplishment.” Along this line, Weed posited, “Alexander believed that this

69 F.M. Alexander, The Use of the Self, 39.
70 Ibid., 45.
71 F.M. Alexander, Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual, 189.
72 F.M. Alexander, Man’s Supreme Inheritance, 64.
combination of thoughtful engagement during activity, and the resulting success in accomplishment, was a powerful combination to bring about happiness in an individual.”

Weed goes on to say that most of us can agree “There is no greater joy than the fulfillment of our dreams.” Since the aim of the Alexander Technique is to help the individual realize their full potential to enable them to fulfill their dreams, then it is fair to say the pursuit of happiness is one of its core objectives.

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73 Donald Weed, *Reach Your Dreams*, 127.

74 Ibid., 140.
Chapter 4
Workshop Interviews with Donald Weed

Interviews with Donald Weed were conducted from July 5 – 9, 2019, in Darmstadt, Germany, during his five-day ITM Workshop. The format of the workshop centered around Weed’s lectures in a large group setting, where he would also teach one-on-one lessons in front of the group. Twice a day, we split into smaller groups of eight to ten people for break-out sessions with other experienced ITM teachers who were also participating in the workshop. Discussions were always encouraged, as was asking questions. Active discussions occurred both during the lectures as well as after witnessing the lessons.

Donald Weed and the Alexander Technique

As a youth, Weed had two interests, baseball and theater. Baseball eventually superseded his interest in theater; his goal in life at that time was to play left-field for the local professional baseball team. However, increasing health issues throughout his 20s prevented him from reaching his dream as an athlete, so he returned to his passion for the theater.

While still negotiating his health issues, Weed began studying drama and acting at University. At that time, Weed believed he could not take a professional acting job due to his failing health and endurance. Part of his training course requirements was to take a class on the Alexander Technique, which was free for students as it was included in the curriculum. In fact, he was in the hospital when it was time to register for the AT class and he needed to ask a friend to do it for him.
During his first exposure to the Alexander Technique, Weed decided he did not believe a word of what he was hearing. He later reflected, “I thought it was a great practical joke that they were playing on me because I didn’t see anything, and I didn’t feel anything. In fact, I tried to drop the Alexander part of the program.” Weed readily admits he was a poor student in the sense that he could not see, feel, or sense the changes his classmates could. It took him a long time to develop self-awareness in his movements and sensitivity in the use of his hands. Weed often refers to a time in his training when he was referred to as ‘old stone hands.’

Yet, continued AT study, in conjunction with his drama studies, proved to be instrumental in shaping Weed’s future as an AT teacher. In 1971, an accumulation of positive events occurred, which both opened Weed’s eyes to the incredible possibilities of what his life could become without health deficits, as well as created a deep sense of gratitude for the healing he experienced through the AT itself.

However, as Weed became an advanced practitioner, he nonetheless grew more and more of the opinion that the quality of the AT training courses available to students at that time were not fulfilling the potential of the work itself. He felt there were not enough options for students. The only choices aspiring AT students had were either an endless series of private lessons or joining a Teacher Training Course. Weed believed neither of those options had much to do with what Alexander wrote.

Application of the ITM in Lessons, Art of Questioning, Group Teaching, Interactive

Weed noted some teachers would direct a class towards what the teacher wanted it to be, and one of the things the ITM talks about is their idea of taking the class through the student.

75 Weed Interview Transcript, p. 118.
What does the student want and what does the student need? He explained that if the class is run so the person having the lesson has a significant experience, then the rest of the people can either pay attention or not, and the class is not stalled.

More to the point, Weed stated that teachers are in the position to learn the most, while those present in the class are in the second-best position to learn. The reason for this is they have not only a different perspective, but they are also not directly involved in the work of the lesson. The person who is in the worst position to learn something is the person in the chair who is having the lesson. He acknowledged how important having a lesson in the chair is and how crucial it is to experience something other than to which they are accustomed. However, when that happens, the person who is having the new experience is often overwhelmed or quite distracted.

He alluded to lessons earlier that morning when there were several examples of asking a student a question, to which they could not articulate an answer, while everyone else in the class was urging them, “C’mon, this is the answer!” Due to the observers not being tied to the work of that moment, they could see the ‘critical moment’ of change happening and relate to it. These are some of the reasons Weed chooses to teach in groups. When one of the class participants asks a question, the answer Weed gives often sets off a ‘lightbulb of understanding’ in one or more of the other students. The answer to one student often makes something ‘click’ for the others. The wealth of possibilities that occur in a group is the chief reason Weed prefers to give classes and teaches predominantly in class settings.

*Breath Use*
At the beginning of the ITM Workshop I had asked Weed if he could speak specifically about breathing and resonance for singing. He neglected to give me an answer which I then realized was appropriate, as my question was likely one of end-gaining. During our last class together, I decided to try a different tactic. I asked him why almost every person I observed in a lesson had, at some point, given a big, deep, relaxed exhale, and when they spoke again, their voice was lower and more resonant. Alas, I was still unsuccessful. Weed answered, “There has been a change in the balance of the whole pattern of muscles that has to do with the process of speaking. Are you seriously wondering that I might know what that was?” My reply was simply, “yes,” to which he responded,

Twice disappointed today. You know, I’ve never taken the time to figure that out. And the reason is, that particularly when I’m here and working in an Alexander fashion, I’m more interested in how someone goes about the process of directing themselves in activity than I am about any kind of outcome. Perhaps more than occasionally, people will comment that their voice has changed or that they sense that their voice has changed. Certainly, in performance circumstances, we often encounter people who experience a change in their voice that has gone undetected by the rest of us. And in these circumstances we do see some experiences where peoples voices change, and many people look to that and focus on that and in my past, both in Nebraska and Switzerland, I was involved with singers and singing teachers who would spend a great deal of time discussing the merits and variations and technical detail of all of that. And I noticed that they weren’t making nearly as much progress as other students. And I came to the decision that maybe what would be best for me would be to put my attention again on that thought process. I’m thinking of one person in particular who routinely sabotaged his good experience by investigating it to a great degree, and another thing that came to my mind, it’s a little bit like I told that story about my friend who did her doctoral dissertation on various piano techniques, and what disturbed her quite frequently, is that all of these best ways to play disagreed with one another, and here she was translating another piano teacher, and this person disagreed with the others and she noticed that all of the techniques involved at least one element which was not physiologically possible. And when it came to something like the investigation of what is happening specifically in terms of the voice, these people, the one person I have in mind in particular, was spending so much time and energy trying to figure that out, that they had very little time left over to think about what they were doing with their head in relation to their body. And I am going to be very boring perhaps about that, but that’s what my focus is going to be. What we are primarily interested in, in getting a report from a student is the relative accuracy of the report, where accuracy is defined as the teacher’s impression of what occurred and the student’s impression of what occurred. And the reason why we pursue
that, is we have found that when those two things match, students progress more quickly. But as to what makes that happen, you would know far more about vocal production than I would.\textsuperscript{76}

\textit{Critical Moment, Hands-on Technique, Table Work}

In his book \textit{Freedom to Change}, Frank Pierce Jones says Alexander never did lying down work unless the student was completely bedridden. Jones’ reasoning was it gives a wrong impression. Table work gives the idea some kind of relaxation process is happening. Weed explains when you continue to study the AT and understand more of what Alexander talks about in the first chapter of his third book, about how he did things and learned things, you will realize he comes to a very important issue; what Alexander called a ‘critical moment’\textsuperscript{77}. This term carries not just the ordinary English meaning. It is also a technical term that defines what you are going to think at the moment you go into activity, that moment when you go from planning to do something to actually doing it.

What Alexander was building, Weed explains, was an understanding that he needed to change the way he thought to change the way he moved – to stop doing the thing he didn’t want and to start doing more of what he did want. At that ‘critical moment,’ what Alexander found was initially, no matter how hard he practiced, he still tended to go back to his habitual way of moving. Therefore, while Weed realizes table work is an enjoyable experience, and people like it, the problem he finds is there is no ‘critical moment.’

In the first twenty to thirty years, while Weed was shopping around to see how many different Alexander Techniques he could find, he noticed everybody loved lying down work –

\textsuperscript{76} Donald Weed Interview Transcript, p. 122.

\textsuperscript{77} Please refer to Chapter 1 Definitions, p. 9.
except for one thing – getting up. The only ‘critical moment’ in the whole process and the activity that people most hated was getting up at the end. This is because they went right back to their previous habits of movement. By working in activity, as one does in Weed’s classes, everything is a ‘critical moment,’ and it builds up the discipline of being able to think.

*General/Basic Principles, Original Sources*

On June 6th, 1972, when Weed purchased his first copies of Alexander’s books, picked one up at random and started reading the introductory material, he found a sentence in the introduction to *The Universal Constant in Living*, and misread it! In an overwhelming moment of clarity and inspiration, he had a vision. In that instant, everything disappeared and the concept of a new curriculum for an AT Training Course concept came to him, an experience which also left him filled with gratitude.

Weed vowed on the spot to learn the AT, to create a training course he deemed worthy of the work, and to train 100 teachers. Over the years, Weed has well exceeded his vow; since completing his AT training and instituting his Interactive Teaching Method (ITM) Teacher Training programs, Weed has, excluding the current (2020) Teacher Training Course, awarded approximately 150 ITM Teacher Certificates. He relates that the vision and the ensuing curriculum were, in part, the fulfillment of a debt of gratitude to F.M. Alexander and his Technique.

When asked to describe how the ITM has evolved or changed over the years, Weed spoke about the differences between the evolution of the ITM organization itself and the evolution of the curriculum. Weed described ITM as an organization still in its beginning stages and
continually evolving. Like every young organization, whoever is taking those steps has a tremendous burden. Weed explained,

Like Patrick McDonald, a very well-known and very famous British Alexander teacher used to say about the difference of opinion in all the different (AT) schools. He used to say that what you must do is what you think is best and hope you’re not very far wrong. That is what anyone who is beginning some sort of organization needs to do. You do your best and what happens after that, as crises occur that you have not anticipated, is you respond as best you can, and increase the nature and quality of the organization that you have. So yes, there is a lot of evolution.\textsuperscript{78}

However, in terms of his approach to teaching the work of F.M. Alexander and the curriculum of the ITM Training Course, Weed reported that it has not changed as much as one might imagine over the forty-five years he has been teaching. The training course he created in 1972 is over 60\% still in the current training course and the broad strokes of the course are still the same.\textsuperscript{79} The first module of the ITM Training Course, first taught in January 1973, has also not changed significantly.

In 1976, due to the publication of AT teacher Frank Jones’ important work \textit{Freedom to Change},\textsuperscript{80} which expounded the seminal concept of the ‘critical moment’,\textsuperscript{81} Weed’s Teacher Training Course expanded to include this, and other key concepts iterated by Jones. In 1984, a student, referring to the first module of the training course, challenged him with the following: “You called this Basic Principles; how do you know they’re basic?” Weed replied, “I’ll make a deal with you, for the next ten years, I will read only the material in my Basic Principles Course and in ten years, I’ll tell you what I learned from that and we’ll look to

\textsuperscript{78} Donald Weed Interview Transcript, p. 124-125.

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., 124.

\textsuperscript{80} Frank Pierce Jones, \textit{Freedom to Change} (London: Mouritz, 1997).

\textsuperscript{81} Please refer to Chapter 1 Definitions, p. 9.
see if there’s anything in Alexander’s books that I missed.’” Ten years later, Weed found he had not missed much in terms of defining the operational principles for teaching the AT as ‘Basic.’ His theory, that by working with the Basic Principles of the AT everything else can be extrapolated, was confirmed.

*Lengthening the Spine/Flexibility*

Weed identified the focus on the lengthening of the spine to be the great dividing idea between these approaches. He uses a statement about the spine to illustrate two different interpretations. A common goal of conventional approaches to the Alexander Technique is “to achieve the greatest lengthening of the spine possible, in every movement.” He prompted his class to consider what that means. He claimed it means at least two different things depending on where you place the word “possible” or where you place the comma. If you put ‘possible’ with the first part of the phrase (as written above) then what you want to do is make your spine as long as it can be. But what happens to this phrase, he asks, if you attach the word possible to the second half of the phrase? What we end up with then is “the greatest lengthening of the spine, possible in every movement.” He states this version is something that is almost certain to become fixed, meaning a position will be sought-after and subsequently held. In some parts of the Alexander world, length is the most prized condition; but for the ITM world, it is flexibility. And that is, for Weed, the great dividing idea.

*Mastery, Responsibility of the Student, Self-Awareness/Awareness*

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82 Donald Weed Interview Transcript, p. 125.
In the Alexander Technique, the student carries a large responsibility for progressing in the work. One could even say a goal in the ITM is to make the teacher unnecessary. Weed reminds his students Alexander himself did not have a teacher, and he was able to acquire the skills. So much of the work has to do with thinking and achieving. This requires incredible ongoing efforts that lie in our hands. Weed expounded,

It is up to the student to do the work, the experimentation, and the process to learn what it really means for them. This opportunity to have this experience, this experiment, and as it turns out, this discovery – that’s unique and amazing. And it’s something that all of us can share and respond to. But, as many times as you have one of these amazing experiences, it does not relieve you of the responsibility to learn to do the work for yourself. Because the teacher is here not to solve problems, and certainly not to fix things. The teacher is here in service to you to help you learn how to do this for yourself.83

Weed explains people often think they ought to be ‘finished by now,’ regardless of how long or short their term of study is. However, it can be a comforting realization when one understands the AT is not something to be filled up and finished, but rather, is a process by which you can continue to improve. Weed worked actively with Marjorie Barstow for twenty-three years, and when he saw her shortly before she died (over the age of 90), he asked her, “Marj, how is it that every time I see you, you continue to get better?” She just looked at him, and he thought, “Oh yeah, this thing you’ve been teaching me all these years, that’s how it’s possible. Never mind.”84

Mental Processes/Thinking

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83 Donald Weed Interview Transcript, p. 119.

84 Ibid., 119.
“In the mind... lies the secret of the ability to resist, to conquer, and finally to govern the circumstances of your life.”

Weed included this quote by Alexander in his book *Reach Your Dreams*, designed as an introduction to the ITM. Although many people view the Alexander Technique as something which deals with posture and alignment, Weed notes it is, first and foremost, a mental process. He explains, “...by changing our thoughts and beliefs we can change even the physical manifestation of ourselves – for example, our appearance and our movements.”

Weed noted people are very reluctant to change their thoughts and beliefs, and this is what makes change so difficult. He explained, people want to reach their dreams but do not want to change their beliefs to get there. Yet accomplishing these changes in thoughts, beliefs, and ideas is that for which the ITM continually strives.

*Natural System, Use of Mirrors*

When asked why people tend not to use mirrors in the ITM, Weed replied, “People like to point out to me that Alexander did indeed work with mirrors and in his autobiographical material he makes it very clear that if he had not worked with mirrors and not had mirrors to work with, that he wouldn’t have been able to do what he did.” Consequently, most Alexander courses up to the end of the last century did use mirrors and believed it was necessary.

However, during Weed’s work in Nebraska with Marjorie Barstow (1971-1993), he said they rarely used mirrors. Weed recounted Barstow used to say, “Oh, mirrors are wonderful

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86 Donald Weed, *Reach Your Dreams*, 49.
87 Donald Weed Interview Transcript, p. 120.
because if you look in the mirror, you can see if your hat is straight.” That was the sole utility she had for them. Weed recalled a particular experience concerning the issue with mirrors.

Although, occasionally, particularly when I was having a lesson and it felt so awful, she would say, “You go take a look at yourself in the mirror right now.” Weed said that he would look at her and say, “Are you kidding me?” Is this what you want?” To which she replied, “Oh yes, it’s wonderful,” with his retort being something to the effect of, “It feels like I’m an iron stove being blown up until it bursts!” and she’d say, “Oh, that’s nice.” And so occasionally she would say, “Go look at yourself in the mirror.” And I would go to the mirror, walk up to it, and when I looked, I would see that I was no different from any other time.  

Weed recounted it took him several years to figure out that in that moment before he looked at himself in the mirror, he had changed back. In that tiny moment, there was enough time for Weed to send out the old directions which brought about the old condition as instantaneously as the times when we see these transformations.

As such, in Weed’s classes the students do not use mirrors but what they do often use is each other. His experience told him that when people start looking in the mirrors, they stop looking at themselves. He noticed with almost everyone he had worked with, the detachment from themselves negated or diminished the value of what they might see in the mirror. He explained there are some things you can see, and there are some ways you can use it.

When Weed gave a prima ballerina lessons in her dance studio he noticed she was using the mirror as she practiced a particular move. Yet when they got into class she did not want to know about the mirror and did not want to use it. The ballerina confirmed her own experiences with mirrors were the same as Weed himself had discovered: “When I look into the mirror, I’m trying to verify whether I’m making the shape that I actually think I’m making. But once I have that verification, I move away from the mirror so I can do it through my own system.”  

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88 Weed Interview Transcript, p. 120.
89 Ibid., 121.
CHAPTER 5

Practitioner Interviews

Six practitioner interviews were conducted between July 5–9, 2019, in Darmstadt, Germany, during a five-day ITM workshop led by Donald Weed. In the process of selecting workshop participants for these interviews, I sought subjects who were either a) expert ITM teachers; b) ITM teachers who were musicians and music teachers; c) ITM teachers who were singers and voice teachers; or d) musicians who were new to the ITM. The demographics of the six interview subjects are as follows:

Practitioner A: An American professional trumpet player and teacher who is a certified AT teacher. This was his first workshop in the ITM.

Practitioner B: A British highly accomplished ITM teacher who has completed both 4-year training programs and trains trainers. He is not a musician.

Practitioner C: A German singer and teacher who is a certified ITM teacher and graduate of the Trainer’s Training Program and has completed both 4-year training programs.

Practitioner D: A German singer and teacher who is a certified ITM teacher and graduate of the Trainer’s Training Program and has completed both 4-year training programs.

Practitioner E: A German undergraduate violinist who has had numerous ITM lessons. This was his first ITM Workshop.

Practitioner F: A German cellist and university cello professor who is a highly accomplished teacher of the ITM and has completed both 4-year training programs and trains trainers.

Practitioner Interview Questions

The Practitioner Interview Questions were designed to succinctly glean information about the participants’ training in both AT and ITM, as well as to ascertain how they applied either or both systems in their own teaching. The Practitioner Interview Questions were as follows:
1. What is your affiliation with the AT or the ITM?
2. What brought you to this work?
3. Have you had experiences with the AT other than the ITM? If so, what was different about them?
4. What do you think the fundamental differences are between the ITM and more conventional approaches to the AT?
5. Do you incorporate the ITM/AT into your music teaching lessons? How?
6. Can you speak about breathing and how using the ITM or the AT can improve it?
7. Do you use hands-on work with your music students? In what circumstances?

Practitioner A

Practitioner A, a professional trumpeter, is a trained ATI (Alexander Technique International) teacher who completed his training in Cambridge, Massachusetts, under Tommy Thompson at The Alexander Technique Center. This training comprises 1,600 hours of study and is a three-year, full-time program. This practitioner completed his certification over five years; the first-year was full-time, followed by four years of part-time study, which he completed in 2017.

Practitioner A had an interesting story about what brought him to the Alexander Technique. He had ordered not one, but two custom-made trumpets from David Monette, a renowned American craftsman and designer. He traveled across the country to test them and pick them up. After a substantial investment of both time and money, Practitioner A found to his horror, he could hardly make a sound at all on his new trumpets, let alone the sound he had always dreamed of making. This dilemma brought him and his new trumpets to an Alexander teacher in the hope of finding help.

Practitioner A began taking lessons with Tommy Thompson, and from the very first lesson, results were evident. He recounted he would bring the horn into his lessons, play it, and Tommy would do ‘his thing.’ Through repetition, he learned how to re-create the sound. When I asked him what Tommy did, his reply was, “The same thing any good Alexander teacher would
do; he taught me how to think!” Practitioner A claimed his body changed, which enabled his sound to improve. However, this change was not conscious but resulted from applying the Alexander Technique principles. He stated he was not repositioning himself intentionally, but rather, the improvement in his sound came as a result of the refined mentality which ensued from the instruction.

I met Practitioner A for the first time at the ITM course in July of 2019 in Germany, which was his first exposure to the ITM. He found his experience in Germany very similar to the Alexander training he had previously taken. Differences he noted were that Weed mentioned anatomy more frequently in lessons and discussions than in Practitioner A’s previous training, and in Weed’s classes, recognition of one’s self-awareness was more prevalent. He found the way the lessons were conducted, and the art of questioning Weed used, similar. Although Practitioner A did not perceive his experience new, he did acknowledge it as “the other league.” He related it to baseball, explaining, "You’ve got the American League and the National League, but they’re both baseball, right? The rules are a little bit different, but no big deal. When you’re strategizing in the National League, you have to realize that your pitcher has to hit. The pitcher doesn’t hit in the American League, but it’s still baseball. The tactic is a little bit different.”

Practitioner A explained there is no standard way to teach the Alexander Technique; there is no ‘normal.’ There are different approaches and different organizations but no universal standard. He delineated for me the leading organizations of Alexander Technique as the British STAT (The Society of Teachers of the Alexander Technique), the American AMSAT (The

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90 Practitioner A Interview Transcript, p. 143.
91 Ibid., 146.
American Society for the Alexander Technique), the ATI (The Alexander Technique International) and the ITM (The Interactive Teaching Method).

Practitioner A teaches Alexander Technique lessons separately, as well as integrating them into his music lessons. Most of these lessons are with high school students, where he has been permitted by their parents to use a hands-on approach. Until Practitioner A has this clearance, he will not use his hands, but will sometimes mention the technique to direct the student down a clear path. He asks them to focus on certain things while playing to give them the experience of separating themselves from their habits so they can perceive them.

Once Practitioner A is permitted to apply the Alexander Technique in lessons, he uses the technique in the same way he would in a lesson without the instrument. He may use hands-on before they start playing, or let them begin, notice an issue, work on it, and then have the student continue playing. This process could continue throughout the lesson if he deems it necessary. As the students’ understanding of the AT deepens, he may include work with his hands with more frequency during lessons.

However, ultimately, the lessons are trumpet lessons. Although pursuing their awareness of how they feel is time well spent, Practitioner A finds he cannot spend too much time doing this, particularly at the beginning of their exposure to the AT. He has observed that if too much time is taken away from playing, this impacts student satisfaction with the trumpet lessons.

Over time, the majority of students recognize they play better as a result of the AT, and this success opens their minds enough for them to linger on how, and to what extent, they feel and perform differently. Their beginning comments of “I feel lighter,” or “I don’t know, I just feel different,” eventually develop into specific technical understandings as their self-awareness increases. Practitioner A regularly experiences with his students that as their AT ‘critical
moments’ accumulate, he can guide them to more specific recognition and awareness of themselves. This developing awareness eventually leads to students learning how to govern themselves, as they develop higher levels of technical mastery.

When asked to speak about how the AT helps him deal with the concept of breath control and breath management while playing the trumpet, Practitioner A stated he found isolating breath control is often counter-productive, as you are separating breath management from the rest of the body. He sees no difference, in terms of breath management, between singing and playing a brass instrument. In both instruments, you do not have keys or frets and therefore have to audiate the correct pitch. Practitioner A said he experiences a great deal of success getting his students to make an appropriate sound by transferring concepts of singing into trumpet technique.

To do this, Practitioner A uses one vowel, ‘ah.’ Using the trumpet, the student plans a breath, forms the vowel ‘ah’ in their throat, and ‘sings’ it into the trumpet. He explained that instead of the vocal cords vibrating to make the sound, the lips do, and if one thinks about brass playing the same way a good singer would, one will be successful. He claimed all of the things you learn and read about in standard pedagogy, such as where to put your tongue, what to do with your lips, noticing what your jaw is doing, how you should sit, where your elbows should be, et cetera, is all unnecessary. The use of the vowel stabilizes the body. Since it is a natural behavior that is direct, simple, and replicable for brass playing, it proves successful for Practitioner A’s students in producing sound without extra tension.

Practitioner B
Practitioner B started training with Donald Weed on the 1999 ITM Teacher Training Course. He graduated in 2003 and has been teaching the ITM in his own practice, as well as during the summer school sessions Weed conducts in Germany, England, and Ireland. In 2012, Weed initiated his Trainer's Training Course, which he designed to train ITM instructors to teach the new generation of ITM teachers. The graduates of this course would mostly do more of what Weed does in overseeing the courses and acting as personal trainers to the students in the ITM Training Course. Practitioner B graduated from this course in 2016 and has since then been working as a personal trainer to three of his own trainees.

Practitioner B came to the Alexander Technique entirely by accident. In 1998 he was dating a successful amateur cellist who had developed a persistent pain in her bowing shoulder. She had some previous exposure to the Alexander Technique during her graduate degree. She knew it was supposed to be beneficial but did not actually know what it was. Coincidentally, the teacher they found in Bristol, UK, where they were living at the time, turned out to be an ITM teacher who trained with Weed on the 1993 Training Course.

Since a large part of the ITM pedagogy is to teach in groups as opposed to one-on-one, and because this teacher was a dedicated ITM practitioner, he said to the cellist, “Bring your partner, bring some friends, let’s make a group.” Although Practitioner B initially went along only as moral support, the more he watched his girlfriend resolve her problems, which took about six lessons, the more he became fascinated with the work. So much so, he began to take evening classes with Weed. These lessons led to a weekend workshop session and then finally to him registering for a training course in 1999.

At that time, Practitioner B had no intention of becoming an AT teacher. However, after taking the first three modules (which Weed believes every person on the planet would benefit
from), he could not imagine leaving the course and the ITM community, so he decided to complete the training. Practitioner B quickly found a reason to become a teacher, which was to spread knowledge of this work, so people did not discover it by accident, as he did.

I asked Practitioner B if being an ITM teacher was his full-time job, to which he explained his day job is in health care information technology, which he does two to three days a week. In the ITM, he teaches on a majority of the Training Course weekends, summer workshops, and other weekend workshops, which add up to him being away about ninety nights a year. Since he has become a trainer, his workload has increased over the last three years, and he will likely be teaching on the next training course, which begins in 2020.

When I asked Practitioner B to elaborate on what was different about the ITM as opposed to other approaches of the AT, he had an interesting anecdote to share. He explained the usual labels used to differentiate the approaches to the AT are ‘conventional’ and ‘unconventional.’ ITM would fall into the unconventional category. On his first weekend of the 1999 ITM Teacher Training Course in Bristol, they were picketed by another AT school. The picketers were upset and said Weed was not qualified to train AT teachers. They handed out pamphlets stating if they did Weed’s course, they would not be authorized to teach in the UK. That was Practitioner B’s first exposure to the existence of other AT schools.

Weed, however, was very clear about the existence of these other groups and did not shy away from discussions about them. In the UK, the largest AT organization is STAT, The Society of Teachers of the Alexander Technique. There is also PAAT, The Professional Association of Alexander Teachers, which was the group that picketed Weed’s course. A third AT organization in the UK is the ATI (The Alexander Technique International).
When I asked Practitioner B if he could explain what some of the differences are between these groups, he explained his exposure to the other approaches had come mainly from attending three international congresses of the AT. At the conferences, there had been much encouragement to exchange ideas and swap lessons. Other information he has gleaned about the various training programs came from many of the other students on Weed's training courses. Most of them were already certified STAT teachers who discovered Weed's work and liked it so much they decided to retrain with him, thus committing to another four years of study after completing a three-year AT Training Course with another instructor.

Practitioner B found a primary difference to be that the ITM is interactive in nature and focus. One of the core teaching tools of the ITM is to ask questions. In other programs, questions are not only typically not encouraged, but may even be actively discouraged.

Another critical difference is that everything ITM students are trained to do can be traced directly to Alexander’s texts. The ITM is unique in the degree to which they study Alexander’s four published books. At a 2014 AT conference in Limerick, Ireland, a key presenter stood up and said, “One of the problems with the Alexander Technique is that we don’t have a single unified text that says what we do.” His was a very telling comment because, in the ITM, one works under the premise there are four of them. When teaching, ITM teachers often quote Alexander directly from his four books.

Given that Alexander’s books have often been criticized for being difficult to comprehend, I asked Practitioner B if he thought the principles in the books were still relevant, and if the language used complicated people’s comprehension of them. Practitioner B explained that when Weed presents the material in Alexander’s books, he gives a great deal of context.

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92 Practitioner B Interview Transcript, p. 150.
around it. Since Alexander’s books were written in Edwardian English, it is crucial to understand them in the context of that period. Alexander wrote his books over a period of thirty years. Unless one is familiar with what was going on at that time historically, many things might not be apparent to a younger reader. However, Weed states that struggling with Alexander’s written English is something the students of the ITM ought to be encouraged to do, since struggling with Alexander’s written word forces the students to come to terms with his most important concepts.\textsuperscript{93}

Another recognized difference is how the ITM views hands-on work. Most other AT approaches believe the work done with the hands is the most critical part of teaching the Alexander Technique, while the pedagogy of the ITM infers that the hands are the least important tool in teaching. Practitioner B goes on to explain that the hands are used as often as is appropriate in an ITM lesson. However, they are used only to support the concept of helping a student change their thinking. For non-ITM AT practitioners, if hands are the most important tool, then you do not want students to ask questions because that detracts from the work you are doing with your hands. Due to this, there is some consistency in their approach for the use of hands, and questions may not be encouraged. In this way, the ITM’s perception of hands-on work is very different from the rest of the Alexander world’s view. However, Practitioner B does recognize that people still, of course, get value from the other approaches.

Turning the conversation toward singing, I asked Practitioner B about his experience working with singers. He said on these short courses, similar to the one we were currently on in Germany, it was common to attract a large number of performers. I then asked him to comment on the topic I was especially interested in hearing more about, breathing. My previous perception

\textsuperscript{93} Practitioner B Interview Transcript, p. 150.
was that the Alexander Technique had much to do with the concept of breath. As a singer, I wanted to know what specifically about breathing could be taught to singers and teachers of singing using the AT. He began by stating the well-known fact that when Alexander came to the UK, he was already famous for being the ‘Breathing-Man,’ and he centered his practice around breathing.

Practitioner B explained that in Alexander’s first book, *Man’s Supreme Inheritance*, there are several photos of people doing breathing exercises. At the time, tuberculosis was rampant, and breathing exercises were prescribed as therapeutic, but not necessarily curative. Alexander found much success in helping his tuberculosis patients combat their symptoms through breathing exercises. However, he gave those who purported to teach breathing a bit of a hard time, as he found breathing experts would attend to only one part of the breathing cycle and put undue attention on that. For example, they would work on expanding the ribcage, while ignoring the rest of the cycle of breathing. Alexander supports this idea with photos of small children with incredibly expanded ribcages.

Recognizing this, Alexander’s work focused on completing the breathing cycle. It was in this manner he achieved success, and his fame grew as someone who could help people having significant difficulty breathing as a result of a physical illness. Alexander emphasized when disease or injury is present in a person, there is also a physical and mental response to that disease or injury. Alexander knew he could not do anything for the disease or injury itself. However, his technique could accomplish much in terms of mediating the person’s physical and mental response to the disease, and this response is where Alexander gained great success.

Practitioner B has worked with several professional singers. He recounted one experience of teaching a professional classical singer who was heavily pregnant. Her pregnancy challenged
her beliefs about what she thought she needed to do to breathe. Once they addressed those issues, it turned out it was the perception and ideas she imposed on herself which were limiting her breathing, not that she was pregnant.

Through this experience and many others, it became clear to Practitioner B there was a multitude of contradictory ideas concerning breathing. The manners in which many people explained to him how they had been taught to breathe were not anatomically possible. This prompted me to ask him how he would teach someone in a lesson what he believes would be an efficient way to breathe. Practitioner B responded, “I hear you’re looking for that. Does it sound like an ITM teacher to coach someone in how to do something?”94 As frustrating as it was, I did know enough about the ITM to admit that, no, it did not sound like something an ITM teacher would do. Practitioner B reiterated what I already knew, which is that the work of the ITM is to get people to change their thinking and to let their old ideas go. A favorite Alexander quote supporting this concept is, “If you stop doing the wrong thing, the right thing does itself.”95

The Alexander Technique is the process of getting your old beliefs out of the way and seeing what happens. Practitioner B explained, “What happens is usually something that we would call wonderful. If you stop doing the old habits, it allows the natural system to express itself.”96 Practitioner B continued, “The wrong thing would be our beliefs or ideas, or following someone else's beliefs or ideas, about the way we need to do something. Once we take this imposition away, what occurs naturally is usually very effective.”97 Due to this concept,

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94 Practitioner B Interview Transcript, p. 153.
95 Ibid., 153.
96 Ibid., 153.
97 Ibid., 153.
Practitioner B does not have to be a breathing expert or even have to give any specific instruction to a student on how to breathe, to be able to help them with issues they may be experiencing with breathing.

I asked Practitioner B if he thought this would mean there is less need for voice teachers and sports coaches, to which his reply was, ‘no.’ Practitioner B recognizes some modern activities are very specialized and sometimes at the extremes of our natural movements. He felt we were probably made to sing, and it is something within our natural realm of abilities.

When I asked him if singing as loud as an opera singer is natural, he asked if I had ever been around small babies; claiming since they do not typically have issues with producing loud volumes or sustaining power, these are not things one would have to train. Stating the volume levels of young children are natural abilities which are present until we educate people out of them, he went on to mention one of the books they study in the ITM Training Course, *If You Want to be Rich and Happy, Don’t Go to School* by Robert Kiyosaki. This book discusses current educational models as invoking a sort of reverse metamorphosis, where you start with beautiful children and end up with ugly caterpillars.

This conversation led me to ask Practitioner B how one could best go about combining two worlds, for example, the worlds of teaching voice with the benefits of an ITM lifestyle and methodology. He recognized this is a common theme among many teachers. On Practitioner B’s ITM Training Course from 1999-2003, many certified educators were among the participants. Some teachers were in mainstream education, some were music teachers, and others were specialist teachers. A frequently asked question among all of them was, “How can I continue to do what I do, with what I now know? How can I bring these things together?” Ultimately, and in

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perfect sync with the ITM attitude of empowering each student to learn for themselves, each training course participant came to understand they were responsible for finding their own answers to that question. However, what the training course gave them was the ability to critically examine what they were doing in their day job, to revise their pedagogical approach to their work, and to provide them with the capacity to examine what they did, how they did it, and how to communicate that to their own students.

Practitioner B mentioned one of his colleagues, an Alexander teacher at the Bristol Old Vic Theater School in Bristol, UK, and how he deals with new students and possible conflicting opinions. This colleague explains to his students he will be teaching them things which may not be in agreement with, or may even be contradictory to, what they are learning from their voice teacher or acting teacher. However, he explains they are responsible adults and get to choose what makes the most sense to them. They get to decide how they want to continue, and if the conflict becomes too big, they need to step away. He also reminds them they have chosen to come to The Theater School, to learn and pay attention to what the other person is telling them, to question it, or even to challenge it for themselves.99

I mentioned I had been reviewing books focused on the Alexander Technique and singing or teaching voice. This comment brought about one of Practitioner B’s biggest pet peeves. He has been preparing a presentation which he hopes to present at the Berlin International AT Congress in 2022 called “The Alexander Technique and…” His point is that it is just the Alexander Technique. Period. So many people try to meld the AT and dance, and running, and voice, and yoga, and, and, and… This approach takes Alexander's work and tries to specialize it. He feels Alexander would counsel us very strongly to be a generalist first and a specialist

99 Practitioner B Interview Transcript, p. 155.
second. Practitioner B claims it is all just movement, and the reason these presentations and books are so popular, is individual teachers have always got the question, “How do I work with someone who does this?” as though they need to work differently with a dancer, an athlete, a martial artist, or a singer. “If you are working from Alexander’s principles, you do the same process with whatever the student is presenting to you.”

Of course, I am interested in how the ITM can benefit singers, and the questions I had initially prepared and wanted Donald Weed to answer were quite specific. However, I soon realized there are no specific answers. When I told Practitioner B this, he answered with a quote from Alexander, “In the general process, specific defects are eradicated.”

Alexander means that, in all things, we as humans are always participating in ‘general processes.’ Practitioner B explained that John Dewey, an educational philosopher and contemporary of Alexander’s, described the Alexander Technique as bearing the same relation to education, as education bears to all the different disciplines in which it is used to teach. So, in effect, it is a step above and beyond the teaching of any specific discipline.

This is one of the reasons the AT is so hard to market; because it is so general. This is also why less experienced people or people looking for cures or ‘answers’ tend to go down the “Alexander Technique and…” route. I commented that people are often looking for something specific. His response was, “Often? Almost always.”

However, we agreed it was possible to make the ITM relevant to my world of singing and teaching voice.

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100 Practitioner B Interview Transcript, p. 155.
101 Ibid., 156.
102 Ibid., 157.
Practitioner C

The interview with Practitioner C began with her explaining that it was her dream to become a singer since she was an eight-year-old. Once Practitioner C was older, she began to study music and take voice lessons; however, by the time she was twenty-five, she had lost her voice. She felt this resulted from two factors: a) she knows today her vocal cords are not entirely normal because they cannot withstand much strain and are not resilient in the same way as others; and b) her previous singing teachers, unfortunately, were not highly competent and exacerbated her vocal issues. As a result, Practitioner C stopped singing and instead played and taught the recorder. However, her desire to become a singer never diminished.

Before she lost her voice, Practitioner C completed studies at the Lichtenberger Institute, a music school and institute founded by Eugene Rabine and Gisela Romad for applied vocal physiology. Rabine was a student of the well-known vocal pedagogue Cornelius Reid, who was famous for teaching a more functional approach to singing. Thus, this institution operated on a different principle than other music schools by stimulating the vocal system and accepting the result. After completing her training at the Lichtenberger Institute, she taught singing for a short time; however, due to persistent vocal issues, she decided to stop teaching until she felt more confident with her instrument. Years later, she was introduced to both the ITM and a voice teacher who proved to be pivotal to her technical understanding and rehabilitation of her voice. Interestingly, many years prior, Practitioner C had had an initial experience with the Alexander Technique. At that time, she thought, “No, that's not for me. I did not understand what was going on. I did not see anything. I did not feel any change.”

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103 Practitioner C Interview Transcript, p. 158.
Yet, Practitioner C believes fate led her to rediscover the AT. One of Practitioner C’s previous recorder students came to present an Alexander Workshop in her town Fulda in Germany. Although not interested in the subject matter itself, since she knew the woman and wanted to say hello, Practitioner C decided to attend her Workshop. During the introductory lecture, something the presenter mentioned about thinking caught her interest. That was enough motivation for Practitioner C to begin studying the Alexander Technique with her former student.

After a time studying with this teacher, Practitioner C came to a point where she felt there was no further development possible through lessons so she began to look for a training course. Yet, all of the options she found for training courses were not possible for someone with a full-time job. Eventually, she learned about the ITM and Weed’s training course which took place on weekends.

Several months later, when Practitioner C had her first Alexander Technique lesson with Weed, which included singing, something very, very strange happened. “He threw me around, and I sang,” and I thought, “My goodness, it was like begin shot to that mountain there (pointing out a window) and looking at my goal from the other side. That was amazing.”

From that point, she knew there was much more potential to explore with her singing voice. Practitioner C continued with the ITM training program, and also found a new singing teacher whose methods were very much in congruence with the Alexander Technique.

The new voice teacher was a Canadian, Carol Baggott-Forte, who was, interestingly, a long-time student of Cornelius Reid. Baggott-Forte gave regular masterclasses in Germany, and Practitioner C was delighted to discover Baggott-Forte’s teaching style corresponded entirely

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104 Practitioner C Interview Transcript, 158.
with the principles of the ITM. She used what could be considered a sort of ‘primary control’ while leaving all the other details to the system itself. Her ‘primary control’ was the vocal registers. Other vocal aspects, such as breathing, resonance, and vocal adjustments, would take care of themselves as long as the registers were working correctly together. Due to her experiences learning from both Baggott-Forte and Weed, her teaching changed drastically. Her pedagogy became infused by the ITM and the ideas of functional voice training, which are now the most significant part of her life.

When asked how she incorporates ITM into her voice teaching, Practitioner C first delineated we have to distinguish between the ITM and the AT. She incorporates the ITM very much into her teaching but not necessarily as much of the AT. On the ITM training course, the main issues are how to deal with people, how to communicate with students, how to be precise in using your own words, and how to ask questions. Listening to what the student is saying without jumping to conclusions is essential. Often they may use a word that is understood differently by the teacher. These interactions with the student, which are a crucial part of the ITM, are how Practitioner C incorporates the ITM into her voice lessons.

In addressing specific technical vocal issues, such as breath management or resonance, Practitioner C turns to the techniques she has learned in her voice studies in functional voice training through developing the registers. When working with a student, she would give a specific direction to correct a bad habit she noticed. Then she would use the ITM way of communication by asking, “What did you notice, was it the same or different? Was there one part of the sound which perhaps improved?” As for using hands-on techniques in a voice lesson, she would only do that with singers who have had Alexander Technique lessons.

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105 Practitioner C Interview Transcript, p. 160.
Practitioner C teaches Alexander Technique lessons and voice lessons, but she said she does not mix the two. She would never, for example, go up to a voice student and start ‘fiddling around with their neck.’ However, she may recommend they come to an Alexander class. Once they have had some experience with the AT, and she sees an issue in a voice lesson, she may ask, “I see something, is it ok if put my hands on you?”\textsuperscript{106} In this way, she uses the AT within the voice lesson. She admits she is still experimenting with how best to combine the two worlds. In an ITM lesson, it is the student who comes to the teacher with a problem, question, or issue about something they want to improve. However, in a voice lesson, it is she who notices when something can be improved, and therefore takes the initiative to say, “Well, I detect a problem there, is it ok…?”\textsuperscript{107}

I mentioned to Practitioner C I have been involved in singing workshops where the AT teacher would approach the singer while singing to make an adjustment, and this was something I have also witnessed during lessons at an ITM workshop. So, I asked Practitioner C if this was a similar situation that would occur in a voice lesson. Her response was if she saw a singer with an issue while singing (for example, they were lifting their chin to sing a high note and pulling their head back), then she would try to address it first by asking a question. An example would be, “Did you notice what you were doing with your head in relation to your body while starting to sing?”\textsuperscript{108} As a follow-up, she might ask them to touch their necks while singing the same phrase to see if they can notice anything themselves.

\textsuperscript{106} Practitioner C Interview Transcript, p. 160.
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., 160.
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., 160.
I was curious to know if she tells her voice students about the AT and if she mentions it during her voice lessons. Her answer was generally, ‘no.’ She explained there are two types of students; those who are exceptionally talented and whom she can tell would be even better if they stopped certain habits, and those who are more regular students and have much general tension creating interference almost everywhere. With these more normal students, she teaches singing with the ITM way of communication. In contrast, with the exceptional students, she may encourage them to begin AT work. She noted she also uses the ITM way of communication with her recorder students. Furthermore, she added the ITM generally informs her lifestyle. Through her studies with Donald Weed, she has learned more about pedagogy, communication, and dealing with people, than in all her high school and university courses.

When asked about the difference between more conventional approaches to the AT and the ITM, Practitioner C admits she has not had many experiences with conventional AT lessons. With one former AT teacher, who worked in a completely different way than the ITM, the focus was on the feet instead of the head. The lessons would take place in a chair or on a table, and the teacher would touch her feet and tell her exactly what to think. It was a type of body scan supported by the hands. She noted it was helpful to achieve a certain kind of relaxation, but it did not produce a change in her everyday life. Another experience she had was in a three-day workshop where the students had table AT lessons. As she was already a certified ITM teacher, this AT teacher would not work with her because he found her to be too advanced. When she compared what she obtained from that workshop to one of Weed’s three-day workshops, she found there to be no comparison. After three days of participation in an ITM workshop, she said one was brain-dead from all the input, thoughts, ideas, questions, and realizations which had occurred.
Practitioner D

Practitioner D is a singer, singing teacher, choral conductor, and certified ITM teacher. While she was a student at a Musikhochschule (music conservatory in Germany), they offered Alexander Technique lessons. Unfortunately, there were so many interested students she was not able to enroll in the class. Instead, she found a woman who offered Alexander lessons in the community.

Practitioner D was looking for some relief from back and knee pain as well as help with her singing. Her results of these first lessons were that she experienced temporary relief and felt good afterward. However, hours or days later, the pain would return, and she would have to go back for more lessons. As she was not the type of person who wanted to have lessons twice a week to stay in shape, she was about to stop her studies when something remarkable happened. Her teacher began to change the way she taught. Previously she had worked only with her hands, and there were no discussions.

Practitioner D found out afterward her teacher had met Donald Weed. She had attended a short course of his in the U.S, and when she returned to Germany, she began to incorporate the new ideas she had learned from him into her teaching. Practitioner D remained with this teacher for another three years until Weed moved to Switzerland where she was easily able to train with him and subsequently begin his Teacher Training Program.

When asked when she began teaching voice, Practitioner D replied that when she graduated in 1990, she did not feel ready to be a singer or a singing teacher. After meeting Weed a year later in 1991, she discovered that through her work with him, she had learned how to teach. Currently, she is working as an ITM teacher and singing teacher, whose work is heavily influenced by the ITM. When asked how the ITM influences her singing teaching, she replied it
is about principles. In her music education studies, she did not learn about core teaching principles and how to work with them. The ITM has provided her with this knowledge.

She explained that through the ITM, one learns specific principles, such as the idea that our thinking influences our movement. While singing, it is crucial to examine what we are thinking during our vocal production. Another essential principle is the awareness of the relationship between the head and the rest of the body. When working with a student, one always has to be aware. The teacher’s job is to help the student discover where there is excess tension or movements which are not necessary to sing. It is a fascinating process when the student begin to recognize themselves where the unnecessary effort is and can inhibit it. When this happens, the voice can reveal itself in its natural state.

When asked if she uses hands-on during voice lessons, her response was ‘yes’ and ‘no.’ When she works with children, she is cautious about using her hands in lessons. Most of the time, she does not, unless she has been working with them for a few years, and she speaks first to the parents. In these circumstances, she would usually work with them in an Alexander lesson first, and not in a music lesson. With her adult pupils, she recommends they first have a series of Alexander lessons with her and then commence their singing studies. That way, when it is appropriate during a singing lesson, she can incorporate some hands-on work, or use other Alexander principles, and it will not seem foreign.

When I asked what the benefits were of combining the ITM with vocal instruction, she replied the biggest benefit is that her experience as an Alexander Teacher has trained her to see when and where there are interferences while singing. Her training has given her the tools to help the student from an Alexander standpoint. One of these tools is asking questions. Students always want to get it right. Trying to be good and get it right usually means involving more
muscle work than is necessary. Just the realization alone a student is doing too much can make an enormous difference.

When I had asked Weed in class to expand upon why I noticed certain things would change after a lesson, such as the students’ breath slowing down, or the sound of their voice becoming deeper and more resonant, he responded it would take too long to explain. So I asked Practitioner D if she had any thoughts to add on this subject. She responded that once you stop doing the unnecessary muscle work, the breathing will do itself. You have to experience it yourself in a lesson, or perhaps through practicing on your own, to discover what it feels like to breathe freely. It was only now, after all her Alexander training, she began to understand specific singing methods that deal with special breathing instructions. She feels someone else explaining something to you like breathing, does not work unless you can experience it for yourself. One is not learning to create a new movement but is getting out of the way, so the natural movements are revealed. When this flow happens, and you experience it, it can, initially, feel very foreign. When she sees a student struggle with their breathing repeatedly, she may touch them at the point of conflict and, with her hand, ask, “Could this be different? Could you relax this muscle?”

Practitioner D noted the ITM is unique in comparison with other Alexander methods because it is really the ‘interactive’ teaching method. Not only is Weed teaching the Alexander Technique, but he has developed a method of how to teach the Alexander Technique to others. It is one thing to learn how to apply the Alexander Technique to oneself, but then you must also learn how to teach it to others, and how to interact with people.

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109 Practitioner D Interview Transcript, p. 165.
Practitioner D was so convinced by the skills she was learning, she decided to take the first Trainer’s Training Course Weed offered in 2012. Cumulatively, she has trained for eight years as an ITM teacher with Don Weed. Additionally, Practitioner D also joins the short workshops as a trainer and an ongoing pupil. If someday she has the permission and opportunity to train trainees, then she will be more involved in the formal teaching process. For now, she is committed to the ITM in both her personal and professional life. Practitioner D reported that increasingly her life has become better and easier because of the ITM.

Practitioner E

At the time of this interview, Practitioner E had just finished his first year of violin study at a Musikhochschule. The current ITM course was his first experience taking part in a summer workshop. He struck me as a very astute young man who made keen observations. His mother, also a violinist, and on the ITM course, was in the middle of the four-year Teacher Training Program with Weed. I was interested to hear his opinion on how he thought he might implement the ITM ideas as he continues to study the violin.

When asked what his ITM experiences were thus far, he replied that four years ago, he had his first Alexander lesson with Weed in a small group. This meeting happened by accident, as it was his parents who were interested in it and he just happened to be there. One year later, he had a second lesson and noticed it began to help him play the violin. Due to that experience, and because his mother was on the training course, they would sometimes have discussions about it and he became fascinated with the technique. Over the past two years he periodically had lessons with another very experienced ITM teacher, Stefan Welsch.
Practitioner E found the summer workshop quite different, in that contrary to some previous experiences with the Alexander Technique, he was part of a big group of participants, around twenty-five people. We spoke on the last day of the course, and I asked him what main points he would take away from this workshop. For Practitioner E, the concept of working through a process, and not looking for a result was the most important concept. This idea was new to him because up to that point, his motivation for taking Alexander lessons was only to get a better result playing the violin. It is clear to him now that this way of thinking, looking for a result, is not the way the ITM works. He understood that to use the ITM directly to achieve a result is not logical.

In talking more about this process, Practitioner E explained that when he practices now, he attempts to apply the concept of working through a process, as opposed to just trying to play the piece through as nicely as possible. He continually thinks of this process before and during the entire practice session. This process involves mainly thinking about the head in relation to the body, as well as continually asking oneself, “What am I doing?” and not immediately judging the result. He gave an example from a practice session he had that day, when he was playing a piece which required a shift up to a very high note – higher than he was used to playing. He did not have a clear structure in his head of where his fingers had to land and felt his success in reaching the correct pitch had been through luck. He reached for the note, and when it was wrong, went up again, and was again wrong. Subsequently, very consciously, just as he was approaching the upper register note, he thought of the poise of the head; twice in a row, he played the note perfectly in tune. While doing it, he did not think, “Ok, I'm going to play this D in tune now,” he purely thought of his head in relation to his body.
When we experience success, of course, we want to repeat it; yet Practitioner E mentioned another thing he learned on this course was not to go hunting for success. When I asked him if he thought this was possible, he replied, ‘yes’ and ‘no.’ He said of course, he likes it when he is playing and something goes well because that is his goal. Yet, he believes it is possible, while practicing, to consciously not think in that goal-oriented way. He also recognizes that one must continuously practice these concepts and they are not always easy. This was shown in many different ways during the workshop.

Practitioner E realized another central point of the ITM: what you do and study for yourself, combined with input and lessons from a teacher, will bring about the most success. Due to his heavy academic schedule, he would not be able to devote much time to the ITM but was indeed planning to take this idea of the importance of the process with him. For now, he believes for the next while, he has enough input and thoughts to work with, but at some point, it would be very beneficial to have another lesson.

Practitioner F

Practitioner F has been practicing and teaching the ITM of the AT for over twenty years. He had his first experience with the Alexander Technique during the first-semester holiday break as a cello student at the Musikhochschule in Stuttgart in 1992. A girl he was interested in at the time had said to him, “There is a workshop which sounds interesting. It's free, and you have nothing else to do, why don't you go?” Donald Weed was offering this workshop.

First, Practitioner F had a sitting lesson, which he did not particularly remember, followed by a lesson while playing the cello, which made a deep and lasting impression on him. Weed's explanation of what happened made the experience even more powerful; he explained he
did not give him anything but instead helped him stop the habits which were getting in the way of his playing. It sounded crazy and unbelievable to him at the time, and he could not sleep that night as he was filled with excitement and hope. After this experience, when a professor from the Musikhochschule heard him play, he commented the difference he heard in Practitioner F’s playing was the difference between an amateur and a professional.

Practitioner F continued to attend workshops in Stuttgart and Zürich. In 1996, he began the Human Movement, Structure, and Function Course in Zürich, which is the second part of the training program. At that time, Weed offered these parts of the training course individually and outside the curriculum of the training course. Practitioner F was absolutely sure he would never become an Alexander teacher and would never do the whole training course. However, that changed in 1997 when he took the third module of the training course, Principles of Personal Development. Upon completing this course, Practitioner F decided to join the formal Teacher Training Course in Bristol, and he successfully graduated in 2001. In 2016, he completed four additional years of training to qualify as an ITM trainer.

Practitioner F began teaching cello in 1992 with just a few students, earning his first professional teaching job at the Musikhochschule in Rostock in 1998. From 1999 to the present, he has been teaching cello full-time. Since 2005 he has divided his time, teaching 50% at the school in Darmstadt and 50% at a school in another city.

While explaining how the ITM influences his cello teaching, Practitioner F explains it is difficult to separate, because most of the time he has been teaching cello, he has known the ideas and principles of the ITM. He gave an example of one of his students who had seven previous cello teachers over a five-year period before coming to him for lessons. Their lessons together lasted for two and a half years. At the end of their time together, this student confided in him that
she had had a challenging time at the beginning of their work together, because, with every other teacher she had, she was used to being told what to do and did not really have to think much on her own.

However, with him, this was not the case at all. Practitioner F believes the most important job of a teacher is to make yourself unnecessary. He tries to guide his students through their studies in such a way they have to discover answers for themselves. When the student can solve their own problems, they become their own teacher.

This entry point is an overarching way of teaching, as well as being applicable at every small step along the way. Practitioner F’s aim in teaching is to assist the student in being able to solve each progressive step with less and less guidance. Through this process, the hope is that they gain more confidence, knowledge, and understanding.

One thing he regularly notices with his students is their ability to reach 100% of their current abilities during a performance. This notion of being only able to achieve a level of perhaps 80% during a performance, because of nerves or other circumstances, does not seem to apply to his students. He sees his students experiencing success because he believes they rely on a different foundation, which is more successful than just relying on their teacher. The learning process his students develop leads them to know they can do this on their own.

I asked Practitioner F how he reacts in lessons when he notices something which needs correcting. He replied the approach he uses more than anything else is to ask questions, the exact thing which drove the student mentioned above absolutely crazy. Practitioner F noted Alexander recognized the dilemma of students who are accustomed to being told what to do, and often expect to feel a certain way while following those instructions. However, short-term expectations of happiness or familiarity do not develop self-responsibility.
I asked Practitioner F if it was possible to refrain from correcting a fault, mistake, or bad habit in a lesson. He called this a ‘quick fix’ and said that if something is going wrong, there must be some lack of knowledge or some belief which is getting in the way of success. Giving a quick trick or some information which does not include the big picture, may work for a moment, but will have the student coming back in the next moment for the next trick, or piece of information. This behavior makes the student more reliant on the teacher, and that is the opposite of what he wants to achieve.

I remarked that by working at a Hochschule, he likely has his students for four years, so they are not going to stop their lessons before they complete their formal training. He said he always tells his students that if they can manage to do a series of steps on their own, then there becomes less and less for him to help them with as a teacher, and that is the moment the student needs to leave. However, he admits he has not yet come across this situation.

When I asked what the major differences were between more conventional AT approaches and the ITM, Practitioner F replied that in his few encounters with other approaches, the thing he noticed was that you were told what exercises to do and how to do them, and were told how it should make you feel. He found this did not appeal to his reasoning process. He claims every ITM lesson appeals to the reasoning process. He felt the other lessons did not encourage self-responsibility. However, he did not want to judge which methods were better or worse stating every person needs to decide what resonates with them. Currently, Practitioner F teaches at the Musikhochschule in Mannheim, where there is another Alexander Technique teacher who has been there for over twenty years. He encourages the students to go to both classes and decide which appeals to them.
I then asked Practitioner F if there was room for individual teaching styles or personalities when teaching an ITM lesson since my experiences have been that they seem to be somewhat similar. He responded that the principles and belief system learned in the Training Course, and expanded upon in the Trainer's Course, underlie everything in the ITM. No one tells you how to teach. You learn the principles, which become the foundation, but you do not get a recipe for teaching.

It surprises many students who enter their fourth year of training to discover they are not told how to teach in a scripted manner. Practitioner F recognized it can seem like there is a set procedure; however, when you are learning throughout the course, you discover that the questions which are asked, just happen to be the ones that make the most sense. For example, at the beginning of a lesson, you need to find out what the student wants, so the range of questions you can ask to determine that are pretty limited.

ITM lessons are generally taught in a group, yet I asked Practitioner F if he also taught individuals. He replied he did, but for one reason only. If he cannot find at least two people to come together, then he will teach individually. However, he strives to teach in groups of two or more because, in a group situation, reactions, perspectives, and discussions occur which cannot take place in a one-on-one situation.

In response to my question about the use of hands in a music lesson, Practitioner F responded he uses his hands very little, or not at all. In an Alexander lesson, one is in close proximity while doing hands-on work. At the most, he might touch a hand or an arm to show something, but there are good reasons not to touch students unnecessarily, especially if they are under eighteen. If he were to touch someone in a lesson, he would ask permission before doing so, emphasizing that it is a situation that needs attention and respect.
Practitioner F made clear that most of the Alexander work can be done verbally, and in his experience, using the hands without first explaining concepts and ideas did not end up being very helpful. He found hands-on work was best used to enhance verbal instruction, a handy tool which could really bring the idea home. Practitioner F summarized that in his experience, if both hands and words come together like a piece of art, then many things make sense.

I was curious to know how Practitioner F would approach a particular technical problem in a cello lesson and to give me an example. He gave the example of bowing with the cello. “Bowing in a certain way creates a certain sound,” he explained, “and let us say the student is not producing a nice sound.” He could say, “You’re too close to the bridge,” or “Your bowing is not at the right angle,” or he could ask, “Why does it sound like that?” However, he prefers to encourage students to go through certain questions in their head while they play on their own. This questioning forces them to listen to themselves and analyze what they did to produce that particular sound. He explained, “If it is a nice sound, great, but if it is not, then you can go through your own process to solve the problem.”

Practitioner F tries to go through a series of questions to enable the student to ask the same questions when they are on their own. Even if it seemed easier or quicker to say, “Just move your arm a little bit more to the right,” for example, he would not do so. He is looking for how they are moving and what will help them the most as the next step. Using the ITM principles allows him to best address the needs of each student.

To summarize, Practitioner F claimed not to have any one particular teaching style, although he did say the ITM predominantly informs his cello teaching. Part of the ITM is that

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110 Practitioner F Interview Transcript, p. 174.
you make decisions on the spot. This is how Practitioner F has built up his teaching philosophy, and for him and his students, it appears to be working very well.
Chapter 6

Findings and Discussions

The purpose of this study has been to investigate how certified ITM instructors apply the ITM principles in their music teaching pedagogy, with a specific focus on the specialist activity of applied voice lessons. Analysis of the data synthesized from the two data sets; the Donald Weed Workshop Interviews and the six Practitioner Interviews, delineated the important teaching concepts and strategies that when implemented in an organic, use-oriented approach, create ‘critical moments’ resulting in ease and freedom in the music-making process, for the greater awareness of both student and teacher. The goal of this study, to identify behavioral guidelines which will facilitate further understanding of the AT concepts, the ITM teaching model, and assist in more effectively delivering AT concepts through the ITM in applied voice lessons, is supported by the depth of data and information brought forward by the interviews pertaining to these stated purposes and goals.

Donald Weed Workshop Interviews

Findings

The raw data from the Weed Workshop Interviews were sorted to eliminate rhetoric and process from the individual stories, thus bringing to light Weed’s essential AT and ITM concepts and principles as presented in the 2019 ITM Summer Workshop. The emergent data were identified and sorted into seventeen codeword/categories. These codeword/categories are: ‘Application of the ITM in Lessons,’ ‘Art of Questioning,’ ‘Breath Use,’ ‘Critical Moment,’ ‘General/Basic Principles,’ ‘Group Teaching,’ ‘Hands-on Techniques,’ ‘Interactive,’
‘Lengthening the Spine/Flexibility,’ ‘Mastery,’ ‘Mental Processes/Thinking,’ ‘Natural System,’ ‘Original Sources,’ ‘Responsibility of the Student,’ ‘Self-Awareness/Awareness,’ ‘Table Work,’ and ‘Use of Mirrors.’

Table 1: Codeword/Category Tally of References: Donald Weed Interviews

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111 Please refer to Appendix III, p. 126.
Discussion

In terms of data central to this investigation, given Weed has built his entire Teacher Training curriculum on the writings and discoveries of F.M. Alexander, the data focused on ‘Original Sources’ holds a place of primary importance in this study. In his class lectures and during lessons, Weed constantly ‘tells stories,’ as he likes to phrase it. These stories take many forms, and very often explain situations through Alexander’s eyes. Weed uses quotes from Alexander’s books, paraphrases how Alexander approached different problems, explains how Frank Pierce Jones encountered similar issues in his book, and relates learning experiences he had with Marjorie Barstow. One of Weed’s comments during our workshop was that he found there were not enough suitable options for students who wanted to study the Alexander Technique back when he was starting to teach. One could take endless lessons or join a teacher training course. Neither of those options, as far as he could tell, had much to do with what Alexander wrote.

In terms of data most pertinent to this study, other relevant topics derived from the Weed Interviews were the discussions on the ‘Interactive’ nature of the ITM and the ‘Application of the ITM in Lessons.’ Pertaining to the interactive nature of the ITM, Weed stressed the importance of taking the class through the student to find out what are their wants and needs. He is most interested in getting a report from the student that matches the teacher’s impression of what occurred during the lesson. When this happens, the student progresses more quickly.

There are multiple ways to apply the ITM during lessons. This may be through the art of communication, the exploration of an activity during a lesson, questioning, invoking class discussion, the use of hands, and the telling of stories. In terms of how ITM principles apply to vocal study and the ‘Application of the ITM in Lessons,’ during one of the class discussions, I
asked Weed why during or after an AT lesson, the student’s voice would often sound different or lower. Weed clarified he is much more interested in the student’s process of directing themselves in activity than in any specific outcome, or the functional or anatomical reasons why a certain vocal outcome occurred.

Both categories of ‘Hands-on Technique’ and ‘Use of Mirrors’ had a moderate frequency tally from Weed’s classes. It is interesting to note that these terms were mentioned as not being important to the values of the ITM. While the use of hands is of primary importance during many AT lessons, in the ITM they are relegated to a secondary, or even least important aspect. Hands are used only to enhance an idea or concept. Weed noted although students seemed to love having hand work done while lying on a table, there was always one problem; getting up. Without the refined mentality to accompany the hand work, people reverted to their old habits of movement once they left the table. Most Alexander courses up until the end of the 1900’s regularly used mirrors and believed it was necessary. However, in Weed’s work with Barstow in Nebraska, they almost never used mirrors. He explained that instead of mirrors, the students used each other. Weed’s experience working with students taught him that once people started looking at themselves outwardly in mirrors, they stopped looking inwardly.

Four categories had a frequency of five times being mentioned during Weed’s interview. Two of them, ‘Group Teaching,’ and ‘Self-Awareness/Awareness’ are absolutely central to the ITM. The primary points outlined by Weed in ‘Group Teaching’ were that in an ITM group setting where one person is having a lesson and the class is observing, the person in the position to learn the most is actually the teacher. The people observing and taking part in the class are in the second-best position to learn, as they have a unique perspective because they are directly involved in observing and following the process of the lesson. The person who is actually in the
least advantageous learning position is the person having the lesson; they are experiencing something new, which is usually very distracting. However, to the observers, what was happening in the lesson itself makes perfect sense, as they are not tied into the work of the lesson and can more easily see and relate to the unfolding process.

Building up the student’s awareness is the ultimate purpose of every ITM teacher. Weed shared it took him a long time to develop a self-awareness in his own movements and in the sensitivity in the use of his hands. He recognized the difficulty a student had in processing a new experience during a lesson and being able to verbalize that change. Weed explained Alexander’s realization and ‘Self-Awareness/Awareness’ by saying in order to change the way he moved, he needed to change the way he thought.

In addressing the topics of ‘Table Work’ and ‘Lengthening the Spine/Flexibility,’ Weed noted these topics are part of the distinguishing factors between the ITM and other approaches to the AT. According to Weed, the problem with table work is there is no ‘Critical Moment.’

Weed also mentioned according to Frank Pierce Jones’ book, Freedom to Change, Alexander never did lying-down work unless the patient was bedridden. In terms of the spine, Weed noted in some parts of the Alexander world, length is the primary focus, but for the ITM, it is flexibility. The aim is to avoid anything which can become fixed when dealing with the arrangement of our bodies.

With four references each were the codeword/categories ‘Art of Questioning,’ ‘General/Basic Principles,’ and ‘Mastery.’ Asking questions is central to the ITM; one of the reasons that group teaching is so effective is the group learns from the discourse between teacher and student and also from the discussions between the observers. The frequent questioning also

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112 Weed Interview Transcript, p. 45.
leads the student to more independent thinking. The concept that the ITM deals primarily with
general or basic principles is evident from Weed’s curriculum for the Teacher Training Course.
The first module is called ‘Basic Principles,’ and he told the class a story about how he made a
bet with someone that he would read only the material in his Basic Principles Course and in ten
years would tell them if there was anything he missed from Alexander’s books. Weed claimed
that from these basic principles, all other information could be extracted.

Further, Weed’s insistence that he was more interested in student process is also evidence
of the codeword/category ‘Mastery.’ Weed reported that in his experience, students who were
only concerned with the outcome did not make as much progress as those who focused on the
process itself. As a teacher, Weed is always fundamentally interested in whether the student’s
report of what they experienced matches the teacher’s impression of what happened. When these
two observations match, students progress more quickly. The students’ capacity to focus on
directing themselves in activity, rather than on their concern for a specific outcome (end-
gaining), defines the true essence of ‘Mastery’ in terms of both the AT and ITM.

Several codeword/categories had only three references, ‘Critical Moment,’ ‘Mental
Processes/Thinking,’ ‘Natural System,’ and ‘Breath Use.’ However, this is not necessarily
representative of their importance to the ITM. Weed discussed the ‘Critical Moment’ in terms of
what Alexander wrote at the end of chapter one of his third book. Alexander realized this critical
moment came when one went from planning to do something to actually doing it, or from the
thought which comes at the moment you go into activity. This is why Weed does not favor table
work; because there is no critical moment.

The fact that the majority of the work of the ITM is mental was reiterated often and in
different ways. Weed emphasized that our thinking controls our movements and if we want to
change how we move, we must change how we think. Weed refers to ‘Mental Processes/Thinking’ when he mentions that by working in activity, one is building up the discipline of being able to think. The ‘Natural System’ codeword/category is ubiquitous to the ITM. The ITM’s purpose is to get the individual’s body back to its natural state of functioning. Referring back to the changed speaking voice after a lesson, Weed explained it came about as a result of a change in the balance of the whole pattern of muscles involved in speaking.

When Weed discussed ‘Breath Use,’ it was in response to my question regarding the change I noticed in peoples’ speaking voices after having a lesson. Since the ITM is not interested in looking specifically at isolated functions of the body, for example breath use, Weed’s answer was that this change did not interest him. What did interest him was putting his attention on the thought process which led to the change.

Although the codeword/category “Responsibility of the Student” received only two references, similar to ‘Natural System,’ this concept is also ubiquitous to the ITM. Weed emphasized the teacher was not there to solve problems or to fix things but to guide and help the student. However, it is ultimately the student’s responsibility to experiment, to learn and practice the process, and to figure out how to do the work themselves in order to progress.

Practitioner Interviews

Findings

The raw data from the Practitioner Interviews were sorted to eliminate rhetoric and process from the individual stories, thus bringing to light the essential AT and ITM concepts and principles from each of the interviews. Table 2 summarizes the tally of the raw data from the Practitioner Interviews by frequency of codeword/categories.
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prac. B: 1</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prac. C: 2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Prac. D: 1</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prac. E: 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prac. F: 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

113 Please refer to Appendix V, Parts 2 and 3, p. 183, 200.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Interactive</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Lengthening the Spine/Flexibility</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mastery</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Mental Processes/Thinking</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Natural System</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Original Sources</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Responsibility of the Student</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Self-Awareness/Awareness</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table Work

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Table Work</td>
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<td>Prac. B: 0</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Prac. C: 1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prac. D: 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prac. E: 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prac. F: 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use of Mirrors

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Use of Mirrors</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prac. A: 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prac. B: 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prac. C: 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prac. D: 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prac. E: 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prac. F: 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

As indicated in the findings, all Practitioner Interviews focused on multiple concepts and principles of both the AT and the ITM. The pertinent ideas were extracted and compiled in a list format for each study participant. This list allowed recurrent codeword/categories among participants to be easily identified and sorted. Again, the seventeen codeword/categories identified from the Practitioner Interview data are, in alphabetical order: ‘Application of the ITM in Lessons,’ ‘Art of Questioning,’ ‘Breath Use,’ ‘Critical Moment,’ ‘General/Basic Principles,’ ‘Group Teaching,’ ‘Hands-on Techniques,’ ‘Interactive,’ ‘Lengthening the Spine/Flexibility,’ ‘Mastery,’ ‘Mental Processes/Thinking,’ ‘Natural System,’ ‘Original Sources,’ ‘Responsibility of the Student,’ ‘Self-Awareness/Awareness,’ ‘Table Work,’ and ‘Use of Mirrors.’

The main concepts gleaned from the interview with Practitioner A in terms of emergent categories and codewords centered around ‘Mental Processes/Thinking’ and ‘Self-Awareness/Awareness,’ ‘Use of the Breath,’ and the ‘Application of the AT in Lessons’ leading to independent ‘Mastery.’ In his own learning experiences with the Alexander Technique, Practitioner A recognized the first job of a good teacher is to teach the student how to think. This

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114 Please refer to Appendix V, p. 176.
refined mentality, which in essence is experiencing a ‘Critical Moment,’ led to an improved body coordination which resulted naturally from the thinking process. Further, because his body improved, his sound while playing the trumpet improved. Practitioner A recognized that this was not a conscious change, but one which occurred from applying the ‘General/Basic Principles’ of the Alexander Technique.

While teaching music students, Practitioner A found as he guided them towards an increased ‘Self-Awareness/Awareness,’ students learned how to take ‘Responsibility,’ and guide themselves as they developed greater levels of technical ‘Mastery.’ In ‘Application of the ITM in Lessons’ he does not focus on ‘Breath Use’ as he finds isolating or concentrating on breath control is often counter-productive because the breath is being separated from the rest of the body.

Practitioner B’s emergent categories during the interview focused on ‘General Principles’ of the ITM, including the ‘Art of Questioning,’ ‘Mental Processes/Thinking,’ and ‘Self-Awareness/Awareness.’ Other categories revealed were ‘Original Sources,’ ‘Hands-on Techniques,’ and ‘Natural System.’ One of the core teaching tools of the ITM is to ask questions and this interactive part of the ITM is one of the most important general principles. Another essential principle evident in this interview is the concept of getting a student to change their thinking. If the student can let go of wrong ideas and beliefs, then the ‘Natural System’ is free to express itself. This is why the Alexander teacher does not need to be an expert in the activity you are helping the student accomplish. Helping the student change their thinking allows the right physical function to occur on its own.

Practitioner B mentioned that in the ITM there is a dedication to the study of Alexander’s written texts, or ‘Original Sources’ as the basis of their learning. ‘Hands-on Techniques’ are
viewed as secondary in importance and are used only to support the concept of changing a student’s thinking. Increased ‘Self-Awareness/Awareness’ gained through the ITM training course allows the Alexander student to critically examine every aspect of their life and then pass these skills onto their students.

Practitioner C’s interview centered on the categories of applying the ITM in lessons through the ‘Art of Questioning’ as well as development of self-awareness. She incorporates the ITM principles into her voice teaching through the manner in which she communicates to her students. Learning to be precise in the use of words and the ‘Art of Questioning’ are two key ITM concepts conveying the ‘Interactive’ quality of the method. Practitioner C has learned more about pedagogy, communication, and interacting with people from her ITM studies than in any other educational institution. As for the use of ‘Hands-on Techniques’ in a voice lesson, she would only do so if the student has already taken Alexander lessons. Practitioner C would first work on ‘Self-Awareness/Awareness’ through questioning about the relationship of the head to the rest of the body. Her previous experience with ‘Table Work’ did not make any lasting impressions on her.

The categories which emerged from Practitioner D’s interview were ‘General Principles,’ specifically those in the ITM which deal with ‘Interaction,’ ‘Breath Use,’ the ‘Application of the ITM in Lessons,’ and the ‘Hands-on Techniques.’ She notes the way Weed has instructed his course teaches the pupil not only the ITM and how to teach it, but also how to teach in general. The important principles she emphasizes are thinking in relation to movement, the relationship of the head to the body, and the ability to detect excess muscular effort.

The biggest benefit of combining the ITM with teaching voice, in Practitioner D’s opinion, is that the ITM has trained her to see when a student has interferences while singing. By
asking questions, she can help the student realize where there is extra effort and learn to stop it.

Practitioner D’s view on ‘Breath Use’ is that once you stop doing unnecessary muscle work, the breathing will take care of itself; Alexander lessons are an excellent way to discover where and when the extra muscle work occurs. In an exhibit of the ‘Lengthening the Spine/Flexibility codeword/category, Practitioner D, when she notices someone ‘fixing’ their posture will use hands-on as a way to continue asking questions. With a light touch, at the point of contact, her hand will ask, “Could this be different? Could you relax this muscle?”

Practitioner D notes the ITM is special because it is really the interactive teaching method. Weed has developed a method of how to teach the ITM to people, and in doing so, is teaching his students how to teach any subject. She has learned how to apply the ITM to herself, to others, how to teach the ITM, and how to interact with people.

Practitioner E’s interview elicited responses which dealt with the general ITM principles of the ‘Art of Questioning,’ ‘Self-Awareness/Awareness’ and ‘Mental Processes/Thinking,’ leading to ‘Mastery.’ For Practitioner E, the concept of going through a process without looking for a result was a new and meaningful idea. This process involves being aware of your actions the-entire time and also being aware of your head in relation to the body. Through not immediately judging the result, and constantly re-focusing energy on the process instead of the end result, he recognized these ideas were both core to the ITM and also needed conscious practice. This conscious practice, combined with lessons and input from an Alexander teacher, was deemed the best way to achieve positive results and ‘Mastery,’ albeit the mastery of thinking in action rather than any kind of end-gaining for a specific result. The success he was able to achieve came also as a result of dealing successfully with the ‘Critical Moment,’ when he was able to control his thinking before, and while he performed the action.
The main categories expressed in Practitioner F’s interview were the application of the ITM in lessons, ‘General/Basic Principles’ of ‘The Art of Questioning,’ and ‘Hands-on Techniques.’ He uses his hands while teaching music lessons only to enhance his words, but the ‘Art of Questioning’ has a most significant role. Rather than correct a fault in a student’s behavior while playing their instrument, he would ask them to notice what they were doing and to suggest a change for improvement. He encourages students to think for themselves, and by gaining self-awareness in their music-making they become more independent and gain self-responsibility.

Practitioner F remarks students usually want to be told what to do. By refraining from these kinds of end-gaining behaviors or learning strategies, and focusing instead on developing the ‘Responsibility of the Student,’ the student is guided towards figuring out their own problems, and tends to gain more confidence, knowledge, and understanding. ITM lessons only give the student the awareness they must change their thinking to stop the habits which get in the way of them experiencing success. ITM teachers prefer ‘Group Teaching’ because in a group situation you can get reactions, perspectives, and discussions which cannot take place in a one-on-one lesson.

Emergent Behavioral Statements

Significance Indicator Groups

From the data presented in Tables 1 and 2, as well as the research literature for both the AT and the ITM, it is possible to identify the intrinsic significance of each codeword/category to the AT, the ITM, or both. In addition, the total tally per category of each of the two data sets also demonstrates how the ITM delivers the AT. Through analysis of the codeword/category
indications, three distinct Significance Indicator Groups were defined; and one Significance Indicator Group was found to be solely focused on the unique concepts of the ITM. Further, from this Significance Indicator Group, the actual operational procedures of the ITM begin to both coalesce into a unique list for this method, as well as indicate a set of behavioral guidelines for teacher implementation.

Table 3: Significance Indicator Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codeword/Category Number</th>
<th>Codeword/Category Name</th>
<th>Importance to AT</th>
<th>Importance to ITM</th>
<th>Importance to Both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Application of ITM in Lessons</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Art of Questioning</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Breath Use</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Critical Moment</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>General/Basic Principles</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Group Teaching</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Hands-on Techniques</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Interactive</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Lengthening the Spine/Flexibility</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mastery</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Mental Processes/Thinking</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Natural System</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Original Sources</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Responsibility of the Student</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Self-Awareness/Awareness</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Table Work</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

115 Please refer to Appendix VI, Section 5, p. 235.
Findings: Significance Indicator Groups

The codeword/categories which appear most significant to both methods, are shown in Table 3 by the Significance Indicator Group **Yes-Yes-Yes**. This Significance Indicator Group clarifies that the codeword/categories being discussed are significant to the AT, the ITM, as well as both the AT and the ITM.

The codeword/categories which appear to have the most significance to the Alexander Technique, and thus are not as significant to the ITM, are shown in Table 3 by the Significance Indicator Group **Yes-No-No**. This Significance Indicator Group clarifies that the codeword/categories being discussed are significant to the AT; however, although operational in the ITM, are not as significant to the ITM, and thus not as significant to both the AT and the ITM.

The codeword/categories which appear to have the most significance to the ITM, and thus are not as significant to the AT, are shown in Table 3 by the Significance Indicator Group **No-Yes-No**. This Significance Indicator Group clarifies that the codeword/categories being discussed are significant to the ITM, but not as significant to the AT, and thus not as significant to both the AT and the ITM.

Discussion: Significance Indicator Groups

**Significance Indicator Group: Yes-Yes-Yes**

The codeword/categories with the Significance Indicator Group **Yes-Yes-Yes** are the codeword/categories which are significant to both methods: the AT, the ITM, and both the AT
and the ITM. The 9 of 17, or 53% of the codeword/categories with the Significance Indicator Group **Yes-Yes-Yes** are: ‘Critical Moment,’ ‘General/Basic Principles,’ ‘Hands-on Techniques,’ ‘Lengthening the Spine/Flexibility,’ ‘Mastery,’ ‘Mental Processes/Thinking,’ ‘Natural System,’ ‘Responsibility of the Student,’ and ‘Self-Awareness/Awareness.’ In terms of data gleaned from both AT practitioners and ITM students and teachers in this study, the fact that 53% of the emergent codeword/categories are significant to both methods, indicates all interview participants are busy with best practices in this field.

**Significance Indicator Group: Yes-No-No**

The codeword/categories with the Significance Indicator Group **Yes-No-No** are the codeword/categories which are most significant to the AT; however, although operational in the ITM, are not as significant to the ITM, or both the AT and the ITM. The 3 of 17, or 18% of the codeword/categories with the Significance Indicator Group **Yes-No-No** are: ‘Breath Use,’ ‘Table Work,’ and ‘Use of Mirrors.’ In terms of data gleaned from both AT practitioners and ITM students and teachers in this study, the fact that these categories were referenced only 18% of the time could indicate that, although these codeword/categories are important to AT practitioners, they may not be as significant in teaching AT through the ITM procedures.

**Significance Indicator Group: No-Yes-No**

The codeword/categories with the Significance Indicator Group **No-Yes-No** are the codeword/categories which are significant to the ITM, but not as significant to the AT, or both the AT and the ITM. The 5 of 17, or 29% of the codeword/categories with the Significance Indicator Group **No-Yes-No** are: ‘Application of ITM in Lessons,’ ‘Art of Questioning,’ ‘Group
Teaching, ‘Interactive’ and ‘Original Sources.’ Simply the names of these categories alone, as indicated throughout this study, are indicative of Weed’s curriculum for the ITM. Further, in terms of data gleaned from both AT practitioners and ITM students and teachers in this study, the 29% of the emergent codeword/categories which focus most specifically on the unique concepts of the ITM are a strong indicator of the behavioral guidelines needed to fully implement AT-supported music lessons using the ITM.

Behavioral Guidelines For Teacher Implementation of the ITM in Voice Lessons

In working with the Significance Indicator results, particularly the five codeword/categories which deal specifically with the concepts unique to the ITM in the category No-Yes-No,116 it became evident that by going back into both data sets, a list of category-specific interview statements could be culled.117 Further, from that list, it also became evident that by sorting the specific interview statements in terms of ‘ideas’ and ‘actionable teacher behaviors,’ that another list of applicable behaviors could be developed.118 From this list, the data was further sorted to hone a list of raw data behavioral statements, sorted by each of the codeword/categories.119 As the second last step in the data sort, the raw data behavioral statements were edited into complete sentences and sorted into sections that represented the

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116 Please refer to Appendix VI, p. 214.

117 Please refer to Appendix VI, Section 2: Raw Data Sort of Codeword/Categories in the Significance Indicator No-Yes-No, by Interview, p. 214.

118 Please refer to Appendix VI, Section 3: Raw Data Sort of Codeword/Categories in the Significance Indicator No-Yes-No, by Behavior, p. 223.

119 Please refer to Appendix VI, Section 4: Raw Data Behavioral Statements of Codeword/Categories in the Significance Indicator No-Yes-No, sorted by Codeword/Category, p. 232.
already evident actionable teacher behaviors.\textsuperscript{120} Finally, to harmonize with the interactive approach of the ITM, the behavioral statements were rewritten in the form of a question.\textsuperscript{121}

Findings: Behavioral Guidelines

Table 4: Behavioral Guidelines for Teacher Implementation of the ITM in Voice Lessons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DID I REMEMBER THAT</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>everything is a critical moment, and we are building up the discipline in being able to think?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to stop doing the things we don’t want, and to start doing more of what we do want, both the student and teacher need to understand we must change the way we think in order to change the way we move?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the repositioning/change is a result of the refined mentality which comes from the instruction?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the ITM happens through asking questions; it’s one of the most important tools?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it’s not something to be filled up and finished but it’s a process by which one can continue to improve?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the AT and the ITM are processes and are not looking for results?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it’s about the process of thinking of the head in relation to the body, while not immediately judging the result?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students are going to think of things in terms of what they know and what they have experienced?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>during lessons, we are primarily interested in getting a report from a student which is relatively accurate, where the student’s impression of what occurred is relatively the same as the teacher’s impression of what occurred?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>these wonderful experiences do not relieve the teacher or the student of the responsibility to learn to do the work for themselves?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you must do what you think is best and hope you’re not very far wrong?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textit{DID I REMEMBER TO}

| always work in an Alexander fashion? |  |

\textsuperscript{120} Please refer to Appendix VI, Section 5: Edited and Sorted Raw Data Behavioral Statements of Codeword/Categories in the Significance Indicator No-Yes-No, sorted by Teacher Behavior, p. 235.

\textsuperscript{121} Please refer to Appendix VII, Behavioral Guidelines for Teacher Implementation of the ITM in Voice Lessons, in Questions Format, p. 239.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>teach the lesson/class through the student and focus on what the student wants and needs there to be?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>be thinking of my own head’s relation to my body while teaching and observing students?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>notice the process of how a student is directing themselves in activity?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>always be thinking about and reading from Alexander’s texts and original sources?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>train my eyes and ears to see and hear when there are interferences occurring?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>understand the enormous difference it makes to realize a student may simply be doing too much?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>use the ITM way of communication by asking questions?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>encourage questions from the students?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>be precise in my word choices while giving instruction, and while asking questions?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>encourage in groups the discussions which cannot take place in a one-on-one situation?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>try and create group learning experiences whenever possible?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use AT/ITM training, and ask through hands-on work, “Could this be different, could you relax this muscle?”</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ask the students to touch their own necks while singing to see if they can notice anything themselves?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>listen to what the student is saying and avoid jumping to conclusions?</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DID I WATCH, LISTEN TO, OR NOTICE**

- the process of thinking of the head in relation to the body, in myself and in the student?
- while working with a student, that there is always something to look for, to determine if I see excess tension, interference, or movement which is not necessary for singing?
- the confirmation that the student is now in command of more information by which to further the exploration and carry out that exploration for themselves?

**DID I ASK MY STUDENTS TO**

- remember that this is a continual process of thinking of the head in relation to the body?
- grow in the understanding that they need to change the way they think in order to change the way they move?
- remember this is a process and we are not looking for a result?
- remember this is a process of continually asking themselves, and noticing, “What am I doing?”
- not immediately judge the result?
- go through the thinking and questioning process on their own when they encounter difficulty?
- go through the process of thinking about the head in relation to the body between lessons as well as when practicing at home?
remember that as wonderful as these experiences are, it does not relieve them of the responsibility to learn to do the work for themselves?

**DID I ASK MY STUDENTS QUESTIONS WHICH are an application of the Alexander Technique principles?**

- have them examine what they did and how they did it?
- focus on the process?
- are non-judgmental?

**DID I ASK MY STUDENTS QUESTIONS SUCH AS:**

- What did you notice?
- Was it the same or different?
- Was there one part of the sound which improved?
- Did you think about or notice your head in relation to your body while singing?
- Is it okay if I put my hands on your neck?
- While you sing that phrase again, can you touch your neck and see if you notice anything?

Discussion: Behavioral Guidelines: Defining a New Guiding Question

It is noteworthy to mention that in codifying this list of Behavioral Guidelines, the data revealed actionable, applicable behaviors which can lead to more consciously implementing an ITM-oriented music lesson. The general, open-ended focus of the Guiding Question\textsuperscript{122} and Purpose Statement\textsuperscript{123} presented in Chapter 1, which form the focus of this study elicited a series of responses which were clearly the actionable behaviors of each interview participant. In terms of my own learning from this study and how I will approach voice lessons in the future, the resultant behavioral guidelines expressed as questions and as outlined in Table 4, have codified for me the deep benefits of an interactive teaching process. Further, they have inspired me to define a new Guiding Question:

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\textsuperscript{122} Chapter 1, p. 5; “How can I teach voice with the benefits of the ITM lifestyle… how best does one combine these two worlds?”

\textsuperscript{123} Please refer to Chapter 1, p. 6.
“How will I maintain a higher level of mental awareness of the AT for myself, in action as a teacher, while helping students find, develop, and maintain their own natural system of use, and mental awareness for themselves, while singing?”

The answer to this new Guiding Question is: “By integrating the questions:

Did I remember that…?
Did I remember to…?
Did I watch, listen to, or notice…?
Did I ask my students to…?
Did I ask my students questions which…?
Did I ask questions such as…?

into my voice teaching with students and groups.
Chapter 7

Summary and Conclusion

Summary

The purpose of this study has been to investigate how certified ITM instructors apply the ITM principles into their music teaching pedagogy, with a specific focus on applied voice lessons. My aim was to identify behavioral guidelines to facilitate the understanding of the AT concepts, the ITM, and to assist in more effectively delivering AT concepts through the ITM in applied voice lessons. Analysis of the data synthesized from two data sets; the Donald Weed Workshop Interviews and the six Practitioner Interviews, delineated the important teaching concepts and strategies, that when implemented in an organic, use-oriented manner within specialist activities, serves to support the creation of ‘critical moments’ of ease and freedom in the music-making process, for the greater awareness of both student and teacher.

As evidenced in Chapters 5 and 6, the interviews yielded a wealth of valuable information pertaining to this stated purpose. Through the data sorting and tallying process, the categories of principles and behaviors unique to the AT and the ITM were highly evident, as well as the categories which were common to both. As evidenced throughout this document, the goal of the study; to create behavioral guidelines which assist in more effectively delivering AT concepts through the ITM in applied voice lessons, has been elegantly and clearly supported by a wealth of valuable information brought forward in both the interviews and the research literature pertaining to the AT and the ITM.

To recap, the raw data from the Weed and Practitioner Interviews were sorted to eliminate rhetoric and process from the individual stories, thus bringing to light all essential AT
and ITM concepts and principles shared in the 2019 ITM Workshop. The emergent data were identified and sorted into the following seventeen codeword/categories: ‘Application of the ITM in Lessons,’ ‘Art of Questioning,’ ‘Breath Use,’ ‘Critical Moment,’ ‘General/Basic Principles,’ ‘Group Teaching,’ ‘Hands-on Techniques,’ ‘Interactive,’ ‘Lengthening the Spine/Flexibility,’ ‘Mastery,’ ‘Mental Processes/Thinking,’ ‘Natural System,’ ‘Original Sources,’ ‘Responsibility of the Student,’ ‘Self-Awareness/Awareness,’ ‘Table Work,’ and ‘Use of Mirrors.’ Emergent data were tallied by frequency in these codeword/categories.

The rich data sets provided abundant indicators concerning the significance of the seventeen codeword/categories in terms of the purpose of this study. Perhaps the most telling part of the data analysis were the results from the Significance Indicator Groups. By calculating the Significant Indicator Group percentages, the actual categories which are solely focused on the unique concepts and actual operational procedures of the ITM began to coalesce into a set of behavioral guidelines for teacher implementation. The codeword/categories with the Significance Indicator Group No-Yes-No are the codeword/categories which are significant to the ITM, but not as significant to the AT, or both the AT and the ITM.

The 5 of 17 (29%) of the codeword/categories in the Significance Indicator Group No-Yes-No are: ‘Application of ITM in Lessons,’ ‘Art of Questioning,’ ‘Group Teaching,’ ‘Interactive’ and ‘Original Sources.’ The names of these categories alone, as indicated throughout this study, are indicative of Weed’s curriculum for the ITM. Further, in terms of data gleaned from this Significance Indicator Group, the fact nearly one-third of the emergent codeword/categories focus specifically on the ITM, makes these participant interviews ideally suited as the basis for the behavioral guidelines for ITM-supported voice lessons.
Conclusion

As presented in Chapter 1; as a result of several years of study with Donald Weed and the incremental but evident changes in my vocal technique, I began to hypothesize about the use of The Interactive Teaching Method of the Alexander Technique in terms of voice instruction. I began to realize I was not only acquiring skills on how to conduct myself in daily activities, but also developing a way to think and develop a self-awareness which would translate into how I interacted with students while teaching. Seeing many parallels in how the ITM was taught and how one could teach voice students, I wondered how I could incorporate this thinking into teaching voice lessons.

I was not alone in this query. Recalling my discussion with Practitioner F, I learned many other teachers taking Weed’s Training Course wondered this same thing. Frequently asked question by all of them were, “How can I continue to do what I do, with what I now know?” and “How can I bring these things together?” Ultimately, and in perfect sync with the ITM attitude of empowering each student to learn for themselves, each training course participant came to understand they were responsible for finding their own answers to that question. However, what the training course gave them was the ability to critically examine what they were doing in their day job, to revise their pedagogical approach to their work, and to give them the capacity to examine what they did, how they did it, and how to communicate that to their own students.

Through the course of this study and document process, I discovered that, as both a voice teacher and researcher, I had to do exactly what Practitioner F proposes; to build “a different foundation to rely on.” This ‘different foundation’ is summarized by the new Guiding Question and the Behavioral Guidelines outlined in Table 4.

\[124\] Practitioner F Interview Transcripts, p. 170.
As discussed in Chapter 6, it is noteworthy to mention that in codifying this list of Behavioral Guidelines, the data revealed actionable, applicable behaviors that can lead to more consciously implementing an ITM-oriented music lesson. In terms of my own learning from this study and how I will approach teaching voice lessons in the future, the new Guiding Question and Behavioral Guidelines have codified for me the profound benefits of an interactive teaching process, and have inspired me to implement them as a vocal pedagogue. It is appropriate that the fulfillment of the Guiding Question, Purpose Statement, and Goal of this study are given in the form of actionable questions.

The summation of the data in this study resulted in the Behavioral Guidelines listed below.

Table 4: Behavioral Guidelines for Teacher Implementation of the ITM in Voice Lessons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DID I REMEMBER THAT</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>everything is a critical moment, and we are building up the discipline in being able to think?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to stop doing the things we don’t want, and to start doing more of what we do want, both the student and teacher need to understand we must change the way we think in order to change the way we move?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the repositioning/change is a result of the refined mentality which comes from the instruction?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the ITM happens through asking questions; it’s one of the most important tools?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it’s not something to be filled up and finished but it’s a process by which one can continue to improve?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the AT and the ITM are processes and are not looking for results?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it’s about the process of thinking of the head in relation to the body, while not immediately judging the result?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students are going to think of things in terms of what they know and what they have experienced?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>during lessons, we are primarily interested in getting a report from a student which is relatively accurate, where the student’s impression of what occurred is relatively the same as the teacher’s impression of what occurred?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
these wonderful experiences do not relieve the teacher or the student of the responsibility to learn to do the work for themselves?

you must do what you think is best and hope you’re not very far wrong?

**DID I REMEMBER TO**

- always work in an Alexander fashion?
- teach the lesson/class through the student and focus on what the student wants and needs there to be?
- be thinking of my own head’s relation to my body while teaching and observing students?
- notice the process of how a student is directing themselves in activity?
- always be thinking about and reading from Alexander’s texts and original sources?
- train my eyes and ears to see and hear when there are interferences occurring?
- understand the enormous difference it makes to realize a student may simply be doing too much?
- use the ITM way of communication by asking questions?
- encourage questions from the students?
- be precise in my word choices while giving instruction, and while asking questions?
- encourage in groups the discussions which cannot take place in a one-on-one situation?
- try and create group learning experiences whenever possible?
- Use AT/ITM training, and ask through hands-on work, “Could this be different, could you relax this muscle?”
- ask the students to touch their own necks while singing to see if they can notice anything themselves?
- listen to what the student is saying and avoid jumping to conclusions?

**DID I WATCH, LISTEN TO, OR NOTICE**

- the process of thinking of the head in relation to the body, in myself and in the student?
- while working with a student, there is always something to look for, to determine if I see excess tension, interference, or movement which is not necessary for singing?
- the confirmation that the student is now in command of more information by which to further the exploration and carry out that exploration for themselves?

**DID I ASK MY STUDENTS TO**

- remember this is a continual process of thinking of the head in relation to the body?
- grow in the understanding that they need to change the way they think in order to change the way they move?
- remember this is a process and we are not looking for a result?
- remember this is a process of continually asking themselves, and noticing, “What am I doing?”
not immediately judge the result?

go through the thinking and questioning process on their own when they encounter difficulty?

go through the process of thinking about the head in relation to the body between lessons as well as when practicing at home?

remember that as wonderful as these experiences are, it does not relieve them of the responsibility to learn to do the work for themselves?

**DID I ASK MY STUDENTS QUESTIONS WHICH**

are an application of the Alexander Technique principles?

have them examine what they did and how they did it?

focus on the process?

are non-judgmental?

**DID I ASK MY STUDENTS QUESTIONS SUCH AS:**

What did you notice?

Was it the same or different?

Was there one part of the sound which improved?

Did you think about or notice your head in relation to your body while singing?

Is it okay if I put my hands on your neck?

While you sing that phrase again, can you touch your neck and see if you notice anything?

**Recommendations for Further Research**

For further research, there truly is a wealth of data waiting to be collected through both narrative and descriptive study formats to add more depth of understanding of the Alexander Technique. Using the research design of this study, the next steps and improvements could include: a) a more clearly defined research design at the outset of the study; and b) interview questions which are more open-ended in nature, so Alexander Teachers would feel more comfortable about answering them without the sense they were ‘end-gaining’ their responses.

To move this interview study format into a more descriptive research design, more strictly defined codewords, as well as their inclusion in the interview questions themselves,
would cull a more diverse yet deeply connected data set from participant interviews. Additionally, asking the exact set of questions to both the teacher of the workshop and practitioner interviewees would narrow the data sets, as well as allow the codewords tallies to be directly compared and contrasted with each other. The differentiation of a ‘codeword’ and a ‘category’ could be delineated in such a way a factor analysis of these elements would give even more clarity in terms of congruence and relatedness. Further, with these improvements, a study with an identical design to this one could be conducted, which compares various approaches of the AT to one another, to discern differentiating application procedures and different sets of Behavioral Guidelines for different branches of the Alexander Technique.

Given it is possible to ‘measure’ the amount of change in singing before, during, and after an Alexander session, an exciting study I could envision is one which analyzes singers using spectrographic analysis. Further, different phases of the study could be created using an immediate ‘hands-on’ adjustment, as well as after a series of ITM lessons, to investigate any differences between using only hands-on and using an ITM version of applying the AT. Another possibility could be conducting the same study design with participants who have received hands-on work compared to those who have studied the ITM but received no hands-on work.

In terms of more deeply researching the impact of applying the Behavioral Guidelines from this study in teaching settings, studies could be done which measure participant perceptions of effective lessons both with and without the Behavioral Guidelines. Lastly, a comparison-contrast study of ITM-oriented voice lessons based on hands-on work combined with the art of questioning, and lessons with AT hands-on work but without questioning, could also yield clarifying and interesting results.
Ending

As Alexander taught, “In the mind… lies the secret of the ability to resist, to conquer, and finally to govern the circumstances of your life.”¹²⁵ In their manner of questioning, listening and watching, the ITM-influenced voice teacher has the potential to create a learning environment in which the student becomes more self-aware physically and mentally, more independent, and therefore more able to sing with freedom and confidence. Using the AT and the ITM as a lens through which to approach vocal pedagogy and performance is beneficial due to its organic organizing principles of movement. These principles underlie the functional use and movement occurring at the root of all specialist activities, thus optimizing the mental acuity to consciously direct the body in any activity of daily life. One is not learning to create a new movement, but rather, in ‘getting out of the way,’ the natural function of the voice is revealed. As summarized in one of the core tenets of Alexander’s technique: “… in general re-education specific defects are eradicated in process.”¹²⁶

Weed begins his book, *What You Think is What You Get*, with a promise and an imploration:

The Alexander Technique can help you in your everyday activities. It can help you in your specialist activities. It can help you walk. It can help you talk. It can help you do more, with greater success, in less time, using less energy. But there is a price. You must think. You must discipline yourself. You must be willing to change.¹²⁷

It is my hope that implementing the new Guiding Question and Behavioral Guidelines will serve as a true ‘means-whereby’ aiding both myself and other ‘specialist activity’ teachers of voice to

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¹²⁶ F.M. *Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual*, 14.

more easily incorporate the ITM in vocal study. If we can create more ‘critical moments’ while teaching, for the greater awareness of both student and teacher, we will reap the benefits of increased ease and freedom in the music-making process. This increased ease and freedom translates to joy and the fulfillment of dreams, the goals of every voice teacher as well as the life goals of ITM founder Donald Weed: “The Interactive Teaching Method gives students the tools to realize an on-going and increasing flexibility in thought and movement as they learn to direct their lives more efficiently to reach their dreams.”

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128 Donald Weed, The Interactive Teaching Method: Course Prospectus, Alexander Technique Teacher Training Cycle.
Appendix I

Donald Weed Bibliography

Weed, Donald. *Complex Simplicity: A Look at Human Movement, Structure, and Function.* Textbook from the second module of the Training Course.


Weed, Donald. “Giving Directions and Why We Don’t Teach It” updated July 31, 2018, www.itmalexandertechnique.org


Weed, Donald. *The Basic Principles Workbook.* Basic Principles textbook from the first module of the Training Course.

Appendix II

Donald Weed Workshop Interview Transcripts, by Class Lecture Topic

The text below was recorded with Weed’s permission, during class lectures he gave on the ITM Workshop in Darmstadt, Germany from July 5-9, 2019.

Why Group Teaching? – July 5th

DW: Well some teachers, none of my teachers of course, but some teachers would direct the class towards what the teacher wants it to be, and one of the things that we constantly talk about is our idea to take the class through the student; what the students wants and needs there to be. If we work the class so that the person (having the lesson) has a significant experience, then the rest of the people can either pay attention or not and the class is not stuck. More to the point, teachers are in the position to learn the most. The people who are in the class are in the second-best position to learn the most. The reason for that is, they have not only a perspective, but they are not involved in the work of the lesson. The person who is in the worst position to learn something is the person in the chair. Now, make no mistake, I understand how important having a lesson in the chair is. I understand how important it is for people to be able to experience something other than what they’re accustomed to. But usually when that happens, the person who is experiencing the new thing is quite distracted by all of that.

We haven’t had an example of this so far here in this class but certainly earlier this morning we had several examples where I would ask someone the answer to a question and they would go, “uuuuhhhh,” or some other intelligent response, and then I would ask the question again and they would still not be able even to figure out what the question is and the rest of the
room is going, “C’mon, c’mon, this is the answer!” because they weren’t tied into the work of that moment – but they could see it, and they could relate to it. So, these are some of the reasons why I teach in groups.

One of the teachers asked a question, and I gave the answer to that question, and that set off a light bulb in one of the other teachers. My answer to him, made something click for her. And we could have searched for weeks and never figured that out. So, the wealth of possibilities that happens in a group, is one of the many reasons why I would prefer to give classes and why I mostly teach in them.

One of the things that figures into the innovations that Marjorie Barstow created, was she said, “this is educational, why not use educational tools.” Anytime you get a number of intelligent people together who want to help themselves and others, they are going to think of things in terms of what they know and what they have experienced. So, I think it’s a healthy thing when there’s a lot of difference of opinion in a profession. It’s certainly a healthy thing when there’s lots of different ways of teaching. I don’t… I may not agree with how someone else is teaching, but they are perfectly well entitled to it. No one died and made me in charge. But, the only time there’s a problem is when someone says, “You’re different, you can’t teach.” I’ve had that problem for a long time. But I’m not different just to be exotic, I’m different for a purpose and reason.

**Why Not Table Work? - July 5th**

**DW:** In Frank Pierce Jones’ book, which is now called *Freedom to Change*, he says that Alexander never did lying down work unless the student was completely bedridden. Now I was always wondering if it’s really true that he made house calls. But it wasn’t true. But Frank’s
(Pierce Jones) reason was, it gives a wrong impression. It gives the idea that some kind of relaxation process is happening.

Now when you continue to study this and you start to see more of Alexander’s first chapter of his third book, and he talks about how he did things and how he learned things, he comes at the end of that chapter to a very important issue, and that’s the issue of what he calls a critical moment and it’s not only that English meaning – but it has a technical term – and that technical term is: what are you going to think at the moment you go into activity – when you go from planning to do something, and actually doing it. And what he built up, was understanding that he needed to change the way he thought in order to change the way he moved. To stop doing the thing he didn’t want, and to start doing more of what he did want. And at that critical moment, what he found was, no matter how hard he practiced, he still tended to go back to his old way.

And so, I think, and certainly experientially it’s been shown to me, that it is a very pleasant experience, and people like it (table work), but there’s no critical moment. Whenever… in the first 20 or 30 years, when I was shopping around to see how many different Alexander Techniques I could find, everybody loved lying down work – except for one thing – getting up. The only critical moment in the whole process, and the reason why most people hated getting up at the end is because they went right back to what they’d done before. So, by working in activity, like we’re going to be doing here, everything is a critical moment, and so it’s building up that discipline in being able to think.

*How he Came to the AT – July 6th*
**DW:** There was a training course for actors and I wanted to do that, but this (the AT class) was part of the program and it was free so I went to class, and as soon as I was in class for the first time, I didn’t believe a word of it. I thought it was a great practical joke they were playing on me because I didn’t see anything, I didn’t feel anything. In fact, I tried to drop the Alexander part of that program and the teacher asked me, “Do you need this course to graduate?” and I said, “Yes, I do” and he said, “I’ll see you on Monday.” So that’s why I’m here.

*What’s Different About the ITM? – July 6th*

**DW:** Looking at possible differences, it used to be and probably still is, in some parts of the Alexander world, the primary preference is for length (of the spine). Here’s a concept; the greatest lengthening of the spine possible (,) in every movement. Now, what does that mean? Well it actually means at least 2 different things depending on where you put the word possible. Because if you put possible with this part of that phrase (as written above) then what you’re wanting to do is make your spine as long as it can be. But what happens to this if you attach “possible” to the second half? What we end up with is “the greatest lengthening of the spine, possible in every movement.” *This* is something that is almost certain to become fixed.

And people used to complain because I got into the Alexander Technique from theater and there are people who would refuse to let the Alexander Technique be taught in theater schools because they would see things like someone who has AT training coming and saying, “oh it’s so wonderful to be here after working in the field all day. I’m completely exhausted.” (showing an overdramatization of his actions). In some parts of the Alexander world, length is the most prized condition, for us, flexibility. And that is a great dividing idea.
Closing Comments Sat – July 6th

**DW**: …the thing I was teaching then is this idea that the door swings both ways. I don’t really care what someone decides. I certainly would not hold anything against them in this regard, I just care that they know there’s a choice.

Many people think they ought to be finished by now, however long or short their term of study is. But it’s a very relieving thing when you understand it’s not something to be filled up and finished, but it’s some process by which you can continue to improve. I worked with Marjorie actively for 22-23 years and I saw her briefly before she died, I was very happy that I could get there in time, and I asked her, “Marj, how is it that every time I see you, you continue to get better?” She just looked at me and I thought, “Oh yeah, this thing you’ve been teaching me all these years, that’s how it’s possible, never mind.”

The Student’s Responsibility – July 7th

**DW**: And then it is up to the student to do the work, and the experimentation, and the process to learn what it really means for them. This opportunity to have this experience, this experiment and as it turns out, this discovery; that’s unique and that’s amazing. And that’s something that all of us, including you and me can share and respond to. But, as many times as you have one of these wonderful experiences, it does not relieve you of the responsibility to learn to do the work for yourself. Because the teacher is here not to solve problems, and certainly not to fix things. The teacher is here in service to you, to help you learn how to do this for yourself.

Use of Mirrors – July 7th
**DW:** People like to point out to me that Alexander did indeed work with mirrors, and in his autobiographical material, he makes it very clear that if he had not worked with mirrors and not had mirrors to work with, that he wouldn’t have been able to do what he did. Consequently, most Alexander courses up to the end of the last century, did use mirrors and believed that it was necessary to use mirrors. And in Nebraska, we almost never used mirrors.

A number of reasons why: Marj used to say, “Oh, mirrors are wonderful because if you look in the mirror, you can see if your hat is straight.” And that’s pretty much what she thought they were good for. Although, occasionally she would say, “You go take a look at yourself in the mirror right now.” And she would certainly say to me, particularly when I was having a lesson and it felt so awful, I would look at her and say, “Are you kidding me?” “Is this what you want?” and she said, “Oh yes, it’s wonderful” and I’d say, “It feels like I’m an iron stove being blown up until it bursts” and she’d say, “Oh, that’s nice.” And so occasionally she would say, “Go look at yourself in the mirror.” And I would go to the mirror, walk up to it, and when I looked, I would see that I was no different from any other time.

And it took me a number of years to figure out that in that moment *before* I looked at myself in the mirror, I changed back. And I no longer felt like a stove who was bursting. But I still looked the same. So yes, just in that tiny moment, that was enough time for me to send out the old directions which brought about the old condition as instantaneously as times when we see these transformations. And so that story also comes into my thinking about this issue with mirrors. We don’t use mirrors here but what do we often use? We use each other. Much more reliable kinds of sources.

My experience and my opinion is that when people start looking in the mirrors, they stop looking at themselves. So, my experiences with almost everyone I have worked with, is that the
detachment from themselves negates or diminishes the value of what they might see in the mirror. Now there are some things that you can see, and there are some ways that you can use it.

When I gave a prima ballerina lessons in her dance studio and I noticed that she was using the mirror as she practiced a particular move, and when we got into class she just didn’t want to know about the mirror, and she didn’t want to use it. And I talked about it and she had the same impression. And the way she said it was, “When I look into the mirror, I’m trying to verify whether I’m making the shape that I actually think I’m making. But once I have that verification, I move away from the mirror so I can do it through my own system.”

*Breathing and Resonance – July 7th*

Weed’s response below was prompted by my question to him about why almost every person I’ve observed in a lesson, at some point, does a big, deep, relaxed exhale, and then when they speak their voice is lower and more resonant.

**DW:** There has been a change in the balance of the whole pattern of muscles that have to do with the process of speaking. Are you seriously wondering that I might know what that was?

**SG:** Yes.

**DW:** Twice disappointed today. You know I’ve never taken the time to figure that out. And the reason is, that particularly when I’m here and working in an Alexander fashion, I’m more interested in how someone goes about the process of directing themselves in activity than I am about any kind of outcome.

Perhaps more than occasionally, people will comment that their voice has changed or that they sense that their voice has changed. Certainly, in performance circumstances we often encounter people who experience a change in their voice that has gone undetected by the rest of
us. And in these circumstances we do see some experiences where peoples voices change and many people look to that and focus on that, and in my past, both in Nebraska and Switzerland, I was involved with singers and singing teachers who would spend a great deal of time discussing the merits and variations and technical detail of all of that. And I noticed that they weren’t making nearly as much progress as other students. And I came to the decision that maybe what would be best for me would be to put my attention again on that thought process.

I’m thinking of one person in particular who routinely sabotaged his good experience by investigating it to a great degree, and another thing that came to my mind, it’s a little bit like I told that story about my friend who did her doctoral dissertation on various piano techniques and what disturbed her quite frequently, is that all of these best ways to play disagreed with one another. And here she was translating another piano teacher, and this person disagreed with the others, and she noticed that of all the techniques involved, at least one element was not physiologically possible. And when it came to something like the investigation of what is happening specifically in terms of the voice, these people, the one person I have in mind in particular, was spending so much time and energy trying to figure that out, that they had very little time left over to think about what they were doing with their head in relation to their body.

And I am going to be very perhaps boring about that, but that’s what my focus is going to be. What we are primarily interested in, in getting a report from a student, is the relative accuracy of the report, where accuracy is defined as the teacher’s impression of what occurred and the student’s impression of what occurred. And the reason why we pursue that, is we have found that when those two things match, students progress more quickly. But as to what makes that happen, you would know far more about vocal production than I would.
Change in the Teaching Goals – July 8th

DW: In this part of the Alexander world we’ve moved quite a bit away from that. Always with reason, always with cause, so that now I almost don’t care what happens inside the lesson IF while that’s going on, I have the impression the student is now in command of more information by which to further the exploration and carry out that exploration for himself. There’s enough to do in a sitting lesson.

How has the ITM Evolved? July 9th

DW: The approach for teaching the work of F.M. Alexander – has that changed a lot? Not as much as you might imagine. On June 6th, 1972 when I purchased my first copies of Alexander’s books, I picked up one at random and started reading the introductory material and found a sentence that’s in the introduction to The Universal Constant in Living and misread it. I love that I misread it and received a vision. I had a real overwhelming moment, and in that moment, I devised and later wrote down a curriculum for a teacher training course.

Because at that time, it was my opinion that the current training courses available to students were not as good as the work itself. There were not enough options for students back then, you just took endless private lessons, or you joined a teacher training course. Those were your options. And neither of those options, as far as I could tell, had much to do with what Alexander wrote.

And I was already expressing my gratitude, because for health reasons I had to stop playing sports, and the only thing I ever wanted to do in life was to play left field for the local professional baseball team. And when the sport thing was taken away from me, I returned to theater. When I first applied to the course where I was introduced to the AT, I was actually in the
college hospital and had to have a friend apply for me before the deadline passed. At that time, I believed that I could not actually take a professional job due to my health and endurance.

This experience in the year before, in ’71, and what happened afterwards, so opened my eyes, and so opened the possibilities of my life, that my gratitude was already huge. So in that moment when everything disappeared and the training course concept came to me, it was just fulfilling the debt. And I said that before I finish, I’m going to learn the work, and I’m going to create a training course worthy of the work, and I’m going to train 100 teachers. And I don’t know what your opinion is, but as far as I’m concerned, I’m off the hook.

We have already awarded something in the range of 150 certificates and the current group is quite different because of course, how we’re doing things now is quite different. Typically, two thirds of a training group qualify to take the practical exam. And of that two thirds, about 80% pass the exam. We had 100% pass the exam in the last group, but to tremendous dissension and upset because not everyone was given the opportunity to take the exam. But the reason for that was either a) they had not fulfilled the requirements or b) they weren’t ready for it.

But that training course that I wrote down (in ‘72) is over 60% still in the current training course and the broad strokes of it are still exactly the same. So, the training course has evolved, but not as much as one might imagine. The teaching has evolved in the same, that it, and I become increasingly simple. The organization is still in its beginnings, and continues to evolve. And like every young organization, whoever is taking those steps has a very large burden. Like Patrick McDonald, a very well-known and very famous Alexander teacher, used to say about the difference of opinion in all the different schools, he used to say that what you must do is what you think is best, and hope you’re not very far wrong. And that’s what anyone who’s beginning
some sort of organization needs to do. You do your best and what happens after that is, as crises occur that you haven’t anticipated, you then respond as best you can to that and increase the nature and quality of the organization that you have.

So yes, there’s a lot of evolution. But certainly, in something like the first module - I first taught the material in the first module in January of 1973, and that hasn’t changed much. There’s been some shifting of course material, and of course in 1976, when Frank Jones published his book, suddenly the course expanded, and it changed its focus. I didn’t realize in ’72 that 4 years later someone was going to write a very valuable book.

Also, from ‘84, someone said you me, “You called this basic principles. How do you know they’re basic?” And I said, “I’ll make a bet, I’ll make a deal with you. For the next ten years, I will read only the material in my basic principles course, and in 10 years, I’ll tell you what I learned from that and we’ll look to see if there’s anything in Alexander’s books that I missed.” Fortunately, the timing of the ‘93 training course was such that ‘94 came a year and a half before I had to teach the 5th module, so I had that amount of time to prepare the first attempt at the Conceptual Foundations course. I didn’t miss much. My claim was, from these principles that you can extrapolate everything else. In fact, there were things that I found were almost without exception, confirming of what I’d extrapolated. So yeah, in any kind of improvement process, you would hope there’d be some kind of change.
Appendix III

Data Sort of Donald Weed Interviews

Part 1: Main Concepts from 2019 ITM Summer Workshop Interviews
Part 2: Main Concepts Sorted Alphabetically by Seventeen Codeword/Categories

Part 1: Main Concepts from 2019 ITM Summer Workshop Interviews

- It took him a long time to develop a self-awareness in his movements and the sensitivity in the use of his own hands. Don often refers to a time in his training when he was referred to as “old stone hands.”

- So, in that moment, when everything disappeared and the training course concept came to him, it was fulfilling a debt of gratitude. He vowed to learn the work, to create a training course worthy of the work and to train 100 teachers. He has already accomplished more than that.

- He explains that if the class is worked so that the person having the lesson has a significant experience, then the rest of the people can either pay attention or not, and the class is not stuck.

- The person who is in the worst position to learn something is the person in the chair (having the lesson). He acknowledges how important having a lesson in the chair is, and how crucial is it for people to be able to experience something other than what they are accustomed to, however, usually when that happens, the person who is experiencing the new thing is quite distracted by all of that.

- These are some of the reasons why he chooses to teach in groups. When one of the teachers asks a question, the answer Don gives sets off a lightbulb in one of the other teachers. The answer to one student made something click for the other. The wealth of possibilities that happens in a group is why he would prefer to give classes and why he mostly teaches in a class setting.

- A critical moment. This carries not just the typical English meaning; but it is also a technical term which defines what you are going to think at the moment you go into activity; that moment when you go from planning to do something to actually doing it.

- What Alexander was building, Don explains, was an understanding that he needed to change the way he thought in order to change the way he moved – to stop doing the thing he didn’t want and to start doing more of what he did want.

- And it took him a number of years to figure out that in that moment before he looked at myself in the mirror, he changed back.
• So yes, just in that tiny moment, that was enough time for him to send out the old
directions which brought about the old condition as instantaneously as the times when we
see these transformations.

• His experience and opinion is that when people start looking in the mirrors, they stop
looking at themselves. His experiences with almost everyone he has worked with, is that
the detachment from themselves negates or diminishes the value of what they might see
in the mirror. He explains that there are some things that you can see and there are some
ways that you can use it (the mirror).

• When I look into the mirror, I’m trying to verify whether I’m making the shape that I
actually think I’m making. But once I have that verification, I move away from the
mirror so I can do it through my own system.

• In the Alexander Technique, the student carries a large responsibility for progressing in
the work. In fact, one could even say that a teacher is almost unnecessary.

• It is up to the student to do the work, the experimentation, and the process to learn what it
really means for them.

• It does not relieve you of the responsibility to learn to do the work for yourself. The
teacher is here is service to you, to help you learn how to do this for yourself.

• But it’s a process by which you can continue to improve.

• Oh yeah, this thing you’ve been teaching me all these years, that’s how it’s possible.

• That they had very little time left over to think about what they were doing with their
head in relation to their body. And I am going to be very perhaps boring about that, but
that’s what my focus is going to be. What we are primarily interested in, in getting a
report from a student, is the relative accuracy of the report, where accuracy is defined as
the teacher’s impression of what occurred and the student’s impression of what occurred.
And the reason why we pursue that, is we have found that when those two things match,
students progress more quickly.

• So, by working in activity, like we’re going to be doing here, everything is a critical
moment, and so it’s building up that discipline in being able to think.

• It’s not something to be filled up and finished but it’s some process by which you can
continue to improve.

• Because the teacher is here not to solve problems, and certainly not to fix things. The
teacher is here in service to you, to help you learn how to do this for yourself.
• When I’m here and working in an Alexander fashion, I’m more interested in how someone goes about the process of directing themselves in activity than I am about any kind of outcome.

• I almost don’t care what happens inside the lesson IF while that’s going on, I have the impression the student is now in command of more information by which to further the exploration and carry out that exploration for himself.

• Earlier this morning we had several examples where I would ask someone the answer to a question and they would go, “uuuuhhhh,” or some other intelligent response, and then I would ask the question again and they would still not be able even to figure out what the question is and the rest of the room is going, “C’mon, c’mon, this is the answer!” because they weren’t tied into the work of that moment – but they could see it, and they could relate to it.

• And then it is up to the student to do the work, and the experimentation, and the process to learn what it really means for them.

• “The greatest lengthening of the spine, possible in every movement”. This is something that is almost certain to become fixed.

• So, by working in activity, like we’re going to be doing here, everything is a critical moment, and so it’s building up that discipline in being able to think.

• And people used to complain because I got into the Alexander Technique from theater and there are people who would refuse to let the Alexander Technique be taught in theater schools because they would see things like someone who has AT training coming and saying, “oh it’s so wonderful to be here after working in the field all day. I’m completely exhausted.” (Weed is implying rigidity here – as opposed to flexibility)

• When I look into the mirror, I’m trying to verify whether I’m making the shape that I actually think I’m making. But once I have that verification, I move away from the mirror so I can do it through my own system.” (Prima Ballerina taking lessons with Weed)

• In Frank Pierce Jones’ book, which is now called Freedom to Change, he says that Alexander never did lying down work unless the student was completely bedridden.

• But Frank’s (Pierce Jones) reason was, it gives a wrong impression. It gives the idea that some kind of relaxation process is happening.

• It’s been shown to me, that it is a very pleasant experience, and people like it (table work), but there’s no critical moment.

• Everybody loved lying down work except for one thing – getting up. The only critical moment in the whole process… and the reason why most people hated getting up at the end is because they went right back to doing what they’d done before.
• But, as many times as you have one of these wonderful experiences, it does not relieve you of the responsibility to learn to do the work for yourself.

• Because the teacher is here not to solve problems, and certainly not to fix things. The teacher is here in service to you, to help you learn how to do this for yourself.

• One of the things that we constantly talk about is our idea is to take the class through the student, what the students wants and needs there to be.

• The people who are in the class are in the second-best position to learn the most.

• Anytime you get a number of intelligent people together who want to help themselves and others, they are going to think of things in terms of what they know and what they have experienced.

• So, by working in activity, like we’re going to be doing here, everything is a critical moment, and so it’s building up that discipline in being able to think.

• This opportunity to have this experience, this experiment and as it turns out, this discovery – that’s unique and that’s amazing. And that’s something that all of us, including you and me can share and respond to.

• We don’t use mirrors here but what do we often use? We use each other. Much more reliable kinds of sources.

• Now I almost don’t care what happens inside the lesson IF while that’s going on, I have the impression the student is now in command of more information by which to further the exploration and carry out that exploration for himself.

• There has been a change in the balance of the whole pattern of muscles that have to do with the process of speaking.

• Perhaps more than occasionally, people will comment that their voice has changed or that they sense that their voice has changed.

• You start to see more of Alexander’s first chapter of his third book, and he talks about how he did things and how he learned things, he comes at the end of that chapter to a very important issue, and that’s the issue of what he calls a critical moment.

• I worked with Marjorie actively for 22-23 years and I saw her briefly before she died, I was very happy that I could get there in time.

• Alexander did indeed work with mirrors and in his autobiographical material he makes it very clear that if he had not worked with mirrors and not had mirrors to work with, that he wouldn’t have been able to do what he did.
• There were not enough options for students back then, you just took endless private lessons, or you joined a Teacher Training Course. Those were your options. And neither of those options, as far as I could tell, had much to do with what Alexander wrote.

• Like Patrick McDonald, a very well-known and very famous Alexander teacher, used to say about the difference of opinion in all the different schools, he used to say that what you must do is what you think is best, and hope you’re not very far wrong.

• There’s been some shifting of course material and of course in 1976, when Frank Jones published his book, suddenly the course expanded, and it changed its focus.

• For the next ten years, I will read only the material in my basic principles course, and in 10 years, I’ll tell you what I learned from that and we’ll look to see if there’s anything in Alexander’s books that I missed. My claim was, from these principles that you can extrapolate everything else.

• And what he (Alexander) built up, was understanding that he needed to change the way he thought, in order to change the way he moved. To stop doing the thing he didn’t want, and to start doing more of what he did want.

• So, by working in activity, like we’re going to be doing here, everything is a critical moment, and so it’s building up that discipline in being able to think.

• But, as many times as you have one of these wonderful experiences, it does not relieve you of the responsibility to learn to do the work for yourself. Because the teacher is here not to solve problems, and certainly not to fix things. The teacher is here in service to you, to help you learn how to do this for yourself.

• My experience and my opinion is that when people start looking in the mirrors, they stop looking at themselves. So, my experiences with almost everyone I have worked with, is that the detachment from themselves negates or diminishes the value of what they might see in the mirror.

• I’m more interested in how someone goes about the process of directing themselves in activity than I am about any kind of outcome.

• Perhaps more than occasionally, people will comment that their voice has changed or that they sense that their voice has changed.

• Now I almost don’t care what happens inside the lesson IF while that’s going on, I have the impression the student is now in command of more information by which to further the exploration and carry out that exploration for himself.

• I understand how important it is for people to be able to experience something other than what they’re accustomed to. But usually when that happens, the person who is experiencing the new thing is quite distracted by all of that.
Anytime you get a number of intelligent people together who want to help themselves and others, they are going to think of things in terms of what they know and what they have experienced.
Part 2: Main Concepts Sorted Alphabetically by Seventeen Codeword/Categories

‘Application of the ITM in Lessons,’ ‘Art of Questioning,’ ‘Breath Use,’
‘Critical Moment,’ ‘General/Basic Principles,’ ‘Group Teaching,’
‘Hands-on Techniques,’ ‘Interactive,’ ‘Lengthening the Spine/Flexibility,’
‘Mastery,’ ‘Mental Processes/Thinking,’ ‘Natural System,’
‘Original Sources,’ ‘Responsibility of the Student,’
‘Self-Awareness/Awareness,’ ‘Table Work,’ and ‘Use of Mirrors’

Application of the ITM in Lessons (8 references)
  • Teachers are in the position to learn the most. The people who are in the class are in the second-best position to learn the most.

  • One of the teachers asked a question and I gave the answer to that question and that set off a light bulb in one of the other teachers.

  • So, by working in activity, like we’re going to be doing here, everything is a critical moment, and so it’s building up that discipline in being able to think.

  • It’s not something to be filled up and finished but it’s some process by which you can continue to improve.

  • Because the teacher is here not to solve problems, and certainly not to fix things. The teacher is here in service to you, to help you learn how to do this for yourself.

  • When I’m here and working in an Alexander fashion, I’m more interested in how someone goes about the process of directing themselves in activity than I am about any kind of outcome.

  • What we are primarily interested in, in getting a report from a student, is the relative accuracy of the report, where accuracy is defined as the teacher’s impression of what occurred and the student’s impression of what occurred. And the reason why we pursue that, is we have found that when those two things match, students progress more quickly.

  • I almost don’t care what happens inside the lesson IF while that’s going on, I have the impression the student is now in command of more information by which to further the exploration and carry out that exploration for himself.

Art of Questioning (4 references)
  • These are some of the reasons why he chooses to teach in groups. When one of the teachers asks a question, the answer Don gives sets off a light bulb in one of the other teachers. The answer to one student made something click for the other. The wealth of
possibilities that happen in a group is why he would prefer to give classes and why he mostly teaches in a class setting.

- Earlier this morning we had several examples where I would ask someone the answer to a question and they would go, “uuuuhhhh,” or some other intelligent response, and then I would ask the question again and they would still not be able even to figure out what the question is and the rest of the room is going, “C’mon, c’mon, this is the answer!” because they weren’t tied into the work of that moment – but they could see it, and they could relate to it.

- And then it is up to the student to do the work, and the experimentation, and the process to learn what it really means for them.

- What we are primarily interested in, in getting a report from a student, is the relative accuracy of the report.

**Breath Use** (3 references)

- Perhaps more than occasionally, people will comment that their voice has changed or that they sense that their voice has changed. Certainly in performance circumstances we often encounter people who experience a change in their voice that has gone undetected by the rest of us. And in these circumstances we do see some experiences where peoples voices change and many people look to that and focus on that and in my past, both in Nebraska and Switzerland, I was involved with singers and singing teachers who would spend a great deal of time discussing the merits and variations and technical detail of all of that. And I noticed that they weren’t making nearly as much progress as other students. And I came to the decision that maybe what would be best for me would be to put my attention again on that thought process.

- And when it came to something like the investigation of what is happening specifically in terms of the voice, these people, the one person I have in mind in particular, was spending so much time and energy trying to figure that out, that they had very little time left over to think about what they were doing with their head in relation to their body.

- What we are primarily interested in, in getting a report from a student, is the relative accuracy of the report, where accuracy is defined as the teachers impression of what occurred and the students impression of what occurred. And the reason why we pursue that, is we have found that when those two things match, students will progress more quickly.

**Critical Moment** (3 references)

- In Alexander’s first chapter of his third book, he talks about how he did things and how he learned things. He comes at the end of that chapter to a very important issue, and
that’s the issue of what he calls a critical moment and it’s not only that English meaning – but it has a technical term – and that technical term is- what are you going to think at the moment you go into activity – when you go from planning to do something and actually doing it. And what he built up, was understanding that he needed to change the way he thought, in order to change the way he moved. To stop doing the thing he didn’t want, and to start doing more of what he did want. And at that critical moment, what he found was, no matter how hard he practiced, he still tended to go back to his old way. And so I think, and certainly experientially it’s been shown to me, that it is a very pleasant experience, and people like it (table work), but there’s no critical moment.

- So by working in activity, like we’re going to be doing here, everything is a critical moment, and so it’s building up that discipline in being able to think.

- He explains that if the class is worked so that the person having the lesson has a significant experience (critical moment), then the rest of the people can either pay attention or not, and the class is not stuck.

**General/Basic Principles** (4 references)

- Also from ‘84, someone said you me, “You called this basic principles, how do you know they’re basic?” And I said, “I’ll make a bet, I’ll make a deal with you – for the next ten years, I will read only the material in my basic principles course and in 10 years, I’ll tell you what I learned from that and we’ll look to see if there’s anything in Alexander’s books that I missed.” My claim was, from these principles that you can extrapolate everything else.

- I’m more interested in how someone goes about the process of directing themselves in activity than I am about any kind of outcome.

- What are you going to think at the moment you go into activity – when you go from planning to do something and actually doing it. And what he built up, was understanding that he needed to change the way he thought, in order to change the way he moved. To stop doing the thing he didn’t want, and to start doing more of what he did want. And at that critical moment, what he found was, no matter how hard he practiced, he still tended to go back to his old way.

- Some teachers would direct the class towards what the teacher wants it to be and one of the things that we constantly talk about is our idea is to take the class through the student, what the students wants and needs there to be.

**Group Teaching** (5 references)
• Teachers are in the position to learn the most – the people who are in the class are in the second best position to learn the most. The reason for that is, they have not only a perspective, but they are not involved in the work of the lesson.

• The person who is in the worst position to learn something is the person in the chair.

• One of the teachers asked a question and I gave the answer to that question and that set off a light bulb in one of the other teachers. My answer to him, made something click for her. And we could have searched for weeks and never figured that out.

• The wealth of possibilities that happens in a group, is one of the many reasons why I would prefer to give classes and why I mostly teach in them.

• Anytime you get a number of intelligent people together who want to help themselves and others, they are going to think of things in terms of what they know and what they have experienced. So I think it’s a healthy thing when there’s a lot of difference of opinion in a profession.

*Hands-on Techniques* (7 references)

• Earlier this morning we had several examples where I would ask someone the answer to a question and they would go, “uuuuhhh,” or some other intelligent response, and then I would ask the question again and they would still not be able even to figure out what the question is and the rest of the room is going, “C’mon, c’mon, this is the answer!” because they weren’t tied into the work of that moment – but they could see it, and they could relate to it.

• In Frank Pierce Jones’ book, which is now called *Freedom to Change*, he says that Alexander never did lying down work unless the student was completely bedridden.

• But Frank’s (Pierce Jones) reason was, it gives a wrong impression. It gives the idea that some kind of relaxation process is happening.

• It’s been shown to me, that it is a very pleasant experience, and people like it (table work), but there’s no critical moment

• Everybody loved lying down work – except for one thing – getting up. The only critical moment in the whole process… and the reason why most people hated getting up at the end is because they went right back to what they’d done before.

• But, as many times as you have one of these wonderful experiences, it does not relieve you of the responsibility to learn to do the work for yourself.

• Because the teacher is here not to solve problems, and certainly not to fix things. The teacher is here in service to you, to help you learn how to do this for yourself.
Interactive (9 references)

• One of the things that we constantly talk about is our idea is to take the class through the student, what the students wants and needs there to be.

• The people who are in the class are in the second-best position to learn the most.

• Then I would ask the question again and they would still not be able even to figure out what the question is and the rest of the room is going, “C’mon, c’mon, this is the answer!” because they weren’t tied into the work of that moment – but they could see it, and they could relate to it.

• Anytime you get a number of intelligent people together who want to help themselves and others, they are going to think of things in terms of what they know and what they have experienced

• So, by working in activity, like we’re going to be doing here, everything is a critical moment, and so it’s building up that discipline in being able to think.

• This opportunity to have this experience, this experiment and as it turns out, this discovery – that’s unique and that’s amazing. And that’s something that all of us, including you and me can share and respond to.

• We don’t use mirrors here but what do we often use? We use each other. Much more reliable kinds of sources.

• What we are primarily interested in, in getting a report from a student, is the relative accuracy of the report, where accuracy is defined as the teacher’s impression of what occurred and the student’s impression of what occurred. And the reason why we pursue that, is we have found that when those two things match, students’ progress more quickly.

• Now I almost don’t care what happens inside the lesson IF while that’s going on, I have the impression the student is now in command of more information by which to further the exploration and carry out that exploration for himself.

Lengthening the Spine/Flexibility (5 references)

• In some parts of the Alexander world, length is the most prized condition – for us – flexibility.

• “The greatest lengthening of the spine, possible in every movement”. This is something that is almost certain to become fixed.

• So, by working in activity, like we’re going to be doing here, everything is a critical moment, and so it’s building up that discipline in being able to think.
• And people used to complain because I got into the Alexander Technique from theater and there are people who would refuse to let the Alexander Technique be taught in theater schools because they would see things like someone who has AT training coming and saying, “Oh it’s so wonderful to be here after working in the field all day. I’m completely exhausted.” (Weed is implying rigidity here – as opposed to flexibility)

• When I look into the mirror, I’m trying to verify whether I’m making the shape that I actually think I’m making. But once I have that verification, I move away from the mirror so I can do it through my own system.” (Prima Ballerina taking lessons with Weed)

**Mastery (4 references)**

• He explains that if the class is worked so that the person having the lesson has a significant experience, then the rest of the people can either pay attention or not, and the class is not stuck.

• What we are primarily interested in, in getting a report from a student, is the relative accuracy of the report, where accuracy is defined as the teachers impression of what occurred and the students impression of what occurred. And the reason why we pursue that, is we have found that when those two things match, students will progress more quickly.

• And I would go to the mirror, walk up to it, and when I looked I would see that I was no different from any other time. And it took me a number of years to figure out that in that moment before I looked at myself in the mirror, I changed back.

• Just in that tiny moment, that was enough time for me to send out the old directions which brought about the old condition as instantaneously as times when we see these transformations.

**Mental Process/Thinking (3 references)**

• What are you going to think at the moment you go into activity – when you go from planning to do something and actually doing it. And what he built up, was understanding that he needed to change the way he thought, in order to change the way he moved. To stop doing the thing he didn’t want, and to start doing more of what he did want. And at that critical moment, what he found was, no matter how hard he practiced, he still tended to go back to his old way.

• So, by working in activity, like we’re going to be doing here, everything is a critical moment, and so it’s building up that discipline in being able to think.

• And I noticed that they weren’t making nearly as much progress as other students. And I came to the decision that maybe what would be best for me would be to put my attention again on that thought process.
Natural System (3 references)
- “Marj, how is it that every time I see you, you continue to get better?” She just looked at me and I thought, “Oh yeah, this thing you’ve been teaching me all these years, that’s how it’s possible – never mind.”
- There has been a change in the balance of the whole pattern of muscles that have to do with the process of speaking.
- Perhaps more than occasionally, people will comment that their voice has changed or that they sense that their voice has changed.

Original Sources (17 references)
- In Frank Pierce Jones’ book, which is now called Freedom to Change, he says that Alexander never did lying down work unless the student was completely bedridden.
- You start to see more of Alexander’s first chapter of his third book, and he talks about how he did things and how he learned things, he comes at the end of that chapter to a very important issue, and that’s the issue of what he calls a critical moment.
- What he built up, was understanding that he needed to change the way he thought, in order to change the way he moved.
- I worked with Marjorie actively for 22-23 years and I saw her briefly before she died, I was very happy that I could get there in time.
- Alexander did indeed work with mirrors and in his autobiographical material he makes it very clear that if he had not worked with mirrors and not had mirrors to work with, that he wouldn’t have been able to do what he did.
- There were not enough options for students back then, you just took endless private lessons, or you joined a teacher training course. Those were your options. And neither of those options, as far as I could tell, had much to do with what Alexander wrote.
- Like Patrick McDonald, a very well-known and very famous Alexander teacher, used to say about the difference of opinion in all the different schools, he used to say that what you must do is what you think is best, and hope you’re not very far wrong.
- There’s been some shifting of course material and of course in 1976, when Frank Jones published his book, suddenly the course expanded, and it changed its focus.
- For the next ten years, I will read only the material in my basic principles course, and in 10 years, I’ll tell you what I learned from that and we’ll look to see if there’s anything in Alexander’s books that I missed. My claim was, from these principles that you can extrapolate everything else
And what he (Alexander) built up, was understanding that he needed to change the way he thought, in order to change the way he moved. To stop doing the thing he didn’t want, and to start doing more of what he did want.

So, by working in activity, like we’re going to be doing here, everything is a critical moment, and so it’s building up that discipline in being able to think.

But, as many times as you have one of these wonderful experiences, it does not relieve you of the responsibility to learn to do the work for yourself. Because the teacher is here not to solve problems, and certainly not to fix things. The teacher is here in service to you, to help you learn how to do this for yourself.

My experience and my opinion is that when people start looking in the mirrors, they stop looking at themselves. So, my experiences with almost everyone I have worked with, is that the detachment from themselves negates or diminishes the value of what they might see in the mirror.

I’m more interested in how someone goes about the process of directing themselves in activity than I am about any kind of outcome.

Perhaps more than occasionally, people will comment that their voice has changed or that they sense that their voice has changed.

What we are primarily interested in, in getting a report from a student, is the relative accuracy of the report, where accuracy is defined as the teacher’s impression of what occurred and the student’s impression of what occurred. And the reason why we pursue that, is we have found that when those two things match, students’ progress more quickly.

Now I almost don’t care what happens inside the lesson IF while that’s going on, I have the impression the student is now in command of more information by which to further the exploration and carry out that exploration for himself.

Responsibility of the Student (2 references)

It is up to the student to do the work, and the experimentation, and the process to learn what this work really means for them.

As many times as you have one of these wonderful experiences, it does not relieve you of the responsibility to learn to do the work for yourself. Because the teacher is here not to solve problems, and certainly not to fix things. The teacher is here in service to you, to help you learn how to do this for yourself.
Self-Awareness (5 references)

- It took him a long time to develop a self-awareness in his movements and the sensitivity in the use of his own hands. Don often refers to a time in his training when he was referred to as “old stone hands.”

- I understand how important it is for people to be able to experience something other than what they’re accustomed to. But usually when that happens, the person who is experiencing the new thing is quite distracted by all of that.

- I would ask the question again and they would still not be able even to figure out what the question is and the rest of the room is going, “C’mon, c’mon, this is the answer!” because they weren’t tied into the work of that moment – but they could see it, and they could relate to it.

- Anytime you get a number of intelligent people together who want to help themselves and others, they are going to think of things in terms of what they know and what they have experienced.

- And what he (Alexander) built up, was understanding that he needed to change the way he thought, in order to change the way he moved. To stop doing the thing he didn’t want, and to start doing more of what he did want.

Table Work (5 references)

- There is a section in Frank Pierce Jones’ book, which is now called Freedom of Change, where he says that Alexander never did lying down work unless the student was completely bedridden.

- It gives the idea that some kind of relaxation process is happening.

- Alexander’s first chapter of his third book, and he talks about how he did things and how he learned things, he comes at the end of that chapter to a very important issue, and that’s the issue of what he calls a critical moment.

- It is a very pleasant experience, and people like it (table work), but there’s no critical moment.

- In the first 20 or 30 years, when I was shopping around to see how many different Alexander Techniques I could find, everybody loved lying down work – except for one thing – getting up. The only critical moment in the whole process… and the reason why most people hated getting up at the end is because they went right back to what they’d done before. So by working in activity, like we’re going to be doing here, everything is a critical moment, and so it’s building up that discipline in being able to think.
Use of Mirrors (6 references)

- Alexander did indeed work with mirrors and in his autobiographical material he makes it very clear that if he had not worked with mirrors and not had mirrors to work with, that he wouldn’t have been able to do what he did. Consequently, most Alexander courses up to the end of the last century, did use mirrors and believed that it was necessary.

- And in Nebraska, we almost never used mirrors.

- Occasionally she would say, “Go look at yourself in the mirror.” And I would go to the mirror, walk up to it, and when I looked I would see that I was no different from any other time. And it took me a number of years to figure out that in that moment before I looked at myself in the mirror, I changed back.

- Just in that tiny moment, that was enough time for me to send out the old directions which brought about the old condition as instantaneously as times when we see these transformations.

- We don’t use mirrors here but what do we often use? We use each other.

- My experience and my opinion is that when people start looking in the mirrors, they stop looking at themselves. So my experiences with almost everyone I have worked with, is that that detachment from themselves negates or diminishes the value of what they might see in the mirror.
Appendix IV
Practitioner Interview Transcripts

The following interviews were conducted with six participants at the ITM Workshop in Darmstadt, Germany from July 5-9, 2019. To protect anonymity, the participants are referred to as Practitioners A – F.

Four of the following study participants are German natives, for whom English is a second language. These transcriptions are word-for-word; no attempt has been made to correct grammatical or syntax errors. When needed, clarifications have been added in parentheses.

Interview: Practitioner A: July 7, 2019

SG: Can you tell me what your affiliation is at the moment with the Alexander Technique?
A: I’m an ATI trained practitioner.

SG: ATI standing for…
A: Alexander Technique International. I was trained by Tommy Thompson in Cambridge Massachusetts. I finished about 2 years ago. Yeah, I came to this late in my life.

SG: Ok, and how long did the training take?
A: If you go full-time the training is 3 years, it’s 1,600 hours. Um well, I did it over 5 years, I did the first year full-time and then did 4 years of part-time work.

SG: Ok, and one of the things that really interested me about what I’ve learned about you so far is that you’re a musician. A professional musician?
A: Yes.

SG: A trumpeter.
A: Yes.
SG: I really enjoyed the story you told about the trumpet that you purchased, and then found that at the beginning you couldn’t play it the way you wanted to. That is what brought you to study the Alexander Technique correct?

A: That’s right.

SG: So, can you tell me what it was that you learned that enabled you to play these trumpets the way you wanted? Presumably you were able to play these trumpets the way you wanted to, right?

A: Oh yeah.

SG: So how did that come about?

(He had told a story in class about how he got the best trumpet maker in the country to build him 2 trumpets, and he spent an enormous amount of money on them but when he picked them up and tried to play them, he could make hardly any sound at all, not to mention a sound he wanted or had dreamed of making).

A: Through the lessons with Tommy. I would bring the horn in and play, and he would do what he did, and through repetition, I would learn how to recreate it.

SG: So, to do what he did. What did he do?

A: The same thing any good Alexander teacher would do. He taught me how to think.

SG: Oh, ok. And so, in terms of what was happening physically; the thing that enabled you to play the instrument the way you wanted to; was it something that you changed in your body?

A: Well the body did change, but it changed as a result of the application. It wasn’t a conscious change.

SG: It wasn’t a conscious change?

A: No, I wasn’t repositioning myself intentionally. The repositioning came as a result of the refined mentality that comes from the instruction.

SG: Wow. How long did it take you to start to begin to make the sounds that you wanted to make?

A: It was almost immediate. Yeah, I was lucky, I guess. I got good results in the first lesson I had with the instrument. And I had a little bit of an advantage. I had studied a type of Chinese meditation called Chi Gong and I studied it 30 years ago and it stayed with me. I still practice it occasionally and there is a considerable similarity in certain ways between the Alexander Technique and the effects of Chi Gong.
SG: Discipline? Mental Discipline? Awareness?

A: They both use Chi. So, I already had an awareness of the use of Chi, plus I went through acupuncture and had acupuncture lessons for at least 10-12 years just for general health. I wasn’t going for anything specific. So, the Chi Gong and the acupuncture gave me a sort of bigger canvas and it made the processing, understanding, and executing the directions that Tommy gave me, easier I think, than what I’ve seen of other people who don’t have such a background.

SG: Right. So, as I mentioned briefly, I’m a singer and I’m going to be writing about how the principles of the ITM can be used in the voice studio and in voice teaching. And you as a brass player have to deal with some of the same things that singers consider when performing our tasks - dealing with the breath, breath management and breath pressure to create sound. So, is there anything specific that you can pinpoint to in terms of breath management, or how you use your body in order to create the breath you want for your instrument, that the AT is helping you optimally create?

A: Well there’s a couple of parts to it. So, you’re talking about breath control.

SG: Yes, breath control, breath management.

A: I also studied extensively with a pedagogue, Carmine Caruso. Brass players will all know that name, particularly trumpet players, because the jazz competition for the international trumpet guild is named for Carmine. And one of the titles that we used of his method is breath control. When you look at something like that from an Alexander point of view, at least in my experience, I’ve found that isolating breath control, concentrating on breath control, is often counter-productive, because you’re separating it from the rest of your reality. I use vowels. I see no difference except for where the sound resonates and the part of the body that produces the sound. There’s no difference between playing a brass instrument and singing. We don’t have keys or frets or any indication of where you are, you have to find it. Now what a brass instrument has that a singer doesn’t have, is the confines of the harmonic series, so once you get used to that it’ll help the manipulation, but in essence, there’s no difference between playing a brass instrument and singing. So, I’ve had an awful lot of good success, particularly with the high school kids, trying to get them to make a decent sound. I use vowels. Actually, only one vowel, ah.

SG: Without the instrument?

A: No, with the instrument. Again, you plan a breath and it’s the same as singing except these (lips) vibrate instead of the vocal cords, and it doesn’t resonate in your sinuses, it resonates in the instrument and goes out. It’s identical. So, what I’ve found is, if you think about brass playing as a good singer would, you’re home. All of the specifics that pop up in a lot of the standard pedagogy – where to put your tongue, what do you do with your lips, what’s your jaw supposed to do, how are you supposed to sit, where are your elbows, it’s all completely unnecessary. Because the use of the vowel basically stabilizes things, because there’s hardly anybody who can’t pronounce a vowel. So, it’s a very
natural thing and because it’s so natural, if you can integrate the Alexander work to this, it’s much more direct because the action is so simple.

SG: Right. Do you do a lot of teaching?

A: Yeah.

SG: And as you just mentioned, I wanted to ask you how much of the Alexander Technique are you able to incorporate in your trumpet lessons?

A: I use it as much as necessary.

SG: In what way? Is it more like the sequence of events, mental concepts, a pedagogical sequence?

A: It depends on the circumstance.

SG: Ok. And now I guess this is your first experience with the ITM. You mentioned that it’s very similar to what you’ve encountered before. Are there any differences that you could note?

A: Yeah, Don’s more attentive to, no, that’s not the right word, there’s more mention of anatomy. There’s more mention of specific anatomy here than there was in my training – not that there wasn’t any mention of anatomy in my training – there was! But as far as the examples that we would have, and the coaching we would have in the training when we were working on other people, I’m having trouble describing this accurately because I don’t want it to sound less effective than it was… for lack of a better term, there’s a spiritual aspect about the Alexander technique in that you feel differently, just as someone who is involved religiously. You get overwhelmed with the satisfaction of your perception of the savior, or y’know, whatever might happen in a religious circumstance. And then you are uplifted. Similar things happen when you get somebody’s head in the right place and the body opens up, and people start laughing and smiling. It’s kind of like a spiritual experience. There was a recognition of that. It’s a similar thing that Don does, I guess it’s a recognition of self-awareness. The context of that was a little more prevalent.

SG: And the process? Is it a similar process in the lessons you observed?

A: Oh yeah. You size the person up and go from there.

SG: And the art of questioning?

A: Oh yeah, that’s huge.

SG: It’s similar?
A: Oh yeah, yeah.

SG: Now do you think this ITM is something you might continue to investigate?

A: Yeah, um, I find it reinforcing. It’s not new. But y’know, it’s the other league, so to speak. Not that’s there’s any controversy, but y’know, you’ve got the American league and the National league, but they’re both baseball, right? The rules are a little different in the National league than in the American league, but no big deal. But there is a little difference, so when you’re strategizing in the National league you have to realize that your pitcher has to hit. The pitcher doesn’t hit in the American league, but it’s still baseball. So that’s the deal here. The tactic is a little bit different.

SG: I’m still trying to grasp what the difference is for myself.

A: The difference between…?

SG: The way the AT is normally taught and the ITM.

A: Ah, my first reaction to that is, what’s normal? From my experience I’ve seen a couple of different approaches.

SG: Ok, so there’s not one traditional method.

A: There are a number of different organizations. They have their own hats. It would be nice if there was more collaboration so that there could be more of an accepted universal standard.

SG: Isn’t there one big one? Or two?

A: Well there’s STAT and there’s AMSTAT.

SG: Ah, yes, right. That’s what it is.

A: So yeah, there’s the English one STAT, and the American one AMSTAT, and Tommy’s thing, the ATI and then this. (the ITM)

SG: And as a certified trainer, do you teach Alexander lessons on their own?

A: Yes.

SG: So, you have music students that want lessons or just whomever?

A: Anyone, I mean the last lesson I taught before I came here was a friend of mine’s son and it was for emotional reasons.
SG: Can you give me some examples of how you incorporate the AT while teaching trumpet lessons?

A: I think that once the bug bites you, once one learns enough about the Technique to be able to teach it, one uses it everywhere. Since most of my teaching is with high school students, I have their parents give me permission to put my hands on them. Until I have this clearance, I will sometimes talk to them about the Technique and in ways that may direct them to a clear start down the path. I ask them to begin to focus on certain things when they are playing to give them experience in separating themselves from their habits so they can perceive them. For example, to have them imagine they are perpetually singing the vowel sound ‘ah’ when playing. Once I know I can work on them without the administration having kittens, I pretty much go about applying the Technique at least as far as my perception goes, as one would in a lesson without the instrument. I'll sometimes do a bit of hands-on before they start, or let them start to play, notice a kink, work on it and have them play again. As you can imagine, this before and after game can continue throughout the lesson. I don't make it the center of attention at the beginning. I work up to including AT issues more and more, as their understanding of the concept widens.

These are music lessons first and foremost, but since the endeavor is so personal for most, I find these explanatory moments to be effective. The kids recognize that they play better, and this success usually opens their mind enough for us to linger a bit on how and to what extent they feel differently. Pursuing their awareness of how they feel is time well-spent, but I find that you can't do too much of this, particularly at the beginning of their exposure to the Technique, when often all they can say is “I feel lighter” or “I don't know, I just feel different,” because taking too much time away from the thing for which they have come to you, can affect their satisfaction with the music lesson. I don't want the kids leaving with more questions than they arrived with. I'm sure you've experienced with students that as the AT moments accumulate, one is able to guide the student to more specific recognition/awareness of the change in themselves, which then enables one to further guide them to learn more of how to guide themselves.

SG: Ok, thanks, I think that is all my questions for now. I’m particularly interested in talking to people who are also musicians and doing AT, or who have done other training and also the ITM. By the way, can you tell me what is the name of the trumpet you were talking about?

A: Monette. Ask any trumpet player, they’ll know.

(addendum the next day)

A: Instead of the thing I said about Tommy being more sensitive to spirituality, for lack of a better term, ah, I was speaking more personally. What he was able to do was recognize as people were developing in the training, what individual strengths were relative to the technique. Someone may be a little more perceptive in muscular things, skeletal things, emotional things. These things develop as one develops through the discipline. And Tommy and his teachers Debbie Adams and Bob Layda, were very, very skilled at being
able to direct these inclinations such that they could be developed, as well as the other aspects of the technique that anybody has to develop anyway.

SG: Right, ok, thank you for your time.

Interview: Practitioner B: July 7, 2019

SG: Can you tell me about your affiliation with the ITM of the Alexander Technique?

B: Ok, I started training with Don on the ‘99 Teacher Training Course which means I qualified in 2003, and I’ve been teaching ever since then in my own practice, and within the summer schools here in Darmstadt, Cirencester and latterly, Cork. And when Don started the Trainer’s Training Course in 2012, I began that one and graduated from that in 2016, and I’ve been a personal trainer to 3 of my own trainees in the context of the bigger ITM Teacher Training Course.

SG: Got it. Excellent. Can you tell me what initially brought you to studying the AT, and if you had any experience with the AT before you became introduced to the ITM?

B: So, I fell into this work entirely by accident.

SG: Oh yes, actually you did tell us about that! Carry on…

B: Do you want me to repeat it?

SG: Yes, please do.

B: In 1998, my partner at the time was a very good amateur cellist, and she still is a very good amateur cellist. And she was struggling with pain in her bowing shoulder, and she knew from her graduate degree that the AT was a good thing, though she had no idea what it was, and I had never heard of it. So, we found a teacher in Bristol where we lived who turned out to be an ITM teacher who trained with Don on the 1993 Training Course. Being a good ITM teacher, he said to my partner Kate, bring your partner, bring some friends, let’s make a group, because part of the ITM pedagogy is that we teach in groups not one-to-one. So, I went along simply as moral support for my partner to help her resolve what was, for her, a very significant problem in something she loved doing. She resolved that in about 6 lessons, and I just got fascinated with the work and that led me on to evening classes with Don, a weekend experiential with Don, and then beginning the training course in ‘99. With no intention to become a teacher, no desire to become a teacher, but after those first 3 modules, which Don says that every person on the planet needs to know that information, that’s a clear point at which we transition more formally into teacher training, but I couldn’t imagine not being part of this community on an ongoing basis, and so I decided to continue, and fairly quickly discovered reasons why I
did want to be a teacher. Which was primarily, as I said, I fell into this by accident and I just wanted to make it so that others know more about this and don’t discover it by accident.

SG: Right. So, would you say that this is your career path now?

B: I have what I euphemistically call my day job, which is in healthcare IT, which takes between 2 and 3 days a week. With this ITM work, because I teach on a majority of the course weekends and the summer workshops and other weekend workshops, I’m actually away about 90 nights a year. So that’s a fair chunk of my time as well. So, it’s not quite 50/50, but since I’ve become a trainer, the amount of time I’m putting into this has increased over the last 3 years and I hope to be in a position to begin the next training course in 2020 and continue to do that, yeah.

SG: So, one of the things I’m interested in exploring, and I think that people might have different answers to this question… So, your first introduction to the AT was already with the ITM – so perhaps you haven’t had much exposure to other trains of thinking, and I’m curious to know what your perception is of what’s so special about the ITM and what differentiates it from other… actually I don’t even know what word to use, should I call it other schools of thought or shall I call it other approaches of the AT?

B: A common label that we’ll use is conventional work or conventional AT. So, there’s conventional and there’s ITM.

SG: Which is then by nature unconventional?

B: (Ha-ha) Yes. So, when I had my first lessons in ‘98 and I started the Teacher Training Course in Sept of ‘99; that first weekend of the Teacher Training Course, we were actually picketed by another school who were telling us that Don was not qualified to train. If we did a course with him, then we would not be authorized to teach in the UK, and they were handing out posters for that. So that was my discovery that there were other schools. Once I started the course with Don, he was very clear that there are other ones and he would talk about them.

SG: Can you name them?

B: I can. I can name them in the UK. So, in the UK the biggest organization is STAT. Society of teachers of the Alexander Technique, which is actually a loosely affiliated collection of training courses and apparently there’s significant differences within there as well, though I know less about that. Then there’s the organization that picketed us PAAT – Professional Association of Alexander Teachers, and then the other one that functions in the UK is ATI – Alexander Technique International. Which isn’t a training course, but they verify that people are at a suitable standard to teach. So that’s the UK picture.

SG: Are you able to tell me what’s different about the ITM?
B: I have been to 3 international congresses of the AT, which has been my primary exposure to lessons in the other works, because within the context of those, there’s great encouragement to do what they call “work exchange” – swap lessons. So that’s been my primary exposure to that. Also, most of the people on the first Teacher Training Course that Don did starting in ’93, were already STAT qualified people who had discovered Don and decided they liked what he was talking about, and how he was talking about it so much, that they retrained with Don. Most of them had already done a 3-year training course, then did a further 4 years with Don. Which was fairly compelling to me at the time. So, some of my early colleagues came from other schools themselves and they would talk about the differences.

A primary difference is that the ITM – the interactive teaching method – it’s interactive. One of my primary teaching tools is to ask questions. Questions are not only typically not encouraged in conventional work, they may even be actively discouraged. So, that’s one of our differences. Another significant difference is that everything we do as teachers, everything we’re trained in, we can take back to Alexander’s texts. We are unusual in the degree to which we study Alexander’s texts. So at the Limerick Congress, which was 5 years ago, Limerick in Ireland, one of the key presenters at that stood up in a session and said, “One of the problems with the Alexander Technique is we don’t have a single unified text that says what we do.” Which was a very telling comment. We believe, well we actually have 4 of them, because Alexander wrote 4 books and we go back to those and study them. And consequently, when we are teaching, as you’ve probably heard, we often quote Alexander. Alexander says this, Alexander wrote that…

SG: And you believe that despite these books being around 150 years old, that the principles are still very relevant, and it’s not complicated by language or anything like that? I could imagine that some people might think that or say that.

B: No. When Don presents the material in the books, he gives a lot of context around that. Because Alexander’s writing in Edwardian English, at a certain time, and Don will give us a context of the zeitgeist of the time – the concepts that were in people’s minds, and largely what was going on when Alexander wrote this book, because he wrote the books over a period of, well, he published the books over a period of 30 years. And there’s stuff where, unless you know that he’s actually referring to the first world war, it wouldn’t be clear to a reader; a young reader these days. But Don will draw that context out. So yes, sometimes we struggle with the English, but that concept of struggle is something we encourage our students to do. And I see you nodding in agreement there. We encourage our students to struggle with the written word. Because by doing so they come to own the concepts that Alexander writes about.

SG: So, we’ve got the asking questions, and the relying on Alexander’s personal writings. Are there any other differences?

B: I’m aware of sweeping generalizations about the rest of them. They believe that the hands are the most important tools in teaching. Whereas we believe that the hands are our least important tool in teaching. Which doesn’t mean to say we don’t try and use our hands as
often as is appropriate in a lesson, but they very much support the concepts and ideas in helping a student change their thinking. So, our perception of our hands as tools is very different. We believe they are our least important, most of the rest of the Alexander world believes they are the most important tool.

SG: Got it.

B: And if hands are the most important tool, then you don’t want the students asking questions because that is detracting from what you are doing with your hands. So, there is a degree of consistency to their approach. I feel like I’m being too negative. We always say that people get value from the other approaches. That’s why Alexander’s work is still here 115 years after he came to the UK. And he was teaching for 10-15 years in Australia prior to that.

SG: Any other major differences or minor differences that come to mind?

B: Those are our main ones that come to mind.

SG: Good, that’s helpful. So, do you work with any singers?

B: I have done. Less so since I moved to a more rural area.

SG: So, you mean it’s not rampant with opera singers?

B: It’s typically not.

SG: I shouldn’t say opera singers, I should say singers.

B: Yes, bring your own prejudice to the interview there Susan. But, at events like this we tend to attract a fair number of performers, and a lot of the teaching I do is in the context of ITM and the Teacher Training Courses, for which summer workshops and experiential workshops are a valuable feed of students into the Teacher Training Course. We end up with a higher than usual percentage of performers, many of which are singers, so there is always plenty of often professional singers around, who are around looking for lessons.

SG: Right, of course. And as a singer myself I think about things that are – well, that I thought were - very central to the Alexander Technique, which is the concept of breathing. And so, I thought that was an Alexander Technique main topic and of course it’s a main topic in singing. But, I mean, I haven’t really experienced so far in my ITM exposure, much discussion about breathing. Do you have anything to add to this topic of breathing? Or even of breathing for singers, if we were to get more specific?

B: Well, obviously we hope our students continue to breathe. Whilst we do have professional indemnity insurance, I hate to think of the amount of paperwork I’d have to fill out if a student stopped breathing in class. When Alexander came to the UK, his
practice was largely placed around breathing. He was commonly known as the “Breathing-Man.”

SG: Yeah, exactly.

B: And if you look in his first book, Man’s Supreme Inheritance, there are several photographs in there of people doing what was then, breathing exercises, because tuberculosis was rife, again this is part of the context that Don will bring. Tuberculosis was rife, and breathing exercises were prescribed as therapeutic, but not necessarily curative, for tuberculosis. And Alexander gave people who taught breathing a bit of a hard time. He supports that with the photos he gives, which is usually small children, with incredibly expanded ribcages. And he said people take part of the cycle, and it is a cycle, and put undue attention on that, in this case, expanding the ribcage, whilst ignoring the rest of the cycle of breathing.

So, Alexander was known as a breathing man. He had great success with that. Again, part of the reason we’re still around today is because his fame spread through his ability to help people who were having significant medical difficulty with breathing. Because, and you probably know this, if there is a disease or injury, there’s also the response to that injury. Alexander’s work can’t do anything for the disease or injury itself, but the person’s response – we can do a lot of work with, which is where Alexander had that success. I have had the good fortune to work with several professional singers. Professional singers who are self-taught, perhaps like Eithne (a folk singer) or professional singers who have been formally taught. Have you met our colleague Zoe Challenor?

SG: I don’t think so.

B: Professional singer and qualified as an ITM teacher. I remember having great fun working with her when she was heavily pregnant, and her pregnancy challenged her beliefs of what she needed to do in order to breathe. We worked around that and it turned out that it didn’t really. It was only her perception that she was imposing on herself that was actually the limit to the breathing, not the fact that she was heavily pregnant. Those who decide to sing as an activity, or bring breathing as an activity, it’s very clear to me as a person who’s never had any formal training in any of that area, that there is a lot of very contradictory ideas about breathing out there. Don told a story yesterday about his pianist friend who was looking at the different piano techniques and they all contradicted each other and the other point she made, which I would make about the breathing stuff, as it’s been explained to me, which I understand may not be how it was explained to them, because there’s always that degree of interpretation that we’ll bring to something. But a lot of what people tell me about how they’ve been taught to breathe is not anatomically possible.

SG: Ok, so do you have a way that you would coach someone in what you believe is an efficient way to breathe for singing or for anything else?
B: I hear you’re looking for that. Does it sound like an ITM teacher to coach someone in how to do something?

SG: No…no.

B: Mostly what we do is to work with them to change their thinking. That they let their old ideas go.

SG: Right.

B: And one of the things Alexander is quoted as saying is, “If you stop doing the wrong thing, the right thing does itself.”

SG: Right.

B: Where the wrong thing would be our beliefs or ideas, or perhaps what we’ve been trained in, in how to do something, which becomes an imposition. And if we can take that away, what occurs naturally is usually very effective. So, in that sense, I don’t need to give any specifics in how to do breathing, or any other activity that a student comes with. It’s more a case of – get your old beliefs out of the way; and see what happens. And mostly what happens we would label as something wonderful. That’s going to be a technical term for our fourth year - if you just stop doing the old stuff, it allows the natural system to express itself.

SG: But this would be presuming that people wouldn’t need voice teachers and sports coaches, you know what I mean? All of these other methods of training?

B: No. We are made to move. But some of the modern activities people do are very specialized and are often at the extremes of our natural movement pathways. For me, professional swimmers, some of the movements they impose on their systems are way beyond our normal range of motion. And there are consequences of that. You don’t see any old swimmers. They’re all damaged by what they do to themselves. We probably are made to sing. I think that’s something that’s within our natural gift.

SG: Yeah, but as loud as an opera singer is expected to do? Is that natural?

B: Have you been around any small babies?

SG: Yes, that’s loud.

B: Do they have any difficulty with volume, with sustaining? No, typically not.

SG: No, but it’s not opera singing.
B: It’s not opera singing. But if the loudness is there, if the ability to sustain that is there, then that’s not what we have to train. We might have to train into pitch and sequence or whatever, but those natural abilities are there, until we educate people out of them.

SG: Ok.

B: One of the books we study, by Robert Kiyosaki is If You Want to Be Rich and Happy, don’t go to school. He talks about education being kind of a reverse metamorphosis where you take these beautiful children in, and they come out as ugly caterpillars.

SG: How does one do their task of teaching voice lessons (in my case), or teaching whatever else – how does one implement the ITM principles?

B: Most of the students come to the ITM…

SG: I know what you’re going to say…

B: …because of the struggles they are having in what they’re currently doing. Some like me, fall into it accidentally, but I recognize that I am in a minority there. Many people come to it because they have a passion, and there is something significant going on that’s preventing them doing it. My partner at the time loved playing cello, her shoulder hurt so much, she couldn’t. That’s a much more common route for people to come to the Alexander technique – whatever the specialist activity might be. And within specialist, I might say simply doing a day’s work sitting in front of a computer, without doing things that bring about significant discomfort.

SG: Can I rephrase my question?

B: Please do.

SG: I became very interested in the ITM because it was a new way of thinking and a new way of approaching a problem that I found that I could possibly latch onto and go with easier than with some of the other ideas I had. So, with that in mind, and if I were in a position to take the ITM training and I do teach voice… I’ve kind of answered my own question.

B: Don’t let that stop you speaking, do go on.

SG: Yeah, well, I guess my question didn’t really change. So how can I teach voice with the benefits of the ITM lifestyle, let’s say? Or how best does one combine these two worlds?

B: Yep. So, on my training course from 1999-2003 there were several teachers on there. Some were in mainstream education, some were music teachers, general music teachers to kids, some were specialist teachers. And a very common question they had was, how can I continue to do what I do, with what I now know. How can I bring those together? And, they each had to find their own answer to that. But what the training course gave them was the ability to critically examine what they were doing in their day job. And to
revise what they did, and how they did it. And that was a journey they each had to make on their own. It’s not one I’ve had to face because I don’t have that specialist teaching combining two things. I’m not sure I can help much more than that, with that particular question. I know that Practitioner F, if you hadn’t had a chat with him yet, with his cello teaching - that’s undoubtedly one he’s had to face.

SG: Yes, I will be talking with him.

B: And my colleague Ollie Lee teaches at Bristol Old Vic Theater School. He’s the resident AT teacher there. At the theater school, they are teaching theater type stuff and one of the things that Ollie describes very well with each new intake of students when they come to his classes, he says, I will be teaching you stuff and that stuff may be not just not in agreement with, but contradictory to, what your voice teacher is teaching or what your acting teacher is teaching you – you are responsible adults. You get to choose which makes more sense to you and what you choose to do. And decide if you want to continue with that or continue with this, or say that the conflict is too big and I need to step away from one or the other. And also, to remind them that they’ve come to the theater school. That’s what they’ve come to learn, so if they want to graduate, they do need to pay attention to what the other person is teaching them. But just to question it, even if only for themselves, not necessarily directly questioning or challenging the teachers. And I’ve done a poor job of reflecting, ’cuz Ollie’s shared with me directly how he articulates that, and it is really quite good.

SG: Got it. There a number of books written, not a lot, but some, a few, written about the Alexander Technique and Voice, or singing, or teaching voice. So, I’ve been delving into that.

B: You have described one of my pet peeves.

SG: Yes? What’s that?

B: I was going to present at the second Lugano Congress, but unfortunately life got in the way. And my presentation working title at the time was, “The Alexander Technique and…” It’s just the bloody Alexander Technique. Because so many people are trying to meld the AT and dance and running and voice and yoga and whatever it is. Which is taking Alexander’s work and trying to specialize it, and Alexander would counsel us very strongly to be a generalist first and a specialist second. It’s all just movement, and the reason these presentations and books are so popular is because individual teachers have perennially got the question, “How do I work with someone who does this?” as though they need to work differently with a dancer, or an athlete, or a martial artist, or a singer. If you’re working from principles, you do the same process, whatever the student presents in front of you. So, one of my pet peeves is the AT and… Which I hope to do at the Berlin Congress in, I think, 3 years’ time now.
SG: You know the thing is, I’m going to have to see how… I’m formulating and speaking at the same time… Because I was interested in the ITM and thought it was great and because I’m a singer, I’m thinking, ok, how can this benefit singers?

B: Yes, that’s not unreasonable.

SG: Right, it’s not unreasonable, right? I mean it’s there to benefit people doing whatever.

B: Exactly.

SG: Yeah. So, but see the questions that I wanted Don to answer were very specific and there are no specific answers.

B: *Chuckling.*

SG: The answers are all just…that. Right?

B: Yes.

SG: I realize that.

B: In the general process, specific defects are eradicated, Alexander wrote. So, we’re always doing general processes.

SG: So, for my purpose in writing this document, in my mind I had devised something quite… what’s the word…

B: Structured? Specific?

SG: Yeah. You know, now we’re going to talk about breathing, now we’re going to talk about posture, now we’re going to talk about resonance, and how people can work on these things. But I don’t think that’s going to work.

B: I would be surprised if it did. Sorry about that.

SG: No, it’s ok. But I’ll find a way that makes sense.

B: John Dewey, educational philosopher, contemporary of Alexander’s, described the AT as bearing the same relationship to education, as education bears to all the different disciplines that it’s used to teach in. So, it’s a step above and beyond teaching any specific discipline. Which is one of the reasons this stuff is so hard to market. Because it’s so general. And that’s also part of why people tend to go down the “AT and” route. I’m not saying that’s wrong.

SG: Because people want to use it and want to benefit from it, and find work, and make themselves relevant.
B: Yes.

SG: I want to make myself relevant just with this document that I write, because I think that it’s important. I’m interested in the ITM, and to me, who didn’t have much experience with what the AT was without the ITM… so part of my document will be defining the ITM and its differences. But I’m a singer and my research has got to pertain to the academic vocal stream of producing something that is an original view. So, I have to see what kind of angle to take to check off some of the boxes, but I have realized that the answers I envisioned I might get from my questions are just not going to happen.

B: Yep.

SG: People are looking often for specific things, right?

B: Often? Almost always.

SG: Yeah. Right, so do you have an idea how I can… I have to get it to make sense for myself. Because otherwise, I can’t just write a book about the ITM because that’s Don’s job. My job would be to make that relevant to my world. Is that possible?

B: I don’t see why not. It doesn’t mean it’s going to be easy. But I don’t see why it wouldn’t be possible to take this stuff and make it relevant to your singing world.

SG: Right, ok, I’ll have to still work on that part of it. Thank you so much. You were very helpful.

Interview: Practitioner C: July 7, 2019

SG: You started talking about your experiences as a singer. Do you want to continue?

C: Well, my dream was to become as singer when I was 8 years-old. I heard for the first time Schubert’s Ave Maria with a beautiful soprano voice and I decided that is what I want to do. I started music because during that study I would have singing lessons but when I was 25, I lost my voice.

SG: How did that happen?

C: I know today that my vocal cords are not normal in that sense, so my voice in general is not so belastbar (resilient). And on the other hand, I know today that the way my singing teachers taught me was not of great help. I know today that some of the exercises they did were counter-productive and made the whole thing worse rather than better. And so, I stopped and became a recorder player and music teacher for recorder in a music school, but I wanted to sing. And then we say in German, Wie die Jungfrau zum Kind (like the virgin to a baby) I came to the AT to ITM, that was the only thing possible for me. The Training Course here in ITM.
SG: What do you mean, it was the only thing possible?

C: I have had Alexander lessons before because I met a woman who had once upon a time recorder lessons with me, and she came to my town Fulda to give an Alexander workshop, and I wanted just to say hello to her because my very first experience in 1992 I think or 3, was of a kind that I knew, “No that’s nothing for me. I did not understand what was going on, I did not see anything, I did not feel any change.” But because of that woman I knew, I wanted to say hello to her, so I went to her class and when she gave her introductory lecture there was something that caught my interest and that was something about thinking. This thinking stuff.

And I took lessons with her and from a certain point on I had the impression that I’m sort of at an impasse. There’s no going further. No further development. And I thought it would be a good idea, in order to learn more, to look for a training course. And the structure of the courses on the non-ITM courses is that it is not possible to do this when you have a full-time job. And so, because the ITM course was only on weekends, I took this one. And I had my first singing lesson with Don Weed in England, I think 6-9 months after beginning the course here, and it was amazing. It was, well you know, I compare it like this, I had in the meantime I had good singing teachers and I made progress.

SG: So your voice was ok?

C: My voice came a little bit, but not sufficient for any professional singing career. But I knew if I go on working, I would perhaps reach (pointing) that tree there outside. And then Don worked with me and it was very, very strange. He threw me around and I sang and I thought, “My goodness, it was like being shot to that mountain there and looking to my goal from the other side.” So that was amazing. So, from that point in time I knew that there is much more possible that I thought about. And I went on with my studies and I met a singing teacher, a Canadian woman.

SG: Who?

C: Carol Baggott-Forte.

SG: Ah, I have worked with her.

C: She taught in such a different way, and I found out that it matches completely the principles of our AT.

SG: Oh, very interesting.

C: Thinking sort of a primary control and leaving the details to the system itself. And her primary control was the registers and how the registers work; and the other stuff – breathing, resonance, adjustments, etc., does itself if the registers are properly working together.
SG: And how did you come to teaching singing.

C: Well already in the 90’s I had heard about an institute here nearby Darmstadt in the Odenwald – Lichtenberger Institute. And the source was also Cornelius Reid. Cornelius Reid was the teacher of Eugene Rabine. And he together with Gisela Romad founded that institute and worked in that different way. Not do this, do that, but stimulating the system and see what happens. And that was a singing life saver for me. But still I had vocal issues that were not solved at that point in time. And then I stopped and then 10 years later I met Carol and Don. A gift from the God.

SG: And teaching singing?

C: Teaching singing? I started after having finished the training in Lichtenberg. But when I met Carol, my teaching changed a lot. Carol and also Don. It’s very much influenced by the ITM and by the ideas of that functional voice training.

SG: So, you did the 4-year teacher training course with Don. And do you teach voice now? Is that a big part of your life?

C: Yes, it’s the biggest part of my life. Because recorder playing has got very small now and most of my pupils and students are singers, or people who want to sing, choir singers, or some people with vocal problems who want to try out whether there is something.

SG: So how do you incorporate the ITM into your voice teaching? Or do you?

C: I think we have to distinguish between ITM and AT. I incorporate ITM very much because a big issue during our training course was how to deal with people, how to communicate with students, how to be precise in words and so on. And how to ask questions. How to check out what the student is saying. Not jumping to conclusions because he uses a word which perhaps he understands in a different way than I do, and so I ask what do you mean – a hah – and then we talk about that. And so, the whole interactive part is a big part in my teaching. Interactions with the student.

SG: What about the more technical aspects of singing? Like physiologically, if you’re talking about breath management, or resonance or trying to develop a voice. Do you have other techniques that you use, or does the ITM also play a role?

C: Um, well in regard to singing, I use that what I have learned with Carol and Monica and Rachel about first to develop the registers, and when there are problems showing up and I cannot deal with those means, then I have a look at special problems – for instance breathing, if I see a person breathing with this pressing outside and it does not change with the other work by itself, I have to have a look at that. And also, with resonance adjustments – if I hear that there is for instance, the tongue too far back down and it occurs in the sound that what we call knödeln (singing from the throat) then I have to address it more specifically.
SG: Right and would you still use in this situation the ITM method of questioning, and instructing, or?

C: Mmmm, yes, and no. No in that case I will say – well do this. There’s a very clear direction. Take your tongue and make ‘eeeh’ or something like that. And then when they are singing, then comes again the ITM way of communication. What did you notice? Was it the same, was it different? Was there one part in the sound which was perhaps not awful or even got better? Did you hear that blah, blah, blah… showed up? And then we are working on that.

SG: Do you do hand-on work with your singers?

C: Only to those who have had an Alexander lesson.

SG: That was my next question. Do you teach Alexander lessons just on their own as well, separate from voice lessons?

C: I teach AT lessons, but I don’t mix it. I would never go to a student and fiddle around with their necks, but sometimes I recommend to a voice student to come to an Alexander class. Then when they have made experience there, then I sometimes ask, “Is it ok, I see something there and there, if I put my hands on you?” And we are working with the Alexander stuff on that and that problem.

SG: Interesting.

C: Yeah, sometimes I don’t know whether that is a good solution. I’m still trying out. Because normally what we experience here is that students come with a problem, or with a question, or with an issue, and with something that they want to improve. And in those situations in my singing lessons it’s me who says, “well, I detect a problem there, is it ok etc.” So, it is a little bit different. Perhaps no so ITMish, (laughing) I don’t know.

SG: I’ve been a part of singing workshops where there’s been an AT person present who will just come and start making adjustments while the person is singing – which we experience here sometimes too. So that would be similar to someone in a voice lesson that doesn’t necessarily say, “I’m experiencing a problem with my neck” but the teacher can see some sort of extra effort, let’s say.

C: Well sometimes, especially in singing, it is so common with the high notes to do this, to lift the chin or the face up to the… and to pull the head back.

SG: And if you see that happening…

C: Right, when I see that happening, first I try to address that by asking, “Did you notice what you were doing with your head in relation to your body while starting to sing?” and so on. And sometimes I let them touch their neck themselves without me doing this.
SG: And do you tell them about the AT? Do you work that in, in general to your student’s lessons?

C: Not in general. Well there are 2 kinds of people. Those who are really, really good and when I see they could be much better if they stop this and that and that and that, and those who really have a lot of general tension that there is interference almost everywhere. And with the normal people, I teach singing, with the ITM way of communication.

SG: Right. For you – and that’s your way of thinking now probably in much of your life, so it is present in your voice teaching as well, because it’s a way that you would try to adopt in your lifestyle - I’m curious to know how it influences their work – musicians, when they are teaching music. That’s what I’m investigating.

C: Yes, the ITM communication also goes into my recorder playing students.

SG: Sure, that makes sense.

C: And to tell the truth, here with Don, I have learned more about pedagogy, communication, dealing with people than in all my high school and university courses.

SG: Do you mean in terms of teaching in general?

C: Yes. And that is independent from singing.

SG: This is my last question. Could you tell me what the difference is for you between conventional AT and the ITM?

C: Well, it is very difficult to say because I did not have very many conventional lessons. I have had with my former teacher – she was trained with a person named Chris Stevens who had developed his own system and what was really completely different was that she did not start with the head in relationship to the body, but she started with the feet. And the lessons, well by the time, I don’t really remember exactly how many lessons I had, 20 perhaps, and they were sort of stereotyped. I sat on a chair, or I was lying on a table. And what she did, she began with the feet and touched the feet and told me exactly what I have to think. Now I could say it was sort of a body scan supported by the hands. It was very helpful at that time because I was so full of tension, and so I experienced a certain kind of relaxation, but not really a change in my everyday life, in my activities, so to say.

And the other experience I had, that was when I was already an ITM teacher. For 2 and a half days, we were 2 people in a group, and had 1 Alexander teacher. And when I compare what 5 people in 2.5 days do with Don - how 5 people in 2.5 days with Don would be brain dead, and there I was just walking around and waiting for a lesson and I had a table lesson, and well perhaps it was my fault to say that I am an ITM Alexander teacher, because this teacher could not work with me. He could not say, here is a person in a certain condition and work with that person. He always said, yeah, if you were a
beginner, I would do this and I would do that – and I had no idea what it was about. Those were my 2 experiences with conventional Alexander teachers.

SG: Thank you for sharing with me

Interview: Practitioner D: July 7, 2019

SG: Could you tell me what you do in terms of music and how you came to the ITM?

D: I am a singer, singing teacher, conductor of choirs, and ITM AT teacher. I came over this ITM when I was in my music studies at the Musikhochschule, about Alexander. Then I didn’t get a place (in the AT class) at the Musikhochschule, because there were too any people wanting to have lessons. So, I looked around the place otherwise and I found a teacher, and she led me to the ITM.

SG: Because she has studied the ITM?

D: During her second training she met Don, so she did a second training, and when I went in there it was just at the turning point. The first part of it, she taught like she was taught in her first training.

SG: Your teacher you mean?

D: Yes, my AT teacher.

SG: Which was an ITM teacher?

D: Not yet. First, she was a normal qualified AT teacher, and I went to her and I was about to leave her because it didn’t help me a lot just at that moment.

SG: Were you looking for help for something specific?

D: Yes, for singing. And for movement as well. I had some difficulties climbing mountains or so. I was in my early 20’s and already had knee pain and back pain, things like that. These first lessons didn’t show me much, how to go on. It was just temporary. When I left her, I felt very well and it was all good, but after some hours or days it faded away and I was my old one again and I had to go back for another lesson. And I’m not the person who likes to think I have to go to an Alexander teacher twice a week to stay in shape. So, I was about to leave her but just then she began to change her way of teaching. And that’s when I became interested, because I then found out that I could do something with this, what she was working with me and telling me, suddenly she was talking to me about how we are functioning. Before there was no talk, only hands on.

SG: And what prompted this change in her?
D: I learned only afterwards, she met Don in between. She went over to the States and met him together with some other of her colleagues and she came back after a course like this and she really began to incorporate these things. And that’s why I stayed with her, and then 3 years after that, Don came to Switzerland and I had the chance to go very easily to him.

SG: Ok, and then you decided to start the teacher training?

D: Right.

SG: And when did you start teaching voice?

D: This was also around the same time that I met Don. I had my grade (graduated) in 1990 and met Don in ‘91. I came out of my music studies not really as a singer, and not really as a singing teacher. So, I was very happy to meet Don just at that time. I think I learned how to teach with him.

SG: Wow, and you use this now. Do you only teach voice, or do you teach other things?

D: I teach voice. I did teach some piano as well, but I left this.

SG: And do you teach AT separately?

D: Yes.

SG: Ok, so how does the ITM influence or affect your voice teaching?

D: This is about principles. And this I didn’t learn in my first education. What a principle is and how we can work towards a principle. This is what I learned and adopted (from the ITM) when I’m teaching.

SG: Specific principles?

D: There are specific principles. Like the ones we had already now in this workshop of course. There is the idea it’s our thinking that influences what we are doing, and it’s a very good thing to look more after our thinking and how we think during our vocal production. Specifically, in singing I incorporate the idea that what we are doing with our head in relation to our body is very important in this thinking, and to incorporate this as well. And we, with a pupil, we experiment with this and I see, hear, what the pupil is bringing to the work already, and every time there is first something to look at. What can you leave away? What can you throw away? What do you not need to sing? And then we are going on from there. And the fascinating thing about this is when people really go into it, and begin to leave away the things that are hindering them, the voice is here. Then there is another work of course. Work with music. This is on another scale. But when they understand the music, the voice, it presses itself and they are going out of the way, mostly. There are some things.
SG: Would you say that you use the ITM pedagogy or sequence of teaching in your voice teaching?

D: Yes.

SG: Do you use any hands-on work in voice lessons?

D: Yes and no. It depends. For a long time, I was in a Musikschule (music school) where I also had kids coming and there I was very careful with my hands. Most of the time I didn’t (use them). It’s only after a few years or when they get older, or I did speak with the parents about it. But I had the chance to really do Alexander lessons with them first.

SG: Ah, without music. Ok.

D: Yes, so there was not this experience specifically – Alexandrine-like. But with adult pupils, I recommend that they have a series of lessons first in the AT, and then come for the singing part and then they already know about the hands-on stuff – that this is happening as well. And I use it as well in the singing lessons, if it’s appropriate.

SG: Can you speak about what you believe the main difference is between conventional AT and the ITM?

D: As you know now, I don’t have much experience with other Alexander methods. Only with my first teacher and it was clear for her that she wanted to go on.

SG: What would you say are the benefits of combining the ITM with vocal instruction.

D: One of the biggest benefits is that my eye and my experience as an Alexander teacher helps me to see and hear when there are interferences that someone is doing. And then I can help with it from my Alexander standpoint of view.

SG: By asking questions mostly, or…?

D: With questions, with information. Because this is an information that people don’t have. That you don’t need to do. Pupils always want to do it right and proper. And the realization that this right and proper for most people means more muscle work – just more muscle work. Just this information, and this realization that they really do too much, just in wanting to be right, or nice, or good. Just this is a little one that helps.

SG: I was asking Don if he would speak to certain things I noticed, like the breath changing, or the voice changing, and he said it would take too long to explain. Do you have any thoughts on these topics you feel like adding?

D: For me, when you leave away all the unnecessary stuff, the breathing will do itself. And more and more I come to a point that I can feel myself better when I am breathing good, when I am in a lesson mostly, or when I am practicing on my own, sometimes I come in
this direction that I begin more to feel how it feels when I’m breathing free. And it’s only now that I begin to understand certain singing methods speaking about parts of you that are doing special things in breathing, and very many of these things might be true, but I couldn’t make head nor tail from it when I didn’t have the experience. So, to really understand it, you can’t go from someone telling it and making it; because it’s not a making, it’s just a getting out of the way. And these things happen and it’s funny to feel it, when this flow happens.

**SG:** You don’t teach a specific breathing technique, do you?

**D:** Not a special technique, I just do the Alexander Technique. So when I see someone really fixing at a certain place forever and ever, there comes a point when I say, “so, what about this?” and I touch even the ones that I don’t touch otherwise, just to create a conflict. “Could it be otherwise?”

**SG:** You obviously think that this is a great combination, right? To have the AT influencing vocal instruction.

**D:** Yes, yes. And I think this ITM is special in comparison with other Alexander methods because it’s really the *interactive* teaching method. So, Don not only knows how to do the AT, but he has a method how to bring it to the people. And this kind of teaching helps to teach any subject.

**SG:** It’s got different levels, doesn’t it? He’s showing us how to teach.

**D:** Yes. It’s one thing the AT and being able to apply it, and there is the other thing; how do I teach it? How do I interact with people? Being able to do (construct) a bridge for them to incorporate new ideas.

**SG:** Right. And so, you’re taking this workshop just to get reacquainted? And to continue working?

**D:** Yes.

**SG:** Do you do workshops regularly?

**D:** Yes, I had some break from ‘03 through ‘10 and from then on, I came back again here in Darmstadt and I do the trainers course.

**SG:** Oh, you are doing that?

**D:** I did the first one from 2012-2016

**SG:** So, you finished that one?
D: Ah yes, I did the course, but I don’t have trainees, and I don’t have the permission to train yet. And until I have enough pupils that say, “I want to train with you,” I just go with it and if there are sometime (if this happens at some point), it would be nice, I might put more energy in it.

SG: So, you have really committed to the ITM. You’ve done now 8 years of the formal training programs.

D: Yes, I’m committed in the way I live with it. And more and more so. I see, and feel that just going on, my life becomes better with it. That’s enough motivation.

SG: Great, I agree. Thank you so much for your time and for sharing your experiences with me.

Interview: Practitioner E: July 8, 2019

SG: What has been your experience so far with the ITM?

E: I had, 4 years ago, a lesson in a small group with Don Weed and then again, a year afterwards. Since then, the last 2 years I’ve been somewhat irregularly having lessons with Stefan Welsch.

SG: And is this your first weekend workshop?

E: It’s my first summer course, yeah.

SG: I guess you’re not new. But this is maybe a more extensive or more informative experience?

E: It’s certainly very different in that it’s in a big group.

SG: What was your motivation to begin this exploration?

E: Well the very first AT contact I had was more by accident. It was my parent’s motivation and I happened to be there. But since then the motivation both to take the lessons and to come here especially, was because I noticed it helped me on the violin, and because my mother’s doing the course, we talk about it sometimes, and I was just very fascinated by it.

SG: What are the main points that you are going to take from this particular workshop?

E: By far, the concept of a process and not of looking for a result. That’s also something that’s new in as much that until now, it’s only been for a result on the violin, if I’m honest. And now I find, it was just very clearly shown that that way of thinking, for a
result, is not the way ITM works. So, to try and use ITM directly for my own result
doesn’t go together. Now what’s slightly weird about that, is in a way the only logical
next step would be then, ok, spend a lot of time with ITM, but that’s not something I can
do in my life just now. So instead, in the end, I will just be using it for a result. I’m still
not quite sure how that’s going to work, but I’ve certainly found out the importance of
the process.

SG: Ok, that leads nicely to my next question, which is, is there something that you’re going
to take from your experience until now into your violin practicing and performance?
What thoughts are you going to try to apply directly into your violin work?

E: Definitely, like I said, the process thought. Because I also think it isn’t something that
unique to AT, so I think also on the violin, I mean the whole point of practicing, is that I
do a process, and if every time I practice a piece, I try and play it through as nicely as
possible, that won’t work.

SG: Right, so what will you do instead?

E: In a way I’m already doing that. But I’m certainly now going to have it more aware, to
think of a process, and also when I think of AT in the practice, I don’t try and achieve a
state before practicing which until now has sometimes been a practical application, but
that I just continually think of the process, during and before practice.

SG: Ok, now I’m going to bug you and ask you what you mean exactly by process, and what
process if you can be more specific?

E: Yeah, the process of thinking of the head in relation to the body. The process of
continually asking myself, “What am I doing?” and not immediately judging the result,
obviously that doesn’t always work in practicing. That maybe won’t be possible at the
same time. That’s yet to be tested. I noticed just now in a piece I was practicing – in a
piece where I shift all the way up to a very high note – so high that it’s outside where I’m
used to playing, and where I have a very clear structure in my head. And it’s always a bit
of a luck sort of thing. And I went up, it was wrong, went up, it was wrong again and then
I very, very consciously, just as I was going up, thought of the poise of the head and
twice in a row it was just bang in tune. And I didn’t think, I’m going to play this D in
tune now. I just purely thought of the head.

SG: So, you experienced some success and that makes you happy obviously.

E: Yeah, although now, one of the things I carried from this course is not to go sort of
hunting for success.

SG: Do you think that’s possible?

E: Yes and no. Obviously, I won’t suddenly not like it when something goes well. I mean,
that’s nonetheless what I want.
But do you think it’s possible for you to not hunt for success in your musical pursuits?

I think it’s possible that when I’m actually actively practicing, I can *not* think in that way, so I can *not* hunt for success. Obviously, it’s something else, something different, when I’m actually practicing, and in life in general.

I think so too. But everything starts with an awareness, right? And a thought. So, are you interested in finding out more about the ITM?

Yeah. I think that’s one of the facts; that’s it’s a continuous study, which was shown in many ways in this workshop.

Do you think that you need more input to continue? Or would you think, ok, I’ve gotten this information and that’s going to be enough to sustain me forever, or for a certain amount of time? Or do you imagine that at some point in the future that you will look for more experiences.

I can imagine that for now, for the next small or big, depending, but for the next amount of time, I can certainly sort of use what we’ve been doing here. I could also imagine that then it would be really helpful to have another lesson. I think that’s also one of the whole points, that it’s both what you study for yourself and the lessons; that’s the interactive part of it.

Well, and you have somebody relatively close to you, who at some point in the future can help you with that. (His mother is completing the training course)

Exactly, yes, I’m very lucky about that.

Ok, and just so I have it on tape; you just finished your first year studying violin at the Musikhochschule? (German Music Conservatory)

Yes.

Now you have some new ideas and thoughts to take back with you as you continue your studies.

Yes, and not only for musical purposes.

Thank you very much!

Could you please tell me how you became interested in the Alexander Technique and/or the ITM?
My first workshop was in the first term holidays at the Musikhochschule in Stuttgart in the spring of 1992 (with Don Weed). A “young lady of influence for me” told me this, “There is a workshop which sounds interesting. It’s for free, you have nothing to do. Why don’t you go there?” And so I went!

First I had a sitting lesson, which I can’t quite remember at all. But then I had a lesson playing the cello, and I vividly remember that! It was an experience in itself. But after I played, a teacher from the Musikhochschule said that this was the difference between a student and a professor! That caught my attention, and never left it. And Don’s explanation made it even more powerful. He told me that he hadn’t ‘given’ me anything, but just helped me stopping what I did to be in my way of playing. That sounded crazy unbelievable. It took me hours to find some sleep that night. I was filled with excitement and hope!

After that I continued regularly to attend workshops in Stuttgart and Zürich. In 1996, I even started the ‘Human Movement, Structure and Function Course’ in Zürich, which is the second part of the training program. At those days Don offered these parts of the Training Course individually, outside of the curriculum of a training course. I was absolutely sure that I would never become an AT teacher and would never do the whole training course. That changed when I did the third part of the Training Course ‘Principles of Personal Development’ in 1997. Therefore, I joined the Training Course which started in 1997 in Bristol. I successfully graduated in 2001, on the first of April. In 2012, I joined the Mariner’s Course (Trainer’s Training Course) and am a trainer since 2016.

Great! Thank you. Can you tell me when you started teaching cello?

I started teaching probably somewhere in ‘92 with just a couple of students, and then the first professional teaching at a Musikhochschule I did on ‘98 in Rostock. I had a Lehrauftrag (Adjunct Faculty Teaching Position) and I had students there, and some other private students. But from ‘99, that’s 20 years ago now, I’ve been teaching a full-time job in Darmstadt cello, and from 2005 on, I divided the full-time into 50% here and 50% at a different school.

So, you probably know that I’m interested in learning about how you and other ITM teachers incorporate the ITM into their music teaching lessons. When you started teaching cello, was this before you were certified as an ITM teacher?

Yes, I had very few students then.

SG: Ok, and now with all your experience as a musician and as an ITM trainer and teacher, how does the ITM influence your cello music lessons?

It’s nearly impossible to answer it, because most of my teaching time I knew the ideas and principles of the AT of the ITM. One of the examples I’ve told you, I’ll repeat it here because I think it’s explaining quite a bit. When a student came to me, she had over about 5 years of cello lessons, she had 6 or 7 different teachers for all kinds of reasons. And one
she stayed with for one and a half years or so, so that means she had a swap (of teachers) regularly, except of this one period. She had lessons with me for 2 and a half years, and at the end, she told me that she really struggled at the beginning when she had lessons with me, because she was used to, by every other teacher, “Do this, do that, do this, do that,” and pretty much didn’t have to ‘think’ in a way. Think in quotations marks, yeah. And I always try to guide my students through lessons in a way that they have to find it out for themselves. Because what I find a very good idea, to describe it very quickly, is the question “What’s the most important job as a teacher?” The funny answer is to make yourself überflüssig, I don’t know the English word.

SG: Ah yeah. Unnecessary.

F: Unnecessary yeah, because you are unnecessary as a teacher when the student has solved the task for himself or herself. So that can be applied to the big picture, but it can also be applied to every small step. So that’s what I’m trying to do in teaching. Make them responsible and able to solve this step with less and less and less guidance. And through that they gain more and more, I would say, confidence and knowledge and understanding, and then you can build the next step on that. It’s been a pretty stable system. I find one of the things my students are struggling very little with, is this belief that when you’re playing a concert you can only play on 80% or something. Even when they are nervous, they pretty much play on 100% most of the time. More than I see with other students.

SG: Yes, that was going to be my next question if your students are experiencing success, in your opinion, through this kind of working and thinking.

F: That’s my experience yes, very clearly. I just think you give a student a different foundation when the student sees that they are not reliant on the teacher, and the teacher needing to help and whatever, but there was a process that leads the student toward knowing, “I can do this.”

SG: So, when you see something that needs to be corrected in their handling…

F: Something that doesn’t work let’s say.

SG: Yes, a musical or physical issue with the instrument.

F: One of the means I use as much as ever possible, is asking questions, which is what drove the one student I was telling the story about, absolutely crazy at the beginning, and she hated my lessons. Until she did it, and then she really liked them. Because, as Alexander says, we want to be told what to do, we want to know how it feels, it should feel the way we want it to feel and then we are happy.

SG: And you’re really able to refrain from doing that in your lessons? From seeing something and correcting it in a normal way?

F: In a quick-fix way is what you mean?
SG: Yes.

F: If something’s going wrong, there must be some lack of knowledge or some idea or some belief which is not working. And if that stays the same, and you just give a little bit of a trick and bit of information – that’s more neutral – information which doesn’t include, let’s call it the big picture of what’s going on, or the whole picture of that part at least – then the student needs to come back at the next moment for the next bit of information/trick, or whatever. And that makes them reliant on you, and that’s the opposite of what I want as a teacher.

SG: Although we do need work… And if you’re working at a Hochschule (Music Conservatory), you’re probably going to have a student for 4 years.

F: I always tell my students, “You know, if you manage to do this step and the next step, and enough steps, you can manage on your own, and there are less and less things where I can help you, that’s the moment where you need to leave me as a teacher.” So far, I never had a problem with that.

SG: With people leaving?

F: Yeah. Partly because some students just leave after they finish the school and make their abitur. (Exams to graduate in their last year of studies)

SG: Can you tell me what you see as the major differences between more conventional AT approaches and the ITM? If you are aware of them?

F: Yeah, I only had very few encounters with other schools. And how shall I say that? One encounter was you were doing exercises, you were told to do that, you were told to do this and told to feel this – in a group and in individual context – and all of it didn’t really appeal to reasoning processes. And I would say every lesson in ITM is appealing to the reasoning processes. I didn’t hear concepts that I would call the AT, from my experience as an ITM’er in those lessons. I couldn’t see how these lessons were encouraging this self-responsibility; this ability to do things on your own.

SG: Were not encouraged?

F: Were not encouraged, yeah. Definitely not to the degree that an ITM lesson does it.

SG: Ok. And so, what shortcomings of other AT methods does the ITM fulfill?

F: Again, I don’t know enough about other schools, and the thing is, some people will like ITM and some people will like the other stuff, and I don’t want to be the judge on what’s better or worse. For me, I’m here because I like this. I’m teaching in Mannheim at the Musikhochschule for example, and there’s another Alexander teacher since over 20 years I think, and some people go to both classes and I’m always encouraging that and say you know, find out what you want and what appeals to you – if both works in a way together
it’s fine – it might create a conflict at some point and if you choose this or the other, just choose what’s best for you.

SG: Sure, one thing I was interested in asking was if you think there is room for individual personality in teaching styles when you teach the ITM.

F: You’ve been on the summer school now and seen different teachers and I believe that you’ve, I guess you’ve seen very different teaching styles?

SG: Well, actually no, I wouldn’t describe it as a different teaching style.

F: Personality, sorry, you said personality.

SG: Is there room for individual personality in teaching style, and I guess I mean, yes, everyone has their own personality, but individual... styles?

F: I would definitely think so. I mean there are principles underlying it, there’s a belief system underlying it which we learn in the training course, and keep learning in the trainer’s course. And it’s everyone’s – no one is told how to teach, you learn the principles, so that’s the foundation but you don’t get a recipe for teaching.

SG: Yes, that's kind of what I’m getting at.

F: It’s pretty much the opposite, which is always the surprise in the fourth year of the training course, that you’re actually not told how to teach in a script manner.

SG: However, in my limited experience, I see the lessons are happening quite similarly, the sequence of events, and the sequence of questioning...

F: Yeah, that’s one of the surprises, is that it can seem like a procedure, but when you’re learning this, those questions are more and more, just the questions that make sense. And then the longer a lesson goes, the more it spreads out to all kinds of directions. So there, I mean at the beginning, you need to find out what the student wants, so there’s kind of a very small range of category of questions you can ask, but once you know what the students wants, then it’s becoming more and more open. If you would observe really beginning teachers who are doing it more like a script, it’s a huge difference then if you ask those questions just because it’s the questions that need to be answered.

SG: Sure, and then you need experience obviously to grow. So, we experience this ITM in a group setting, the lessons. Do you also teach individuals?

F: I do, but only for one reason. Because if I can’t find 2 people to come together at the same time, I teach individually. Every other choice would be to teach at least in groups of 2, plus more.

SG: I can imagine that’s more difficult to try and arrange.
F: Yeah, it is sometimes. Sometimes it’s not.

SG: So, the same thing would happen whether it’s an individual or a group presumably?

F: There’s a ping-pong if there’s a group – which doesn’t happen in a one on one situation.

SG: True. About the use of hands in your cello lessons – you said that you would not use hands.

F: Very, very little. I mean there are obvious things you, I mean when you are teaching the AT, there are reasons why to ask the funny 4 questions at the beginning. Because you are in, let’s call it an intimate space, when you touching heads and necks and chests and whatever. This is something I clearly don’t do in a cello lesson. In a cello lesson, maybe a hand or an arm may be something where I show something, but still much, much less than in an Alexander lesson. I mean there are just good reasons not to touch students unnecessarily, especially if they are under 18. There’s a certain space that you don’t enter without a good reason. As an AT teacher, there’s a good reason to enter it. As a cello teacher, most of the time, I stay out of that. And when I enter it, I ask before. I have a very clear purpose and it’s never a problem. But it’s something I find very important to be very aware of. Even in Alexander teaching, when you begin to touch heads and necks and whatever, you need to be aware that you’re in a safer space. It’s not a big deal, it just needs some attention and respect.

SG: It’s fascinating to understand that a lot of the work can be done verbally. But it seems like all of this physical element is the sort of groundbreaking newness that’s necessary.

F: I would agree, it’s necessary in most cases, but I’d put it differently. If you don’t embed what you do with your hands with concepts and ideas, and just do some hands-on work it just falls into some area, and it’s not very helpful. So, hands are more a tool to manifest what you do with your words. And it’s a very necessary, and a very useful tool. It can be the thing that makes the idea come home. If both come together like a piece of art, then it just makes sense. That’s my experience.

SG: So, I have this question here which I’ve alluded to already, which is: How do you approach a technical problem in a lesson? And I can imagine that your answer is the same way that you would deal with anything, just through questioning.

F: If I want to...

SG: Let’s take an example.

F: …make the student think, your bowing is a certain way that can only create a certain sound and it’s not a nice sound. So, “Why does it sound like it does?” would be a possible question for the student. Or I could say, “You’re too close to the bridge, your bowing is not in the right angle, or whatever.” But I’m trying to encourage the students to go through certain questions when they play themselves. So, when they play, they should
listen to themselves. Once they listen to themselves, then they know, ok this kind of a sound can only be produced through this process, and if it’s a nice sound it’s good, and if it’s a sound you don’t want to have, and you know what happens, then you have your own way to solve it. And I’m trying to go through these kinds of questions so they can ask them themselves when they are on their own.

SG: So, you wouldn’t say, your arm has to be more...

F: Sounds like I wouldn’t say it.

SG: I know. But I just find it fascinating.

F: Yeah. But you know, even if sometimes it would work better in that moment…

SG: Even the most basic thing… to remember to hold your bow this way, or that, or...your arm...

F: The thing is, you’re talking more about the angulation and height and the whatever. And I’m looking at more about how people are doing it, and then see what will help the student most as a next step. Some people sit at the cello and it looks nice. Some bring in a million ideas, and that’s a different student to teach.

SG: Ok, so you would say that the ITM allows you to best address the needs of the individual students.

F: Yes. There is no one rule.

SG: Because we know there are often teachers who have their one way of teaching and they’ll teach their 10 students the same way.

F: I mean I’ve got certain things I want to bring across within the first, within a certain order, but even that is not strictly necessarily just one way. But there are certain things I want to bring across in the first lessons, like principles of bowing, but it depends so much how the student is, in which lesson it would come up. Why would you tell someone something too early just because it’s on your recipe? But on the other hand, why would you wait for something because normally you would only tell it 3 lessons later? So, just look at the student and create your teaching in that moment.

SG: So, if somebody asked you about your teaching style, if you use a specific one, how would you answer?

F: I’d say my teaching style is my teaching style. I would if I could explain it, but I don’t have one person I refer to.

SG: Or you don’t say, “I have the ITM teaching style?”

F: I’d say, my cello teaching is mostly influenced by ITM, yeah. That’s clear. And part of
the ITM is, you make it up. I’ve pretty much made up my, I’ve never had, you know some people have studied with teachers who say, I have the answers for everything. I’ve never had those teachers. I’ve never had those teachers who say, “Oh, you have to do those studies or that, or that.” And this is how I built up my teaching and it seems to work pretty well.

SG: Thank you so much. That was very helpful.
Appendix V

Data Sort of Practitioner Interviews

Part 1: Main Interview Concepts, by Practitioner: AT and ITM Principles
Part 2: Main Interview Concepts, Sorted by Emergent Codeword/Categories
Part 3: Main Interview Concepts, Tallied by Frequency of Codeword/Categories

Part 1: Main Interview Concepts, by Practitioner: AT and ITM Principles

Practitioner A
- The same thing any good Alexander teacher would do, he taught me how to think!
- He claimed his body changed, which enabled his sound to improve. However, this was not a conscious change, and it only changed as a result of applying the Alexander Technique principles.
- He stated that he was not repositioning himself intentionally but that it came as a result of the refined mentality that ensued from the instruction.
- Practitioner A experiences regularly with his students that as their AT moments accumulate, he is able to guide them to more specific recognition and awareness within themselves, which eventually leads to the student learning how to guide themselves as they develop greater levels of technical mastery.
- Differences he noted were that Weed mentions anatomy more frequently in lessons and discussions than in his previous training and that the recognition of one’s self-awareness was more prevalent.
- I’m sure you’ve experienced with students that as the AT moments accumulate one is able to guide the student to more specific recognition/awareness of the change in themselves, which then enables one to further guide them to learn more of how to guide themselves.
- Practitioner A stated that he found that isolating or concentrating on breath control is often counter-productive, as you are then separating breath management from the rest of the body.

Practitioner B
- Practitioner B recognizes that some modern activities are very specialized and sometimes at the extremes of what our natural movements are, thus clarifying the need for specific instructors in music.
- Practitioner B quickly found a reason to become a teacher, which was to spread knowledge of this work so that people did not discover it by accident, as he did.
- Practitioner B found a primary difference to be that the ITM is interactive in nature and focus.
- One of the core teaching tools of the ITM is to ask questions.
- Most other approaches believe that the work done with the hands is the most important tool in teaching the Alexander Technique. In the ITM, they believe that the hands are the
least important tool in teaching. He goes on to explain that the hands are used as often as
is appropriate in a lesson, but they are used only to support the concept of helping a
student change their thinking.

- Another significant difference is that everything ITM students are trained in can be
directly traced back to Alexander's texts. The ITM is unique in the degree to which they
study Alexander's four published books.
- Recognizing this, Alexander's work focuse

on completing the entire breathing cycle.
- Alexander emphasized that when disease or injury is present in a person, there is also a
physical and mental response to that disease or injury. Alexander knew that he could not
do anything for the disease or injury itself. However, his technique could accomplish
much in terms of mediating the person's physical and mental responses to the disease;
modulating patient responses and the subsequent body response is where Alexander had
his success.
- A favorite Alexander quote supporting this notion is, "If you stop doing the wrong thing,
the right thing does itself."
- The Alexander Technique is the process of getting your old beliefs out of the way and
seeing what happens. What happens is usually something that we would call wonderful.
If you stop doing the old habits, it allows the 'natural system' to express itself.
- Ultimately, and perfectly in sync with the ITM of empowering each student to learn for
themselves, each training course participant came to understand that they were
responsible for finding their own answers to that question.
- What the training course gave them was the ability to critically examine what they were
doing in their day job, to revise their pedagogical approach to their work, and give them
the capacity to examine what they did, how they did it, and how to communicate that to
their own students.
- If you are working from Alexander’s principles, you do the same process with whatever
the student is presenting to you.
- In the ‘general process’, specific defects are eradicated.
- Being a good ITM teacher he said to my partner Kate, bring your partner, bring some
friends, let’s make a group. Because part of the ITM pedagogy is that we teach in groups
not one to one.
- This prompted me to ask him how he would teach someone in a lesson what he believes
would be an efficient way to breathe. His response was, “I hear you’re looking for that.
Does it sound like an ITM teacher to coach someone in how to do something?” As
frustrating as it was, I did know enough about the ITM to admit that no, it did not sound
like something an ITM teacher would do. He reiterated what I already knew, which is
that the work of the ITM is to get people to change their thinking; to let their old ideas go.
- He recounts one experience of teaching a professional classical singer who was heavily
pregnant. Her pregnancy challenged her beliefs of what she thought she needed to do in
order to breathe. Once they addressed those issues, it turned out that it was only her
perception and ideas that she was imposing on herself that were actually limiting her
breathing, not the fact that she was heavily pregnant. Through this experience and many
others, it became clear to him that there are a lot of contradictory ideas circulating about
breathing. And that the way many people explain to him how they have been taught to
breathe is not anatomically possible.
• Babies do not typically have issues with producing loud volumes or sustaining power, therefore those are not things one would have to train. Those are natural abilities that are there until we educate people out of them.

**Practitioner C**

• Practitioner C discovered that her teaching completely matched the principles of the ITM. She used what could be considered a sort of ‘primary control’ while leaving all the other details to the system itself. Her primary control was the vocal registers. All the other details, such as breathing, resonance, and vocal adjustments would take care of themselves as long as the registers were working correctly together.

• Her teaching changed drastically, becoming infused by the ITM and the ideas of functional voice training which are now the most significant part of her life.

• On the ITM training course, the main issues are how to deal with people, how to communicate with students, how to be precise in using your own words, and how to ask questions. Listening to what the student is saying without jumping to conclusions because perhaps they use a word that is understood differently by the teacher is essential. These interactions with the student, which is a crucial part of the ITM, are how she incorporates the ITM in her voice lessons.

• An example is, “Did you notice what you were doing with your head in relation to your body while starting to sing?”

• She explains that there are two types of students, those who are exceptionally talented, and she can tell that they would be even better if they stopped doing certain habits, and those who are more regular students and have much general tension creating interference almost everywhere. With these more normal students, she teaches singing with the ITM way of communication. In contrast, with the exceptional students, she may encourage them to begin AT work.

• There I was just walking around and waiting for a lesson and I had a table lesson, and well perhaps it was my fault to say that I am an ITM Alexander teacher, because this teacher could not work with me.

• She would give a specific direction to correct a bad habit that was noticed and then she would turn to using the ITM way of communication by asking, “What did you notice? Was it the same or different? Was there one part of the sound which perhaps improved?”

• As for using hands-on techniques in a voice lesson, she would only do that with singers who have had Alexander Technique lessons.

• She notes that she uses the ITM way of communication also with her recorder students, and that it generally informs her daily lifestyle. She added that in her work with Donald Weed and the ITM, she has learned more about pedagogy, communication, and dealing with people, than in all her high school and university courses.

**Practitioner D**

• The teacher began to change the way she taught her lessons.
When asked how the ITM influences her singing teaching, she replied that it is about principles. In her music education studies, she did not learn about important teaching principles and how to work toward them. The ITM has provided her with this knowledge.

Such as the idea that our thinking influences our movement. While singing, it is crucial to examine what we are thinking during our vocal production.

Another important principle is to learn to be aware of the relationship between the head and the rest of the body.

To always be looking for excess effort is another skill that is emphasized.

When working with a student, there is always something to look for and determine if you see some excess tension or movements that are not necessary to sing.

It is a fascinating process when the students begin to recognize themselves where there is unnecessary effort and can begin to stop it.

When this happens, the voice can reveal itself in its’ natural state.

When I asked her what the benefits were of combining the ITM with vocal instruction, she replied that the biggest benefit is that her experience as an Alexander Teacher has trained her eyes to see when there are interferences while singing.

Her training has given her the tools to help the student from an Alexander standpoint. One of these tools is asking questions. Students always want to get it right. Trying to be good and get it right usually means involving more muscle work than is necessary. Just this realization alone, that a student is doing too much, can make an enormous difference.

She responded that once you stop doing the unnecessary muscle work, the breathing will do itself. You have to experience it for yourself by having an experience in a lesson, or perhaps practicing on your own, to discover what it feels like to breathe freely.

She notes that the ITM is unique in comparison with other Alexander methods because it is really the ‘interactive’ teaching method. Not only is Weed teaching the Alexander Technique, but he has developed a method of how to teach it to people.

The kind of teaching that he does teaches one how to teach any subject at all. It is one thing learning how to apply the Alexander Technique to yourself, but then you also learn how to teach it, and how to interact with people.

When I see someone really fixing at a certain place for ever and ever, there comes a point when I say, “So, what about this?” and I touch even the ones that I don’t touch otherwise. Just to create a conflict. “Could it be otherwise?”

And it is not about learning to create a new movement; but a getting out of the way, so the natural movements are exposed. When this flow happens and you feel it, it feels very strange. When she sees a student struggle with their breathing over and over, she may touch them at the point of conflict that she notices and with her hand ask, “Could this be different, could you relax this muscle?”

Practitioner E

For Practitioner E, the concept of working through a process and not looking for a result was the most important concept.

It is clear to him now that this way of thinking, looking for a result, is not the way the ITM works. To try and use the ITM directly to achieve a result just does not go together.
• He will attempt to apply the concept of working through a process, as opposed to just trying to play the piece through as nicely as possible. He will continually think of this process before and during the entire practice session.
• This process involves mainly thinking about the head in relation to the body, as well as continually asking oneself, “What am I doing?” and not immediately judging the result.
• He mentioned that another thing he learned on this course was not to go hunting for success.
• He also recognizes that one must continuously practice these concepts and that they are not always easy.
• It is what you do and study for yourself combined with input and lessons from a teacher that will bring about the most success.
• I think that’s also one of the whole points, that it’s both what you study for yourself and the lessons. That’s the interactive part of it.
• I noticed just now in a piece I was practicing – in a piece where I shift all the way up to a very high note – so high that it’s outside where I’m used to playing, and where I have a very clear structure in my head. And it’s always a bit of a luck sort of thing, and I went up, it was wrong, went up, it was wrong again and then I very, very consciously, just as I was going up, thought of the poise of the head and twice in a row it was just bang in tune. And I didn’t think, I’m going to play this D in tune now. I just purely thought of the head.
• By far the concept of a process and not of looking for a result. That’s also something that’s new in as much that until now, it’s only been for a result on the violin, if I’m honest. And now I find, it was just very clearly shown that that way of thinking, for a result, is not the way ITM works.
• Yeah, the process of thinking of the head in relation to the body. The process of continually asking myself, “What am I doing?” And not immediately judging the result, obviously that doesn’t always work in practicing.
• Yet, he believes it is possible while practicing, to consciously not think in that way. He also recognizes that one must continuously practice these concepts and that they are not easy, and that this was shown in many different ways during the workshop.

Practitioner F
• (Weed) explained that he did not give him anything, but rather helped him stop the habits he did himself which were getting in the way of his playing.
• He tries to guide his students through their studies in such a way that they have to discover answers for themselves. He believes the most important job as a teacher is to make yourself unnecessary.
• When the student can solve their own problems, then the teacher becomes unnecessary. This is a big picture way of looking at it, but the same idea can be applied at every small step along the way as well.
• That is his aim in teaching, to make the student responsible and able to solve each progressive step with less and less guidance.
• How he reacts in lessons when he notices something that needs correcting. The approach he uses more than anything else is to ask questions. This is what drove the student
mentioned above absolutely crazy. She hated the lessons until she got used to this new approach, and then she really enjoyed the work.

- As Alexander says, we want to be told what to do, we want things to feel the way we think it should feel, and then we are happy. I asked him if it was possible to refrain from correcting a fault, mistake, or bad habit in a lesson.
- Giving a quick trick or some information which does not include the big picture may work for a moment, but will have the students coming back in the next moment for the next trick or piece of information. This behavior makes the student reliant on the teacher, and that is the opposite of what he wants to achieve.
- The thing he noticed was that you were told what exercises to do and how to do them, and were told how it should make you feel. He found that this did not appeal to the reasoning process. He claims that every ITM lesson appeals to the reasoning process. The other lessons did not encourage self-responsibility.
- He responded that the principles and belief system learned in the training course, and expanded upon in the trainer’s course, underlie everything in the ITM.
- No one actually tells you how to teach. You learn the principles, which become the foundation, but you do not get a recipe for teaching. This surprises many students who enter their fourth year of training to discover that you are not actually told how to teach in a scripted manner. He recognizes that it can seem like there is a set procedure. However, when you are learning throughout the course, you discover that the questions that are asked, just happen to be the ones that make the most sense. For example, at the beginning of a lesson, you need to find out what the student wants, so the range of questions you can ask to determine that are pretty limited.
- In a group situation, you can get reactions, perspectives, and discussions which cannot take place in a one-on-one situation.
- Practitioner F responded that he uses his hands very little, or not at all. He made clear that most of the Alexander work can be done verbally. Using the hands without before explaining concepts and ideas, does not end up being very helpful.
- He found that the hands-on work was used to enhance what you do with your words; a very useful tool that can really bring the idea home.
- Practitioner F summarized that, in his experience, if both hands and words came together like a piece of art, then many things make sense.
- However, he prefers to encourage students to go through certain questions in their head when they play on their own. This questioning forces them to listen to themselves and analyze what they did to produce that particular sound.
- Part of the ITM is that you make decisions on the spot.
- I do (teach individuals) but only for one reason. Because if I can’t find 2 people to come together at the same time, I teach individually. Every other choice would be to teach at least in groups of 2, plus more.
- There’s a ping pong if there’s a group – which doesn’t happen in a one-on-one situation.
- In a group situation you can get reactions, perspectives, and discussions which cannot take place in a one-on-one situation.
- Because what I find a very good idea, to describe it very quickly, is the question “what’s the most important job as a teacher.” The funny answer is to make yourself überflüssig, I don’t know the English word. (unnecessary)
• So that’s what I’m trying to do in teaching. Make them responsible and able to solve this step with less and less and less guidance. And through that they gain more and more, I would say confidence and knowledge, and understanding.

• I just think you give a student a different foundation when the student sees that they are not reliant on the teacher and the teacher needing to help and whatever but there was a process that leads the student toward knowing, “I can do this.”

• If something’s going wrong, there must be some lack of knowledge or some idea or some belief which is not working, and if that stays the same and you just give a little bit of a trick and bit of information – that’s more neutral – information which doesn’t include, let’s call it the big picture of what’s going on, or the whole picture of that part at least – then the student needs to come back at the next moment for the next bit of information/trick, or whatever. And that makes them reliant on you, and that’s the opposite of what I want as a teacher.

• I always tell my students, “you know if you manage to do this step and the next step, and enough steps, you can manage on your own, and there are less and less things where I can help you, that’s the moment where you need to leave me as a teacher.”

• One encounter was you were doing exercises, you were told to do that, you were told to do this and told to feel this – in a group and in individual context – and all of it didn’t really appeal to reasoning processes.

• He claims that every ITM lesson appeals to the reasoning process. The other lessons did not encourage self-responsibility.

• Using the ITM principles, allow him to best address the needs of the individual student.
Part 2: Main Interview Concepts, Sorted by Codeword/Categories

‘Application of the ITM in Lessons,’ ‘Art of Questioning,’ ‘Breath Use,’
‘Critical Moment,’ ‘General/Basic Principles,’ ‘Group Teaching,’ ‘Hands-on Techniques,’
‘Interactive,’ ‘Lengthening of the Spine/Flexibility,’ ‘Mastery,’ ‘Mental Processes/Thinking,’
‘Natural System,’ ‘Original Sources,’ ‘Responsibility of the Student,’
‘Self-Awareness/Awareness,’ ‘Table Work,’ and ‘Use of Mirrors’

Practitioner A

Application of the ITM in Lessons (3 references)

- He claimed his body did change, which enabled his sound to improve, but that it was not a conscious change and it only changed as a result of applying the Alexander Technique principles.

- I wasn’t repositioning myself intentionally. The repositioning came as a result of the refined mentality that comes from the instruction.

- I'm sure you've experienced with students that as the AT moments accumulate one is able to guide the student to more specific recognition/awareness of the change in themselves, which then enables one to further guide them to learn more of how to guide themselves.

Art of Questioning (0 references)

Breath Use (1 reference)

- Practitioner A stated that he found that isolating or concentrating on breath control is often counter-productive, as you are then separating breath management from the rest of the body.

Critical Moments (1 reference)

- I wasn’t repositioning myself intentionally. The repositioning came as a result of the refined mentality that comes from the instruction.

General/Basic Principles (1 reference)

- He claimed his body did change, which enabled his sound to improve, but that it was not a conscious change and it only changed as a result of applying the Alexander Technique principles.

Group Teaching (0 references)

Hands-on Technique (0 references)

Interactive (0 references)
Lengthening the Spine/Flexibility (0 references)

Mastery (1 reference)
- Practitioner A experiences regularly with his students that as their AT moments accumulate, he is able to guide them to more specific recognition and awareness within themselves, which eventually leads to the student learning how to guide themselves as they develop greater levels of technical mastery.

Mental Processes/Thinking (2 references)
- The same thing any good Alexander teacher would do – he taught me how to think!
- I wasn’t repositioning myself intentionally. The repositioning came as a result of the refined mentality that comes from the instruction.

Natural System (0 references)

Original Sources (0 references)

Responsibility of the Student (1 reference)
- I’m sure you’ve experienced with students that as the AT moments accumulate one is able to guide the student to more specific recognition/awareness of the change in themselves, which then enables one to further guide them to learn more of how to guide themselves.

Self-Awareness/Awareness (2 references)
- Practitioner A experiences regularly with his students that as their AT moments accumulate, he is able to guide them to more specific recognition and awareness within themselves, which eventually leads to the student learning how to guide themselves as they develop greater levels of technical mastery.
- Differences he noted were that Weed mentions anatomy more frequently in lessons and discussions than in his previous training and that the recognition of one’s self-awareness was more prevalent.

Table Work (0 references)

Use of Mirrors (0 references)

Practitioner B

Application of the ITM in Lessons (3 references)
- On my training course from 1999-2003 there were several teachers on there. Some were in mainstream education, some were music teachers, general music teachers to kids, some were specialist teachers. And a very common question they had was, how can I continue to do what I do with what I now know. How can I bring those together? And, they each
had to find their own answer to that. But what the training course gave them was the ability to critically examine what they were doing in their day job. And to revise what they did and how they did it. And that was a journey they each had to make on their own. It’s not one I’ve had to face because I don’t have that specialist teaching combining two things.

- Most other approaches believe that the work done with the hands is the most important tool in teaching the Alexander Technique. In the ITM, they believe that the hands are the least important tool in teaching. He goes on to explain that the hands are used as often as is appropriate in a lesson, but they are used only to support the concept of helping a student change their thinking.

- This prompted me to ask him how he would teach someone in a lesson what he believes would be an efficient way to breathe. His response was, “I hear you’re looking for that. Does it sound like an ITM teacher to coach someone in how to do something?” As frustrating as it was, I did know enough about the ITM to admit that no, it did not sound like something an ITM teacher would do. He reiterated what I already knew, which is that the work of the ITM is to get people to change their thinking; to let their old ideas go.

**Art of Questioning** (1 reference)
- He found a primary difference to be that the ITM is interactive. One of the core teaching tools of the ITM is to ask questions. In other programs, questions are not only typically not encouraged but may even be actively discouraged.

**Breath Use** (2 references)
- He recounts one experience of teaching a professional classical singer who was heavily pregnant. Her pregnancy challenged her beliefs of what she thought she needed to do in order to breathe. Once they addressed those issues, it turned out that it was only her perception and ideas that she was imposing on herself that were actually limiting her breathing, not the fact that she was heavily pregnant. Through this experience and many others, it became clear to him that there are a lot of contradictory ideas circulating about breathing. And that the way many people explain to him how they have been taught to breathe is not anatomically possible.

- This prompted me to ask him how he would teach someone in a lesson what he believes would be an efficient way to breathe. His response was, “I hear you’re looking for that. Does it sound like an ITM teacher to coach someone in how to do something?” As frustrating as it was, I did know enough about the ITM to admit that no, it did not sound like something an ITM teacher would do. He reiterated what I already knew, which is that the work of the ITM is to get people to change their thinking; to let their old ideas go.

**Critical Moment** (0 references)

**General/Basic Principles** (1 reference)
- “How do I work with someone who does this?” as though they need to work differently with a dancer from an athlete, or a martial artist, or a singer. If you are working from
Alexander’s principles, you do the same process with whatever the student is presenting to you. A quote from Alexander which is, “In the general process, specific defects are eradicated.” So he means that we are always doing general processes. He then explains that John Dewey, an educational philosopher and contemporary of Alexander’s, described the Alexander Technique as bearing the same relationship to education as education bears to all the different disciplines that it is used to teach in. So, in effect, it is a step above and beyond teaching any specific discipline. This is one of the reasons the AT is so hard to market; because it is so general.

**Group Teaching** (1 reference)
- Being a good ITM teacher he said to my partner Kate, bring your partner, bring some friends, let’s make a group. Because part of the ITM pedagogy is that we teach in groups not one to one.

**Hands-on Techniques** (1 reference)
- Most other approaches believe that the work done with the hands is the most important tool in teaching the Alexander Technique. In the ITM, they believe that the hands are the least important tool in teaching. He goes on to explain that the hands are used as often as is appropriate in a lesson, but they are used only to support the concept of helping a student change their thinking.

**Interactive** (1 reference)
- He found a primary difference to be that the ITM is interactive. One of the core teaching tools of the ITM is to ask questions. In other programs, questions are not only typically not encouraged but may even be actively discouraged.

**Lengthening the Spine** (0 references)

**Mastery** (0 references)

**Mental Processes/Thinking** (5 references)
- Most other approaches believe that the work done with the hands is the most important tool in teaching the Alexander Technique. In the ITM, they believe that the hands are the least important tool in teaching. He goes on to explain that the hands are used as often as is appropriate in a lesson, but they are used only to support the concept of helping a student change their thinking.

- This prompted me to ask him how he would teach someone in a lesson what he believes would be an efficient way to breathe. His response was, “I hear you’re looking for that. Does it sound like an ITM teacher to coach someone in how to do something?” As frustrating as it was, I did know enough about the ITM to admit that no, it did not sound like something an ITM teacher would do. He reiterated what I already knew, which is that the work of the ITM is to get people to change their thinking; to let their old ideas go. A favorite Alexander quote supporting this notion is, “If you stop doing the wrong thing, the right thing does itself.”
• The wrong thing would be our beliefs or ideas; or following someone’s else’s beliefs or ideas about the way we need to do something. This becomes an imposition. Once we take that away, what occurs naturally is usually very effective. Because of this, he doesn’t have to be a breathing expert, or even have to give any specific instruction to a student in how to breathe, to be able to help them with issues they may be experiencing with breathing, or anything else for that matter. It’s more a case of, get your old beliefs out of the way, and see what happens. And what happens is usually something that we would call wonderful. If you stop doing the old stuff, it allows that natural system to express itself.

• He recounts one experience of teaching a professional classical singer who was heavily pregnant. Her pregnancy challenged her beliefs of what she thought she needed to do in order to breathe. Once they addressed those issues, it turned out that it was only her perception and ideas that she was imposing on herself that were actually limiting her breathing, not the fact that she was heavily pregnant. Through this experience and many others, it became clear to him that there are a lot of contradictory ideas circulating about breathing. And that the way many people explain to him how they have been taught to breathe is not anatomically possible.

• What the training course gave them was the ability to critically examine what they were doing in their day job, to revise their pedagogical approach to their work, and give them the capacity to examine what they did, how they did it, and how to communicate that to their own students.

Natural System (2 references)
• The wrong thing would be our beliefs or ideas; or following someone’s else’s beliefs or ideas about the way we need to do something. This becomes an imposition. Once we take that away, what occurs naturally is usually very effective. Because of this, he doesn’t have to be a breathing expert, or even have to give any specific instruction to a student in how to breathe, to be able to help them with issues they may be experiencing with breathing, or anything else for that matter. It’s more a case of, get your old beliefs out of the way, and see what happens. And what happens is usually something that we would call wonderful. If you stop doing the old stuff, it allows that natural system to express itself.

• Babies do not typically have issues with producing loud volumes or sustaining power, therefore those are not things one would have to train. Those are natural abilities that are there until we educate people out of them. This brought him to mention one of the books they study in the ITM training course, which is called, If You Want to be Rich and Happy, Don’t Go to School by Robert Kiyosaki. This book talks about education as kind of a reverse metamorphosis, where you start with beautiful children and end up with ugly caterpillars.

Original Sources (1 reference)
• Another significant difference is that everything ITM students are trained in can be directly traced back to Alexander’s texts. Sometimes they do struggle with his written
English, but this concept of struggling is something the students of the ITM are encouraged to do. In struggling with Alexander’s written word, the students are forced to come to terms with the concepts that Alexander is writing about.

**Responsibility of the Student** (0 references)

**Self-Awareness/Awareness** (1 reference)
- What the training course gave them was the ability to critically examine what they were doing in their day job; to revise their pedagogical approach to their work, and the capacity to examine what they did and how they did it.

**Table Work** (0 references)

**Use of Mirrors** (0 references)

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**Practitioner C**

**Application of ITM in Lessons** (3 references)
- Practitioner C teaches Alexander Technique lessons and voice lessons, but she said she does not mix the two. She would never, for example, go up to a singing student and start fiddling around with their neck; however, she may recommend that they come to an Alexander class. Once they have had some experience with the AT and she sees an issue, she may ask, “I see something, is it ok if I put my hands on you?” In this way she uses the AT within the voice lesson. She admits that she is still experimenting on how best to combine the two worlds. In an AT lesson, it is the student who comes to the teacher with a problem, question, or issue about something they want to improve. But in a voice lesson scenario, it is her that notices something that could be improved and therefore takes the initiative to say, “Well, I detect a problem there, it is ok…?” She notes that this is a difference and while laughing, questions if this is even an ITM way of thinking.

- With these more “normal” students, she teaches singing with the ITM way of communication whereas with the exceptional students she may encourage them to begin AT work. She notes that she uses the ITM way of communication also with her recorder students, and that it generally informs her daily lifestyle. She added that in her work with Donald Weed and the ITM, she has learned more about pedagogy, communication, and dealing with people, than in all her high school and university course.

- She notes that she uses the ITM way of communication also with her recorder students, and that it generally informs her daily lifestyle. She added that in her work with Donald Weed and the ITM, she has learned more about pedagogy, communication, and dealing with people, than in all her high school and university courses.

**Art of Questioning** (2 references)
She would give a specific direction to correct a bad habit that was noticed and then she would turn to using the ITM way of communication by asking, “What did you notice? Was it the same or different? Was there one part of the sound which perhaps improved?” As for using hands-on techniques in a voice lesson, she would only do that with singers who have had Alexander Technique lessons.

If she saw a singer with an issue while singing; for example, perhaps they are lifting up their chin and face to sing a high note and pulling the head back, then she would try to address it first by asking questions. “Did you notice what you were doing with your head in relation to your body while starting to sing?” Then she may ask them to touch their own necks while singing the same phrase to see if they can notice anything themselves.

Breath Use (0 references)

Critical Moment (0 references)

General/Basic Principles (0 references)

Group Teaching (0 references)

Hands-on Techniques (2 references)

Practitioner C teaches Alexander Technique lessons and voice lessons, but she said she does not mix the two. She would never, for example, go up to a singing student and start fiddling around with their neck; however, she may recommend that they come to an Alexander class. Once they have had some experience with the AT and she sees an issue, she may ask, “I see something, is it ok if I put my hands on you?” In this way she uses the AT within the voice lesson. She admits that she is still experimenting on how best to combine the two worlds. In an AT lesson, it is the student who comes to the teacher with a problem, question, or issue about something they want to improve. But in a voice lesson scenario, it is her that notices something that could be improved and therefore takes the initiative to say, “Well, I detect a problem there, it is ok...?” She notes that this is a difference and while laughing, questions if this is even an ITM way of thinking.

Interactive (3 references)

She incorporates the ITM very much into her teaching but not necessarily so much of the AT. On the ITM training course, a main issue is how to deal with people, how to communicate with students, how to be precise in using your own words, and how to ask questions. Listening to what the student is saying, and not jumping to conclusions because perhaps they use a word which is understood differently by the teacher, are key.
These interactions with the student, which is a crucial part of the ITM, are how she incorporates the ITM in her voice lessons.

- She would give a specific direction to correct a bad habit that was noticed and then she would turn to using the ITM way of communication by asking, “What did you notice? Was it the same or different? Was there one part of the sound which perhaps improved?” As for using hands-on techniques in a voice lesson, she would only do that with singers who have had Alexander Technique lessons.

- If she saw a singer with an issue while singing; for example, perhaps they are lifting up their chin and face to sing a high note and pulling the head back, then she would try to address it first by asking questions. “Did you notice what you were doing with your head in relation to your body while starting to sing?” Then she may ask them to touch their own necks while singing the same phrase to see if they can notice anything themselves.

**Lengthening the Spine/Flexibility** (0 reference)

**Mastery** (0 references)

**Mental Processes** (0 references)

**Natural System** (0 references)

**Original Sources** (0 references)

**Responsibility of the Student** (0 references)

**Self-Awareness/Awareness** (1 reference)
- If she saw a singer with an issue while singing; for example, perhaps they are lifting up their chin and face to sing a high note and pulling the head back, then she would try to address it first by asking questions. “Did you notice what you were doing with your head in relation to your body while starting to sing?” Then she may ask them to touch their own necks while singing the same phrase to see if they can notice anything themselves.

**Table Work** (1 reference)
- There I was just walking around and waiting for a lesson and I had a table lesson, and well perhaps it was my fault to say that I am an ITM Alexander teacher, because this teacher could not work with me.

**Use of Mirrors** (0 references)

Practitioner D

**Application of ITM in Lessons** (4 references)
• What I asked her what the benefits were of combining the ITM with vocal instruction she replied that the biggest benefit is that her experience as an Alexander Teacher has trained her eyes to see when there are interferences while singing. Then she has the tools to help the student from an Alexander standpoint.

• To always be looking for excess effort is another skill that is emphasized.

• When working with a student, there is always something to look for and determine if you see some excess tension or movements that are not necessary to sing.

• Her training has given her the tools to help the student from an Alexander standpoint. One of these tools is asking questions. Students always want to get it right. Trying to be good and get it right usually means involving more muscle work than is necessary. Just this realization alone, that a student is doing too much, can make an enormous difference.

**Art of Questioning** (2 references)

• Her training has given her the tools to help the student from an Alexander standpoint. One of these tools is asking questions. Students always want to get it right. Trying to be good and get it right usually means involving more muscle work than is necessary. Just this realization alone, that a student is doing too much, can make an enormous difference.

• And it is not about learning to create a new movement; but a getting out of the way, so the natural movements are exposed. When this flow happens and you feel it, it feels very strange. When she sees a student struggle with their breathing over and over, she may touch them at the point of conflict that she notices and with her hand ask, “Could this be different, could you relax this muscle?”

**Breath Use** (2 references)

• Her response was that once you stop doing the unnecessary muscle work, the breathing will do itself. You have to experience it for yourself by having an experience in a lesson, or perhaps practicing on your own, to discover what it feels like to breathe freely.

• And it is not about learning to create a new movement; but a getting out of the way, so the natural movements are exposed. When this flow happens and you feel it, it feels very strange. When she sees a student struggle with their breathing over and over, she may touch them at the point of conflict that she notices and with her hand ask, “Could this be different, could you relax this muscle?”

**Critical Moment** (0 references)

**General/Basic Principles** (7 references)

• When asked how the ITM influences her singing teaching, she replied that it is about principles. In her music education, she did not learn about important principles and how to work toward them; and this is what the ITM has provided her with. One learns specific principles, such as the idea that our thinking influences our movement. While singing, it’s important to examine what we are thinking during our vocal production.
• Another important principle is to learn to be aware of the relationship between the head and the rest of the body.

• To always be looking for excess effort is another skill that is emphasized.

• When working with a student, there is always something to look for and determine if you see some excess tension or movements that are not necessary to sing.

• Her training has given her the tools to help the student from an Alexander standpoint. One of these tools is asking questions. Students always want to get it right. Trying to be good and get it right usually means involving more muscle work than is necessary. Just this realization alone, that a student is doing too much, can make an enormous difference.

• She responded that once you stop doing the unnecessary muscle work, the breathing will do itself. You have to experience it for yourself by having an experience in a lesson, or perhaps practicing on your own, to discover what it feels like to breathe freely.

• And it is not about learning to create a new movement; but a getting out of the way, so the natural movements are exposed. When this flow happens and you feel it, it feels very strange. When she sees a student struggle with their breathing over and over, she may touch them at the point of conflict that she notices and with her hand ask, “Could this be different, could you relax this muscle?”

**Group Teaching** (0 references)

**Hands-on Techniques** (1 reference)

• And it is not about learning to create a new movement; but a getting out of the way, so the natural movements are exposed. When this flow happens and you feel it, it feels very strange. When she sees a student struggle with their breathing over and over, she may touch them at the point of conflict that she notices and with her hand ask, “Could this be different, could you relax this muscle?”

**Interactive** (1 reference)

• She notes that the ITM is special in comparison with other Alexander methods because it is really the interactive teaching method. Not only is Weed teaching the Alexander Technique, but he has developed a method of how to teach it to people. This kind of teaching that he does, teaches us how to teach any subject at all. It is one thing learning how to apply the Alexander Technique; but then you also learn how to teach it, and how to interact with people.

**Lengthening the Spine/Flexibility** (2 references)

• When I see someone really fixing at a certain place for ever and ever, there comes a point when I say, “so, what about this?” and I touch even the ones that I don’t touch otherwise. Just to create a conflict. “Could it be otherwise?”
• Another important principle is to learn to be aware of the relationship between the head and the rest of the body.

Mastery (0 references)

Mental Processes (0 references)

Natural System (4 references)
• To always be looking for excess effort is another skill that is emphasized.

• It is a fascinating process when the students begin to recognize themselves where there is unnecessary effort and can begin to stop it.

• Her training has given her the tools to help the student from an Alexander standpoint. One of these tools is asking questions. Students always want to get it right. Trying to be good and get it right usually means involving more muscle work than is necessary. Just this realization alone, that a student is doing too much, can make an enormous difference.

• And it is not about learning to create a new movement; but a getting out of the way, so the natural movements are exposed. When this flow happens and you feel it, it feels very strange. When she sees a student struggle with their breathing over and over, she may touch them at the point of conflict that she notices and with her hand ask, “Could this be different, could you relax this muscle?”

Original Sources (0 references)

Responsibility of the Student (1 reference)
• It is a fascinating process when the students begin to recognize themselves where there is unnecessary effort and can begin to stop it.

Self-Awareness/Awareness (4 references)
• It is a fascinating process when the students begin to recognize themselves where there is unnecessary effort and can begin to stop it.

• Her training has given her the tools to help the student from an Alexander standpoint. One of these tools is asking questions. Students always want to get it right. Trying to be good and get it right usually means involving more muscle work than is necessary. Just this realization alone, that a student is doing too much, can make an enormous difference.

• She responded that once you stop doing the unnecessary muscle work, the breathing will do itself. You have to experience it for yourself by having an experience in a lesson, or perhaps practicing on your own, to discover what it feels like to breathe freely.

• Yet, he believes it is possible while practicing, to consciously not think in that way. He also recognizes that one must continuously practice these concepts and that they are not easy, and that this was shown in many different ways during the workshop.
Table Work (0 references)

Use of Mirrors (0 references)

Practitioner E

Application of the ITM in Lessons (3 references)

- I think that’s also one of the whole points, that it’s both what you study for yourself and the lessons. That’s the interactive part of it.

- By far the concept of a process and not of looking for a result. That’s also something that’s new in as much that until now, it’s only been for a result on the violin, if I’m honest. And now I find, it was just very clearly shown that that way of thinking, for a result, is not the way ITM works.

- Yeah, the process of thinking of the head in relation to the body. The process of continually asking myself, “What am I doing?” And not immediately judging the result, obviously that doesn’t always work in practicing.

Art of Questioning (1 reference)

- When he practices, he will attempt to apply the concept of doing a process as opposed to just trying to play the piece through as nicely as possible. He will continually think of this process before and during the entire practice session. This process involves mainly thinking about the head in relation to the body. Also, of continually asking oneself, “What am I doing?” and not immediately judging the result.

Breath Use (0 references)

Critical Moment (2 references)

- I noticed just now in a piece I was practicing – in a piece where I shift all the way up to a high note – so high that it’s outside where I’m used to playing, and where I have a very clear structure in my head. And it’s always a bit of a luck sort of thing, and I went up, it was wrong, went up, it was wrong again and then I very, very consciously, just as I was going up, thought of the poise of the head and twice in a row it was just bang in tune. And I didn’t think, I’m going to play this D in tune now. I just purely thought of the head.

- Yet, he believes it is possible while practicing, to consciously not think in that way. He also recognizes that one must continuously practice these concepts and that they are not easy, and that this was shown in many different ways during the workshop.

General/Basic Principles (5 references)

- For him the concept of doing a process and not looking for a result was the most important concept. This idea was new to him because up to that point, his motivation for taking Alexander lessons was only to get a better result playing the violin. It is clear to
him now that this way of thinking - looking for a result – is not the way the ITM works; so to try and use the ITM directly to achieve a result just does not go together.

• When he practices, he will attempt to apply the concept of doing a process as opposed to just trying to play the piece through as nicely as possible. He will continually think of this process before and during the entire practice session. This process involves mainly thinking about the head in relation to the body. Also, of continually asking oneself, “What am I doing?” and not immediately judging the result.

• When we experience success, of course we want to repeat it, and he mentioned that another thing he learned on this course was not to go hunting for success. When I asked him if he thought this was possible, he replied, yes and no. He said that of course he will like it when he is playing and something goes well, because that is his goal. Yet, he believes it is possible while practicing, to consciously not think in that way. He also recognizes that one must continuously practice these concepts and that they are not easy, and that this was shown in many different ways during the workshop.

• He realizes this is one also one of the main points of the ITM – it is what you do and study for yourself combined with input and lessons from a teacher that will bring about the most success.

• Yet, he believes it is possible while practicing, to consciously not think in that way. He also recognizes that one must continuously practice these concepts and that they are not easy, and that this was shown in many different ways during the workshop.

*Group Teaching* (0 references)

*Hands-on Technique* (0 references)

*Interactive* (0 references)

*Lengthening the Spine/Flexibility* (0 references)

*Mastery* (2 references)

• When he practices, he will attempt to apply the concept of doing a process as opposed to just trying to play the piece through as nicely as possible. He will continually think of this process before and during the entire practice session. This process involves mainly thinking about the head in relation to the body. Also, of continually asking oneself, “What am I doing?” and not immediately judging the result.

• Yet, he believes it is possible while practicing, to consciously not think in that way. He also recognizes that one must continuously practice these concepts and that they are not easy, and that this was shown in many different ways during the workshop.

*Mental Processes/Thinking* (1 reference)
• When we experience success, of course we want to repeat it, and he mentioned that another thing he learned on this course was not to go hunting for success. When I asked him if he thought this was possible, he replied, yes and no. He said that of course he will like it when he is playing and something goes well, because that is his goal. Yet, he believes it is possible while practicing, to consciously not think in that way. He also recognizes that one must continuously practice these concepts and that they are not easy, and that this was shown in many different ways during the workshop.

*Natural System* (0 references)

*Original Sources* (0 references)

*Responsibility of the Student* (1 reference)
  • I think that’s also one of the whole points, that it’s both what you study for yourself and the lessons. That’s the interactive part of it.

*Self-Awareness/Awareness* (2 references)
  • When he practices, he will attempt to apply the concept of doing a process as opposed to just trying to play the piece through as nicely as possible. He will continually think of this process before and during the entire practice session. This process involves mainly thinking about the head in relation to the body. Also, of continually asking oneself, “What am I doing?” and not immediately judging the result.
  • Yet, he believes it is possible while practicing, to consciously not think in that way. He also recognizes that one must continuously practice these concepts and that they are not easy, and that this was shown in many different ways during the workshop.

*Table Work* (0 references)

*Use of Mirrors* (0 references)

Practitioner F

*Application of ITM in Lessons* (3 references)
  • He tries to guide his students through their studies in such a way that they have to discover answers for themselves. He believes the most important job as a teacher is to make yourself unnecessary. When the student can solve their own problems, then the teacher becomes unnecessary. This is a big picture way of looking at it, but the same idea can be applied at every small step along the way as well. That is his aim in teaching – to make the student responsible and able to solve each progressive step with less and less guidance. Through this process they gain more confidence, knowledge and understanding.
• That is his aim in teaching, to make the student responsible and able to solve each progressive step with less and less guidance.

• As Alexander says, we want to be told what to do, we want things to feel the way we think it should feel and then we are happy. I asked him if it was really possible to refrain from correcting a fault, mistake, or bad habit in a lesson. He called this a quick fix, and said that if something is going wrong, there must be some lack of knowledge, or some belief which is getting in the way of success. Giving a quick trick or some information which does not include the big picture, may work for a moment, but will have the students coming back in the next moment for the next trick, or bit of information. This makes the student reliant on the teacher and that is the opposite of what he wants to achieve.

Art of Questioning (2 references)
• I asked Practitioner F how he reacts in lessons when he notices something that needs correcting. The approach he uses more than anything else is to ask questions.

• He wants to encourage students to go through certain questions in their head when they play on their own. This forces them to listen to themselves and analyze what they did to produce that particular sound. If it is a nice sound - great, but it if is not, then they can go through their own process to solve the problem. He tries to go through these series of questions to enable them to ask the same questions when they are on their own. Even if it would seem easier or quicker to say, “just move your arm a little bit more to the right”, for example, he would not do this. He is looking for how they are moving and what will help them the most, as a next step. Some people sit at the cello and it looks nice, others bring with them millions of ideas and this is a different student to teach. Using the ITM principles, allow him to best address the needs of the individual student.

Breath Use (0 references)

Critical Moment (0 references)

General/Basic Principles (7 references)
• Weed’s explanation of what happened made the experience even more powerful; explaining that he did not give him anything, but rather helped him stop the habits he did himself, which got in the way of his playing.

• In his few encounters with other approaches, the thing he noticed was that you were told what exercises to do and how to do them; and were told how it should make you feel. He found that this did not appeal to the reasoning process. He claims that every ITM lesson appeals to the reasoning process. The other lessons did not encourage self-responsibility.

• That the principles and belief system learned in the training course and expanded upon in the trainer’s course, underlie everything in the ITM. No one actually tells you how to teach; you learn the principles, which become the foundation, but you do not get a recipe for teaching.
• He wants to encourage students to go through certain questions in their head when they play on their own. This forces them to listen to themselves and analyze what they did to produce that particular sound. If it is a nice sound - great, but if it is not, then they can go through their own process to solve the problem. He tries to go through these series of questions to enable them to ask the same questions when they are on their own. Even if it would seem easier or quicker to say, “Just move your arm a little bit more to the right,” for example, he would not do this. He is looking for how they are moving and what will help them the most, as a next step. Some people sit at the cello and it looks nice, others bring with them millions of ideas and this is a different student to teach. Using the ITM principles, allow him to best address the needs of the individual student.

• He strives to teach in groups or two or more. In a group situation you can get reactions, perspectives, and discussions which cannot take place in a one-on-one situation.

• Practitioner F responded that he uses his hands very little, or not at all. He made clear that most of the Alexander work can be done verbally. Using the hands without before explaining concepts and ideas, does not end up being very helpful.

• Using the ITM principles, allows him to best address the needs of the individual student.

Group Teaching (3 references)
• I do (teach individuals) but only for one reason. Because if I can’t find 2 people to come together at the same time, I teach individually. Every other choice would be to teach at least in groups of 2, plus more.

• There’s a ping pong if there’s a group – which doesn’t happen in a one on one situation.

• In a group situation you can get reactions, perspectives, and discussions which cannot take place in a one-on-one situation.

Hands-on Techniques (1 reference)
• In response to my question about the use of hands in a music lesson, Practitioner F responded that he uses his hands very little, or not at all. He made clear that most of the Alexander work can be done verbally. Using the hands without before explaining concepts and ideas, does not end up being very helpful. The hands are used to enhance what you do with your words. It is a very useful tool that can really bring the idea home. If both hands and words can come together like a piece of art, then many things can make sense.

Interactive (0 references)

Lengthening the Spine/Flexibility (0 references)

Mastery (0 references)

Mental Processes/Thinking (2 references)
• As Alexander says, we want to be told what to do, we want things to feel the way we think it should feel, and then we are happy. I asked him if it was possible to refrain from correcting a fault, mistake, or bad habit in a lesson.

• In his few encounters with other approaches, the thing he noticed was that you were told what exercises to do and how to do them; and were told how it should make you feel. He found that this did not appeal to the reasoning process. He claims that every ITM lesson appeals to the reasoning process. The other lessons did not encourage self-responsibility.

Natural System (0 references)

Original Sources (0 references)

Responsibility of the Student (7 references)
• Because what I find a very good idea, to describe it very quickly, is the question “what’s the most important job as a teacher.” The funny answer is to make yourself überflüssig, I don’t know the English word. (unnecessary)

• So that’s what I’m trying to do in teaching. Make them responsible and able to solve this step with less and less and less guidance. And through that they gain more and more, I would say confidence and knowledge, and understanding.

• I just think you give a student a different foundation when the student sees that they are not reliant on the teacher and the teacher needing to help and whatever but there was a process that leads the student toward knowing, “I can do this.”

• If something’s going wrong, there must be some lack of knowledge or some idea or some belief which is not working, and if that stays the same and you just give a little bit of a trick and bit of information – that’s more neutral – information which doesn’t include, let’s call it the big picture of what’s going on, or the whole picture of that part at least – then the student needs to come back at the next moment for the next bit of information/trick, or whatever. And that makes them reliant on you, and that’s the opposite of what I want as a teacher.

• I always tell my students, “You know if you manage to do this step and the next step, and enough steps, you can manage on your own, and there are less and less things where I can help you, that’s the moment where you need to leave me as a teacher.”

• One encounter was you were doing exercises, you were told to do that, you were told to do this and told to feel this – in a group and in individual context – and all of it didn’t really appeal to reasoning processes.

• He claims that every ITM lesson appeals to the reasoning process. The other lessons did not encourage self-responsibility.

Self-Awareness/Awareness (0 references)
Table Work (0 references)

Use of Mirrors (0 references)

Part 3: Main Interview Concepts, Tallied by Frequency of Codeword/Categories

Application of ITM in Lessons (19 references)
A: He claimed his body did change, which enabled his sound to improve, but that it was not a conscious change and it only changed as a result of applying the Alexander Technique principles.

A: I wasn’t repositioning myself intentionally. The repositioning came as a result of the refined mentality that comes from the instruction.

A: I’m sure you’ve experienced with students that as the AT moments accumulate one is able to guide the student to more specific recognition/awareness of the change in themselves, which then enables one to further guide them to learn more of how to guide themselves.

B: On my training course from 1999-2003 there were several teachers on there. Some were in mainstream education, some were music teachers, general music teachers to kids, some were specialist teachers. And a very common question they had was, how can I continue to do what I do with what I now know. How can I bring those together? And, they each had to find their own answer to that. But what the training course gave them was the ability to critically examine what they were doing in their day job. And to revise what they did and how they did it. And that was a journey they each had to make on their own. It’s not one I’ve had to face because I don’t have that specialist teaching combining two things.

B: This prompted me to ask him how he would teach someone in a lesson what he believes would be an efficient way to breathe. His response was, “I hear you’re looking for that. Does it sound like an ITM teacher to coach someone in how to do something?” As frustrating as it was, I did know enough about the ITM to admit that no, it did not sound like something an ITM teacher would do. He reiterated what I already knew, which is that the work of the ITM is to get people to change their thinking; to let their old ideas go.

B: Most other approaches believe that the work done with the hands is the most important tool in teaching the Alexander Technique. In the ITM, they believe that the hands are the least important tool in teaching. He goes on to explain that the hands are used as often as is appropriate in a lesson, but they are used only to support the concept of helping a student change their thinking.
C: Practitioner C teaches Alexander Technique lessons and voice lessons, but she said she does not mix the two. She would never, for example, go up to a singing student and start fiddling around with their neck; however, she may recommend that they come to an Alexander class. Once they have had some experience with the AT and she sees an issue, she may ask, “I see something, is it ok if I put my hands on you?” In this way she uses the AT within the voice lesson. She admits that she is still experimenting on how best to combine the two worlds. In an AT lesson, it is the student who comes to the teacher with a problem, question, or issue about something they want to improve. But in a voice lesson scenario, it is her that notices something that could be improved and therefore takes the initiative to say, “Well, I detect a problem there, it is ok…?” She notes that this is a difference and while laughing, questions if this is even an ITM way of thinking.

C: With these more ‘normal’ students, she teaches singing with the ITM way of communication whereas with the exceptional students she may encourage them to begin AT work. She notes that she uses the ITM way of communication also with her recorder students, and that it generally informs her daily lifestyle. She added that in her work with Donald Weed and the ITM, she has learned more about pedagogy, communication, and dealing with people, than in all her high school and university courses.

C: She would give a specific direction to correct a bad habit that was noticed and then she would turn to using the ITM way of communication by asking, “What did you notice? Was it the same or different? Was there one part of the sound which perhaps improved?”

D: What I asked her what the benefits were of combining the ITM with vocal instruction she replied that the biggest benefit is that her experience as an Alexander Teacher has trained her eyes to see when there are interferences while singing. Then she has the tools to help the student from an Alexander standpoint. This happens through asking questions. Students always want to get it right. Trying to be good and get it right usually means involving more muscle work than is necessary. Just this realization alone; that a student is doing too much, can make an enormous difference.

D: To always be looking for excess effort is another skill that is emphasized.

D: When working with a student, there is always something to look for and determine if you see some excess tension or movements that are not necessary to sing.

D: Her training has given her the tools to help the student from an Alexander standpoint. One of these tools is asking questions. Students always want to get it right. Trying to be good and get it right usually means involving more muscle work than is necessary. Just this realization alone, that a student is doing too much, can make an enormous difference.

E: I think that’s also one of the whole points, that it’s both what you study for yourself and the lessons. That’s the interactive part of it.

E: By far the concept of a process and not of looking for a result. That’s also something that’s new in as much that until now, it’s only been for a result on the violin, if I’m
honest. And now I find, it was just very clearly shown that that way of thinking, for a result, is not the way ITM works.

E: Yeah, the process of thinking of the head in relation to the body. The process of continually asking myself, “What am I doing?” And not immediately judging the result, obviously that doesn’t always work in practicing.

F: He tries to guide his students through their studies in such a way that they have to discover answers for themselves. He believes the most important job as a teacher is to make yourself unnecessary. When the student can solve their own problems, then the teacher becomes unnecessary. This is a big picture way of looking at it, but the same idea can be applied at every small step along the way as well.

F: As Alexander says, we want to be told what to do, we want things to feel the way we think it should feel and then we are happy. I asked him if it was really possible to refrain from correcting a fault, mistake, or bad habit in a lesson. He called this a quick fix, and said that if something is going wrong, there must be some lack of knowledge, or some belief which is getting in the way of success. Giving a quick trick or some information which does not include the big picture, may work for a moment, but will have the students coming back in the next moment for the next trick, or bit of information. This makes the student reliant on the teacher and that is the opposite of what he wants to achieve.

F: That is his aim in teaching, to make the student responsible and able to solve each progressive step with less and less guidance.

Art of Questioning (8 references)

B: He found a primary difference to be that the ITM is interactive. One of the core teaching tools of the ITM is to ask questions. In other programs, questions are not only typically not encouraged but may even be actively discouraged.

C: She would give a specific direction to correct a bad habit that was noticed and then she would turn to using the ITM way of communication by asking, “What did you notice? Was it the same or different? Was there one part of the sound which perhaps improved?” As for using hands-on techniques in a voice lessons, she would only do that with singers who have had Alexander Technique lessons.

C: If she saw a singer with an issue while singing; for example, perhaps they are lifting up their chin and face to sing a high note and pulling the head back, then she would try to address it first by asking questions. “Did you notice what you were doing with your head in relation to your body while starting to sing?” Then she may ask them to touch their own necks while singing the same phrase to see if they can notice anything themselves.

D: Her training has given her the tools to help the student from an Alexander standpoint. One of these tools is asking questions. Students always want to get it right. Trying to be
good and get it right usually means involving more muscle work than is necessary. Just this realization alone, that a student is doing too much, can make an enormous difference.

D: And it is not about learning to create a new movement; but a getting out of the way, so the natural movements are exposed. When this flow happens and you feel it, it feels very strange. When she sees a student struggle with their breathing over and over, she may touch them at the point of conflict that she notices and with her hand ask, “Could this be different, could you relax this muscle?”

E: when he practices, he will attempt to apply the concept of doing a process as opposed to just trying to play the piece through as nicely as possible. He will continually think of this process before and during the entire practice session. This process involves mainly thinking about the head in relation to the body. Also, of continually asking oneself, “What am I doing?” and not immediately judging the result.

F: I asked Practitioner F how he reacts in lessons when he notices something that needs correcting. The approach he uses more than anything else is to ask questions.

F: He wants to encourage students to go through certain questions in their head when they play on their own. This forces them to listen to themselves and analyze what they did to produce that particular sound. If it is a nice sound - great, but if it is not, then they can go through their own process to solve the problem. He tries to go through these series of questions to enable them to ask the same questions when they are on their own. Even if it would seem easier or quicker to say, “Just move your arm a little bit more to the right,” for example, he would not do this. He is looking for how they are moving and what will help them the most, as a next step. Some people sit at the cello and it looks nice, others bring with them millions of ideas and this is a different student to teach. Using the ITM principles, allow him to best address the needs of the individual student.

**Breath Use (5 references)**

A: Practitioner A stated that he found that isolating or concentrating on breath control is often counter-productive, as you are then separating breath management from the rest of the body.

B: He recounts one experience of teaching a professional classical singer who was heavily pregnant. Her pregnancy challenged her beliefs of what she thought she needed to do in order to breathe. Once they addressed those issues, it turned out that it was only her perception and ideas that she was imposing on herself that were actually limiting her breathing, not the fact that she was heavily pregnant. Through this experience and many others, it became clear to him that there are a lot of contradictory ideas circulating about breathing. And that the way many people explain to him how they have been taught to breathe is not anatomically possible.

B: This prompted me to ask him how he would teach someone in a lesson what he believes would be an efficient way to breathe. His response was, “I hear you’re looking for that. Does it sound like an ITM teacher to coach someone in how to do something?”
As frustrating as it was, I did know enough about the ITM to admit that no, it did not sound like something an ITM teacher would do. He reiterated what I already knew, which is that the work of the ITM is to get people to change their thinking; to let their old ideas go.

D: Her response was that once you stop doing the unnecessary muscle work, the breathing will do itself. You have to experience it for yourself by having an experience in a lesson, or perhaps practicing on your own, to discover what it feels like to breathe freely.

D: And it is not about learning to create a new movement; but a getting out of the way, so the natural movements are exposed. When this flow happens and you feel it, it feels very strange. When she sees a student struggle with their breathing over and over, she may touch them at the point of conflict that she notices and with her hand ask, “Could this be different, could you relax this muscle?”

Critical Moment (3 references)
A: I wasn’t repositioning myself intentionally. The repositioning came as a result of the refined mentality that comes from the instruction.

E: I noticed just now in a piece I was practicing – in a piece where I shift all the way up to a very high note – so high that it’s outside where I’m used to playing, and where I have a very clear structure in my head. And it’s always a bit of a luck sort of thing, and I went up, it was wrong, went up, it was wrong again and then I very, very consciously, just as I was going up, thought of the poise of the head and twice in a row it was just bang in tune. And I didn’t think, I’m going to play this D in tune now. I just purely thought of the head.

E: Yet, he believes it is possible while practicing, to consciously not think in that way. He also recognizes that one must continuously practice these concepts and that they are not easy, and that this was shown in many different ways during the workshop.

General/Basic Principles (21 references)
A: He claimed his body did change, which enabled his sound to improve, but that it was not a conscious change and it only changed as a result of applying the Alexander Technique principles.

B: “How do I work with someone who does this?” as though they need to work differently with a dancer from an athlete, or a martial artist, or a singer. If you are working from Alexander’s principles, you do the same process with whatever the student is presenting to you. A quote from Alexander which is, “In the general process, specific defects are eradicated.” So he means that we are always doing general processes. He then explains that John Dewey, an educational philosopher and contemporary of Alexander’s, described the Alexander Technique as bearing the same relationship to education as education bears to all the different disciplines that it is used to teach in. So, in effect, it is a step above and beyond teaching any specific discipline. This is one of the reasons the AT is so hard to market; because it is so general.
D: When asked how the ITM influences her singing teaching, she replied that it is about principles. In her music education, she did not learn about important principles and how to work toward them; and this is what the ITM has provided her with. One learns specific principles, such as the idea that our thinking influences our movement. While singing, it’s important to examine what we are thinking during our vocal production. Another important principle is to learn to be aware of the relationship between the head and the rest of the body. Another is to always be looking for excess effort. When working with a student there is always something to look at and determine if you see some excess tension or movements that you do not need to sing. It is a fascinating process when the students begin to recognize themselves where there is unnecessary effort and can begin to stop it. When this happens, the voice can reveal itself in its’ natural state.

D: And it is not about learning to create a new movement; but a getting out of the way, so the natural movements are exposed. When this flow happens and you feel it, it feels very strange. When she sees a student struggle with their breathing over and over, she may touch them at the point of conflict that she notices and with her hand ask, “Could this be different, could you relax this muscle?”

D: Another important principle is to learn to be aware of the relationship between the head and the rest of the body.

D: To always be looking for excess effort is another skill that is emphasized.

D: When working with a student, there is always something to look for and determine if you see some excess tension or movements that are not necessary to sing.

D: Her training has given her the tools to help the student from an Alexander standpoint. One of these tools is asking questions. Students always want to get it right. Trying to be good and get it right usually means involving more muscle work than is necessary. Just this realization alone, that a student is doing too much, can make an enormous difference.

D: She responded that once you stop doing the unnecessary muscle work, the breathing will do itself. You have to experience it for yourself by having an experience in a lesson, or perhaps practicing on your own, to discover what it feels like to breathe freely.

E: For him the concept of doing a process and not looking for a result was the most important concept. This idea was new to him because up to that point, his motivation for taking Alexander lessons was only to get a better result playing the violin. It is clear to him now that this way of thinking, looking for a result, is not the way the ITM works; so to try and use the ITM directly to achieve a result just does not go together.

E: When he practices, he will attempt to apply the concept of doing a process as opposed to just trying to play the piece through as nicely as possible. He will continually think of this process before and during the entire practice session. This process involves mainly thinking about the head in relation to the body. Also, of continually asking oneself, “What am I doing?” and not immediately judging the result.
E: When we experience success, of course we want to repeat it, and he mentioned that another thing he learned on this course was not to go hunting for success. When I asked him if he thought this was possible, he replied, yes and no. He said that of course he will like it when he is playing and something goes well, because that is his goal. Yet, he believes it is possible while practicing, to consciously not think in that way. He also recognizes that one must continuously practice these concepts and that they are not easy, and that this was shown in many different ways during the workshop.

E: He realizes this is one also one of the main points of the ITM – it is what you do and study for yourself combined with input and lessons from a teacher that will bring about the most success.

E: Yet, he believes it is possible while practicing, to consciously not think in that way. He also recognizes that one must continuously practice these concepts and that they are not easy, and that this was shown in many different ways during the workshop.

F: Weed’s explanation of what happened made the experience even more powerful; explaining that he did not give him anything, but rather helped him stop the habits he did himself, which got in the way of his playing.

F: In his few encounters with other approaches, the thing he noticed was that you were told what exercises to do and how to do them; and were told how it should make you feel. He found that this did not appeal to the reasoning process. He claims that every ITM lesson appeals to the reasoning process. The other lessons did not encourage self-responsibility.

F: That the principles and belief system learned in the training course and expanded upon in the trainer’s course, underlie everything in the ITM. No one actually tells you how to teach; you learn the principles, which become the foundation, but you do not get a recipe for teaching.

F: He strives to teach in groups or two or more. In a group situation you can get reactions, perspectives, and discussions which cannot take place in a one-on-one situation.

F: He wants to encourage students to go through certain questions in their head when they play on their own. This forces them to listen to themselves and analyze what they did to produce that particular sound. If it is a nice sound - great, but if it is not, then they can go through their own process to solve the problem. He tries to go through these series of questions to enable them to ask the same questions when they are on their own. Even if it would seem easier or quicker to say, “just move your arm a little bit more to the right”, for example, he would not do this. He is looking for how they are moving and what will help them the most, as a next step. Some people sit at the cello and it looks nice, others bring with them millions of ideas and this is a different student to teach. Using the ITM principles, allow him to best address the needs of the individual student.
F: Practitioner F responded that he uses his hands very little, or not at all. He made clear that most of the Alexander work can be done verbally. Using the hands without before explaining concepts and ideas, does not end up being very helpful.

F: Using the ITM principles, allows him to best address the needs of the individual student.

**Group Teaching** (4 references)

B: Being a good ITM teacher he said to my partner Kate, bring your partner, bring some friends, let’s make a group. Because part of the ITM pedagogy is that we teach in groups not one to one.

F: I do (teach individuals) but only for one reason. Because if I can’t find 2 people to come together at the same time, I teach individually. Every other choice would be to teach at least in groups of 2, plus more.

F: There’s a ping pong if there’s a group – which doesn’t happen in a one on one situation.

F: In a group situation you can get reactions, perspectives, and discussions which cannot take place in a one-on-one situation.

**Hands-on Techniques** (5 references)

B: Most other approaches believe that the work done with the hands is the most important tool in teaching the Alexander Technique. In the ITM, they believe that the hands are the least important tool in teaching. He goes on to explain that the hands are used as often as is appropriate in a lesson, but they are used only to support the concept of helping a student change their thinking.

C: She would give a specific direction to correct a bad habit that was noticed and then she would turn to using the ITM way of communication by asking, “What did you notice? Was it the same or different? Was there one part of the sound which perhaps improved?” As for using hands-on techniques in a voice lessons, she would only do that with singers who have had Alexander Technique lessons.

C: Practitioner C teaches Alexander Technique lessons and voice lessons, but she said she does not mix the two. She would never, for example, go up to a singing student and start fiddling around with their neck; however, she may recommend that they come to an Alexander class. Once they have had some experience with the AT and she sees an issue, she may ask, “I see something, is it ok if I put my hands on you?” In this way she uses the AT within the voice lesson. She admits that she is still experimenting on how best to combine the two worlds. In an AT lesson, it is the student who comes to the teacher with a problem, question, or issue about something they want to improve. But in a voice lesson scenario, it is her that notices something that could be improved and therefore takes the initiative to say, “Well, I detect a problem there, it is ok…?” She notes that this is a difference and while laughing, questions if this is even an ITM way of thinking.
D: And it is not about learning to create a new movement; but a getting out of the way, so the natural movements are exposed. When this flow happens and you feel it, it feels very strange. When she sees a student struggle with their breathing over and over, she may touch them at the point of conflict that she notices and with her hand ask, “could this be different, could you relax this muscle?”

F: In response to my question about the use of hands in a music lesson, Practitioner F responded that he uses his hands very little, or not at all. He made clear that most of the Alexander work can be done verbally. Using the hands without before explaining concepts and ideas, does not end up being very helpful. The hands are used to enhance what you do with your words. It is a very useful tool that can really bring the idea home. If both hands and words can come together like a piece of art, then many things can make sense.

*Interactive (5 references)*

B: He found a primary difference to be that the ITM is interactive. One of the core teaching tools of the ITM is to ask questions. In other programs, questions are not only typically not encouraged but may even be actively discouraged.

C: She incorporates the ITM very much into her teaching but not necessarily so much of the AT. On the ITM training course, a main issue is how to deal with people, how to communicate with students, how to be precise in using your own words, and how to ask questions. Listening to what the student is saying, and not jumping to conclusions because perhaps they use a word which is understood differently by the teacher, are key. These interactions with the student, which is a crucial part of the ITM, are how she incorporates the ITM in her voice lessons.

C: She would give a specific direction to correct a bad habit that was noticed and then she would turn to using the ITM way of communication by asking, “What did you notice? Was it the same or different? Was there one part of the sound which perhaps improved?” As for using hands-on techniques in a voice lessons, she would only do that with singers who have had Alexander Technique lessons.

C: If she saw a singer with an issue while singing; for example, perhaps they are lifting up their chin and face to sing a high note and pulling the head back, then she would try to address it first by asking questions. “Did you notice what you were doing with your head in relation to your body while starting to sing?” Then she may ask them to touch their own necks while singing the same phrase to see if they can notice anything themselves.

D: She notes that the ITM is special in comparison with other Alexander methods because it is really the *interactive* teaching method. Not only is Weed teaching the Alexander Technique, but he has developed a method of *how* to teach it to people. This kind of teaching that he does, teaches us how to teach any subject at all. It is one thing learning how to apply the Alexander Technique; but then you also learn how to teach it, and how to interact with people.
Lengthening of the Spine/Flexibility (2 references)

D: When I see someone really fixing at a certain place for ever and ever, there comes a point when I say, “so, what about this?” and I touch even the ones that I don’t touch otherwise. Just to create a conflict. “Could it be otherwise?”

D: Another important principle is to learn to be aware of the relationship between the head and the rest of the body.

Mastery (3 references)

A: Practitioner A experiences regularly with his students that as their AT moments accumulate, he is able to guide them to more specific recognition and awareness within themselves, which eventually leads to the student learning how to guide themselves as they develop greater levels of technical mastery.

E: When he practices, he will attempt to apply the concept of doing a process as opposed to just trying to play the piece through as nicely as possible. He will continually think of this process before and during the entire practice session. This process involves mainly thinking about the head in relation to the body. Also, of continually asking oneself, “What am I doing?” and not immediately judging the result.

E: Yet, he believes it is possible while practicing, to consciously not think in that way. He also recognizes that one must continuously practice these concepts and that they are not easy, and that this was shown in many different ways during the workshop.

Mental Processes/Thinking (11 references)

A: The same thing any good Alexander teacher would do – he taught me how to think!

A: He stated that he was not repositioning himself intentionally but that it came as a result of the refined mentality that ensued from the instruction.

B: Most other approaches believe that the work done with the hands is the most important tool in teaching the Alexander Technique. In the ITM, they believe that the hands are the least important tool in teaching. He goes on to explain that the hands are used as often as is appropriate in a lesson, but they are used only to support the concept of helping a student change their thinking.

B: This prompted me to ask him how he would teach someone in a lesson what he believes would be an efficient way to breathe. His response was, “I hear you’re looking for that. Does it sound like an ITM teacher to coach someone in how to do something?” As frustrating as it was, I did know enough about the ITM to admit that no, it did not sound like something an ITM teacher would do. He reiterated what I already knew, which is that the work of the ITM is to get people to change their thinking; to let their old ideas go. A favorite Alexander quote supporting this notion is, “If you stop doing the wrong thing, the right thing does itself.”
B: The wrong thing would be our beliefs or ideas; or following someone’s else’s beliefs or ideas about the way we need to do something. This becomes an imposition. Once we take that away, what occurs naturally is usually very effective. Because of this, he doesn’t have to be a breathing expert, or even have to give any specific instruction to a student in how to breathe, to be able to help them with issues they may be experiencing with breathing, or anything else for that matter. It’s more a case of, get your old beliefs out of the way, and see what happens. And what happens is usually something that we would call wonderful. If you stop doing the old stuff, it allows that natural system to express itself.

B: What the training course gave them was the ability to critically examine what they were doing in their day job, to revise their pedagogical approach to their work, and give them the capacity to examine what they did, how they did it, and how to communicate that to their own students.

B: He recounts one experience of teaching a professional classical singer who was heavily pregnant. Her pregnancy challenged her beliefs of what she thought she needed to do in order to breathe. Once they addressed those issues, it turned out that it was only her perception and ideas that she was imposing on herself that were actually limiting her breathing, not the fact that she was heavily pregnant. Through this experience and many others, it became clear to him that there are a lot of contradictory ideas circulating about breathing. And that the way many people explain to him how they have been taught to breathe is not anatomically possible.

E: When we experience success, of course we want to repeat it, and he mentioned that another thing he learned on this course was not to go hunting for success. When I asked him if he thought this was possible, he replied, yes and no. He said that of course he will like it when he is playing and something goes well, because that is his goal. Yet, he believes it is possible while practicing, to consciously not think in that way. He also recognizes that one must continuously practice these concepts and that they are not easy, and that this was shown in many different ways during the workshop.

F: As Alexander says, we want to be told what to do, we want things to feel the way we think it should feel, and then we are happy. I asked him if it was possible to refrain from correcting a fault, mistake, or bad habit in a lesson.

F: In his few encounters with other approaches, the thing he noticed was that you were told what exercises to do and how to do them; and were told how it should make you feel. He found that this did not appeal to the reasoning process. He claims that every ITM lesson appeals to the reasoning process. The other lessons did not encourage self-responsibility.

*Natural System* (6 references)

B: The wrong thing would be our beliefs or ideas; or following someone’s else’s beliefs or ideas about the way we need to do something. This becomes an imposition. Once we take that away, what occurs naturally is usually very effective. Because of this, he doesn’t
have to be a breathing expert, or even have to give any specific instruction to a student in how to breathe, to be able to help them with issues they may be experiencing with breathing, or anything else for that matter. It’s more a case of, get your old beliefs out of the way, and see what happens. And what happens is usually something that we would call wonderful. If you stop doing the old stuff, it allows that natural system to express itself.

B: Babies do not typically have issues with producing loud volumes or sustaining power, therefore those are not things one would have to train. Those are natural abilities that are there until we educate people out of them. This brought him to mention one of the books they study in the ITM training course, which is called, If You Want to be Rich and Happy, Don’t Go to School by Robert Kiyosaki. This book talks about education as kind of a reverse metamorphosis, where you start with beautiful children and end up with ugly caterpillars.

D: To always be looking for excess effort is another skill that is emphasized.

D: It is a fascinating process when the students begin to recognize themselves where there is unnecessary effort and can begin to stop it.

D: Her training has given her the tools to help the student from an Alexander standpoint. One of these tools is asking questions. Students always want to get it right. Trying to be good and get it right usually means involving more muscle work than is necessary. Just this realization alone, that a student is doing too much, can make an enormous difference.

D: And it is not about learning to create a new movement; but a getting out of the way, so the natural movements are exposed. When this flow happens and you feel it, it feels very strange. When she sees a student struggle with their breathing over and over, she may touch them at the point of conflict that she notices and with her hand ask, “Could this be different, could you relax this muscle?”

Original Sources (1 reference)

B: Another significant difference is that everything ITM students are trained in can be directly traced back to Alexander’s texts. Sometimes they do struggle with his written English, but this concept of struggling is something the students of the ITM are encouraged to do. In struggling with Alexander’s written word, the students are forced to come to terms with the concepts that Alexander is writing about.

Responsibility of the Student (10 references)

A: I’m sure you’ve experienced with students that as the AT moments accumulate one is able to guide the student to more specific recognition/awareness of the change in themselves, which then enables one to further guide them to learn more of how to guide themselves.

D: It is a fascinating process when the students begin to recognize themselves where there is unnecessary effort and can begin to stop it.
E: I think that’s also one of the whole points, that it’s both what you study for yourself and the lessons. That’s the interactive part of it.

F: Because what I find a very good idea, to describe it very quickly, is the question “what’s the most important job as a teacher.” The funny answer is to make yourself überflüssig, I don’t know the English word. (unnecessary)

F: So that’s what I’m trying to do in teaching. Make them responsible and able to solve this step with less and less and less guidance. And through that they gain more and more, I would say confidence and knowledge, and understanding.

F: I just think you give a student a different foundation when the student sees that they are not reliant on the teacher and the teacher needing to help and whatever but there was a process that leads the student toward knowing, “I can do this.”

F: If something’s going wrong, there must be some lack of knowledge or some idea or some belief which is not working, and if that stays the same and you just give a little bit of a trick and bit of information – that’s more neutral – information which doesn’t include, let’s call it the big picture of what’s going on, or the whole picture of that part at least – then the student needs to come back at the next moment for the next bit of information/trick, or whatever. And that makes them reliant on you, and that’s the opposite of what I want as a teacher.

F: I always tell my students, “you know if you manage to do this step and the next step, and enough steps, you can manage on your own, and there are less and less things where I can help you, that’s the moment where you need to leave me as a teacher.”

F: One encounter was you were doing exercises, you were told to do that, you were told to feel this – in a group and in individual context – and all of it didn’t really appeal to reasoning processes.

F: He claims that every ITM lesson appeals to the reasoning process. The other lessons did not encourage self-responsibility.

Self-Awareness/Awareness (10 references)

A: Practitioner A experiences regularly with his students that as their AT moments accumulate, he is able to guide them to more specific recognition and awareness within themselves, which eventually leads to the student learning how to guide themselves as they develop greater levels of technical mastery.

A: Differences he noted were that Weed mentions anatomy more frequently in lessons and discussions than in his previous training and that the recognition of one’s self-awareness was more prevalent.
B: What the training course gave them was the ability to critically examine what they were doing in their day job; to revise their pedagogical approach to their work, and the capacity to examine what they did and how they did it.

C: If she saw a singer with an issue while singing; for example, perhaps they are lifting up their chin and face to sing a high note and pulling the head back, then she would try to address it first by asking questions. “Did you notice what you were doing with your head in relation to your body while starting to sing?” Then she may ask them to touch their own necks while singing the same phrase to see if they can notice anything themselves.

D: It is a fascinating process when the students begin to recognize themselves where there is unnecessary effort and can begin to stop it.

D: Her training has given her the tools to help the student from an Alexander standpoint. One of these tools is asking questions. Students always want to get it right. Trying to be good and get it right usually means involving more muscle work than is necessary. Just this realization alone, that a student is doing too much, can make an enormous difference.

D: She responded that once you stop doing the unnecessary muscle work, the breathing will do itself. You have to experience it for yourself by having an experience in a lesson, or perhaps practicing on your own, to discover what it feels like to breathe freely.

D: Yet, he believes it is possible while practicing, to consciously not think in that way. He also recognizes that one must continuously practice these concepts and that they are not easy, and that this was shown in many different ways during the workshop.

E: When he practices, he will attempt to apply the concept of doing a process as opposed to just trying to play the piece through as nicely as possible. He will continually think of this process before and during the entire practice session. This process involves mainly thinking about the head in relation to the body. Also, of continually asking oneself, “What am I doing?” and not immediately judging the result.

E: Yet, he believes it is possible while practicing, to consciously not think in that way. He also recognizes that one must continuously practice these concepts and that they are not easy, and that this was shown in many different ways during the workshop.

Table Work (1 reference)
C: There I was just walking around and waiting for a lesson and I had a table lesson, and well perhaps it was my fault to say that I am an ITM Alexander teacher, because this teacher could not work with me.

Use of Mirrors (0 references)

Appendix VI

Data Sort for Behavioral Indicators - Significance Indicator Group: No-Yes-No
Section 1:
Codeword/Categories in Significance Indicator Group: No-Yes-No

Application of ITM in Lessons

Art of Questioning

Group Teaching

Interactive

Original Sources

Section 2:
Raw Data Sort of Codeword/Categories in Significance Indicator Group No-Yes-No, by Interview

Application of the ITM in Lessons (Weed: 8 references)

• Teachers are in the position to learn the most. The people who are in the class are in the second-best position to learn the most.

• One of the teachers asked a question and I gave the answer to that question and that set off a light bulb in one of the other teachers.

• So, by working in activity, like we’re going to be doing here, everything is a critical moment, and so it’s building up that discipline in being able to think.

• It’s not something to be filled up and finished but it’s some process by which you can continue to improve.

• Because the teacher is here not to solve problems, and certainly not to fix things. The teacher is here in service to you, to help you learn how to do this for yourself.

• When I’m here and working in an Alexander fashion, I’m more interested in how someone goes about the process of directing themselves in activity than I am about any kind of outcome.

• What we are primarily interested in, in getting a report from a student, is the relative accuracy of the report, where accuracy is defined as the teacher’s impression of what occurred and the student’s impression of what occurred. And the reason why we pursue that, is we have found that when those two things match, students’ progress more quickly.
• I almost don’t care what happens inside the lesson IF while that’s going on, I have the impression the student is now in command of more information by which to further the exploration and carry out that exploration for himself.

*Application of ITM in Lessons* (Practitioners: 21 references)

A: He claimed his body did change, which enabled his sound to improve, but that it was not a conscious change and it only changed as a result of applying the Alexander Technique principles.

A: I wasn’t repositioning myself intentionally. The repositioning came as a result of the refined mentality that comes from the instruction.

A: I’m sure you've experienced with students that as the AT moments accumulate one is able to guide the student to more specific recognition/awareness of the change in themselves, which then enables one to further guide them to learn more of how to guide themselves.

B: On my training course from 1999-2003 there were several teachers on there. Some were in mainstream education, some were music teachers, general music teachers to kids, some were specialist teachers. And a very common question they had was, how can I continue to do what I do with what I now know. How can I bring those together? And, they each had to find their own answer to that. But what the training course gave them was the ability to critically examine what they were doing in their day job. And to revise what they did and how they did it. And that was a journey they each had to make on their own. It’s not one I’ve had to face because I don’t have that specialist teaching combining two things.

B: What the training course gave them was the ability to critically examine what they were doing in their day job, to revise their pedagogical approach to their work, and give them the capacity to examine what they did, how they did it, and how to communicate that to their own students.

B: This prompted me to ask him how he would teach someone in a lesson what he believes would be an efficient way to breathe. His response was, “I hear you’re looking for that. Does it sound like an ITM teacher to coach someone in how to do something?” As frustrating as it was, I did know enough about the ITM to admit that no, it did not sound like something an ITM teacher would do. He reiterated what I already knew, which is that the work of the ITM is to get people to change their thinking; to let their old ideas go.

B: Most other approaches believe that the work done with the hands is the most important tool in teaching the Alexander Technique. In the ITM, they believe that the hands are the least important tool in teaching. He goes on to explain that the hands are used as often as is appropriate in a lesson, but they are used only to support the concept of helping a student change their thinking.
C: Practitioner C teaches Alexander Technique lessons and voice lessons, but she said she does not mix the two. She would never, for example, go up to a singing student and start fiddling around with their neck; however, she may recommend that they come to an Alexander class. Once they have had some experience with the AT and she sees an issue, she may ask, “I see something, is it ok if I put my hands on you?” In this way she uses the AT within the voice lesson. She admits that she is still experimenting on how best to combine the two worlds. In an AT lesson, it is the student who comes to the teacher with a problem, question, or issue about something they want to improve. But in a voice lesson scenario, it is her that notices something that could be improved and therefore takes the initiative to say, “Well, I detect a problem there, it is ok…?” She notes that this is a difference and while laughing, questions if this is even an ITM way of thinking.

C: With these more ‘normal’ students, she teaches singing with the ITM way of communication whereas with the exceptional students she may encourage them to begin AT work.

C: She notes that she uses the ITM way of communication also with her recorder students, and that it generally informs her daily lifestyle. She added that in her work with Donald Weed and the ITM, she has learned more about pedagogy, communication, and dealing with people, than in all her high school and university courses.

C: She would give a specific direction to correct a bad habit that was noticed and then she would turn to using the ITM way of communication by asking, “What did you notice? Was it the same or different? Was there one part of the sound which perhaps improved?”

D: What I asked her what the benefits were of combining the ITM with vocal instruction she replied that the biggest benefit is that her experience as an Alexander Teacher has trained her eyes to see when there are interferences while singing. Then she has the tools to help the student from an Alexander standpoint. This happens through asking questions. Students always want to get it right. Trying to be good and get it right usually means involving more muscle work than is necessary. Just this realization alone; that a student is doing too much, can make an enormous difference.

D: To always be looking for excess effort is another skill that is emphasized.

D: When working with a student, there is always something to look for and determine if you see some excess tension or movements that are not necessary to sing.

D: Her training has given her the tools to help the student from an Alexander standpoint. One of these tools is asking questions. Students always want to get it right. Trying to be good and get it right usually means involving more muscle work than is necessary. Just this realization alone, that a student is doing too much, can make an enormous difference.

E: I think that’s also one of the whole points, that it’s both what you study for yourself and the lessons. That’s the interactive part of it.
E: By far the concept of a process and not of looking for a result. That’s also something that’s new in as much that until now, it’s only been for a result on the violin, if I’m honest. And now I find, it was just very clearly shown that that way of thinking, for a result, is not the way ITM works.

E: Yeah, the process of thinking of the head in relation to the body. The process of continually asking myself, “What am I doing?” And not immediately judging the result, obviously that doesn’t always work in practicing.

F: He tries to guide his students through their studies in such a way that they have to discover answers for themselves. He believes the most important job as a teacher is to make yourself unnecessary. When the student can solve their own problems, then the teacher becomes unnecessary. This is a big picture way of looking at it, but the same idea can be applied at every small step along the way as well.

F: As Alexander says, we want to be told what to do, we want things to feel the way we think it should feel and then we are happy. I asked him if it was really possible to refrain from correcting a fault, mistake, or bad habit in a lesson. He called this a quick fix, and said that if something is going wrong, there must be some lack of knowledge, or some belief which is getting in the way of success. Giving a quick trick or some information which does not include the big picture, may work for a moment, but will have the students coming back in the next moment for the next trick, or bit of information. This makes the student reliant on the teacher and that is the opposite of what he wants to achieve.

F: That is his aim in teaching – to make the student responsible and able to solve each progressive step with less and less guidance. Through this process they gain more confidence, knowledge and understanding.

Art of Questioning (Weed: 4 references)

- These are some of the reasons why he chooses to teach in groups. When one of the teachers asks a question, the answer Don gives sets off a lightbulb in one of the other teachers. The answer to one student made something click for the other. The wealth of possibilities that happens in a group is why he would prefer to give classes and why he mostly teaches in a class setting.

- Earlier this morning we had several examples where I would ask someone the answer to a question and they would go, “uuuuhhhh,” or some other intelligent response, and then I would ask the question again and they would still not be able even to figure out what the question is and the rest of the room is going, “C’mon, c’mon, this is the answer!” because they weren’t tied into the work of that moment – but they could see it, and they could relate to it.

- And then it is up to the student to do the work, and the experimentation, and the process to learn what it really means for them.
What we are primarily interested in, in getting a report from a student, is the relative accuracy of the report.

**Art of Questioning (Practitioners: 8 References)**

B: He found a primary difference to be that the ITM is interactive. One of the core teaching tools of the ITM is to ask questions. In other programs, questions are not only typically not encouraged but may even be actively discouraged.

C: She would give a specific direction to correct a bad habit that was noticed and then she would turn to using the ITM way of communication by asking, “What did you notice? Was it the same or different? Was there one part of the sound which perhaps improved?” As for using hands-on techniques in a voice lessons, she would only do that with singers who have had Alexander Technique lessons.

C: If she saw a singer with an issue while singing; for example, perhaps they are lifting up their chin and face to sing a high note and pulling the head back, then she would try to address it first by asking questions. “Did you notice what you were doing with your head in relation to your body while starting to sing?” Then she may ask them to touch their own necks while singing the same phrase to see if they can notice anything themselves.

D: Her training has given her the tools to help the student from an Alexander standpoint. One of these tools is asking questions. Students always want to get it right. Trying to be good and get it right usually means involving more muscle work than is necessary. Just this realization alone, that a student is doing too much, can make an enormous difference.

D: And it is not about learning to create a new movement; but a getting out of the way, so the natural movements are exposed. When this flow happens and you feel it, it feels very strange. When she sees a student struggle with their breathing over and over, she may touch them at the point of conflict that she notices and with her hand ask, “Could this be different, could you relax this muscle?”

E: When he practices, he will attempt to apply the concept of doing a process as opposed to just trying to play the piece through as nicely as possible. He will continually think of this process before and during the entire practice session. This process involves mainly thinking about the head in relation to the body. Also, of continually asking oneself, “What am I doing?” and not immediately judging the result.

F: I asked Practitioner F how he reacts in lessons when he notices something that needs correcting. The approach he uses more than anything else is to ask questions.

F: He wants to encourage students to go through certain questions in their head when they play on their own. This forces them to listen to themselves and analyze what they did to produce that particular sound. If it is a nice sound - great, but if it is not, then they can go through their own process to solve the problem. He tries to go through these series of questions to enable them to ask the same questions when they are on their own. Even if it would seem easier or quicker to say, “Just move your arm a little bit more to the right,”
for example, he would not do this. He is looking for how they are moving and what will help them the most, as a next step. Some people sit at the cello and it looks nice, others bring with them millions of ideas and this is a different student to teach. Using the ITM principles, allow him to best address the needs of the individual student.

**Group Teaching** (Weed: 5 references)

- Teachers are in the position to learn the most – the people who are in the class are in the second best position to learn the most. The reason for that is, they have not only a perspective, but they are not involved in the work of the lesson.

- The person who is in the worst position to learn something is the person in the chair.

- One of the teachers asked a question and I gave the answer to that question and that set off a light bulb in one of the other teachers. My answer to him, made something click for her. And we could have searched for weeks and never figured that out.

- The wealth of possibilities that happens in a group, is one of the many reasons why I would prefer to give classes and why I mostly teach in them.

- Anytime you get a number of intelligent people together who want to help themselves and others, they are going to think of things in terms of what they know and what they have experienced. So I think it’s a healthy thing when there’s a lot of difference of opinion in a profession.

**Group Teaching** (Practitioners: 4 References)

B: Being a good ITM teacher he said to my partner Kate, bring your partner, bring some friends, let’s make a group. Because part of the ITM pedagogy is that we teach in groups not one to one.

F: I do (teach individuals) but only for one reason. Because if I can’t find 2 people to come together at the same time, I teach individually. Every other choice would be to teach at least in groups of 2, plus more.

F: There’s a ping pong if there’s a group – which doesn’t happen in a one on one situation.

F: In a group situation you can get reactions, perspectives, and discussions which cannot take place in a one-on-one situation.

**Interactive** (Weed: 9 references)

- One of the things that we constantly talk about is our idea is to take the class through the student, what the students wants and needs there to be.

- The people who are in the class are in the second-best position to learn the most.
• Then I would ask the question again and they would still not be able even to figure out what the question is and the rest of the room is going, “C’mon, c’mon, this is the answer!” because they weren’t tied into the work of that moment— but they could see it, and they could relate to it.

• Anytime you get a number of intelligent people together who want to help themselves and others, they are going to think of things in terms of what they know and what they have experienced.

• So, by working in activity, like we’re going to be doing here, everything is a critical moment, and so it’s building up that discipline in being able to think.

• This opportunity to have this experience, this experiment and as it turns out, this discovery—that’s unique and that’s amazing. And that’s something that all of us, including you and me can share and respond to.

• We don’t use mirrors here but what do we often use? We use each other. Much more reliable kinds of sources.

• What we are primarily interested in, in getting a report from a student, is the relative accuracy of the report, where accuracy is defined as the teacher’s impression of what occurred and the student’s impression of what occurred. And the reason why we pursue that, is we have found that when those two things match, students’ progress more quickly.

• Now I almost don’t care what happens inside the lesson IF while that’s going on, I have the impression the student is now in command of more information by which to further the exploration and carry out that exploration for himself.

Interactive (Practitioners: 5 references)

B: He found a primary difference to be that the ITM is interactive. One of the core teaching tools of the ITM is to ask questions. In other programs, questions are not only typically not encouraged but may even be actively discouraged.

C: She incorporates the ITM very much into her teaching but not necessarily so much of the AT. On the ITM training course, a main issue is how to deal with people, how to communicate with students, how to be precise in using your own words, and how to ask questions. Listening to what the student is saying, and not jumping to conclusions because perhaps they use a word which is understood differently by the teacher, are key. These interactions with the student, which is a crucial part of the ITM, are how she incorporates the ITM in her voice lessons.

C: She would give a specific direction to correct a bad habit that was noticed and then she would turn to using the ITM way of communication by asking, “What did you notice? Was it the same or different? Was there one part of the sound which perhaps improved?” As for using hands-on techniques in a voice lessons, she would only do that with singers who have had Alexander Technique lessons.
C: If she saw a singer with an issue while singing; for example, perhaps they are lifting up their chin and face to sing a high note and pulling the head back, then she would try to address it first by asking questions. “Did you notice what you were doing with your head in relation to your body while starting to sing?” Then she may ask them to touch their own necks while singing the same phrase to see if they can notice anything themselves.

D: She notes that the ITM is special in comparison with other Alexander methods because it is really the interactive teaching method. Not only is Weed teaching the Alexander Technique, but he has developed a method of how to teach it to people. This kind of teaching that he does, teaches us how to teach any subject at all. It is one thing learning how to apply the Alexander Technique; but then you also learn how to teach it, and how to interact with people.

Original Sources (Weed: 17 references)

- In Frank Pierce Jones’ book, which is now called Freedom to Change, he says that Alexander never did lying down work unless the student was completely bedridden.

- You start to see more of Alexander’s first chapter of his third book, and he talks about how he did things and how he learned things, he comes at the end of that chapter to a very important issue, and that’s the issue of what he calls a critical moment.

- What he built up, was understanding that he needed to change the way he thought, in order to change the way he moved.

- I worked with Marjorie actively for 22-23 years and I saw her briefly before she died, I was very happy that I could get there in time.

- Alexander did indeed work with mirrors and in his autobiographical material he makes it very clear that if he had not worked with mirrors and not had mirrors to work with, that he wouldn’t have been able to do what he did.

- There were not enough options for students back then, you just took endless private lessons, or you joined a teacher training course. Those were your options. And neither of those options, as far as I could tell, had much to do with what Alexander wrote.

- Like Patrick McDonald, a very famous Alexander teacher, used to say about the difference of opinion in all the different schools, he used to say that what you must do is what you think is best, and hope you’re not very far wrong.

- There’s been some shifting of course material and of course in 1976, when Frank Jones published his book, suddenly the course expanded, and it changed its focus.

- For the next ten years, I will read only the material in my basic principles course, and in 10 years, I’ll tell you what I learned from that and we’ll look to see if there’s anything in Alexander’s books that I missed. My claim was, from these principles that you can extrapolate everything else.
• And what he (Alexander) built up, was understanding that he needed to change the way he thought, in order to change the way he moved. To stop doing the thing he didn’t want, and to start doing more of what he did want.

• So, by working in activity, like we’re going to be doing here, everything is a critical moment, and so it’s building up that discipline in being able to think.

• But, as many times as you have one of these wonderful experiences, it does not relieve you of the responsibility to learn to do the work for yourself. Because the teacher is here not to solve problems, and certainly not to fix things. The teacher is here in service to you, to help you learn how to do this for yourself.

• My experience and my opinion is that when people start looking in the mirrors, they stop looking at themselves. So, my experiences with almost everyone I have worked with, is that the detachment from themselves negates or diminishes the value of what they might see in the mirror.

• I’m more interested in how someone goes about the process of directing themselves in activity than I am about any kind of outcome.

• Perhaps more than occasionally, people will comment that their voice has changed or that they sense that their voice has changed.

• What we are primarily interested in, in getting a report from a student, is the relative accuracy of the report, where accuracy is defined as the teacher’s impression of what occurred and the student’s impression of what occurred. And the reason why we pursue that, is we have found that when those two things match, students’ progress more quickly.

• Now I almost don’t care what happens inside the lesson IF while that’s going on, I have the impression the student is now in command of more information by which to further the exploration and carry out that exploration for himself.

Original Sources (Practitioners: 1 reference)
B: Another significant difference is that everything ITM students are trained in can be directly traced back to Alexander’s texts. Sometimes they do struggle with his written English, but this concept of struggling is something the students of the ITM are encouraged to do. In struggling with Alexander’s written word, the students are forced to come to terms with the concepts that Alexander is writing about.
Section 3:  
Raw Data Sort of Codeword/Categories in Significance Indicator Group No-Yes-No, 
by Behavior

Green highlights indicate actionable behaviors.

Application of the ITM in Lessons (Weed: 8 references)
• Teachers are in the position to learn the most. The people who are in the class are in the second-best position to learn the most.

• One of the teachers asked a question and I gave the answer to that question and that set off a light bulb in one of the other teachers.

• So, by working in activity, like we’re going to be doing here, everything is a critical moment, and so it’s building up that discipline in being able to think.

• It’s not something to be filled up and finished but it’s some process by which you can continue to improve.

• Because the teacher is here not to solve problems, and certainly not to fix things. The teacher is here in service to you, to help you learn how to do this for yourself.

• When I’m here and working in an Alexander fashion, I’m more interested in how someone goes about the process of directing themselves in activity than I am about any kind of outcome.

• What we are primarily interested in, in getting a report from a student, is the relative accuracy of the report, where accuracy is defined as the teacher’s impression of what occurred and the student’s impression of what occurred. And the reason why we pursue that, is we have found that when those two things match, students’ progress more quickly.

• I almost don’t care what happens inside the lesson IF while that’s going on, I have the impression the student is now in command of more information by which to further the exploration and carry out that exploration for himself.

Application of ITM in Lessons (Practitioners: 21 references)
A: He claimed his body did change, which enabled his sound to improve, but that it was not a conscious change and it only changed as a result of applying the Alexander Technique principles.

A: I wasn’t repositioning myself intentionally. The repositioning came as a result of the refined mentality that comes from the instruction.

A: I’m sure you’ve experienced with students that as the AT moments accumulate one is able to guide the student to more specific recognition/awareness of the change in
themselves, which then enables one to further guide them to learn more of how to guide themselves.

B: On my training course from 1999-2003 there were several teachers on there. Some were in mainstream education, some were music teachers, general music teachers to kids, some were specialist teachers. And a very common question they had was, how can I continue to do what I do with what I now know. How can I bring those together? And, they each had to find their own answer to that. But what the training course gave them was the ability to critically examine what they were doing in their day job. And to revise what they did and how they did it. And that was a journey they each had to make on their own. It’s not one I’ve had to face because I don’t have that specialist teaching combining two things.

B: What the training course gave them was the ability to critically examine what they were doing in their day job, to revise their pedagogical approach to their work, and give them the capacity to examine what they did, how they did it, and how to communicate that to their own students.

B: This prompted me to ask him how he would teach someone in a lesson what he believes would be an efficient way to breathe. His response was, “I hear you’re looking for that. Does it sound like an ITM teacher to coach someone in how to do something?” As frustrating as it was, I did know enough about the ITM to admit that no, it did not sound like something an ITM teacher would do. He reiterated what I already knew, which is that the work of the ITM is to get people to change their thinking; to let their old ideas go.

B: Most other approaches believe that the work done with the hands is the most important tool in teaching the Alexander Technique. In the ITM, they believe that the hands are the least important tool in teaching. He goes on to explain that the hands are used as often as is appropriate in a lesson, but they are used only to support the concept of helping a student change their thinking.

C: Practitioner C teaches Alexander Technique lessons and voice lessons, but she said she does not mix the two. She would never, for example, go up to a singing student and start fiddling around with their neck; however, she may recommend that they come to an Alexander class. Once they have had some experience with the AT and she sees an issue, she may ask, “I see something, is it ok if I put my hands on you?” In this way she uses the AT within the voice lesson. She admits that she is still experimenting on how best to combine the two worlds. In an AT lesson, it is the student who comes to the teacher with a problem, question, or issue about something they want to improve. But in a voice lesson scenario, it is her that notices something that could be improved and therefore takes the initiative to say, “Well, I detect a problem there, it is ok…?” She notes that this is a difference and while laughing, questions if this is even an ITM way of thinking.
C: With these more ‘normal’ students, she teaches singing with the ITM way of communication whereas with the exceptional students she may encourage them to begin AT work.

C: She notes that she uses the ITM way of communication also with her recorder students, and that it generally informs her daily lifestyle. She added that in her work with Donald Weed and the ITM, she has learned more about pedagogy, communication, and dealing with people, than in all her high school and university courses.

C: She would give a specific direction to correct a bad habit that was noticed and then she would turn to using the ITM way of communication by asking, “What did you notice? Was it the same or different? Was there one part of the sound which perhaps improved?”

D: What I asked her what the benefits were of combining the ITM with vocal instruction she replied that the biggest benefit is that her experience as an Alexander Teacher has trained her eyes to see when there are interferences while singing. Then she has the tools to help the student from an Alexander standpoint. This happens through asking questions. Students always want to get it right. Trying to be good and get it right usually means involving more muscle work than is necessary. Just this realization alone, that a student is doing too much, can make an enormous difference.

D: To always be looking for excess effort is another skill that is emphasized.

D: When working with a student, there is always something to look for and determine if you see some excess tension or movements that are not necessary to sing.

D: Her training has given her the tools to help the student from an Alexander standpoint. One of these tools is asking questions. Students always want to get it right. Trying to be good and get it right usually means involving more muscle work than is necessary. Just this realization alone, that a student is doing too much, can make an enormous difference.

E: I think that’s also one of the whole points, that it’s both what you study for yourself and the lessons. That’s the interactive part of it.

E: By far the concept of a process and not of looking for a result. That’s also something that’s new in as much that until now, it’s only been for a result on the violin, if I’m honest. And now I find, it was just very clearly shown that that way of thinking, for a result, is not the way ITM works.

E: Yeah, the process of thinking of the head in relation to the body. The process of continually asking myself, “What am I doing?” And not immediately judging the result, obviously that doesn’t always work in practicing.

F: He tries to guide his students through their studies in such a way that they have to discover answers for themselves. He believes the most important job as a teacher is to make yourself unnecessary. When the student can solve their own problems, then the
teacher becomes unnecessary. This is a big picture way of looking at it, but the same idea can be applied at every small step along the way as well. That is his aim in teaching – to make the student responsible and able to solve each progressive step with less and less guidance. Through this process they gain more confidence, knowledge and understanding.

F: As Alexander says, we want to be told what to do, we want things to feel the way we think it should feel and then we are happy. I asked him if it was really possible to refrain from correcting a fault, mistake, or bad habit in a lesson. He called this a quick fix, and said that if something is going wrong, there must be some lack of knowledge, or some belief which is getting in the way of success. Giving a quick trick or some information which does not include the big picture, may work for a moment, but will have the students coming back in the next moment for the next trick, or bit of information. This makes the student reliant on the teacher and that is the opposite of what he wants to achieve.

F: That is his aim in teaching, to make the student responsible and able to solve each progressive step with less and less guidance.

Art of Questioning (Weed: 4 references)

- These are some of the reasons why he chooses to teach in groups. When one of the teachers asks a question, the answer Don gives sets off a lightbulb in one of the other teachers. The answer to one student made something click for the other. The wealth of possibilities that happens in a group is why he would prefer to give classes and why he mostly teaches in a class setting.

- Earlier this morning we had several examples where I would ask someone the answer to a question and they would go, “uuuuhhhhh,” or some other intelligent response, and then I would ask the question again and they would still not be able even to figure out what the question is and the rest of the room is going, “C’mon, c’mon, this is the answer!” because they weren’t tied into the work of that moment – but they could see it, and they could relate to it.

- And then it is up to the student to do the work, and the experimentation, and the process to learn what it really means for them.

- What we are primarily interested in, in getting a report from a student, is the relative accuracy of the report.

Art of Questioning (Practitioners: 8 references)

B: He found a primary difference to be that the ITM is interactive. One of the core teaching tools of the ITM is to ask questions. In other programs, questions are not only typically not encouraged but may even be actively discouraged.

C: She would give a specific direction to correct a bad habit that was noticed and then she would turn to using the ITM way of communication by asking, “What did you notice? Was it the same or different? Was there one part of the sound which perhaps improved?”
As for using hands-on techniques in a voice lessons, she would only do that with singers who have had Alexander Technique lessons.

C: If she saw a singer with an issue while singing; for example, perhaps they are lifting up their chin and face to sing a high note and pulling the head back, then she would try to address it first by asking questions. “Did you notice what you were doing with your head in relation to your body while starting to sing?” Then she may ask them to touch their own necks while singing the same phrase to see if they can notice anything themselves.

D: Her training has given her the tools to help the student from an Alexander standpoint. One of these tools is asking questions. Students always want to get it right. Trying to be good and get it right usually means involving more muscle work than is necessary. Just this realization alone, that a student is doing too much, can make an enormous difference.

D: And it is not about learning to create a new movement; but a getting out of the way, so the natural movements are exposed. When this flow happens and you feel it, it feels very strange. When she sees a student struggle with their breathing over and over, she may touch them at the point of conflict that she notices and with her hand ask, “Could this be different, could you relax this muscle?”

E: When he practices, he will attempt to apply the concept of doing a process as opposed to just trying to play the piece through as nicely as possible. He will continually think of this process before and during the entire practice session. This process involves mainly thinking about the head in relation to the body. Also, of continually asking oneself, “What am I doing?” and not immediately judging the result.

F: I asked Practitioner F how he reacts in lessons when he notices something that needs correcting. The approach he uses more than anything else is to ask questions.

F: He wants to encourage students to go through certain questions in their head when they play on their own. This forces them to listen to themselves and analyze what they did to produce that particular sound. If it is a nice sound - great, but if it is not, then they can go through their own process to solve the problem. He tries to go through these series of questions to enable them to ask the same questions when they are on their own. Even if it would seem easier or quicker to say, “Just move your arm a little bit more to the right”, for example, he would not do this. He is looking for how they are moving and what will help them the most, as a next step. Some people sit at the cello and it looks nice, others bring with them millions of ideas and this is a different student to teach. Using the ITM principles, allow him to best address the needs of the individual student.

Group Teaching (Weed: 5 references)

- Teachers are in the position to learn the most – the people who are in the class are in the second best position to learn the most. The reason for that is, they have not only a perspective, but they are not involved in the work of the lesson.

- The person who is in the worst position to learn something is the person in the chair.
• One of the teachers asked a question and I gave the answer to that question and that set off a light bulb in one of the other teachers. My answer to him, made something click for her. And we could have searched for weeks and never figured that out.

• The wealth of possibilities that happens in a group, is one of the many reasons why I would prefer to give classes and why I mostly teach in them.

• Anytime you get a number of intelligent people together who want to help themselves and others, they are going to think of things in terms of what they know and what they have experienced. So I think it’s a healthy thing when there’s a lot of difference of opinion in a profession.

**Group Teaching (Practitioners: 4 references)**

B: Being a good ITM teacher he said to my partner Kate, bring your partner, bring some friends, let’s make a group. Because part of the ITM pedagogy is that we teach in groups not one to one.

F: I do (teach individuals) but only for one reason. Because if I can’t find 2 people to come together at the same time, I teach individually. Every other choice would be to teach at least in groups of 2, plus more.

F: There’s a ping pong if there’s a group – which doesn’t happen in a one on one situation.

F: In a group situation you can get reactions, perspectives, and discussions which cannot take place in a one-on-one situation.

**Interactive (Weed: 9 references)**

• One of the things that we constantly talk about is our idea is to take the class through the student, what the students wants and needs there to be.

• The people who are in the class are in the second-best position to learn the most.

• Then I would ask the question again and they would still not be able even to figure out what the question is and the rest of the room is going, “C’mon, c’mon, this is the answer!” because they weren’t tied into the work of that moment – but they could see it, and they could relate to it.

• Anytime you get a number of intelligent people together who want to help themselves and others, they are going to think of things in terms of what they know and what they have experienced.

• So, by working in activity, like we’re going to be doing here, everything is a critical moment, and so it’s building up that discipline in being able to think.
• This opportunity to have this experience, this experiment and as it turns out, this discovery – that’s unique and that’s amazing. And that’s something that all of us, including you and me can share and respond to.

• We don’t use mirrors here but what do we often use? We use each other. Much more reliable kinds of sources.

• What we are primarily interested in, in getting a report from a student, is the relative accuracy of the report, where accuracy is defined as the teacher’s impression of what occurred and the student’s impression of what occurred. And the reason why we pursue that, is we have found that when those two things match, students’ progress more quickly.

• Now I almost don’t care what happens inside the lesson IF while that’s going on, I have the impression the student is now in command of more information by which to further the exploration and carry out that exploration for himself.

Interactive (Practitioners: 5 references)

B: He found a primary difference to be that the ITM is interactive. One of the core teaching tools of the ITM is to ask questions. In other programs, questions are not only typically not encouraged but may even be actively discouraged.

C: She incorporates the ITM very much into her teaching but not necessarily so much of the AT. On the ITM training course, a main issue is how to deal with people, how to communicate with students, how to be precise in using your own words, and how to ask questions. Listening to what the student is saying, and not jumping to conclusions because perhaps they use a word which is understood differently by the teacher, are key. These interactions with the student, which is a crucial part of the ITM, are how she incorporates the ITM in her voice lessons.

C: She would give a specific direction to correct a bad habit that was noticed and then she would turn to using the ITM way of communication by asking, “What did you notice? Was it the same or different? Was there one part of the sound which perhaps improved?” As for using hands-on techniques in a voice lessons, she would only do that with singers who have had Alexander Technique lessons.

C: If she saw a singer with an issue while singing; for example, perhaps they are lifting up their chin and face to sing a high note and pulling the head back, then she would try to address it first by asking questions. “Did you notice what you were doing with your head in relation to your body while starting to sing?” Then she may ask them to touch their own necks while singing the same phrase to see if they can notice anything themselves.

D: She notes that the ITM is special in comparison with other Alexander methods because it is really the interactive teaching method. Not only is Weed teaching the Alexander Technique, but he has developed a method of how to teach it to people. This kind of teaching that he does, teaches us how to teach any subject at all. It is one thing
learning how to apply the Alexander Technique; but then you also learn how to teach it, and how to interact with people.

**Original Sources (Weed: 17 references)**

- In Frank Pierce Jones’ book, which is now called “Freedom of Change”, he says that Alexander never did lying down work unless the student was completely bedridden.

- You start to see more of Alexander’s 1st chapter of his third book, and he talks about how he did things and how he learned things, he comes at the end of that chapter to a very important issue, and that’s the issue of what he calls a critical moment.

- What he built up, was understanding that he **needed to change the way he thought**, in order to change the way he moved.

- I worked with Marjorie actively for 22-23 years and I saw her briefly before she died, I was very happy that I could get there in time.

- Alexander did indeed work with mirrors and in his autobiographical material he makes it very clear that if he had not worked with mirrors and not had mirrors to work with, that he wouldn’t have been able to do what he did.

- There were not enough options for students back then, you just took endless private lessons, or you joined a teacher training course. Those were your options. And neither of those options, as far as I could tell, had much to do with what Alexander wrote.

- Like Patrick McDonald, a very famous Alexander teacher, used to say about the difference of opinion in all the different schools, he used to say that what you must do is **what you think is best, and hope you’re not very far wrong**.

- There’s been some shifting of course material and of course in 1976, when Frank Jones published his book, suddenly the course expanded, and it changed its focus.

- For the next ten years, I will read only the material in my basic principles course, and in 10 years, I’ll tell you what I learned from that and we’ll look to see if there’s anything in Alexander’s books that I missed. My claim was, from these principles that you can extrapolate everything else.

- And what he (Alexander) built up, was understanding that he **needed to change the way he thought**, in order to change the way he moved. To stop doing the thing he didn’t want, and to start doing more of what he did want.

- So, by working in activity, like we’re going to be doing here, everything is a critical moment, and so it’s building up that discipline in being able to think.

- But, as many times as you have one of these wonderful experiences, it does not relieve you of the responsibility to learn to do the work for yourself. Because the teacher is here
not to solve problems, and certainly not to fix things. The teacher is here in service to you, to help you learn how to do this for yourself.

- My experience and my opinion is that when people start looking in the mirrors, they stop looking at themselves. So, my experiences with almost everyone I have worked with, is that the detachment from themselves negates or diminishes the value of what they might see in the mirror.

- I’m more interested in how someone goes about the process of directing themselves in activity than I am about any kind of outcome.

- Perhaps more than occasionally, people will comment that their voice has changed or that they sense that their voice has changed.

- What we are primarily interested in, in getting a report from a student, is the relative accuracy of the report, where accuracy is defined as the teacher’s impression of what occurred and the student’s impression of what occurred. And the reason why we pursue that, is we have found that when those two things match, students’ progress more quickly.

- Now I almost don’t care what happens inside the lesson IF while that’s going on, I have the impression the student is now in command of more information by which to further the exploration and carry out that exploration for himself.

*Original Sources* (Practitioners: 1 reference)

B: Another significant difference is that everything ITM students are trained in can be directly traced back to Alexander’s texts. Sometimes they do struggle with his written English, but this concept of struggling is something the students of the ITM are encouraged to do. In struggling with Alexander’s written word, the students are forced to come to terms with the concepts that Alexander is writing about.
Section 4:
Raw Data Behavioral Statements in
Significance Indicator Group No-Yes-No, sorted by Codeword/Category

Application of the ITM in Lessons

Everything is a critical moment, and so it’s building up that discipline in being able to think.

It’s not something to be filled up and finished but it’s some process by which you can continue to improve.

Working in an Alexander fashion.

I’m more interested in how someone goes about the process of directing themselves in activity than I am about any kind of outcome.

What we are primarily interested in, in getting a report from a student, is the relative accuracy of the report, where accuracy is defined as the teacher’s impression of what occurred and the student’s impression of what occurred.

Applying the Alexander Technique principles

The repositioning came as a result of the refined mentality that comes from the instruction.

To examine what they did, how they did it, and how to communicate that to their own students.

Once they have had some experience with the AT and she sees an issue, she may ask, “I see something, is it ok if I put my hands on you?” In this way she uses the AT within the voice lesson.

She would give a specific direction to correct a bad habit that was noticed and then she would turn to using the ITM way of communication by asking, “What did you notice? Was it the same or different? Was there one part of the sound which perhaps improved?”

Trained her eyes to see when there are interferences while singing.

This happens through asking questions.

Just this realization alone; that a student is doing too much, can make an enormous difference.

To always be looking for excess effort is another skill that is emphasized.
When working with a student, there is always something to look for and determine if you see some excess tension or movements that are not necessary to sing.

One of these tools is asking questions.

Just this realization alone, that a student is doing too much, can make an enormous difference.

That it’s both what you study for yourself and the lessons. That’s the interactive part of it.

By far the concept of a process and not of looking for a result.

Yeah, the process of thinking of the head in relation to the body. The process of continually asking myself, “What am I doing?” And not immediately judging the result.

Art of Questioning

What we are primarily interested in, in getting a report from a student, is the relative accuracy of the report.

He found a primary difference to be that the ITM is interactive.

One of the core teaching tools of the ITM is to ask questions. Encourage questions.

She would give a specific direction to correct a bad habit that was noticed and then she would turn to using the ITM way of communication by asking, “What did you notice? Was it the same or different? Was there one part of the sound which perhaps improved?”

“Did you notice what you were doing with your head in relation to your body while starting to sing?” Then she may ask them to touch their own necks while singing the same phrase to see if they can notice anything themselves.

She may touch them at the point of conflict that she notices and with her hand ask, “Could this be different, could you relax this muscle?”

He will continually think of this process before and during the entire practice session. This process involves mainly thinking about the head in relation to the body.

Also, of continually asking oneself, “What am I doing?” and not immediately judging the result.

The approach he uses more than anything else is to ask questions.

Go through certain questions in their head

Group Teaching
They are going to think of things in terms of what they know and what they have experienced.

Because part of the ITM pedagogy is that we teach in groups not one to one.

Engender discussions which cannot take place in a one-on-one situation

Interactive

Take the class through the student, what the students wants and needs there to be.

Everything is a critical moment, and so it’s building up that discipline in being able to think.

Share and respond to.

I have the impression the student is now in command of more information by which to further the exploration and carry out that exploration for himself.

how to be precise in using your own words, and how to ask questions. Listening to what the student is saying, and not jumping to conclusions

by asking, “What did you notice? Was it the same or different? Was there one part of the sound which perhaps improved?”

If she saw a singer with an issue while singing; for example, perhaps they are lifting up their chin and face to sing a high note and pulling the head back, then she would try to address it first by asking questions. “Did you notice what you were doing with your head in relation to your body while starting to sing?” Then she may ask them to touch their own necks while singing the same phrase to see if they can notice anything themselves.

Original Sources

What he built up was understanding that he needed to change the way he thought, in order to change the way he moved.

He used to say that what you must do is what you think is best, and hope you’re not very far wrong.

Understanding that he needed to change the way he thought, in order to change the way he moved. To stop doing the thing he didn’t want, and to start doing more of what he did want.

But, as many times as you have one of these wonderful experiences, it does not relieve you of the responsibility to learn to do the work for yourself.

I’m more interested in how someone goes about the process of directing themselves in activity than I am about any kind of outcome.
What we are primarily interested in, in getting a report from a student, is the relative accuracy of the report, where accuracy is defined as the teacher’s impression of what occurred and the student’s impression of what occurred.

Another significant difference is that everything ITM students are trained in can be directly traced back to Alexander’s texts.

Section 5:
Edited Raw Data Behavioral Statements
in Significance Indicator Group No-Yes-No, sorted by Teacher Behavior

REMEMBER THAT:
• Everything is a critical moment, and so it’s building up that discipline in being able to think.

• It’s not something to be filled up and finished but it’s some process by which you can continue to improve.

• The repositioning came as a result of the refined mentality that comes from the instruction.

• These wonderful experiences, it does not relieve you of the responsibility to learn to do the work for yourself.

• This happens through asking questions.

• One of these tools is asking questions.

• Understanding that he needed to change the way he thought, in order to change the way he moved. To stop doing the thing he didn’t want, and to start doing more of what he did want.

• You must do is what you think is best, and hope you’re not very far wrong.

• By far the concept of a process and not of looking for a result.

• What he built up, was understanding that he needed to change the way he thought, in order to change the way he moved.

• The process of thinking of the head in relation to the body. And not immediately judging the result.

• They are going to think of things in terms of what they know and what they have experienced.
• How to be precise in using your own words, and how to ask questions. Listening to what the student is saying, and not jumping to conclusions

**REMEMBER TO:**
• Always be working in an Alexander fashion myself.
• Take the class through the student, what the students wants and needs there to be.
• The process of thinking of the head in relation to the body.
• Notice the process of how a student is directing themselves in the activity rather than judge any kind of outcome.
• What we are primarily interested in, in getting a report from a student, is the relative accuracy of the report, where accuracy is defined as the teacher’s impression of what occurred and the student’s impression of what occurred.
• Always be reading and thinking Alexander’s texts and original sources.
• Trained her eyes to see when there are interferences while singing.
• Just this realization alone, that a student is doing too much, can make an enormous difference.
• Then she would turn to using the ITM way of communication by asking questions.
• By far the concept of a process and not of looking for a result.
• Encourage questions
• The process of thinking of the head in relation to the body. And not immediately judging the result.
• How to be precise in using your own words, and how to ask questions. Listening to what the student is saying, and not jumping to conclusions
• Engender discussions which cannot take place in a one-on-one situation.
• Try to create group learning experiences whenever possible.
• With her hand asked, “Could this be different, could you relax this muscle?”
• Then she may ask them to touch their own necks while singing the same phrase to see if they can notice anything themselves.
WATCH FOR - NOTICE WHEN/HOW:

- The process of thinking of the head in relation to the body.
- Just this realization alone; that a student is doing too much, can make an enormous difference.
- Students go about the process of directing themselves in activity than I am about any kind of outcome.
- To always be looking for excess effort is another skill that is emphasized.
- In working with a student, there is always something to look for and determine if you see some excess tension or movements that are not necessary to sing.
- I have the impression the student is now in command of more information by which to further the exploration and carry out that exploration for himself.

LISTEN FOR:

- What we are primarily interested in, in getting a report from a student, is the relative accuracy of the report.

ASK YOUR STUDENTS TO:

- These wonderful experiences, it does not relieve you of the responsibility to learn to do the work for yourself.
- The process of continually asking myself, “What am I doing?”
- The process of thinking of the head in relation to the body.
- Go through certain questions in their head
- Continually asking oneself, “What am I doing?” and not immediately judging the result.
- He will continually think of this process before and during the entire practice session. This process involves mainly thinking about the head in relation to the body.
- “Did you notice what you were doing with your head in relation to your body while starting to sing?” Then she may ask them to touch their own necks while singing the same phrase to see if they can notice anything themselves.

ASK QUESTIONS WHICH:

- Have students to examine what they did, how they did it.
• Are an application of the Alexander Technique principles.
• Focus on the process.
• Are non-judgmental.

**ASK QUESTIONS LIKE:**

• What did you notice?

• Was it the same or different?

• Was there one part of the sound which perhaps improved?

• Can you think about /notice your/the head in relation to your body while you are singing?

• I see something, is it ok if I put my hands on your neck?

• Did you notice what you were doing with your head in relation to your body while starting to sing?” Then she may ask them to touch their own necks while singing the same phrase to see if they can notice anything themselves.
Appendix VII

Behavioral Guidelines for Teacher Implementation of the ITM in Voice Lessons, in Questions Format

*In order to keep the chart complete, it begins on the following page.*
## Behavioral Guidelines for Teacher Implementation of the ITM in Voice Lessons

### DID I REMEMBER THAT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>everything is a critical moment, and we are building up the discipline in being able to think?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to stop doing the things we don’t want, and to start doing more of what we do want, both the student and teacher need to understand we must change the way we think in order to change the way we move?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the repositioning/change is a result of the refined mentality which comes from the instruction?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the ITM happens through asking questions; it’s one of the most important tools?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it’s not something to be filled up and finished but it’s a process by which one can continue to improve?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the AT and the ITM are processes and are not looking for results?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it’s about the process of thinking of the head in relation to the body, while not immediately judging the result?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students are going to think of things in terms of what they know and what they have experienced?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>during lessons, we are primarily interested in getting a report from a student which is relatively accurate, where the student’s impression of what occurred is relatively the same as the teacher’s impression of what occurred?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>these wonderful experiences do not relieve the teacher or the student of the responsibility to learn to do the work for themselves?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you must do what you think is best and hope you’re not very far wrong?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### DID I REMEMBER TO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>always work in an Alexander fashion?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teach the lesson/class through the student and focus on what the student wants and needs there to be?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be thinking of my own head’s relation to my body while teaching and observing students?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>notice the process of how a student is directing themselves in activity?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>always be thinking about and reading from Alexander’s texts and original sources?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>train my eyes and ears to see and hear when there are interferences occurring?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>understand the enormous difference it makes to realize a student may simply be doing too much?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use the ITM way of communication by asking questions?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>encourage questions from the students?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be precise in my word choices while giving instruction, and while asking questions?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>encourage in groups the discussions which cannot take place in a one-on-one situation?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>try and create group learning experiences whenever possible?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Use AT/ITM training, and ask through hands-on work, “Could this be different, could you relax this muscle?”

ask the students to touch their own necks while singing to see if they can notice anything themselves?

listen to what the student is saying and avoid jumping to conclusions?

**DID I WATCH, LISTEN TO, OR NOTICE**
the process of thinking of the head in relation to the body, in myself and in the student?

while working with a student, there is always something to look for, to determine if I see excess tension, interference, or movement which is not necessary for singing?

the confirmation that the student is now in command of more information by which to further the exploration and carry out that exploration for themselves?

**DID I ASK MY STUDENTS TO**
remember this is a continual process of thinking of the head in relation to the body?

grow in the understanding that they need to change the way they think in order to change the way they move?

remember this is a process and we are not looking for a result?

remember this is a process of continually asking themselves, and noticing, “What am I doing?”

not immediately judge the result?

go through the thinking and questioning process on their own when they encounter difficulty?

go through the process of thinking about the head in relation to the body between lessons as well as when practicing at home?

remember that as wonderful as these experiences are, it does not relieve them of the responsibility to learn to do the work for themselves?

**DID I ASK MY STUDENTS QUESTIONS WHICH**
are an application of the Alexander Technique principles?

have them examine what they did and how they did it?

focus on the process?

are non-judgmental?

**DID I ASK MY STUDENTS QUESTIONS SUCH AS:**
What did you notice?

Was it the same or different?

Was there one part of the sound which improved?

Did you think about or notice your head in relation to your body while singing?

Is it okay if I put my hands on your neck?

While you sing that phrase again, can you touch your neck and see if you notice anything?
Appendix VIII

List of Alexander Technique Organizations

AmSAT – American Society for the Alexander Technique
   www.amsat.ws

ATI – Alexander Technique International
   www.ati-net.com

AUSTAT – Australian Society for the Alexander Technique
   www.alexnadertechnique.org.au

GLAT – Gesellschaft der Lehrer/innen der F.M. Alexander-Technik, Germany
   www.alexander-technik.org

IASAT – International Affiliated Societies of the Alexander Technique
   www.alexandertechniqueworldwide.com

ITM – Interactive Teaching Method of the Alexander Technique
   www.itmalexandertechnique.org

PAAT – Professional Association of Alexander Teachers
   www.paat.org.uk

STAT – Society of Teachers of the Technique, Great Britain
   www.stat.org.uk
Bibliography


