

Text alternative for audio file of workshop Learning to Teach : Practising the Principles.

I am going to introduce the context and background for this poster (which is number 2 of a triptych) which depicts the effect on our course delivery of ATI certification requirements. The course was offered from a base in Johannesburg.

Sharyn and I were very eager to be in South Africa and share some of our experience with teaching and training to teach Alexander Technique in that context. We had both trained in England in the 80's and worked there and internationally.

There is a rich history of Alexander work in South Africa with the legacy of the first generation teachers (Irene Tasker and Dick and Elisabeth Walker who taught there between 1930 and 1960), the influence of Professor Raymond Dart and the libel case that Alexander instigated during that time.

Sharyn had been many years both teaching Alexander Technique to individuals and groups and incorporating the work into undergraduate and post-graduate degree courses for health and social care professionals. I had been continuing my teaching and practise of movement improvisation and teaching Alexander work on different training courses internationally and co-directed a teacher training course with my mother Elisabeth Walker. Sharyn led the study of Alexander's writings on Elisabeth's course.

We both have a passion for lifelong learning and for ways of sharing how the principles of Alexander's work provide a robust and reliable method for managing development and change.

To look for support for our approach to teacher training and to be active participants in a professional community of Alexander Teachers we applied for recognition for our training course from the South African Society of teachers of the Alexander Technique. SASTAT is a small organisation that took on the Constitution and most of the regulations and guidelines of STAT in England. This model requires a minimum of 1600 hours of training, delivered over three years, four days a week and a ratio of teacher to student of not more than 5 to 1. We had been trained under this model, had worked on training courses run that way and undertook to offer a course structured in that way. We already had an ethos that placed emphasis on partnership with the learner (learner centred but not learner led). We really believe that learning happens at the learners end and that Alexander's method requires active learning on the part of the learner. Teaching, in our view, requires giving frameworks for discovery with learning materials supported by coaching and guidance tailored to the particular needs and interests each learner brought to the work.

In the course of three years of us being available full time, only one person was able to attend full time, and that was only made possible by our experience and willingness to adapt training to a variety of settings, venues and types of gatherings. This poster is the second in a triptych that will record the inquiry we made along the journey of developing the training by which we have now accompanied 3 trainees on a journey that has obtained teaching membership of ATI, another is in the process of joining by recognition, yet another is in the process of arranging sponsorship, and we are busy cooking with 4 more.

The poster is about the influence ATI has had on curriculum development i.e. especially re content and delivery and the learning outcomes that measure attainment and course completion. It shows what we made of discoveries and available choices. We adopted the action oriented model of researching our practice by which education, Health and Social Care service delivery has found evidence led curriculum development to be able to respond to concrete circumstance.

We researched our practice by a method compatible with the means whereby self development is managed by the means that Dewey celebrates discovering in the course of his lessons with the Alexander brothers.

From this inquiry we realised we needed much more flexibility in the delivery of the curriculum and that it would involve what is commonly known as blended learning. So we wanted a connection with a professional organisation that did not seek to regulate training but rather to uphold standards by having an independent team of sponsors who would assess the readiness of teachers after their training to join the organisation, that is ATI. We also value the emphasis on ethics and the clarity with which ATI articulates knowledge teaching skills and ethics as the components of an Alexander technique teacher. So this is one of the strands which intersect to form the curriculum. The first is an indicative list of the teachers, and learning possibilities such as Congresses, beginning with Alexander whose work most influences us. other teachers, The third strand is the ontology, epistemology and axiology (aka values base) that characterises ATLTP's phases of learning approach.

Recognising the time and commitment that is necessary to change lifetime habits and learn to communicate the Alexander method to others we found different ways to deliver the curriculum. Students are required to develop their own practice from the outset - it must be something I'm doing - we need to see that as fundamental - we contract with learners that we will set them off on a journey for life. They are required also to cultivate individual and group reflective practice. Without that growing alongside their knowledge and skills the way we work with peer sharing is hampered. Sharing all the way - gaining articulacy, building clarity and own expression are highly valued, in fact fundamental to process. Keeping a learning journal both instils a constancy of self-noticing. This in turn, we find, supports developing an objective attitude to one's subjectivity and allows one to replace judgment with curiosity and appreciation. It also help the cultivation of receptivity and discernment and other qualities fundamental to learning and teaching.

Trainees have private lessons with a range of teachers, attend workshops and a biannual residential intensive. They attend and move towards becoming assistants (apprentices) in introductory and themed workshops that we offer. In this way they learn about working with individuals, groups and are able to co-teach with peers when they offer workshops of their own.

Alexander Technique Learning and Teaching Programs –ATLTP carried out a range of work around the country which, as well as sharing Alexander method served as opportunities for the trainees to learn about teaching. This included workshops on site with a rural company of weavers in KwaZulu Natal, lessons for boys and professional musicians at a prestigious school (Pretoria Boys High School), a contribution to the NIROX sculpture park in the Centre of Human Kind (in the valley where Raymond Dart discovered, what were then, the earliest human remains) ..... Slow Art Day also connected to the long term cultural project “ Not a single story...”,

We subscribe to the importance of applying the Alexander principles to oneself as fundamental to the ability to teach. Also the training is tailored to each student's life activity. We also ask the trainees to find ways to include their Alexander ideas into their current work. Trainee teachers bring a rich range of experience and activity to this process.

This involves us leading sessions in their workplace, or co-teaching with them. For example an introduction at the singing/voice studio where Daniel works, at the Market Lab Theatre training where Alex teaches, at Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator where Caryn does regular large group sessions on confident communication.

We also have an ongoing connection with Forgotten Angle Theatre Collaborative which runs a rural Arts Centre. Here we worked with Artists in Residence and company members around movement and improvisation work and how to 'take care of oneself' in demanding situations.

There are a few influences whose work we have studied who are not mentioned on the poster we need to acknowledge; Marion Milner (A Life of One's Own), Mark Soames (What is a Mind?) and Professor Peggy Mason (Understanding the Brain - the neurobiology of everyday life) – please contact us for references.

We would also like to acknowledge the range and talent of our trainees, some of whom have continued and completed the journey to becoming Alexander teachers and some of whom have used the work to support their current profession:

Caryn Katz - Alexander teacher, actor, voice coach, facilitator

Dr. Keith Moss - artistic co-ordinator of the New Zealand Philharmonic Orchestra, composer, conductor, cellist, musician, teacher.

Cindy Werner- director of School of Lightness for horses, equestrian, saddler, farrier, ballroom dancer

Marco Martins - school teacher, facilitator for young entrepreneurs, Capoeira teacher

Dr. Alex Halligey - Alexander teacher, theatre director, writer, university lecturer, voice and movement teacher.

Tagore Senn – children's music teacher, Ta ke Tina practitioner.

Jeri Silverman - singer songwriter, performer

Sean Redpath - Alexander teacher, Pilates instructor, ballet and theatre coach

Sanderine Kao - financial administrator, pianist, meditation instructor

Daniel de Wet - musician, piano teacher, improviser

Frances Slaboletsky - drama teacher (school), actor, director, writer

Malané Hofmeyr-Burgher Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra orchestral musician, flute teacher