

“Integrating AT and Post-Secondary Music Instruction Using the Oslo Model”

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Supplemental Resources Document

Katie’s Collaborative Teaching Tips

- Navigate with delicacy, respect, openness, and curiosity
- Enjoy: Learning, connecting, collaborating & being ‘in the loop’
- Let the process unfold as if you have all the time in the world
- Invite patience and flexibility
- Stay AT-infused and AT-process oriented
- Let the model evolve and try new things
- Create and maintain a safe space for engagement and collaboration
- Make it easy to book lessons (we used the website “youcanbook.me”)
- Work with people that are already interested and enthusiastic about AT
- Reach out to someone who has experience teaching collaboratively

Additional Tips

- If you are conducting a similar study, consider having a participant-researcher, someone who is on the research team but completes the study activities (e.g., AT lessons, collaborative group sessions, large group meetings) as a participant would
- Make sure you have pizza (or other yummy treats) at the Large Group Meetings

Select Study Findings

1. Participants reported benefits of AT instruction including:

- heightened awareness of body and mental processes during music-making,
- more physical and mental ease in their practicing and playing/singing, and
- more calm in their daily lives as an antidote to a stressful academic environment,

which supported their musical and artistic goals. Teachers and students reported their belief in the value of the AT in helping them achieve their goals.

“AT reduces stress, invites critical thought before action, eases tension, increases self-efficacy in performance, creates efficiency in playing” – Student

“AT builds an understanding of the physical and mental challenges we all have with the goal being to find ways to eliminate or at least minimize any impediments that might prevent us from sharing our gifts.” – Faculty member

2. The Oslo model seemed to foster an “inclusive community of learners” that supported participants’ journey toward musical excellence. This community was marked by “shared personal journeys” where participants could learn by watching others work toward similar goals as themselves (e.g., reducing unnecessary tension to increase freedom, expression, and confidence in performance).

“And by hearing him talk about that helped clarify something for me a little bit more...that I actually have tension in my own breathing. So that was something I was able to think about a little bit.” – Student

“It helped me also to get an insight too into [my students’] way of thinking or what they were specifically feeling challenged with...I really was happy when [the collaborative group sessions] reinforced what my instinct as a teacher was, to hear [my students] express in their own way what their challenges were. It gave me a great deal of delight to hear them say, ‘Oh, this really helped me this week.’ [Because] then I would hook onto that and say, ‘Remember what helped you,’ or ‘In what piece could that be helpful?’” – Faculty member

The AT instructor felt that becoming integrating into regular group instruction allowed her to support the learners’ journeys more strongly than when she was working with students in isolation. By hearing from the AT instructor and faculty member, learners had the opportunity to gain a more holistic perspective on their musical challenges and goals. Many participants reported having “aha” moments in their collaborative group sessions.

*“[The AT instructor] and I team taught, combining my artistic goals for each student with how to utilize AT to help achieve those goals in a better way.”
– Faculty member*

*This student began practicing with a mirror and would notice similar actions in himself that he would comment on in others’ playing. “Then all of a sudden those kinds of comments that I was used to giving to other people, I would be giving to the person that I saw in the mirror, and then I would change those things.”
– Student*

3. Participants reported beginning to use a “shared vocabulary” based on AT principles in main instrument instruction. This finding is consistent with other examples (Pranevičius, 2019) in the related literature on the Oslo model.

*“In the three years that I studied with [my teacher] before I did the AT project, he never mentioned, when talking about practice, he never mentioned, like, mindfulness stuff. Not because he was opposed to it, just because it was just not something that he had included in his lexicon. And all of a sudden, he started saying things like, ‘Trust in the process,’ and ‘Let your breath be light,’ ‘Let your thinking be light.’ But at the same time that he was introducing them, they were already familiar phrases to me.”
– Student*

Before the project, this student spoke with his main instrument teacher about “similar concepts but with more basic words,” but now he and his teacher “simply use AT terms freely.” – Student

This faculty member began noticing the difference in language and vocabulary of AT and incorporating it into her teaching, for instance with the visual field: “What if you felt it higher where the visual cortex really is?” Other phrases she incorporated into her teaching included: “Who owns this space?” and “Where are your feet? Are they on the Earth?” – Faculty member

“I suppose you could say that the basis of this model that we’re developing is to enhance people’s observational skills, and a common language framework, based on the Alexander work, of course.” – Stephen Parker (2017, p. 52)

4. Faculty members already endorsed the idea of “team teaching” and were recruited for their previous interest in the AT approach. They were open-minded, and indeed enthusiastic, about learning from other teachers, and wanted to model being “life-long learners” for their students. Likewise, **student participants expressed an openness to learning from multiple perspectives.** Their experiences with the Oslo model seemed to reinforce their beliefs about the value of learning from multiple perspectives.

This faculty member enjoyed the Oslo model because it “is beneficial for faculty to experience a team approach to teaching. It helps support the idea of being a life-long learner, as you learn from not only your students, but from different types of colleagues. Demonstrating this sense of humility is also a fabulous example for our students.” – Faculty member

“I think it was very, very helpful to have [my professor and the AT instructor] working with me together because it really allowed me to see how each of them perceived how the concepts and information were relevant to what was going on, and also very helpful with it being applied to a very specific instance... Watching my colleagues working through these strategies on their own and seeing how they applied to their own work and the things that they wished to strengthen only further internalized the material for me.” – Student

4. The greatest “challenges” included scheduling (although scheduling group sessions far in advance seemed to mitigate this concern) and that some of the sessions (e.g., 60-minute collaborative group sessions for 3 students, and 30-minute private AT lessons) felt too short to participants.

5. Participants reported a desire to continue AT instruction and felt that integrating it into a music conservatory would best be done through multiple entry points, including private AT lessons, collaborative team teaching of private lessons, Oslo model-style collaborative group sessions with multiple students, and academic courses in AT. In general, participants had mixed opinions on when this instruction would be most beneficial for students – some felt that their younger selves would not have been ready whereas others thought the earlier the better and wished they had had this instruction sooner.

Literature on Oslo Model of AT Instruction

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