

TAKING UP SPACE: A PEDAGOGICAL HISTORY OF FLUTISTS'
PERSPECTIVES ON BREATH AND SUPPORT

by

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Abstract

Breathing and breath support are two of the most important elements of flute playing and are therefore discussed in great detail throughout the history of flute pedagogy. Though many ideas are similar between nineteenth century and contemporary flutists, there are extensive differences and developments, particularly across anatomical language and concepts. In the past century, new ideas on how musicians can interact with their bodies have become more prominent, especially through the practices of Alexander Technique and Body Mapping. These areas of teaching have the potential to impact how flutists understand breath and support because of their foundations in somatic awareness.

Another crucial consideration for an updated flute pedagogy is the changing socio-cultural environment experienced by students. Female students, in particular, are subject to unrealistic expectations of body image through constant exposure to social media. This issue negatively impacts students' abilities to navigate stressful surroundings with confidence and also limits them physically, mentally, and emotionally. Flute teaching philosophies have the room to become more empowering and inclusive by acknowledging the importance of lived-in, bodily experiences, especially within the context of gender and space.

The demands placed upon flutists to breathe unobtrusively, infrequently, and musically make breathing a key pedagogical issue. Breathing and its nebulous counterpart “support” comprise complex issues for teachers and flutists because the functions occur within the body. Another complicating factor is the difference in opinion across anatomical terms involved in the breathing process. To add to its difficulty, breathing is thoroughly tied to one’s mental and emotional state, and can be negatively impacted by too intense a focus to improve on it. This research will initially explore pedagogical sources from flutists and contrast them with perspectives from non-flutists, including perspectives based in Body Mapping, Alexander Technique, and mindfulness practice.

It is likely that reconciling or delineating the differences between teaching methods could positively impact students who need a composite experience, especially if those students suffer from self-consciousness or a disconnect between mind and body. The goal of this research is to unite traditional pedagogy with ideas from flutists and non-flutists to see the potential of a breathing pedagogy that is connected to modern issues in gender, feminism, and bodily awareness.

The French Flute School

The starting point in assembling the viewpoints on breathing from flute pedagogy and literature comes from the French flute school with what Nancy Toff describes as the “supremacy of French woodwind playing.”¹ During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the contributions of students and teachers at the Paris Conservatoire represent what is now

¹ Nancy Toff, *The Flute Book: A Complete Guide for Students and Performers*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 103.

considered the French school of flute playing. Toff dates the beginning of the school as 1885 because it marks the start of Paul Taffanel's extensive teaching and playing career.² Taffanel, often called the "father of modern flute playing,"³ is remembered for championing substantial works for both solo flute and the wind quintet. His discovery and performances of older works such as Mozart concerti and quartets and Bach sonatas made them staples of the flute repertoire, and his premieres of new French pieces such as Camille Saint-Saëns' *Romance* for flute also standardized them in the repertoire.⁴ His compassionate teaching, which was described as "nondidactic" and "inspirational,"⁵ is another reason for his lasting legacy. His other significant contribution was his *Complete Flute Method*, edited by his student Phillipe Gaubert.⁶

In terms of breathing pedagogy, most of Taffanel's work centers around tone production; however, sections of his *Method* acknowledge the relationship between tone and breath. Taffanel writes,

The breath is the soul of the flute, and the culminating point in the art of playing... It is the motion force behind the sound and the spirit which animates it, gives it life and becomes a voice capable of expressing all emotions. The lips, the tongue, the fingers are only its servants; it is by the breath alone that the artist can communicate to the world outside the most exclusive nuances, the thousand inflections of the music with its infinite variety.⁷

² Ibid., 250-251.

³ Edward Blakeman, *Taffanel: Voice of the flute* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 4.

⁴ Patricia Ahmad, "The flute professors of the Paris Conservatoire" (master's thesis, University of North Texas, 1980), 92.

⁵ Blakeman, *Taffanel*, 192.

⁶ Ibid., 211.

⁷ Paul Taffanel and Phillipe Gaubert, *Complete Flute Method*, (Paris: Alphonse Leduc, 1958), 185.

Taffanel's perspective on breath is unique from other flutists in that it is artistic rather than based in any physical process. As for much of Taffanel's reasoning, the priority is the breath's relationship to sound and music. For Taffanel, breath is also the most important part of playing because it is the source of the playing.

Other than its power over playing and communicating, Taffanel describes breath as “a thread from a spindle varying in thickness... and pressure,”⁸ which is manipulated by the lips and air column. Taffanel's *Method* also details the possible kinds of breaths that can be used in phrasing: “deep, medium, or shallow.”⁹ The smallest breaths are used when breaks in the music are brief, and medium breaths are more typically used. The largest breaths are used in extreme circumstances, and the lungs expand to their utmost capacity.¹⁰ Like much of Taffanel's teaching, his breathing concepts are always related back to what the music requires. In terms of body position, Taffanel says relatively little; in his *Method*, he writes that good, upright posture is essential to the “free passage of air.”¹¹

The impact of Taffanel's teaching can be observed in the pedagogy of his students such as René le Roy and Marcel Moyse. Like Taffanel, Moyse's ideas about playing the flute are largely occupied by sonority, and explanations of breath are limited to its need to be unrestricted so that the tone quality is beautiful. Some of the descriptions Moyse uses for discussing the air column are that it should be “warm”¹² and that it is similar to a “column of

⁸ Ibid., 8.

⁹ Ibid., 52.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Marcel Moyse, *The Flute and Its Problems* (Tokyo: Muramatsu Gakki Hanbai Co., Ltd., 1973), 12.

water,”¹³ which works best when pressurized appropriately. Moyse’s explanation of breath is interesting because of the comparison to water pressure as a metaphor for support. Moyse, like Taffanel, emphasizes the flexibility of the embouchure in tone production.¹⁴

René le Roy’s teaching philosophy is also impacted by Taffanel. As described in Sarah Gearhart’s dissertation on French flute school pedagogy, le Roy stands out as advocating for the typical French ideals of a singing and flexible sound.¹⁵ Le Roy also credits breath support as the main method to achieve relaxation, particularly in musical scenarios that require lots of flexibility, which places lip flexibility in tandem with support of the air column.¹⁶ Le Roy’s ideas seem to present breath and support on equal footing with embouchure, especially when Gearhart states “the lack of breath support produces a type of tension which interferes with the relaxation of the soft palate, throat and embouchure, which should all remain flexible and relaxed.”¹⁷ This consideration identifies the cause-and-effect relationship between support and ease of flexibility, which is a key point in his pedagogy and the other flutists previously mentioned, particularly in how support prevents resonance-killing tension.

Another cause for interest from Le Roy’s concept is his process for using breath support, which follows

The first stage begins with a progressive tightening of the muscles near the waist ‘as well as the area...on all sides of the spinal column.’ The second stage follows, with the gradual descent of the rib cage and a slight lengthening of the spine. The third

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Sarah Gearheart, “Exploring the French Flute School in North America: An examination of the pedagogical materials of Georges Barère, Marcel Moyse, and René le Roy,” (Doctoral dissertation, Louisiana State University, 2011), 36.

¹⁶ Ibid., 32.

¹⁷ Ibid., 36.

stage of breath control continues for the remainder of the breath and includes the continual upward movement of the diaphragm as a result of constant pressure applied to the abdominal muscles.¹⁸

Le Roy's explanation of breath support is more detailed than the ones offered by Moyse and Taffanel and goes beyond mention of the air column. Le Roy also suggests that breath support incorporates muscle groups from all over the upper body. Notably, Gearhart's vocabulary defines the order of events as the rib cage lowering before the diaphragm moves upwards.

Though Taffanel, Moyse, and le Roy offer different shades of emphasis on breath and support, the three flutists are unified by similar ideas of tone flexibility, free breath, and an organized air column, and all three had significant influence over later pedagogy. The next generation of pedagogical perspectives stems from the dissemination of the French style as Taffanel's students left France and made performing and teaching careers in America. Other countries are also represented, such as the United Kingdom and Switzerland.

The Next Generation: U.S. and Europe

The following sources about breathing and support concepts show extensive academic influence as well as a depth of consideration for breathing that is previously unexplored in the French school. In the mid to late twentieth century, pedagogy takes on a more analytical role where ideas are supported by a better understanding of anatomy. Though tone is certainly still a large consideration, it is not treated the same way it is by French flutists. Where Taffanel, le Roy, and Moyse left many details unsaid but viewed breath with a

¹⁸ Ibid.

reverence for its artistic capabilities, more space in later literature is devoted to a rigorous explanation of breathing.

One pedagogical view on the relationship between breath and support is promoted by American flutist Ransom Wilson in his article “Breathing: The Central Issue of Flute Playing.” Wilson’s article examines basic mechanics of breathing in relation to easy breathing, support, and resonance learned from vocalists. Wilson notes that the diaphragm is a large muscle with “no proprioceptive nerve endings” and that it creates a vacuum which pulls air into the lungs while external intercostal muscles pull the ribs up to create more room for air.¹⁹ During exhalation, the internal intercostals keep the rib cage from collapsing while the abdominals work with “firm but elastic pressure” in opposition to the diaphragm to push air out.²⁰

Support’s primary purpose is described as resistance against collapse, which offers a defining point to Wilson’s perspective because breathing away from the flute invites more collapse during exhale. Wilson’s description of the breathing process promotes a different kind of breathing for flute because of the concept of “oppos[ing] the expiratory collapse of the breathing organ.”²¹ This view is representative of the pedagogical idea that natural breath can be made more efficient and easy for flute playing, which will dissent from other perspectives that encourage a return to natural breathing. At the end point of exhalation, Wilson upholds that “all action of the abdominal and intercostal muscles cease, so that a new

¹⁹ Ransom Wilson, “Breathing: The Central Issue of Flute Playing.” In *The Flutist’s Handbook: A Pedagogy Anthology* (California: The National Flute Association, Inc., 1998), 61.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 62.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 63.

breath cycle can commence from a state of relaxation.”²² Support, then, manifests itself through the use of abdominal and intercostal muscles and through the isometric balance of actions in the breathing process.

Pedagogues who hold similar views to Ransom Wilson include Peter Lukas Graf and Geoffrey Gilbert. Graf's *Check-up: 20 Basic Exercises for Flutists* includes sections on Abdominal Breathing, Full Breathing, and Economical Breathing with exercises to demonstrate and practice the different types of breathing. The underlying process of his method is

1. Play until your breath is exhausted; the abdominal muscles will tighten.
2. Remain in that position without moving or breathing (c. 2 ¼ seconds).
3. Relax suddenly ('letting go'): air enters the lungs (c. ¾ second).
4. Immediately continue playing: the air will last for about 10-15 seconds.²³

Graf's text differs from Wilson's in that his instructions reproduce a feeling of natural breath, but the language is more constrictive. Phrases like “muscles will tighten” and “maintain the tension you have achieved”²⁴ seem counterintuitive to instilling easy breathing; however, the exercises also probably encourage a degree of exaggeration from the flutist. It is also considerable that giving explicit, literal instructions may help achieve a breathing process that is more grounded in somatic functions than metaphorical instructions. Though Wilson and Graf's approaches differ outwardly, they both indicate a lifted rib cage, active abdominal muscles, and a passive experience of the inhale.

Just as Wilson names breathing as the key principle of flute playing, so does Angeleita Floyd in her treatise on British flutist Geoffrey Gilbert, who the London Times

²² Ibid.

²³ Peter Lukas Graf, *Check-up: 20 Basic Exercises for Flutists* (Mainz: Schott, 1991), 6-7.

²⁴ Ibid.

named the ‘most influential British flutist of the 20th century’ after his death in 1989.²⁵

Floyd’s account states, “When done properly, breathing allows a flutist to achieve peak performance.”²⁶ Similar to Wilson’s writing but less technical in nature, Gilbert’s breathing system encourages a lifted rib cage, easy jaw, and equilibrium between opposing muscle groups.²⁷ Floyd also describes Gilbert’s insistence on an open throat and an undisturbed embouchure as crucial to keeping breathing efficient, which differs from Wilson’s pedagogy in the depth of description because Wilson seems to emphasize the abdominal area over the embouchure, especially in anatomical description.

Another flutist from the British school of playing whose pedagogy is of note is Peter Lloyd, whose decades-long tenure with the London Symphony Orchestra was shared with distinguished British flutist William Bennett.²⁸ As demonstrated in Suzanne Lord’s treatise on Peter Lloyd and his philosophy, many of Lloyd’s ideas about flute playing are influenced by Geoffrey Gilbert.²⁹ As others before him, Lloyd places great emphasis on the importance of controlling the breath and mastering easy breathing in order to achieve an expansive and resonant flute sound. Lloyd’s breathing philosophy is multifaceted and considers the separate areas of posture, inhale, exhale, and an issue in between inhale and exhale referred to as

²⁵ Tammara Phillips, “‘Gentleman of the Flute’ Recounts Gilbert’s Love for Teaching at Stetson.” *Stetson University Today* (Deland, Florida, USA: 1 Dec., 2017).

²⁶ Angeleita Stevens Floyd, *The Gilbert Legacy: Methods, Exercises and Techniques for the Flutist* (Cedar Falls, Iowa: Winzer Press, 1990), 81.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 83.

²⁸ Kenneth Shenton, “Peter Lloyd: Leading British flautist who established an international reputation at the London Symphony Orchestra,” *Independent* (London, UK: May 10, 2018).

²⁹ Suzanne Lord, “The Teaching Methods of Peter Lloyd,” Doctoral treatise, Florida State University, 1998, chapter 2.

“suspension.”³⁰ This moment is intended to make the process more secure without creating extra tension.³¹

Lloyd’s philosophy on stance is derived from Geoffrey Gilbert, which entails “standing at least a flute’s length away from the music stand, placing the feet about twelve inches apart with the left foot forward and the right foot back, with the flutist’s weight resting on the right foot... and turning the body slightly to the right [at the waist]...,” though Lloyd prefers the adaptation of equalizing weight across both feet.³² It is important that stance is discussed in a chapter dedicated to breathing because it highlights the relationship between posture and ease of breath. The depth to which seemingly non-breathing related issues are discussed in tandem with air also emphasizes the role of breathing in all facets of flute playing.

Another idea supported by both Peter Lloyd and Ransom Wilson is keeping air in supply at all times and never completely exhausting the breath. Wilson’s account of this concept remembers the soprano Montserrat Caballé, who gave him the advice that “one should always keep some air in the lungs ‘like the principal of a bank account--never spend that, only the interest.’”³³ Similarly, Peter Lloyd discusses the usefulness of etudes to encourage good breathing habits: “Beginning with a full, relaxed breath, the flutist should play until they have used about half their breath. Then, they should stop, relax, fill again, and play until that breath is halfway gone; then repeat the process.” Both flutists encourage

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ransom Wilson, “Breathing: The Central Issue of Flute Playing,” 60-61

breathing before it is absolutely necessary in order to avoid desperate breaths, which seems to be a key part of being in control of the breathing process rather than being controlled by it.

Another pedagogue involved in the discussion of breathing is Philadelphia flutist William Kincaid, whose teachings were collected by his student John Krell in *Kincaidiana*. Much of Kincaid's teaching incorporates the idea of encouraging space in the body to improve breathing and resonance. Krell accounts for Kincaid as "avoid any constriction in the column of air as it is pushed up from the floor of the diaphragm through the chest, throat, and mouth to the resistance of the mouthpiece of the lips. Imagine your body to be as hollow as possible and think of blowing up from the floor."³⁴ Kincaid's wording is interesting because of the use of the word "hollow," while others, such as Peter Lloyd, work more with connotations of "fullness." Lloyd's pedagogy, for example, stems from the idea that "We fill up everything... That's where the resonance is."³⁵ This difference in wording, while probably not opposites as much as different shades of meaning, could have an interesting potential impact on a flutist's sound concept. Generally, words like "hollow" near sound ideas are unusual, and concepts associated with "fullness" are more common, but this association may or may not affect tone quality. Either way, the impact of the meaning of words is important to consider here.

Another area of breathing and support pedagogy explored by William Kincaid is the diaphragm, to which Kincaid attributes tone production. While more recent anatomical sources, such as Ransom Wilson's article, attribute the "firm and controlled"³⁶ qualities of

³⁴ John Krell, *Kincaidiana: A Flute Player's Notebook* (California: Trio Associates, 1973), 4.

³⁵ Lord, "The Teaching Methods of Peter Lloyd," ch. 2.

³⁶ Krell, *Kincaidiana*, 3.

support to the abdominal muscles, given the lack of nerve endings on the diaphragm,³⁷ Kincaid attributes action to the diaphragm and recommends improving the muscle tone by exercising with a heavy weight, such as a book, on the diaphragm and maintaining the position of the weight while doing a controlled exhale.³⁸ This understanding of anatomy is perhaps outdated but still raises a relevant point about experiencing the feeling of support by controlling air with muscles. This exercise allows flute students to be physically involved in the support process while the teacher is able to observe their success.

A final pedagogue from the late 20th century is one of the most well-known English flutists of his time, Trevor Wye. Author of the *Practice Books for Flute* which are well-used by flutists today, Wye's teaching is forward and prescriptive. In his *Breathing and Scales* book, Wye does not offer detailed anatomical explanations but rather gives an "explanation only of what is strictly necessary for flute playing,"³⁹ which includes one paragraph on the ribs, lungs, diaphragm, and abdominal muscles. Wye also instructs not to move one's shoulders up while taking a breath.⁴⁰ Wye's language around the size of the body during breathing is clear and worth examining: "You should become thinner when breathing out, and fatter when breathing in."⁴¹ While Wye may not consider his language problematic, this paper will later examine the psychological impact of problems with body size, especially in young women.

³⁷ Wilson, "Breathing: The Central Issue of Flute Playing," 61.

³⁸ Sarah Gearheart, "Exploring the French Flute School in North America," 36.

³⁹ Trevor Wye, *Practice Books for the Flute*, Omnibus Ed. (London: Novello Publishing Ltd., 1999), 151.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., 152.

A benefit to Wye's writing is that he gives many cues for students to follow so that they can check to see if they are doing what he suggests correctly. For example, Wye writes, "Is your rib cage going upwards when breathing in? It shouldn't be,"⁴² to ensure that students will expand horizontally rather than only vertically when inhaling. Wye even goes as far as to encourage measuring this horizontal expansion and keeping track of it over time, which is one of the most exacting instructions in the pedagogy examined so far.⁴³ Wye's ideas are similar to Peter Lukas Graf's concept of mastering specific steps in order to achieve efficient breathing.

Ultimately, this middle portion of breath pedagogy history shows a significant difference between what comes before and after, which could suggest that American and European flutists were reacting against the French legacy. In comparison to the beautiful language and artistic metaphors surrounding the "thread of breath"⁴⁴ of the French school, the generation following the French school employs stricter anatomical concepts and is much more literal.

Modern Flutists

The following generation of flutists exemplifies another shift in pedagogical concerns that are less strict and more dependent on an individual flutist's journey. Rather than following the stringent anatomical explanations of an area of the body offered by previous pedagogues, some prefer a whole body understanding strengthened by skeletal diagrams and other physical representations. Many flutists incorporate aspects of spirituality or

⁴² Ibid., 153.

⁴³ Ibid., 154.

⁴⁴ Paul Taffanel and Phillipe Gaubert, *Method Complete de Flute*, (Paris: Alphonse Leduc, 1958), 8.

non-traditional forms of pedagogy such as body mapping, which will be discussed in greater detail later.

The increase in awareness of non-music-specific approaches for improving the relationship to one's body has created room for teachers to bring innovative ideas to traditional pedagogy. This combination, as demonstrated by flutist Christina Jennings, offer standards of flute playing which can be more meaningful through a better connection to the self. For example, in her article "The Embodied Flutist," Jennings centers all concepts around the idea of "embodied playing," and "integrating body and brain."⁴⁵ Balance, in particular, is highlighted as a method to improve breathing and support, as well as mastering efficient movements as a path to make better connections with breathing.⁴⁶ Jennings' perspective is interesting and authentic, not only as a renowned performer and teacher, but as a flutist who has overcome injuries and who often works with students dealing with overuse injuries, which she argues can be helped with a physical understanding of balance, movement, and energy centers.⁴⁷ The "embodied" idea of playing appears highly effective because of its roots in both flute pedagogy and other methods of body awareness.

Another teacher who utilizes the idea of embodied playing is Canadian flutist Fiona Wilkinson. Her book *The Physical Flute* is of particular interest because she studied with several of the flutists examined in the previous generation above, including William Bennett, Trevor Wye, and Peter Lukas Graf.⁴⁸ Some of her ideas on breath have a connection to her

⁴⁵ Christina Jennings, "The Embodied Flutist," In *The Flutist's Handbook: A Pedagogy Anthology*, Volume 2 (California: The National Flute Association, Inc., 2012), 133.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 134.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 133, 135.

⁴⁸ Fiona Wilkinson, "Biography," personal website of Fiona Wilkinson, <http://publish.uwo.ca/~fwilkins/studio.html>.

teachers, but Wilkinson frames them in a way to help the student find ease. For example, she gives the directive

While standing, imagine you are a puppet doll. The head is held high and everything else hangs loosely away from the head. By keeping your back support extending up from the hips, you can concentrate on fully opening the lungs. During each breath, reinforce the relaxation while keeping the shoulders low. Experience the feeling of relaxed “openness” in the neck-chest area. ⁴⁹

Wilkinson’s writing both explores the loosest possible way of being through the need for support, which gives a broad and promising framework for students to work within. Similar to René le Roy’s idea that support prevents the tension that inhibits resonance, Wilkinson brings together an awareness of the body with the clear instructions from her past teachers to hearken back to the ease encouraged by the French school. Another term she uses for the breath is “well-assembled,” ⁵⁰ which also suggests the framework given by support to create ease. As Wilkinson’s text does not move into explaining holistic anatomy or structures of the body, it still operates within a language of bodily experience.

Incorporating the Body: Perspectives from Non-flutists

Though some of the particulars of breathing and support diverge amongst influential flute teachers, many large concepts remain consistent. Some ways in which these perspectives could be more unified include anatomical vocabulary and visualization of processes within the body. While many of these ideas about teaching breathing at the flute are widely held, they are not all-encompassing, especially given the recent rise in areas of

⁴⁹ Fiona Wilkinson, *The Physical Flute: Creative techniques for the development of tone, vibrato, and pitch control*, (Kenswick: Mayfair Music Publications, 1999), 5.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

performance coaching. The following section of this paper will explain the prominent differences between traditional pedagogical perspectives and those that are more awareness-oriented, including Alexander Technique, body mapping, and mindfulness practice.

The principles of Alexander Technique are broad enough to be considered by both musicians and non-musicians alike, which makes it potentially transformative in relation to breath and support because of its goal to help the body return to a more natural way of being. The body's role in breathing, then, becomes of utmost importance, which means that the body must be taken care of to support the task of breathing well. F.M. Alexander, the founder of the technique, developed principles including Primary Control, Use Affects Functioning, Psychophysical Unity, and others.⁵¹ The technique's affinity for helping one "learn how to learn"⁵² could be especially helpful in improving something as habituated as breathing. In Kleinmann and Buckoke's *Alexander Technique for Musicians*, respiration is described as an "automatic reflex process," that can still be affected by emotional states or "conscious choices that indirectly work to re-establish efficient reflex breathing."⁵³

One of the primary ways in which Alexander Technique shows a different concept of breathing is in the instructions: "Don't lift the chest in an effort to breathe deeper. Release your ribcage when breathing out."⁵⁴ This diverges from prominent pedagogues' descriptions of how to exhale and highlights the idea that breathing at the flute is disparate from breathing

⁵¹ Judith Kleinman and Peter Buckoke, *The Alexander Technique for Musicians* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 17.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 4.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 94.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 98.

to survive. It is logical that Alexander Technique would support a naturally descending ribcage, since the method aims to reestablish good Use, or the understanding that the way a person handles their body affects its functioning.⁵⁵ Though the technique offers a different kind of perspective to finding freedom in breathing and playing, exclusively using an Alexandrian approach to breathing may return alternate results in comparison to traditional pedagogy, especially since the method is not specific to flute or wind playing.

Another resource on Alexander Technique, titled *Body Learning*, which is not aimed at an audience of musicians, describes the Technique as “a powerful tool for heightening self-knowledge and changing habit.”⁵⁶ Using this line of thought, the method’s particulars about breathing seem less important if it is kept in mind that the method is meant to help individuals develop themselves. A particularly poignant chapter, Education for Use, examines the decline of students’ physical and mental well-being in public school environments.⁵⁷ Gelb’s *Body Learning* highlights how teachers need to understand the setting in which their students are spending large amounts of habituated time and teach good use of the body. Gelb writes, “How can we expect our children to use an instrument properly when we fail to teach them how to use themselves?”⁵⁸ which places much importance on the goals and potential outcomes of Alexander Technique. This emphasis makes sense because of the lasting relationship between mind and body and the potential promise of nurturing said relationship.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 17.

⁵⁶ Michael Gelb, *Body Learning: An Introduction to the Alexander Technique*, 2nd. ed. (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1994), 3.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 111.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 123.

Another practice popular with musicians and creative people is mindfulness practice, which offers much about breath and its influence over one's emotional state. Mindfulness author Pádraig O'Morain describes this importance as "mindfulness of breathing is... connected with your whole history, back to the origins of humanity and also to your own emotional history and to the way you regulate your feelings."⁵⁹ Not far off from the French school's view of the breath, O'Morain considers it in a holistic, creative, and connective way. Breath from his perspective ties one to oneself and to others through the past, and being aware of the breath gives more power to organize emotions in a way that is useful. This consideration of breath not only makes breath more powerful but also empowers a person breathing, which could benefit students a great deal.

An extension of Alexander Technique with roots in inclusive awareness is Body Mapping, which places more emphasis on the understanding of anatomy to return to a more appropriate use of the body. Developed by Barbara and William Conable,⁶⁰ Body Maps are "physical self-representations,"⁶¹ which determine a person's quality of movement. This method works with the aspect of the human body that can relearn and correct problems intuitively, which makes it ideal for breath and support work.⁶² Like with Alexander Technique and traditional flute pedagogy, the movement of the ribs during the exhale is again an area where different vocabulary and emphasis are placed. Rather than preventing

⁵⁹ Pádraig O'Morain, *Light Mind: Mindfulness for Daily Living*, (Dublin: Veritas Publishing, 2009), 58.

⁶⁰ Lea Pearson, *Body Mapping for Flutists: What every flute teacher needs to know about the body* (Chicago: GIA Publications, Inc., 2006), xv.

⁶¹ Barbara Conable, *The Structures and Movement of Breathing: A Primer for Choirs and Choruses* (Chicago: GIA publications, 2000), 13.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 14.

descent of the ribs, Barbara Conable expresses that “a singer may control the descent of the ribs so they make a long, slow, even excursion across a long phrase.”⁶³ The use of the word “excursion” is critical and juxtaposes with the more typically used word for ribs during breathing, “expansion,” evoking a different mental picture of the movement of the ribs.⁶⁴ Body Mapping is a powerful pedagogical tool for increasing self awareness because it recognizes fine shades of meaning for movement and the body.

As Alexander Technique and mindfulness practice acknowledge the relationship between emotional state and breathing, Body Mapping also has the capability to help with performance anxiety and its frequent and unwanted physical side effects, such as shortness of breath. Barbara Conable’s writing on performance anxiety analyzes self-consciousness as a contributing factor to nerves and gives the strategy of “embodying fear” through kinesthetic sense as a recommendation to manage fear.⁶⁵

First, put all your emotions in the context of your tactile experience, the feeling of your skin, your tactile sensation of your shoes, socks, floor, clothing, the temperature and movement of the air as perceived by your skin... Then find all your kinesthetic sensation, that is, all your experience of your moving, of your position, of your size. You will be moving to perform, and you will need to feel your moving with great clarity... As you become kinesthetically awake, you will feel overt movement and what is fashionably called micromovement, all the inner hum of muscular and visceral activity. You will feel this all as related, like an orchestra of sensation, not isolated like orchestra members warming up.⁶⁶

Acute but soft awareness as means to overcome self-consciousness has potentially large ramifications for young students, especially if they are not mastering a breathing technique.

⁶³ Ibid., 28.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Barbara Conable, “What to do About Performance Anxiety,” *Andover Educators: Teaching the Art of Movement in Music*, 2016. <http://bodymap.org/main/?p=206>

⁶⁶ Ibid.

Performances are often high pressure situations, which is why pedagogy concerning the most essential functions of flute playing, breath and support, should account for “reliability and consistency...through the use of free and efficient movement”⁶⁷ in order for students to have positive performing experiences.

Body Mapping by Flutists

Body Mapping can also offer a more specific approach to breathing at the flute because of resources that are specifically directed at flutists from a mapping perspective, such as flutist and Andover Educator Lea Pearson’s *Body Mapping for Flutists: What every flute teacher needs to know about the body*. Pearson’s book is an especially valuable resource because of her expertise in both flute teaching and body mapping.

Pearson expresses a particularly interesting view of the concept of support which differs from previously mentioned pedagogy in that support comes from the ground, our relationship to gravity, and its opposing normal force, which supports our skeletons.⁶⁸ Flutists not entrenched in a method like Body Mapping or Alexander Technique, however, have defined support as a function of the abdominal muscles, or sometimes diaphragm. This idea of the ground providing support makes sense for Body Mapping and its ideal of easy and free use, since using the abdominal muscles to play flute requires substantial effort, especially for younger players. Whether or not supporting the breath and body only from the ground without intentional use of core muscles makes for successful flute playing is a

⁶⁷ Kelly Wilson, “Musicians as Movers, Part One.” *The Flute Examiner*, 2017.
<http://thefluteexaminer.com/musicians-movers-part-one/>

⁶⁸ Lea Pearson, *Body Mapping for Flutists*, 17-18.

worthwhile question. Pearson's chapter on Breathing states that incorporating more parts of the body in support makes it "global" and prevents "overworking and back tension."⁶⁹

Like Lea Pearson, Amy Likar is another flutist with experience as an Andover educator and body mapping teacher. Likar is the author of the flute edition of *The Breathing Book*, which was inspired by both David Vining's *Breathing Book* and the text by Barbara Conable, *Structure and Movement of Breathing* that was examined earlier.⁷⁰ Though the title would suggest a book entirely about breathing, Likar's text is more a holistic presentation of how breathing interacts with the entire body and vice versa.

Contrary to the support solutions offered by traditional pedagogy, Likar poses that support comes from the pelvic floor instead of contracting abdominal muscles or Lea Pearson's explanation that support comes from the ground one stands on.⁷¹ Likar also suggests that difficulty tuning into the support from the pelvic floor comes from over-engaged abdominal muscles and limited spinal mobility.⁷²

As with other body mapping sources, Likar includes many diagrams of muscular and skeletal structures to teach the body's design. A difference between Pearson and Likar's writing is that Pearson's audience is flute teachers, and Likar's audience is all flutists. Likar also includes directed playing exercises to illustrate her concepts, such as the exercise below. This exercise attempts to help the student recover ease at the Atlanto-Occipital, or "AO" joint that brings together the base of the skull and beginning of the cervical spine. Incorporating long tones on the headjoint eliminates some of the fatigue of holding the whole flute, which

⁶⁹ Ibid., 90.

⁷⁰ Amy Likar, *The Breathing Book*, flute ed., (Flagstaff, AZ: Mountain Peak Music, 2018), ii.

⁷¹ Ibid., 27.

⁷² Ibid.

helps students when they restore the weight of the entire flute. Cues to engage with the body while maintaining awareness offer a unique learning idea for students working on one of the most crucial aspects of breathing from a body mapping perspective: the head and neck relationship.

Figure 1 ⁷³

Hold the headjoint in your left hand and use your right hand to cover the end of the headjoint. While playing these long tones on the headjoint, allow tiny yes-no movements at the AO joint and allow nice, easy breaths between long tones.

♩ = 60 Inhale easily over
4 beats.

Open the end of the headjoint. Allow freedom at the AO joint.

Close the end of the headjoint. Easy jaw joints.

Assemble the flute to play these long tones as you experience whole body balance.

Is your jaw free?

Is your head balanced at your AO joint?

The pedagogical perspectives expressed offer strategies and concepts to not only enhance flute playing through the prioritization of breathing and support but also through strengthening flutists' somatic awareness. While differences in opinion exist between historical flute pedagogy, Alexander Technique, Body Mapping, and “embodied” playing, these differences make it possible for teachers to adjust for many kinds of student needs and preferences and to consolidate individual ideas about playing, which may or may not fit within a system of teaching.

⁷³ Ibid., 7.

A New Generation of Students

Reconciling new and old perspectives on breathing and the body in relation to the flute are essential in order to keep pace with new attention to cultural issues like gender equality, body positivity, and the increase in women holding influential teaching and performing positions. Considering a combination of mindsets also provides the opportunity to fit instruction to student needs, particularly if students are struggling with self-consciousness or body-image issues. Social pressures can instill a fear of taking up space, which contradicts the natural expansion needed in the breathing process.⁷⁴ Given the importance of breathing, as expressed by all previous pedagogues, developing strategies to improve breath and support is crucial to helping students prosper if the current environment is interfering with that prosperity. Pedagogy is not built to address the needs of all students, which gives it potential to become an advocate for girls' well-being.

Research into adolescence strongly indicates that the existing social conditions are interfering with the success of young girls. Therapist Mary Pipher, an expert in working with adolescent girls and author of *Reviving Ophelia*, analyzes how the emotional and physical health of girls is declining due to societal pressures. Pipher's work with girls and their parents includes issues like eating disorders, sexual abuse, body image, divorce, depression, and more. Though Pipher was writing before the rise of social media, the issues she presents have not gone away and have intensified since 1994. She ultimately describes contemporary culture as "girl poisoning."⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Mary C.J. Byrne "Challenge, Joy, and the Teenaged Flutist," In *The Flutist's Handbook: A Pedagogy Anthology*, Volume 2 (California: The National Flute Association, Inc., 2012).

⁷⁵ Mary Pipher, *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Lives of Adolescent Girls*, (New York: Riverhead Books, 1994), 12.

The overriding conflict Pipher identifies for girls is the dichotomy between their true and false selves. The false self is the persona that girls take on during adolescence, which Pipher characterizes as “‘female impersonators’ who fit their whole selves into small, crowded spaces.”⁷⁶ The expectations placed upon young girls from culture, parents, and peers are so conflicting that many choose to surrender their complete selves in favor of being loved by others. This abandonment of the true self can occur at the hands of peers, parents, or both, and the damage is extensive. Pipher, who references Alice Miller’s *The Drama of the Gifted Child*, writes

Miller believed that as the true self was disowned, the false self was elevated. If others approved, the false self felt validated and the person was temporarily happy. With the false self in charge, all validation came from outside the person. If the false self failed to gain approval, the person was devastated. This loss of the true self was so traumatic that her patients repressed it. They had only a vague recollection of what was lost, a sense of emptiness and betrayal.⁷⁷

This excerpt is extremely telling of the kind of inner turmoil that young girls face in their transition to adulthood. This issue has high potential to express itself in the way girls think about themselves and treat their bodies, which can cause damaging behaviors like eating disorders, self-harm, depression, and others.⁷⁸

Other culture-wide themes include “concern with weight, fear of rejection, and the need for perfection.”⁷⁹ Because these issues are nearly universal within this group, it seems absurd that more teaching materials have not been written on how to address students in a way that helps them overcome these problems. However, Pipher explains that “ironically,

⁷⁶ Ibid., 22.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 36-37.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 35.

bright and sensitive girls are most at risk for problems... They have the mental equipment to pick up on our cultural ambivalence about women, and yet they don't have the cognitive, emotional, and social skills to handle this information.”⁸⁰ It makes sense that mental, emotional, and physical struggling would go undiagnosed more frequently in bright girls because their struggling is less obvious to teachers in educational settings.

The lack of attention to the issues faced by young girls is the reason Pipher describes it as a “problem with no name.”⁸¹ While many of the problems faced by young girls seem extreme, it is important to acknowledge that these seemingly severe problems stem from typical psychological reactions to the struggle of growing up. For example, bulimia can develop in young girls and women who are “oversocialized to the feminine role” and “people pleasers”⁸² whereas anorexia develops through the need for meticulous control that extends to eating habits.⁸³ The individuals most plagued by eating disorders are perfectionists and “high achievers,”⁸⁴ and this group has extensive crossover with students involved in music studies, as participation in both has been linked to academic success.⁸⁵ Teachers’ awareness of common inclinations among their students is important so that music is not presented in a way that is perfection-oriented.

Young women involved in music studies, and especially flute playing, are also subject to the gender conceptions attached to particular musical instruments, as students still

⁸⁰ Ibid., 43.

⁸¹ Ibid., 22.

⁸² Ibid., 170.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 174.

⁸⁵ “Music Education and Academic Achievement,” National Association for Music Education. <https://nafme.org/advocacy/music-education-and-academic-achievement/>

consider the flute to be one of the most overtly feminine instruments.⁸⁶ Music educator Colleen Conway's research, "Gender and Music Instrument Choice: A Phenomenological Investigation" discovered that girls who choose the flute are sometimes even criticized for keeping in line with gender stereotypes, whereas parents and teachers express concern for male students who choose the flute because they fear criticism boys will experience.⁸⁷ No one expresses fear for girls choosing instruments that supposedly fall into a perceived feminine category but instead express pride for girls who make more untraditional choices.⁸⁸

One female trumpet student's response to Conway's interview was, "I was never like the stereotypical feminine little girl. Like I would never play the flute... My sister played the flute and she was like the little girls with the pink room and I didn't want to be that way."⁸⁹ This student not only expresses a distaste for being considered traditionally feminine but also a gratification for being different. While room color and instrument choices are wholly unrelated, she is able to reduce her sister's choices to a culturally understood line of logic that somehow connects these two aspects.

Most of the culture's conflicting ideas about women can be credited to the intense pressure to be both beautiful and thin. Much of this stems from the fashion industry and its media presence,⁹⁰ the magazine portion of which was a more pertinent issue in the 1990s. At present, girls have much more immediate access to images that cause negative

⁸⁶ Colleen Conway, "Gender and Music Instrument Choice: A Phenomenological Investigation," *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education* 146 (Fall, 2000), 13-14.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 10, 13.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 13-14.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 40.

self-comparison due to the prominence of Instagram and other social media platforms. Instagram in particular has been linked to having the most negative impact on mental health for users, especially in the areas of sleep deprivation, anxiety, depression, body image, bullying, and the fear of missing out.⁹¹ While pressure from “the dominant political climate and cultural ideas” to fit to the “ideal female body type”⁹² is not new, media is pervasive in a way it has never been before. Experiencing appearance as a defining indicator of value from a constant stream of sources is having a detrimental impact on girls.

Gender and the Body: Taking up Space

Beyond body image, another impact of cultural ideas is the limitation on how women navigate space in daily settings. There are internal and external implications for women interacting with surrounding space, and these two interact with each other. The internal aspects come from a woman’s lived-in, bodily experience, while external factors act upon the woman’s experience of space and stem from social structures. This section is expository in nature because the embodied experience of women is a large and still expanding body of research that reaches across psychology, sociology, feminism, and more. This research has yet to cross over into the realm of music education or specifically flute pedagogy, so the links I will draw between embodied gender experience and flute playing and teaching are highly anecdotal. The sources I will discuss are the kind of research one might consider for a more

⁹¹ Royal Society for Public Health, “Status of mind: Social media and young people’s mental health,” RSPH, 2018. <https://www.rsph.org.uk/our-work/campaigns/status-of-mind.html>

⁹² Jennifer Derenne, Eugene Beresin, “Body Image, Media, and Eating Disorders,” *Academic Psychiatry* 30, no. 3 (2006): 257.

in depth understanding on how to adjust pedagogy for women's issues, but what I am presenting is the tip of the iceberg.

The conflict between traditional flute pedagogy and a more perceptive pedagogy is the understanding that people experience their bodies differently based on their gender. I.M. Young, author of "Throwing Like a Girl: A Phenomenology of Feminine Body Comportment Motility and Spatiality" presents this issue as cognitive dissonance between women having agency over their bodies but also being disempowered as "a mere object."⁹³ Due to their experiences, many women fail to "make full use of the body's spatial and lateral possibilities."⁹⁴ Young shows that when women engage in activities, actions are often isolated to the main location of action, while men demonstrate an understanding that their physical actions necessitate whole body involvement.⁹⁵ The difference in strength is often presented as a biological differences between men and women, though Young theorizes that the reason why women present as physically weaker than men is because women are not utilizing the full capacity of their bodies. In the example of throwing "like a girl," Young comments that the woman's motion is focused on the part of the body throwing the ball and is missing the assistance of the back and shoulder.⁹⁶

Attention to women underutilizing themselves could radically change the way teachers present information. One of the most important implications of this idea is the way in which female students perceive teaching instructions. In my experiences with my own

⁹³ I.M. Young, "Throwing Like a Girl: A Phenomenology of Feminine Body Comportment Motility and Spatiality," *On Female Body Experience*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 5.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

flute students, who are all female, there is often trouble connecting the work of small and large muscle groups required for flute playing. While many demonstrate capabilities of manipulating the tone with with fine adjustments from the lips, jaw, and face, it is difficult for them to coordinate this with the support of their abdominal muscles. Both are required to play flute successfully, as the speed of the air is controlled by the engagement of the embouchure, which is the shape of the lips, and the abdominal muscles. From Young's perspective, this problem makes sense if the students perceive the source of the sound as being the shape of the lips rather than the entire system involved, since women tend to isolate work to a singular body part involved.

Another portion of the issue keeping women from their complete physical potential is that they "do not perceive themselves as capable of lifting and carrying heavy things, pushing and shoving with significant force, pulling, squeezing, grasping, or twisting with force."⁹⁷ In terms of playing the flute, two problems arise. The first is that female students perceive themselves as limited, and the second is that playing the flute requires more difficult work than its sound would suggest. It is contradictory that strength is involved to produce a beautiful and singing tone on a light instrument, while the high physical involvement required to play the tuba would not be underestimated due to perceptions of the instrument as masculine.

It is also problematic that female students perceive their bodies in the way Young suggests, where small portions of the body are heavily used and are less supported by the whole body. Music students who practice for long hours on a daily basis have high potential

⁹⁷ Ibid., 7.

for injury already, and studying music at a high level requires detailed work on fine muscle movements. Using Young's logic, female students are more likely to solve technical problems on the instrument by focusing on the area causing the problem. This intent could be helped by a pedagogy that encourages using the whole body and lowers the risk for overuse injuries.

It is also important to consider the way a flutist's position to space must change at the point of the breath. The exhale is the playing sound, and it must be supported by the use of the abdominal muscles; however, continuing engagement through the breath renders the breath useless because the contracting abdominal muscles do not allow the lungs to expand for air. In an effective breathing process, the lungs create a vacuum that takes in oxygen. Simultaneously, the diaphragm expands downward to make extra space for the air and pushes organs out of the way of the expanding lungs. Therefore, an expansion of the lower abdomen is necessary, which is impossible if the abdominal muscles are contracting. An efficient breath is a point of concern for all flutists but is also a source of self-consciousness for many. Using the full potential of the body to fit the task at hand usually makes it impossible to fit the pervasive media images of an ideal woman.

To connect Young's point, a breathing pedagogy should encourage the strength and expansion of the body so that the female student is never an object but an active user and controller of space. Teachers must combat what media and culture are instilling in girls' experiences of their bodies because "the girl learns actively to hamper her movements... [and] develops a body timidity that increases with age."⁹⁸ Breathing pedagogy at the flute

⁹⁸ Ibid., 16.

and other wind instruments should foster empowerment for students. Being an active user of space combats the loss of control enforced by media and other societal structures. Young further identifies the problem as, “the woman lives her body as object as well as subject.”⁹⁹

Young’s concept of a learned hesitancy over body expansion in women is supported by other research on the impact of external patriarchal structures on how women behave in spaces. One area of this research is gender performativity, which Melissa Tyler and Laurie Cohen explain as the performance of gender norms in order to be recognized as a “viable, intelligible subject” with a “coherent and compelling identity.”¹⁰⁰ Tyler and Cohen’s work supports ideas similar to Young’s in the discussion of how women’s use of their bodies is limited in the workplace. Organizational spaces also present indicators of value, such as who has which office where, and places where people interact across gender, experience, and power. Tyler and Cohen describe this phenomenon as

Gender performativity is played out not only in terms of who is seen (by themselves and others) as a legitimate occupant of space — who is allocated space and who is not, and the symbolic implications of these arrangements — but also in boundary management. At times... women felt that their physical positioning had led to their feelings of being ‘out of bounds’, and consequently not regarded as valid subjects within their organizational settings.¹⁰¹

While Tyler and Cohen’s research is dedicated to workplaces, educational buildings offer similar kinds of structural organization. It is important to consider that most female students spend large periods of time navigating space while being negatively impacted by the inherent structures around them. Tyler and Cohen suggest that “we do not

⁹⁹ Ibid., 18.

¹⁰⁰ Melissa Tyler and Laurie Cohen. “Spaces that Matter: Gender Performativity and Organizational Space,” *Organization Studies* 31, no. 2 (2010): 179.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 186-187.

simply occupy space, but rather we become ourselves in and through it.”¹⁰² The fact that women learn to limit the full expansion and movement of their bodies in places where they struggle to legitimize their use of space is not surprising. Since music lessons usually happen in a space that belongs to the teacher, and this ownership over space reinforces the teacher-student dynamic at play, a breathing pedagogy that encourages expansion from the student should also foster empowerment over the surrounding space.

A Personal Note

I became familiar with the conflict between body image, space, and effective flute playing when I studied with body mapping teacher Lea Pearson in my efforts to overcome playing-related pain. My teacher suspected that much of my shoulder and neck pain was caused by overuse of the back and abdominal muscles while playing, and she suggested some explorative work for me to learn how to relax my abdominal muscles. She explained that while some use of core muscles is required for sitting and standing, my fear of taking up space had led me to use them constantly in order to appear smaller. I was so horrified at the thought of letting these muscles go in my daily life that I thought I would prefer to make substantial changes to my body than truly combat my fear of taking up space or being perceived as large.

I began to work through this issue when I studied with a flutist in the United Kingdom during a semester abroad. She commanded a large amount of physical space when teaching and playing and also emphasized abdominal support. Early on in my lessons, I was

¹⁰² Ibid, 192.

slow to understand supporting the breath. Once, to demonstrate a point, my teacher swatted me in the stomach and commented, “this is soggy.” While I was surprised and initially self-conscious, I came to realize that her purpose was not to highlight any of my insecurities but rather to explain that I had to use muscular effort in order to play the flute.

Acknowledging my conflicts with myself and working to increasing my comfort with my body has made me a better flute player, especially since I learned to view taking up space as an expression of strength. I notice similar kinds of body consciousness in my own flute students that limits their capabilities to breathe and play with vitality. They were the impetus for my research in this area.

Going Forward

The teaching philosophies below offer ideal components of a future flute pedagogy. These ideas all stem from feminist pedagogues and strongly acknowledge the body as a context for student experiences.

“We tried to work with our students to understand the concealed power that is inscribed on bodies—or the direct grip American culture has on the body—and we tried to create a pedagogic process that ‘gives attention to the project of liberation in a way that takes seriously the body as a site for self and social transformation.’ As justice oriented educators, we believe that bodies that are moving, speaking, and interacting in particular ways produce social spaces. Sometimes, the spaces produced are racist, sexist, misogynist, exclusionary, and oppressive, but when individuals work on their own bodies as a site for self-transformation, they can move, speak, and interact differently and produce new social spaces—perhaps spaces of inclusion, value, acceptance, and power.”¹⁰³

¹⁰³ Stephanie Jones and Hilary Hughes-Decatur, “Speaking of Bodies in Justice-Oriented, Feminist Teacher Education,” *Journal of Teacher Education* 63, no. 1 (2012): 52.

“Before words are spoken in the classroom, we come together as bodies. . . . Being comes from the body. And if we listen to our bodies inside the classroom and out we learn more ways to relate to one another.”¹⁰⁴

“Learning to read student body language can be informative. If yoga practitioners walk in hunched forward, a teacher might plan a class around heart opening, shoulder expanding, and backbends... a teacher must be fully present to notice student discomfort or disengagement. Addressing and working out the source of unease proves physically, emotionally, and intellectually fruitful in my experience... I try to communicate in such a way that observes body language without value judgment (e.g., a yoga student is “lazy” or an undergraduate student is “disruptive”); instead, body language provides for interesting teachable moments during class, which can lead to further introspection and contemplation.”¹⁰⁵

I view a potential teaching process for flutists that gives consideration to contemporary gender issues, strengthens perceptions of body image, and provides a safe space for students to learn to use their whole bodies. In this ideal, teachers are attentive to physical and emotional discomfort in their students and also aware of the implications of space. Flute teachers have room to offer as detailed an education on the use of the body as they do music.

What is both uncomfortable and heartening about this research is that there is much room for improvement in flute pedagogy. While current teaching philosophies do not address complex issues of body image and identity for young girls, more holistic methods could contribute to increased wellness and comfort for female students. As presented earlier, a primary strategy for this work should be a pedagogy that clarifies and reconciles anatomical language within itself. A study of the flute should also reach across the channels of learning that are already available to musicians, such as Alexander

¹⁰⁴ bell hooks, *Teaching Critical Thinking*. (New York: Routledge, 2010), 153.

¹⁰⁵ Jennifer Musial, “Engaged Pedagogy in the Feminist Classroom and Yoga Studio,” *Feminist Teacher* 21, No. 3 (2011): 224.

Technique, body mapping, and mindfulness. These different methods already increase awareness of self-consciousness and body image issues. When combined with the previous discussion of taking up space, concepts like I.M. Young's throwing a ball by using the entire body and the Alexander Technique focus on whole body functioning have much in common.

Ultimately, the most important takeaway is that awareness of student issues is crucial. A teaching system that does not acknowledge the struggles of students cannot be effective in such a rapidly changing environment. While the goal of this research was to make learning experiences more inclusive, more work can be done to increase comfort for students of all marginalized identities. Focusing so heavily on the female student experience has the potential to exclude transgender and non-binary students who also deserve recognition for their experiences with body image and the media. I hope to eventually expand the scope of this issue and answer further questions that have arisen from my research, such as how to unite traditional pedagogy with other disciplines and modern perceptions in a way that is concrete for students and teachers. However, the initial step is acknowledging that an awareness of the body contextualized by gender and space is missing in an academic discussion of flute playing and teaching, especially in supporting the breath.

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