

Alexander Technique Academy

ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE TEACHERS TRAINING COURSE

PREMISE

Frederick Matthias Alexander began teaching his method of psychophysical re-education at the end of the nineteenth century and in 1931 he established the first teacher training course in London. Since then the method has been enriched with new knowledge and has accumulated extensive practical and educational experience. Among the teachers who have been interpreters of this evolution stand out Walter Carrington and John Nicholls, who have lavished their commitment to systematize Alexander's teachings. This training course is inspired by them, in the program and in the method.

TRAINING PROGRAM

The three-year training program is designed to accompany the students in the gradual growth of their kinaesthetic awareness, in understanding the principles of Alexander Technique and in the acquisition of the teaching techniques. 80% of the activities are practical, the remaining 20% is theoretical. Students learn from the beginning to work on themselves, to subsequently pass on to mutual practice, and finally to work on external people. The teacher's supervision accompanies them step by step throughout the maturation process. The attitude to self-awareness, cultivated in the first two years, allows to maintain the good use of the self during manual teaching, in order to have the tactile sensitivity necessary to ensure effective action on the pupils. Continuous training to take care of your use puts the student in the condition to continue to increase his skills even after finishing the training course.

First year

In the first year of the course the attention is focused on individual students, so that they can learn to improve their awareness and use of themselves, a fundamental requirement to be able to teach others a better use. This is achieved through the practical and theoretical understanding of the three fundamental elements of the Alexander Technique: *inhibition*, *direction* and *primary control*, whose application allows to realize the condition of *going up* in themselves.

Second year

The second year focuses mainly on learning the manual skills and procedures that are used to convey the principles of the Alexander Technique. Considerable work is needed to acquire the necessary standard in self-use and in the manual sensibility necessary to carry out this work. In this phase the habit of good use is consolidated, both in daily activities and in teaching procedures.

Third year

In the third year the manual skills are refined and the problems related to teaching are tackled. Students move from practicing with each other to practice on external people and learn to keep the *directions* going during teaching. They also acquire the communication skills necessary to explain the Technique and to accompany the manual work with appropriate verbal instructions. The most suitable methods for group teaching are also tested. Issues related to the promotion and dissemination of the Alexander Technique are addressed.

CURRICULUM

Fundamental concepts

The training is carried out through the experience and understanding of the concepts underlying the Alexander Technique:

- *Inhibition*: Consciously refusing to react to stimuli that cause the body to be used habitually; deny consent to compressive attitudes.
- *Direction*: Mentally invite a part of the body to go in the right direction, releasing everything that prevents it.
- *Primary Control*: Head-neck-back relationship in relation to the use and functioning of the rest of the body.
- *Non-end-gaining and means-whereby*: Move the focus from what you want to do to the means taken to reach the end.
- *Non-doing*: Act indirectly; stop doing what interferes with the coordinated, elastic and expansive use of the body.
- *Faulty sensory appreciation*: Habitual use is perceived as normally correct even if inadequate and harmful.
- *Use and functioning*: Use, understood as the motor component on which we exercise will, affects the functioning, i.e. the automatic component.
- *Psychophysical integration*: The unitary psychophysical conception of the person is the presupposition of the re-educational action of the Alexander Technique.

Theoretical activities

They represent 20% of the training. Every day 30-40 minutes are dedicated to a theoretical session, which can be conducted either with the frontal method or through more reflective and participatory practices.

- Study of texts by F. M. Alexander and others authors on the Alexander Technique.
- Elements of anatomy and physiology of the human body especially of the skeletal, muscular and nervous systems.
- Practice of individual and collective teaching: the first lesson; the relationship between teacher and student; application to particular contexts; teaching to groups.
- Psychological and emotional aspects of the processes of growth and change.
- Presenting, promoting, and disseminating the Alexander Technique.
- Ethical and legal aspects of professional practice.

Practical activities

They represent 80% of the training. They are based on the classical procedures developed by F. M. Alexander, to which are added activities that allow to explore the use of oneself in different situations, the so-called *games* of the school of Walter Carrington or *directed activities* of the school of John Nicholls. Furthermore, the application of the Technique to activities of expressive, artistic, recreational or sporting nature is taken into consideration.

Classic procedures

- *Chair work*: through the movement of getting up and sitting, the fundamental coordination between the supporting muscles of the trunk and that of the lower limbs is established, in their dual function of support and mobility.
- *Table work*: the lying position with the knees bent and raised, and the head supported at appropriate height, offers the possibility of releasing chronic tensions, since the body is not committed to sustain and perform physical activities.
- *Monkey*: this position, with hips and slightly bent knees, exemplifies the pattern of *antagonistic pulls* and promotes an elastic tone throughout the musculature, the condition underlying the expansion of the whole body.

- *Hands on the back of the chair*: by means of this practice you learn to use your arms and hands without compromising the muscular support of the trunk and the mobility of the ribs in breathing. Combined with the monkey it becomes a fundamental experience in teacher training.
- *Whispered Ah*: This practice allows you to observe the crucial relationship between breathing and postural support. In many cases these two functions interfere with each other, but improving one's use they can benefit synergistically.

Directed activities

The classical Alexander Techniques procedures and other gestures pertaining to daily life are used, as well as less usual activities. They illuminate some practical aspects of the Alexander Technique and are useful both for observing personal use and for individual and collective teaching. They are performed by each individual student under the supervision of the teacher. The activity lasts 30 minutes and takes place daily.

Individual turns

Mini-lessons lasting 10-15 minutes. They are intended to help students to improve the use of themselves. They usually concern the work on the chair or on the table. Each student receives at least one turn per day, normally two.

Hands-on groups

Students learn to use their hands on another person. They are guided through a progression in which the most basic practices become the foundation on which to develop more complex manual skills. Learning takes place in small groups of 2-3 students, with close supervision of the teacher. Each session lasts 30 minutes and is repeated at least twice a week.

Private lessons

Each student periodically receives a 30-minute private lesson. The lesson is a privileged moment to get in touch with yourself, to face particular aspects of self-use and to take stock of the training situation with the teacher.

Work on oneself

At times when the students are not involved in organized activities, they are expected to work on themselves by exercising in the procedures learned or in other activities of their choice. They are also encouraged to read the available material and to reflect it in writing.

Homework

Each term, written and oral exercises are required to stimulate the skills of observation, perception and introspection in the application of the Alexander Technique. Other exercises are designed to develop communication skills aimed at teaching and promoting the Alexander Technique.

Collective teaching

Although the Alexander Technique is taught individually, by hand, it is often offered to groups of people in various forms: conference, demonstrations, laboratory, series of meetings, etc. To this end, the modalities through which the group experience can be made effective are examined.

Applications

In addition to the basic training, activities are proposed regarding the application of the Alexander Technique to particular disciplines, such as singing, running, swimming, horse riding. These activities are carried out compatibly with the availability of qualified teachers and appropriate facilities.

STRUCTURE

Times

The course has a duration of 3 years, for a total of 1.600 hours. In each year there are 36 weeks of lessons divided into 3 terms of variable duration: from September to Christmas, from January to Easter, from Easter to July. During the summer there are no lessons. The entire training course is therefore made up of 9 terms. Classes run from Tuesday to Friday, from 8.30 to 12.30.

Teacher-student relationship

In order to guarantee the necessary individual attention, a numerical ratio of no more than 5 students per teacher during practical activities is respected.

Location

Via Vittorio Emanuele II, 30/A - 25030 COCCAGLIO (BS)

Costs

Average fee for each term: € 1.800,00.

To be paid in the first week of each term.

The fee may vary depending on the actual duration of the term.

Registration fee: € 600,00. It is considered an advance on the fee for the last term.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION

- Sufficient personal experience of the Alexander Technique (at least 20 lessons, of which at least 5 with the course director).
- Interest in cultivating the Alexander Technique as a personal and professional discipline.
- Average education level.
- Basic knowledge of the English language.
- Presentation of the application form and interview with the director.
- Admission can take place at the beginning of each term, based on available places.

RECOGNITION AND QUALIFICATION

The Training Course is approved by the STAT (The Society of Teachers of the Alexander Technique), the most representative AT professional body in the world, and is subject to its regulations.

The level of learning is certified by the course director and assessed at different stages by an independent STAT moderator.

Upon completion of the training course, students receive the *Alexander Technique Teacher Certificate* from STAT and can become member of the Society. They are also recognized by the *STAT affiliated societies*, which exist in various countries, and can ask to become member of their local one.

TEACHERS

Director: Paolo Frigoli

Paolo Frigoli graduated as a Masseur-physiotherapist in 1989. Between 1989 and 1992 he trained as a teacher at the *Centro Italiano Tecnica Alexander*, under the guidance of Frances Robinson and Angelo Cinque. He then spent several periods of postgraduate training in England, especially at the Brighton Alexander Training Centre, directed by John and Carolyn Nicholls. Since 1993 he has been teaching the Alexander Technique privately. At the same time, he studied the Mézierès-Bertelé method and the Cranio-Sacral Therapy of Dr. John Upledger, which is still integrated into his professional practice. Paolo Frigoli has conducted seminars and courses at various public and private institutions and has taught at various schools of Alexander Technique, in Italy, England, Spain, Switzerland, Brazil, United States.

Main Assistant: Giorgio Ravazzolo

- 1982: Flute diploma at the conservatory "C. Pollini" of Padova.
- 1987: *Konzertdiplom* at the Conservatory of Winterthur (CH).
- 1990 STAT Certificate of Alexander Technique Teacher.
- Postgraduate courses in Switzerland and England.
- Teaching Alexander Technique at various public and private institutions.
- From 2000 to 2007 assistant at the Italian School of Teacher Training of T.A.
- From 2015: principal assistant at the Alexander Technique Academy

2nd assistant: Claudio Zancopè

- 1980: Singing diploma at the "Cesare Pollini" Conservatory in Padova.
- 1970 – 2013: singer at the "Gran Teatro La Fenice" in Venice and concerts in Italy and abroad.
- 2002: STAT Certificate of Alexander Technique Teacher.
- AT postgraduate courses in Switzerland.
- Claudio teaches the Alexander technique privately and in vocal courses.

Other teachers

Experienced teachers in training are regularly invited to contribute. Other certified Alexander Techniques teachers will be present as needed. The teaching of related disciplines can be entrusted to external teachers.