

**AmSAT Huddle: Researching our Practice: Gabriella Minnes Brandes, Ph.D.**  
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Publications relevant to this talk:

Brandes, G.M., & Woods, C. (2021). Disciplined inquiry and the Alexander Technique: What is it and why do it? Alexander Studies Online,  
<https://www.alexanderstudiesonline.com/blog/the-3rd-edition-of-the-aso-newsletter>

Brandes, G.M., Condie, J, Wielinga A., (2020, February). Using Alexander Technique principles with Beginning Piano Students: A Collaborative “duet” between an Alexander Technique teacher and a piano teacher. Music Teachers National Association eJournal

Brandes, G.M., (2019), “Alexander Technique gives me space to create musically”: Musicians explore the application of Alexander Technique principles, Congress Papers- Advancing Global Perspectives. STAT Books: London, pp. 192-198

SLIDES

1  **RESEARCHING OUR PRACTICE**

Gabriella Minnes Brandes, Ph.D.

AmSAT Panel on Research, 2021

2  **F M Alexander: An invitation for inquiry**

- Vocal challenge: Posing a question that matters

- “It was something I was doing that evening [on stage performing] in using my voice that was the cause of the trouble” (U o S p. 412)

Curiosity, real need and responsibility

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- Choosing methods and systematically collecting data:

- Experiments and Observations (mirrors)

- Moving from familiar to unfamiliar

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- Emergent theory based on data analysis and relevant literature
- New experiments
- New theories
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### 3 **Alexander Technique: Re-education**

#### 2 • Learning from research in education:

- Qualitative or quantitative
  - Action research
- Observation, participant observation, interviews, surveys etc.
- Choosing methods that fit the question
- Oriented towards teaching and change

### 4 **An exploration of the process of practicing: An intersection of music and Alexander Technique with Theresa Lei**

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#### Research question:

How can a musician examine the process of practicing through the lens of the application of AT in the practice room?

#### Methodology:

#### Methodology:

Videotaping five practice sessions; using WeVu for time-specific comments on videos.  
Musician (Theresa Lei), French horn professor, AT teacher (Gaby)

### 5 **WeVu**

- Each observer viewed each session independently and made comments that were time-specific using codes that highlighted AT concepts and music
- <https://wevu.video/wevu-for-music>

### 6 **Application of AT concepts to enhance Learning to Act**

#### Research question:

In which ways do acting students take what they learn in Alexander lessons to support their acting?

Methodology:

Content Analysis of journal entries that acting students submitted throughout one academic term.

7  **Alexander Technique and piano pedagogy: A “duet” of applying AT concepts in a piano studio with Jennifer Condie**

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Research questions:

How are a piano teacher’s decisions made in real time connected to AT concepts? How is piano student’s learning shaped by the teacher’s use of AT inspired concepts?

Methodology:

Seven students, six weeks Using WeVu four people (two piano teachers and two AT teachers) provided time-specific comments on the videotapes. These comments as well as follow-up meetings were analyzed.

8  **Research: A generative process of inquiry**

Burning Question >

- Moving away from an intuitive “hunch” to a systematic, critical and analytical process of approaching a question
- Literature review, framework, context, other works in the related fields
- Choosing methods and participants
- Data collection
- Analysis
- Sharing findings and articulating new questions

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Challenges:

- Bias & preconceived ideas
- Ethics
- Resistance
- Time consuming

## 9 My “burning questions”

### Learning

- How do we describe how we learn when we use AT as a framework for experiential and embodied learning?

### Teaching

- How are AT concepts taught in different contexts? Collaborating
- What / how do AT teachers contribute when collaborating with experts in other fields?  
9 research projects Findings:
- Co-constructing a nuanced language for experiential and embodied learning through the application of AT
- Collaborating with others is a fruitful context for exploration

## 10 What is your “burning question”?

- What are you curious about?
  - Is there a challenge in your own use?
  - Is there a comment that you repeat to your students?
  - Is there something that you want to change in your practice?
- Where can you learn more about your question?
- What data will help you systematically gather information to answer
- What data will help you systematically gather information to answer your question?

Feel free to email me with questions or comments

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