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Current Views on Teacher Word Choice in American College Flute Lessons

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CURRENT VIEWS ON TEACHER WORD CHOICE IN
AMERICAN COLLEGE FLUTE LESSONS

By
Hannah Christine Weiss

A DOCTORAL ESSAY

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of the University of Miami
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CURRENT VIEWS ON TEACHER WORD CHOICE IN AMERICAN COLLEGE FLUTE LESSONS

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The purpose of this study is to explore the factors that influence a teacher’s word choice in American private college-level flute lessons. Most of the research that has been conducted on music instruction focuses on technical methods for the purpose of enhancing curricula. Some research exists which explores the more psychological side of teaching and learning; however, the research that studies the private music lesson often seeks to understand either the teacher-student relationship through the eyes of students, or to understand music teacher perceptions on the ways in which their teaching informs their performing. While many studies and publications indirectly speak to the use of language in teaching and learning music, most research that explores the effectiveness of teaching approaches for specific techniques does not explore the verbal delivery used in the method. There is little literature in print which addresses teacher word choice, and even less, still, in the flute world.

An examination of the available literature on subjects relevant to the factors that influence teacher word choice revealed six major topics: artist-teacher background,
teacher’s responsibility to meet student’s needs and expectations, significance of the one-to-one teacher-student relationship, verbal teacher feedback, heightened sensitivities in music instruction, and words and music learning. Careful review of the prose relating word choice and existing practices in music instruction today led the author to pose the following research questions:

1. What elements of a teacher’s background influence their word choice in lessons?

2. To what degree does student individuality affect a teacher’s word choice from student to student?

3. How do teachers reflect their goals and values in their word choice?

The research questions were addressed first by conducting semi-structured interviews with five of the nation’s leading flute pedagogues, chosen based on both the longevity and prestige of their performing career and the notable successes of current and former students. In alphabetical order, the subjects were: Leone Buyse, Marianne Gedigian, Amy Porter, Jim Walker, and Carol Wincenc. The interview questions were designed to uncover perceptions about the artist-teachers’ language use and how it relates to the six overarching topics discovered in the literature review.

Upon completing and transcribing the interviews, the author “encoded” each transcription to discover common themes regarding the influences on the type of language used in lessons. The author performed every stage of research involved in this study, including the interview design, execution, and analyses.

The study would be of use to any flutist, music teacher, or flute teacher who wishes to expand their knowledge of the complexity of music learning, increase their
understanding of the intricacies of the one-to-one instruction model and explore the potentials for interconnectedness and musical creativity that result from thoughtful word choice.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to Leone Buyse, Marianne Gedigian, Amy Porter, Jim Walker, and Carol Wincenc who so graciously gave me hours of their time and attention. You gifted me with rich history, your story so sweetly packaged in the unique way you each describe your teaching self, your beloved mentors, and your dear students. It was my honor to collect all of this in one place and organize it in a way that has not been done before. Thank you for trusting me.

Thank you to Professor Trudy for your infinite support and enthusiasm. When I first learned that you could not participate as an interview subject, I was crushed. I did not yet know how much you would contribute to this project from right beside me as my editor, my cheer leader, my sage. This was a transformational project, and I owe much of my growth to your fierce encouragement. How lucky I am to culminate my formal studies with you as you complete your final semester of university teaching. This has been a special time for me, the memories of which I will carry with me always.

Thank you to the rest of my committee whose refreshing perspectives and patient guidance renewed my excitement for this ambitious project each time I came to you for direction. Dr. Carnochan, Professor Conner, and Dr. Sena Moore, I was fortunate to have you on my team.

Finally, I cannot release a body of work centered on teaching – specifically, on word choice in teaching the arts – without acknowledging a devoted teacher and wordsmith so dear to me, my father. Dad introduced me to the idea of being an educator.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

In the 1960s, child psychologists began to research the importance of a mother’s language in the development of small children. Dr. Haim Ginott was one child psychologist and education advocate who meticulously studied parent-child communication and published his findings in “how-to” books for parents and teachers, such as the bestsellers *Between Parent and Teenager, Between Parent and Child,* and *Teacher and Child: A Book for Parents and Teachers.* His observations are still being quoted in modern resources for today’s parents and teachers. In their 1995 bestseller *How to Talk So Kids Can Learn,* experts on parent-child communication Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish begin with an impactful Ginott quote situated alone on the first page: “How parents and teachers talk tells a child how they feel about him. Their statements affect his self-esteem and self-worth. To a large extent, their language determines his destiny.”

Although this statement refers to susceptibility in child development, it acknowledges the profound impact words have on those who hear and internalize them. It also draws a parallel between the parent-child dyad and the teacher-student dyad.

Private one-to-one teacher-student time in weekly lessons is arguably the most precious of the many benefits of studying music performance in higher education. College music majors receive weekly private applied lessons on their instruments. Both frequency and the consistency of these closed meetings contribute to their effectiveness.

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They are especially powerful for young adults because the opportunity for the repeated total customization of a learning environment to meet the individual goals and needs of a student is so rare.

The intense dyad is most commonly found outside of education, such as in the specialized fields of competitive sports and psychotherapy. In these disciplines, the dyad allows for privacy and intense focus on the specific needs of an athlete in search of the gold medal or a patient in search of healing. In everyday life, there are few chances for the average young adult to enjoy regular private meetings with an expert mentor assigned to them; even fewer still are the number of college degree programs that are actually built around that valuable one-to-one time. An exception is music performance, where the one-to-one lesson is at the heart of the curriculum.2

The undivided attention that coaches and therapists can afford their clients is the same undivided attention that applied music instructors can provide their students every week in private lessons. Music education researcher Helena Gaunt likens the effectiveness of the music teacher-student dyad to that of Ph.D. supervision, which also “allow[s] for the depth of applied craft skills made possible in one-to-one interaction.”3 In private lessons, students not only work to develop complex fine motor skills, they strengthen the ability to execute musical interpretations with conviction, and they discuss personal doubts, fears, and ambitions. Helena Gaunt speaks to the invaluable importance of this regular private meeting with their teachers stating that “the power of one-to-one


3 Ibid.
tuition in Higher Music Education is evidenced by its continuing place at the heart of conservatoire education.”

Danielle Sirek, instructor on the Faculty of Education at Windsor University, speaks to a resulting “natural power imbalance between teacher and student” as she addresses the need for improving teaching practice and developing more meaningful curricula. In a book written for professional musicians who teach, Cornelia Watkins and Laurie Scott simply state, “Teachers are authority figures.” Music teachers in higher education bear great responsibility as they build individual relationships with their students in regular, private contact. Furthermore, a teacher’s words can soften or strengthen the power imbalance between them and their students.

Many well-regarded flute professors have been awarded teaching jobs because they have such impressive playing experience. These teachers have often spent decades honing their playing skills sitting in the major orchestras of the world and touring the world’s recital halls with the most renowned chamber music artists. They are often later appointed to teaching positions by the nation’s leading music schools based on their playing merit, with the expectation that the most experienced artists ought to pass on their expertise to the next generation of musicians. According to David Purser, “Playing, rather

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4 Gaunt, “Understanding the One-to-one Relationship,” 159.


6 Ibid., 17.

than teaching ability has generally appeared to be the major factor in making [a conservatory teaching] appointment…Once appointed, a new conservatoire teacher may be left alone to get on with teaching his or her students.”

These performance experts who have become teachers will from here on be referred to as “artist-teachers.”

Winning and keeping an orchestral job or sustaining a career as a soloist takes immense dedication to the mastering of technical skills and mental focus. It is no wonder that these trained-performers-turned-college-teachers frequently use these hard-earned skills in lessons, relying heavily on demonstration as a form of communication. Denis Bouriakov, current principal flutist of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, testifies to the effectiveness of his teacher William Bennett’s playing as compared to speaking: “When I went to study with [Bennett], hearing him play in lessons was sometimes more informative than words, even though he explained things in amazingly great detail.” In this teacher-student pairing, imitation was often the best method of communication; however, mimicry is not always successful for all students. Some students need explicit verbalization of how a process works in order to learn it. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine teachers’ perceptions about when to use words in teaching, and what words to choose. This study seeks to explore the factors that influences these choices.

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Personal Interest

My personal interest in this subject originated during my transition into the doctor of musical arts in performance degree. After eight years of studying flute in college, I thought I knew what reactions to expect from myself in response to my teachers during private lessons. I was fascinated by my emotional response and the subsequent improvement to my playing as a direct result of my new teacher’s thoughtfully worded feedback. Never before had vocabulary been so central to the lessons I had with my previous teachers, for whom I had and still have the utmost respect, appreciation, and gratitude. I became curious about the impact of my new teacher’s words on her other students. I found that the rest of my colleagues’ experiences mirrored mine; her style of repetition in verbal feedback and all-around positivity was transformative for other students as well. When I asked her about her careful choice of words, we discussed briefly her philosophy on teacher feedback and how it developed throughout her life. Hearing about her diverse experiences studying with and observing both effective and ineffective teachers alike excited me, and I began to wonder about the different journeys and perspectives of other exceptional teachers. This study is my exploration of these differences.

Problem Statement

Only recently has there been any literature in existence which is specifically concerned with teacher word choice in private flute lessons. In the fall 2017 edition of the National Flute Association’s major publication, The Flutist Quarterly, Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music Professor of Flute and former Boston Symphony Orchestra
principal flutist Leone Buyse says, “Every day we talk and we write, whether emails, texts, letters, or the occasional presentation. Do we remember to take full advantage of chances to connect meaningfully by choosing our words with care?” She asserts that the “richness of language” can be a powerful tool in teaching. This study explores current views on the factors that influence teacher word choice in college flute lessons as held by America’s leading flute pedagogues. The themes that emerge are intended to contribute to existing research on artist-teacher perceptions about teaching through intentional exploration on the subject of their use of words in their own teaching. The research intends to move meaningful connection and thoughtful interaction to the fore of what is considered to be skillful college-level teaching.

**Need for Study**

This study aims to equip future flute teachers with insights on developing a personal teaching style which is both authentic and effective. Dialogue between the teacher and student is a part of that style. While it is obvious that a college flute teacher would need to effectively use words to communicate with their students, the traditional performance-heavy trajectory that lands flutists into influential teaching positions does little to assist in the intricacies of instruction. In 2019, most job postings for vacancies in college-level teaching jobs call for applicants who have either an impressive performance career or a doctor of musical arts degree in flute performance. The National Association

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11 Ibid.
of Schools of Music (NASM) describes in its 2017-2018 handbook the following expectations for performance D.M.A. graduates:

Performance competence is at the highest professional level with historical and theoretical knowledge supportive of the development of individualized interpretations. Competencies also include a broad knowledge of repertory and literature. Additional studies in pedagogy are recommended.12

This desired outcome of the performance doctoral degree has a number of alarming implications. The first is that the job market’s demand for students to achieve excellency in performance in order to have the chance to become teachers devalues teacher training. The second is that the degree sets students up to be merely “competent” in regard to non-performative aspects of music, such as in cultivating an awareness of the vast material written for or about their instrument. The third is that the criteria merely suggests that pedagogical studies be included in the doctoral student’s curriculum. The fourth, and perhaps most disturbing implication is the use of the vague term “additional studies” in a curriculum outline. It is not specified if a doctoral student ought to have applied or practical teaching experience, or if the suggestion for “additional studies” is to simply obtain familiarity with the history, philosophy, or theory of teaching their instrument. Perhaps these optional studies refer to the all-too common unsupervised teaching of undergraduate students by inexperienced doctoral students. The passive and ambiguous nature of NASM’s pedagogy inclusion in its performance D.M.A. degree objective deemphasizes the importance of teaching experience for a teacher and does nothing to guide the conscientious young musician seeking resources for developing an

effective teaching style. Similarly unhelpful to musicians without pedagogy training are the books written for artist-teachers seeking to improve their teaching skills.

The back cover of teacher educator Dr. Donald Hamann’s book “On Staff: A Practical Guide to Starting Your Career in a University Music Department” boasts a description by USC Thornton School of Music’s Dean, Rob Cutietta, who calls it a “guiding star” for doctoral music students entering the work force in higher education, “starting with the process of looking for a college position all the way through getting hired and succeeding once hired.”13 The book provides step-by-step processes for writing a cover letter for a job application, optimizing comfort during the exhausting and nerve-wracking audition and interview process, and typing up a sharp syllabus for one’s first class upon being hired. It explains the tenure track and briefs tomorrow’s workforce on the politics in academia. Nowhere in the book are there suggestions for resources which will aid in the development of the excellent teaching skills that might attract the attention of the job search committee. In addition, the book does not address how to speak to one’s students once a teacher has been hired to teach them. If learning to teach is not at the center of the degree required for teaching jobs, and if effective teaching strategies are not mentioned in the “guiding star” for beginner teachers, then how are tomorrow’s teachers to develop into expert pedagogues? Gaining insight into the decision-making process surrounding word choice in applied lessons can inform the teaching philosophies and styles of the next generation of music teachers. Through conversations with today’s leading flute instructors about the factors that influence their word choice, this study seeks to do just that.

The same de-emphasis of teaching effectiveness found in the training and hiring processes of tomorrow’s teachers is reflected in the lack of research on the topic of language in applied music lessons, specifically on the subject of artist-teacher’s opinions on the subject. While exhaustive research has been conducted on both music education and on words, little energy has been focused on examining words in music education; even less energy has been devoted to understanding all that influences a teacher’s word choice. A quick keyword search of the online issue archives for both Flute Talk and The Flutist Quarterly, currently the two most widely disseminated publications of the latest in flute pedagogy, yield no results for either the term “words” or “language.” The “Pedagogy” sections of both magazines list articles that answer “how to teach” questions, but these articles often do not explain why certain approaches work better than others. Research is lacking on artist-teachers’ perceptions of their preferred teaching methods.

In 1995, Gail Lynn Seneviratne interviewed five “artist-musicians in education” to understand the perceptions, practices, and values of those who are both practicing performers and teachers.14 Seneviratne’s intention in surveying these experienced performers-turned-educators was to explore their individual musical journeys and how their performance paths inform their current work as teachers. The study yielded valuable stories and insights but did not address influential factors in the conscious choices these artist-teachers make regarding the use of language in teaching music.

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In the flute community, stories and insights have for centuries been well preserved. All American flutists can somehow trace their pedagogical lineage to find influence by the French flutist and teacher Paul Taffanel, who taught at the Paris Conservatoire from 1893-1908. 87% of living American flutists can trace their lineage back to William Kincaid, who studied with Taffanel’s student Georges Barrère; 59% of American flutists can trace back to Georges Laurent; and 55% to Marcel Moyse, both of whom were also students of the “distinguished master” Paul Taffanel. Thus, this closed circuit of ideas and the model for the passing on of information through mimicking exact interpretations from generation to generation of American flutists has not changed since the 1750s.

Student of Georges Barrère, Bernard Goldberg, recants in an interview that his teacher taught frequently by example, that he was a born performing artist, and that he would arrive by instinct at decisions which students would then accept and adopt themselves. Marcel Moyse is remembered by Flute Talk magazine editor-in-chief Patricia George as “an exacting teacher. It was said that he expected students to interpret the music just as he did and would be upset if they did not comply.” Historically, lessons have been conducted with little teacher-student dialogue. With little

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15 Demetra Baferos Fair, “In Search of the Flutist Family Tree” (DMA doc., The Ohio State University, 2003), 4.

16 Ibid., ii.

17 Ibid., iii.


acknowledgement of the process of problem solving or the gradual development of musical style, artist-teachers have tended over time to pass down, along with their wonderful musical interpretations, the tradition of teacher-centered teaching. However, the world that awaits today’s college music majors is not the same world in which Paul Taffanel lived. The learning arena must evolve to best serve tomorrow’s musicians.

In 2016, Dr. Clint Randles, Associate Professor of Music Education at the University of South Florida wrote in the Huffington Post about this very need for adaptation. “Why Music Lessons Need to Keep Up With the Times” went viral with the message that music teachers must make “drastic change”\(^{20}\) to reflect the rapidly evolving world in which music education struggles to find relevance. He implores those interested in the advancement of music education to update the music teacher’s job description. “I would like to suggest here that perhaps the perfect example of the skill set required of a re-envisioned music teacher can be seen in the life of a music producer. These professionals are part musician, part technician, part guidance counselor and part magician…”\(^{21}\) Randles's request calls for music teachers to acknowledge that they must be more than just musicians. Thus, flute teachers must serve as more than demonstrators. The methods employed in college flute lessons must fulfill a multitude of functions, and the words they use can be great tools for doing just that.


\(^{21}\) Ibid.
Purpose

This study seeks to explore views on teacher word choice in college flute lessons. The author hopes that this exploration of the under-studied subject of language in private college flute lessons might contribute to advancements in not only flute pedagogy but in other areas of college-level musical pedagogy. Through defining the themes found in their described teaching values, motivations, and objectives as they relate to their vocabulary, the author hopes that five of the nation’s already well-respected flute teachers can further inspire the next generation of teachers as they develop their philosophy of teaching. The work aims to answer research questions which may reveal the variety of factors that influence a teacher’s choice of words in American college flute lessons.

Delimitations

The author acknowledges that interviewing five flutist participants yields limited results. The author also recognizes that further valuable insight into music pedagogy at the college level could be gained through interviewing instructors of other instruments as well as vocal teachers and conductors.
Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introductory Remarks

The literature review in this chapter references the research conducted on areas of study pertinent to the advancement of college flute pedagogy. There is little research concerning teacher word choice in American college flute lessons as it is understood by the leading pedagogues in the country; however, there is substantial research on related subjects. This chapter contains the relevant information that serves as a foundation for a study on the factors that influence word choice in American college flute lessons. It is divided into the following six categories: Teacher’s Responsibility to Meet Student Needs and Expectations, Significance of the One-to-one Teacher-Student Relationship, Verbal Teacher Feedback, Artist-Teacher Background, Heightened Sensitivities in Music Instruction, and Words and Music Learning.

Teacher’s Responsibility to Meet Student Needs and Expectations

In the 1920s, Shin’ichi Suzuki developed what is now arguably one of the twentieth century’s most successful approaches to teaching beginner violinists. At the heart of the Mother Tongue Method is the belief that “all children, without exception, flourish in response to skillful teaching. They are born equipped with that potential.”22 Skillful teaching helps students reach their potential. To reach their potential, a student’s learning needs must be met.

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In the 1950s, educational psychologist Benjamin Bloom described the basic facets of cognition in student learning.\textsuperscript{23} Updated in the 1990s,\textsuperscript{24} this taxonomy is still the standard for building curricula in all disciplines. In order of increasing depth of cognition, the six levels of learning are: 1. Knowing or Remembering 2. Understanding or Comprehending 3. Applying 4. Analyzing and Synthesizing 5. Evaluating, and 6. Creating.\textsuperscript{25} In order for a student to truly learn material, the teacher must guide a student through all six levels of cognition. This takes energy, self-awareness, patience, and planning.

Teaching that reaches all of the above six levels requires great care because the lessons must be designed to engage the student’s full brain. Teacher educator and author Elizabeth Sokolowski believes in the importance of this kind of comprehensive learning in music. In \textit{Making Musical Meaning: Unlocking the Value of Music Education in the Age of Innovation}, she explains:

\begin{quote}
When we design learning which is transparent, connects to standards and intellectual/cognitive growth and development, and identifies clearly the rigorous and relevant process of making meaning through music, we substantiate a comprehensive learning process which engages both left and right brain activity. What is critical to such teaching is the design process.\textsuperscript{26}
\end{quote}

Teachers must design lessons with an awareness of students’ constant and complex


\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 31.

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 32.
learning processes. Learning is gradual, and music learning is full of “relevant rigors;” therefore, music teachers must give attention to how they deliver quality instruction to the students.27

This is no small task. Music teachers may find it helpful to borrow from the skill sets of non-musicians. The founder of Philosophy Special Research Interest Group of the National Association of Music Education suggests incorporating ethnographic teaching:

Ethnographic study is based on the notion that ‘knowledge of all cultures is valuable.’ It involves the ongoing and systematic collection, description, and analysis of people, places, events, and understandings, and the placement of these things into meaningful context… Employing ethnography as a pedagogical tool can improve teaching practice and help to develop more meaningful curricula for our students.28

The ongoing process central to ethnography relates to a music teacher’s never-ending process of perfecting their teaching. An ethnographer seeking to understand a culture collects a wide range of data. Just as an ethnographer catalogues diverse experiences across time and with many different people with the belief that all data are valuable in deeply understanding that culture, a college flute teacher must understand the members of their culture — their flute studio. The students will all have unique learning styles, different goals, and individual strengths and weaknesses. Teachers must collect and analyze information about all of this in order to optimize their teaching’s effectiveness.

Music teachers are not just curricula designers and ethnographers. History shows that music teachers have been and always will be salespeople, too. In a book from the

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27 Sokolowski, 32.

28 Sirek, 18.
1930s, James Muriel, a prolific author on the subjects of music education and the use of music in general education, said that “education must be organized as a great and conscious act of the highest salesmanship.”\textsuperscript{29} Given that each student learns in a unique way, teachers must consciously be aware of how they are delivering their material and to whom. Without this conscientious approach, teachers risk the students’ unwillingness to buy what is being sold.

It is important to note that, in addition to their ethnographic and sales-like roles, music teachers also play the important role of performer. Internationally renowned music behavioral researcher Roland Persson speaks to the challenges of balancing these roles. In describing a particularly intimidating artist-teacher, he says “to be a formidable artist and a formidable pedagogue may well be attributes of the same individual, but they describe different roles as well as different skills in different contexts.”\textsuperscript{30} Here, it is not the artist-teacher’s intimidating nature that is of note. Instead, it is Persson’s acknowledgment that this person’s formidable success in both a pedagogical and a performing context does not mean that teaching and performing are the same. There is a distinction between the role of a teacher and the role of a performer. Each role requires different skills. Whether or not a music teacher’s instruction and performing display the same characteristics is dependent on that individual. One cannot lump together the two different job requirements of a performer and a teacher.


In order to define their teaching responsibilities, teachers must not only maintain an awareness of their students’ learning styles; they must also understand that students’ emotional and social needs are constantly changing. College students must combat countless outside stressors. New college students have just moved away from home and must look after themselves, learning to manage their time and their finances. They face the prevalence of drugs and alcohol and all of the social implications that are attached to both the decision to indulge in or to pass on binge drinking and experimenting with drugs. All of these stress factors combine to make the college campus one giant arena for developing flexible and resilient social skills.  

Crucial for music teachers to understand is the fact that students begin at this stage to develop their own character and to learn how best to navigate the accommodation of different personality types.  

For those students who are not transitioning into adult life, college is still a time and place of significant transformation. In her 2011 study seeking to understand the one-to-one teaching model in music learning in higher education, Helena Gaunt acknowledges that it is not just the college freshmen who are vulnerable.  

Students transitioning from school to professional life undergo a huge shift as they traverse their exit from the safety of education to the uncertainty of the professional world. Whether it be from home to independent life on college campus, or from the safety of student-

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32 Ibid.

33 Gaunt, “Understanding the One-to-one Relationship,” 160.

34 Ibid.
hood in academia to the uncertainty of the professional performing arena or a university professorship, all college age musicians are in a state of growth.

In addition to the many skill and personality developments that college students experience, those who major in music need also to learn how to become their best musical selves. Even the most gifted college players are, according to Persson, “still in the process of establishing their identity as musicians.”35 In this crucial mental stage, students are in a vulnerable learning position. It is essential that technical skill acquisition be complemented by the building of self-esteem. Estelle Jorgensen postulates that, in college music lessons, developing technique is even secondary to developing self-confidence.36

In an effort to further understand individuality in students’ music learning, Helena Gaunt and Susan Hallam conducted a study and reported that when music students enter college, they first experience a drop of self-esteem and an increase of anxiety.37 In their second year, students tend to recover confidence, but “become more realistic in their aspirations as they are made aware of the fiercely competitive nature of the music profession.”38 This natural period of questioning induces a rise and fall of emotions, doubts, and fears that exacerbates for music students the additional college pressures that all students face.


38 Ibid.
As students pass through the period of self-doubt and shock, their skills and personalities develop, and so does their learning style. As students age, their approach to learning adapts. This shift in learning must be mirrored by the teacher, whose role will evolve as their students evolve.\textsuperscript{39} “The influence of the early teachers, who are viewed as warm and sympathetic, seems to be particularly important in encouraging the initial development of a positive musical identity with inspiring teachers, who act as role models, increasingly important as expertise develops.”\textsuperscript{40} The beginner musician needs encouragement and sympathy. The pre-professional musician needs an inspiring role model.

**Significance of the One-to-one Teacher-Student Relationship**

In their research on teacher and student perspectives on one-to-one pedagogy, Gemma Carey and Catherine Grant found that music students and teachers alike viewed private lessons as an “indispensable, intense and intricate part of instrumental and vocal learning.”\textsuperscript{41} Contributing to its “invaluable, even irreplaceable”\textsuperscript{42} nature is the one-to-one method’s capacity for customization. Many researchers liken the impactfulness and subordinate dependency of the teacher-student relationship to that of the parent-child

\textsuperscript{39} Gaunt and Hallam, “Individuality in the Learning of Music Skills,” 471.


\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 17.
relationship.\textsuperscript{43} Richard Kennell speaks to the profundity of both relationships. “The one-to-one relationship of the teacher and music student is only duplicated in one's life by the kinship of parent and child. A student often experiences a relationship with his teacher as personal as any in his life and is profoundly influenced musically and otherwise.”\textsuperscript{44} This is likely why the private lesson, however unstudied and unsupervised, is so influential and why it has for decades remained untouched at the core of music learning models.

One factor that contributes to the intensity of the private lesson is the natural power imbalance in the teacher-student dyad. In the one-to-one music lesson, teachers and students must negotiate an appropriate teacher–student relationship, strike the right balance between teacher-led and student-led learning, and manage one or both parties’ adaption to the personality and teaching/learning style of the other.\textsuperscript{45} Through student interviews, Carey and Grant discovered that students place extremely high value on their relationship with their teacher despite the difficulties associated with a power dynamic, or, perhaps even because of that imbalance of power.\textsuperscript{46}

There are a number of consequences associated with the imbalance of power in the teacher-student dyad. Helena Gaunt found a connection between power imbalance and student reluctance to “develop artistic and professional self-direction.”\textsuperscript{47} The one-to-


\textsuperscript{44} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{45} Carey and Grant, 17.

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{47} Gaunt, “Understanding the One-to-one Relationship,” 159.
one model is powerful, indeed — so powerful, it can help or hinder students in the
development of their sense of self.

The stunting of a student’s musical identity development is clearly an issue to the
overall growth of a musician; however, not all students have reached a level of self-
actualization which would allow them to notice the natural power imbalance which
causes the stunt, let alone its repercussions. Students have long since preferred to learn
from a famous and accomplished master performer — an “admired maestro” — over a
true pedagogue.48 Roland Persson describes one of these artist-teachers, referred to here
as B6, in his findings on the concert musicians’ good teaching intentions falling short.

B6, too, is a very dominant teacher. Rather than flexibly altering her teaching in
response to the individual student, the lecturer more or less makes the student fit
into her pedagogical strategy. The students do not mind. On the contrary, they
are overwhelmed by the lecturer's charismatic intensity. The sense of
achievement as a result of progressively mastering the lecturer's proposals,
supported by sincere encouragement, seems to make the students suspend taking
any initiative on their own.49

Without realizing that it is inhibiting their ability to choose and then execute their
own musical convictions, students often willingly submit to a dominant teacher. They are
unaware that, although it is satisfying to please their teacher, the consequence of
constantly “achieving” their teacher’s musical ideas is that they do not learn to think for
themselves. This colossal impediment goes unnoticed, with both student and teacher
feeling mutually satisfied as they recognize constant achievements being made.

48 Persson, “Concert Musicians as Teachers,” 89.
49 Ibid., 86.
Another damaging form of teacher-centered teaching is a more passive method in which the professor relies on their reputation to motivate the student to make progress. In her Ph.D. dissertation, “The Artist-Musician in Education,” Gail Seneviratne interviewed at length several practicing performers who boast that their essence is the one that does the teaching. On music instruction, one teacher says:

It's like laying scent. The purpose is that when those students come into that room they come into my experience of the world and they learn by osmosis. It's not just my words. It's that they're sensing, feeling fully everything that I have. I put all that sense in that room.50 This teacher knows of the power he has over his students. He asserts that there is little significance on what he says and how he says it. This teacher believes that, because the students have such awe, reverence, and respect for him, his verbal communication—essentially, his teaching—is of little relevance. He believes not only that he does not have to assess learning styles and needs, nor design and execute an effective and flexible curriculum which fosters deep cognition, but that his students can and do learn simply by being near him.

The power imbalance in the one-to-one lesson does not have to be damaging. It can, and should, facilitate meaningful mentorship. A majority of music majors study in college for consecutive years with the same teacher; undergraduates usually study with the same teacher for four years, master students for two years, and doctoral students for three or more years.51 Years of weekly private lessons allow for the building of rapport which “ideally [produces] rounded musicians showing a high level of instrumental

50 Seneviratne, 292.
competence, a depth of musical understanding and a core of personal confidence that will allow them to express themselves with total commitment in any performing arena.”

Amongst all the transformations that must take place during this process, there is one variable that stays stable — the teacher. It is no wonder that music teachers and their students often develop an informal closeness, with the teacher at any given point in the process serving as the student's “confidant, motivator and love-hate object.”

Rolf Persson found that in a survey of forty-seven college music students, forty-six expressed a deep need for this informal relationship, one which “established their identity as musicians and encouraged it to emerge…”

In an informal, private relationship, teachers have the opportunity to positively influence many facets of a student’s life, not just musical. In the Carey and Grant study, one student discusses their music teacher’s involvement during the pivotal years of her maturation process:

[T]hey share your journey with you. How deep! That’s in all facets of your life, mostly musical of course because that’s why we’re here. Then also I think we’re growing up as well, because you come in out of high school – you’re still very immature. So I do think that they have a bit of a role in shaping you as an adult citizen.

Not all teacher-student relationships are especially close, but the interaction that takes place in the private lesson is imperative for all music students who spend a lot of

52 Presland, 237.


54 Persson, “Concert Musicians as Teachers,” 87.

55 Carey and Grant, 10.
time studying and practicing alone. The weekly private lesson provides needed balance and helps compensate for the “inwardly focused, intense concentration that making music demands.” What goes on during the private lesson has the power to make a lasting impression on the student.

**Verbal Teacher Feedback**

Almost all human beings are born with an inherent ability to learn through what Daniel Kohut refers to as the Natural Learning Process. This is the method whereby infants learn to walk. Based on “mental imagery, imitation, trial and error practice, and body feedback for detection and correction of performance errors,” this method can be applied to the acquisition of any skill, and it does not require a teacher. A music teacher’s job, then, is to make this natural process efficient. One major component in music instruction is the teacher’s use of productive verbal feedback for the explanation and encouragement of what a student could naturally learn on their own. While it may seem logical or efficient to speak to all students in the same way, uniform teaching “de-skills teachers” and “diminishes the all-important role of the individual teacher engaging individual students.” Thoughtful verbal feedback can be a powerful tool for focusing the

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56 Stembach, 44.


58 Ibid.

59 Ibid., 5

lesson, whose purpose should always be, according to leading teacher educators and authors Cornelia Watkins and Laurie Scott, to provide students with “positive growing experiences.”\(^{61}\) “At all times,” say Watkins and Scott, “you should be working alongside your students, helping them to move forward.”\(^{62}\)

Researchers Helena Gaunt, Andrea Creech, Marion Long, and Susan Hallam found in their four-year study on supporting conservatory students that students unanimously viewed teacher honesty as essential to their moving forward. When asked to describe her ideal private teacher, one conservatory student represented her peer’s preference for teacher transparency, insisting that “first of all, he/she has to be like really honest… honest with the advice he or she is trying to give to you.”\(^{63}\) Another student believes that the ideal teacher is “somebody who is going to push me and make sure that I do the \([sic]\) best.”\(^{64}\) These student desires describe a teacher who divulges everything that a student needs to know to become their very best. In order for their students to reach their full potential, teachers must challenge their students, anticipating and allowing for the occasional struggle.\(^{65}\)

Once a student is comfortable, then it is possible to stretch them beyond their comfort level by asking value-neutral questions. After a student has finished playing a

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\(^{61}\) Watkins and Scott, 95.

\(^{62}\) Ibid.


\(^{64}\) Gaunt, Creech, Long, and Hallam, 34.

\(^{65}\) Watkins and Scott, 95.
passage, a teacher might ask an open question such as, “what might you do differently?” to spur a dialogue and incite the vulnerability that leads to growth.66 Open questions foster the development of “critical self-reflection,”67 a process in which the student must first recall what they did, analyze and evaluate that method, and then invent a new approach to achieve better results. Allowing a student to self-correct in the lesson deeply involves them in their own learning process and promotes the kind of thoughtful analysis that ought to take place during independent practice.

While a teacher’s relinquishing of complete control in the lesson can foster proactive learning, a teacher’s unclear directives can result in an unproductive lesson followed by the student’s unfocused practice throughout the rest of the week. Watkins and Scott encourage teachers to suggest clear strategies for achieving specific tasks and to clarify the objectives that are to be reached during practice.68 Rather than casting off an ambiguous assignment such as, “practice one hour a day,” Watkins and Scott instead suggest saying to a student, “if you practice the entire piece the way we did today, it will probably take an hour.”69 While the time given to complete the assignment is only an estimate, the objective — to practice the entire piece with great attention to detail — is certain.

Students in all fields benefit from teachers who invest time and effort to develop a vocabulary for delivering clear and simple directions. The need for attention to language

66 Sternbach, 46.
67 Gaunt, Creech, Long, and Hallam, 36.
68 Watkins and Scott, 95.
69 Ibid., 93.
is not unique to music teaching and learning; however, communicating clearly in music lessons proves especially difficult as the fundamental properties of music such as sound, time, and sentiment are all intangible. Further challenging to music teachers are the countless hidden physical processes that are involved with playing a musical instrument, such as articulation, which for flutists takes place inside an almost completely closed mouth, and air stream support, which originates inside the abdomen.

Imagery is useful for instructing these difficult-to-describe concepts and processes. Imagery “[evokes] sense-impressions by literal or figurative reference to perceptive or ‘concrete’ objects, scenes, actions, or states,”70 and can aid music students in relating to abstract concepts and music teachers in addressing invisible physical actions. If a student is struggling to judge the appropriate length of a fermata, rather than using a technical directive such as “wait longer at the fermata,”71 a teacher could plant a mental image in the student’s mind by saying “how much time would it take for the dust to settle after a bag of flour has been dropped?”72 If a student constantly forgets to keep their throat relaxed, instead of repeatedly saying “relax your throat,” a teacher might once try using impactful imagery they will not soon forget, such as prompting the student to picture what it would feel like to have an entire orange in their mouth.73 Imagery persuades a student to use their imagination to solve a present problem by drawing on


71 Watkins and Scott, 13.

72 Ibid., 14.

73 The author recalls this image and its frequent use by University of Miami’s Frost School of Music Professor of Flute Trudy Kane, both in private lessons and in other public teaching settings.
their own memories and past experiences. For a developing musician, finding the solution to their own problem is empowering.

While metaphorical language can be a powerful problem solver, it carries the potential to further confuse a student who is struggling to grasp an already puzzling concept. Roland Persson discusses the ramifications of one artist-teacher’s repeated use of metaphorical language in teaching, despite receiving feedback from her students that the metaphors were confusing.74 The teacher felt comfortable using that language and continued to use it, saying that “she has little patience with students who cannot conjure up the same imaginative world instantly.”75 No matter how beautiful the mental picture or how clever the metaphor, even the most brilliant use of imagery may not work for every student. If it does not work, experts say, do not use it. Watkins and Scott elevate the importance of language’s function over form through the emphatic statement that “it doesn’t matter what you say. It matters what they understand.”76

When a student begins to take ownership of a new physical phenomenon, the most important thing they need to understand is what their body feels like. Words are of secondary importance. One teacher-artist says of coaching a student through a new sensation, such as experimenting with a slight embouchure adjustment, “…the words have meaning but…I’m just using the words as a comfort thing for them, explaining what


75 Ibid.

76 Watkins and Scott, 200.
these sensations are.” Here, the student’s own kinesthesia is the best teacher, and the
teacher’s words, while they may provide welcome guidance and encouragement in the
moment, will not be remembered.

Honest assessment, open-ended questions, and constructive use of imagery all
assist a teacher who has chosen to steadily guide a student who is on their own natural
learning path. More efficient methods for instructing do exist. The authoritarian “brutal
teaching methods” commonly used by famous music teachers of the early twentieth to
mid-century have raised some of the world’s finest artists and most influential
pedagogues. For these world-class musicians, the unremitting method created for them
an environment in which they could thrive. Of the long-term effects that callous teaching
had on his many gifted colleagues, the great Russian violinist Philippe Quint says, “these
sorts of brutal teaching methods consistently brought incredible results, but they also
crashed a lot of students. Psychologically, this was truly a case of ‘only the strongest
survive.’”

While few students flourish in an unsparing environment, most students will
immediately respond favorably to positive reinforcement in the form of praise and
encouragement. These types of feedback, while both positive and supportive, fulfill
dissimilar objectives and produce different long-term results. Dr. Chieh Monica Chang
speaks of the important distinction between their two functions:

77 Seneviratne, 294.

78 Laurie Niles, “Heart of the Matter,” The Strad 128, no. 1,529 (September 2017), 40, accessed

79 Niles, 40.
[P]raise focuses on the person rather than on what he or she is doing and tends to be coercive in the way that pride is. Thus, it can induce ego involvement and make learning a means of gaining praise. Encouragement on the other hand, is an expression of pleasure with what students are learning and hope for what they will learn.⁸⁰

Both forms of reinforcement are beneficial. Praise engages ego as it focuses on the gratification of the present achievement. Encouragement acknowledges improvements and inspires continued learning, emphasizing the importance of the learning process as being gradual and ongoing.

Praise is often associated with extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation has been linked to the authoritarian teaching approach⁸¹ and, while it may be temporarily motivating, can have lasting negative consequences. Krista Riggs warns, “high external control can conversely contribute to low self-esteem and high extrinsic motivation for the student, both counterproductive in the pursuit of self-actualization and the attainment of optimal experience.”⁸²

According to the thirty-four students interviewed in a four-year study on student support in conservatories, the optimal learning experience is one in which students learn

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⁸² Ibid.
to teach themselves.\textsuperscript{83} In her own words, one of these students describes fondly how her teacher helps her to become her own best teacher:

I often look around and think, a lot of people in the year are going through the motions because they’re being set something to do and they’ll stick to it rigidly but it’s kind of like blind work because you don’t really question why you’re doing it. You accept that you’re [sic] teacher is right. I think the thing that has inspired me most about my teacher has just been, he won’t ever tell me...for instance he won’t tell me I am sharp or flat. He’ll say, what do you think of the intonation? And it just trains your mind a little bit more to assess your own playing and your approach, because at the end of the day if you’re working you’re not going to have that person to say, you’re sharp or flat or you’re playing it a little bit wrong. To be your own boss has been the main thing that he’s taught me I think.\textsuperscript{84}

**Artist-Teacher Background**

For a great many distinguished performers who assume college teaching positions, a majority of job training is performative based. Substantial careers spent in professional orchestra rehearsals and concerts, solo recitals, and chamber music performances have afforded them enormous experience playing their instrument as a performing artist; however, a lack of teacher training leaves many without the methods to then effectively teach the knowledge they have accrued. Artist-teachers’ experience with formal education is traditionally minimal; most concert musicians’ formal education does not exceed a master or bachelor degree in performance. This makes sense, as the option to earn a terminal performance degree is a relatively new one.

\textsuperscript{83} Gaunt, Creech, Long, and Hallam, 36.

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid.
The doctor of musical arts degree has only recently come into existence. In 1932, the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) created a “Graduate Commission” to observe over several years the three highest level degrees offered in the music field: the performance-driven Master of Music degree, the Master of Arts in Music which balanced performance and scholarly activity, and the research-based Ph.D. in music psychology, musicology, music education, and composition. After studying these three courses of music study and the resulting “bifurcated relationship between research degrees and the preparation of performers,” the Graduate Commission concluded that the future of music would benefit from a terminal performance degree which recognized academically a performance proficiency equal to that of a medical doctor. The doctorate in musical arts degree was intended to prevent the future “shortage of qualified music professors in the performance areas.”

In 1952, NASM began to grant select schools such as the Eastman School of Music, Northwestern University and the University of Michigan the permission to award D.M.A.s. The degree was not popular at first, and the preference to instead gain performing experience in the “real world” prevailed for decades. According to the National Science Foundation’s Division of Science Resources Statistics, a 2006 special report on the U.S. Doctorate in the 20th Century reveals that in 1964, one decade after the


86 Ibid., 20.

87 Ibid.

88 Ibid.

89 Ibid., 21.
introduction of the doctorate of musical arts, the number of doctoral music degrees conferred in the United States was only 518.\textsuperscript{90} Between 1990 and 1999, that number rose to 3,602.\textsuperscript{91}

Today, most job postings for college applied instrumental teaching positions require that candidates have either a terminal degree or a performance reputation which is “equal in prestige to a doctoral degree.”\textsuperscript{92} Many current college music professors have prefaced their teaching position with the prestigious performing career that was the norm in the 20th Century. It certainly has equipped them with invaluable experience, but it has not necessarily provided these artists with the training necessary to effectively teach developing young musicians. Performance proficiency informs music instruction but it is not the only aspect of teaching music. In the words of one artist-teacher on the practice of studio instruction, “it is one thing to perform, to express [oneself] through sound and quite another to teach, to describe intellectually in words the process.”\textsuperscript{93}

Young musicians have always desired to study with the artists who possess the profound ability to express themselves musically, even if these artists have not proven to be especially gifted at teaching.\textsuperscript{94} Students are often attracted to fame rather than teaching


\textsuperscript{91} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{92} Baskerfield, 477.

\textsuperscript{93} Seneviratne, 225.

\textsuperscript{94} Riggs, 180.
ability. This tradition is at the center of performance study in Western art music.\textsuperscript{95} In her award-winning work on a progressive philosophical approach to applied music lessons, Krista Riggs refers to this gravitation of developing young players toward decorated performers or “legendary maestros.”\textsuperscript{96}

A desire to study with a famous teacher within the historic lineage of an instrument is often more of a driving force for teacher selection at the college level than personal compatibility or the pedagogical skills of the instructor.\textsuperscript{97}

Skilled, motivated, and disciplined students can learn a great deal from simply listening to a gifted musician and will make steady progress with regular exposure to the demonstration of excellent playing. Frances Blaisdell, the first woman flutist to ever appear as a soloist in front of a major American orchestra, was one such student, and her mentor, an exemplary artist-teacher.\textsuperscript{98}

Blaisdell studied at The Juilliard School with the brilliant Georges Barrère, then principal flutist of the New York Symphony. Barrère was the extraordinary French flute player who, at the age of eighteen, debuted the iconic flute solo in the Paris premiere of Claude Debussy’s legendary \textit{L’après-midi d’un faune}\textsuperscript{99} and who, at the age of twenty-nine, was invited by the lauded American maestro Walter Damrosch to leave his three principal positions in France to come play principal of the New York Symphony.

\textsuperscript{95} Riggs, 180.

\textsuperscript{96} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{97} Ibid.


Orchestra. Once in New York, he impressed audiences and students alike. His Juilliard studio adored him and his demonstrative teaching style:

He was the perfect role model of what all of us students hoped to achieve. However, Barrère was a natural, and I don't believe he had any idea how he produced his especially beautiful tone or just how he played such perfectly articulated staccato … and the vibrato!!! 'You just sing on the flute, n’est ce pas?’ To analyze any of these techniques would have been of no interest whatsoever to him. Barrère played a great deal at the lessons and you learned much by listening.

Despite his lack of interest in describing what he could instead demonstrate so well, Barrère’s gifted students treasured him then and they remember him now as an exceptional teacher. Blaisdell writes, “was Barrère a good teacher? The Greatest [sic]!”

Though he did not instruct his students, he taught them by modeling excellence in flute playing and in character. Blaisdell recalls,

> Once in a generation, perhaps once in a century in every field of endeavor, some one person emerges who is unique. Someone who combines great talent with hard work, a brilliant mind with a delightful personality and charm. Georges Barrere [sic] had all those qualities.

Many studies which explore private teaching at the college level seek to understand teaching methods by surveying student satisfaction through recollections such as Frances Blaisdell’s memories of Barrère. These studies “[focus] on the perceived impact of work as a teacher on their work as a performer, and the route through which they had learn[ed] to teach, rather than their philosophy of, and approach to teaching.”

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100 Blaisdell, 29.
101 Ibid.
102 Ibid., 30.
103 Purser, 287.
Very few studies exist which attempt to understand the teacher’s perception of their impact on students.

One reason that most studies do not concentrate on either the philosophy of or the approach to teaching is because researching the authentic teaching of private lessons is a difficult task. This challenge does not dismiss the necessity for the traditional one-to-one model to be examined. History shows that the perceived need for innovative research to advance traditional methods of teaching is not a recent one. Award-winning author and music educator Clifford Madsen called for this forty years ago in his best-known work, *Experimental Research Methods in Music*:

Musicians basically use traditional approaches that have been passed down through the ages. There are inherent advantages to apprenticeship systems, but they leave opportunity for speed and efficiency, and are definitely out of step with the demands of modern-day instruction. Possibly the most consequential reason for the exclusive perpetuation of these traditional approaches is the conspicuous lack of valid experimental research in applied music. Surprisingly, even though some efforts are being made in this area, some performers seem reluctant to avail themselves of the new ideas and knowledge incorporated in the findings of experimental research. Some performing musicians seem to be unconcerned with anything that cannot be passed on in the privacy of the studio. Many articles, methods, and demonstration lectures produce little more than personal “testimonials” concerning how music should be performed.¹⁰⁴

Madsen’s depiction of the state of music research in 1978 reveals that traditionalism contributed to a close-mindedness; even the few advancements that were being made in music education at the time were dismissed as opinion and not fact. Forty years later, that traditionalism is still prevalent in studio instruction today.

Like teachers in any profession, some artist-teachers conduct lessons with a great deal of inflexibility. Roland Persson found that, when surveying concert musicians to further understand their teaching approaches, none of the teachers distinguished between the different levels of their students when teaching. They taught each student in exactly the same way. Regardless of the student’s playing capabilities, “[t]he temptation existed [for the artist-teacher] to teach all students as if they had no technical or artistic shortcomings.” While it may be easiest and most comfortable for a teacher to teach all students under the assumption that each operates at the same high level, this method is both impersonal and irresponsible. For the students who are not as developed, this method is ineffective and can be potentially damaging. For the few experienced, seasoned, and expertly skilled students whose capabilities match the methods, the approach is impersonal; without lesson plans specifically curated to an individual’s unique combination of strengths and weaknesses, both teacher and student miss the opportunity for developing a close relationship that lays the foundation for trust, support, inspiration, and empowerment.

Though there are some artist-teachers who instruct all students in the same way, the reality is, of course, that each student is unique. The teachers described above are simply teaching in the way that feels right to them. Persson found that artist-teachers who either have received minimal teacher training or do not possess innate interpersonal skills

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105 Persson, “Concert Musicians as Teachers, 87.
106 Ibid.
often use their own “commonsense strategy”\textsuperscript{107} which is influenced by the teaching they themselves received when they were students.\textsuperscript{108}

Some artist-teachers instruct in exactly the manner in which they were taught because of a “lack of training in instructional methods or developmental theories.”\textsuperscript{109} This commonsense teaching strategy has been repeatedly shown to fail many artist-teachers. According to Persson, it “falls short in accomplishing what [teachers] set out to do because of an unfamiliarity with relatively simple psychological principles of learning and teaching.”\textsuperscript{110} One particularly detrimental unfamiliarity that is commonly found among artist-teachers is the lack of knowledge regarding the dynamic nature of music learning and teaching,\textsuperscript{111} which results in an inflexible teaching strategy.

Other artist-teachers make a concerted effort to avoid teaching their students in the same inflexible manner in which their former teachers taught them. Violinist Dorothy DeLay has been described by her students as a “master violin teacher who continued many of the technical concepts originating from her own tutor, Ivan Galamian… but took a radically different approach to communicating them.”\textsuperscript{112} With conscientious effort, it is possible to develop adaptable and responsive teaching methods. Persson’s findings about the teaching approaches of the brilliant performers in his study reveal that many artist-

\textsuperscript{107}Persson, “Brilliant Performers as Teachers,” 34.


\textsuperscript{109}Riggs, 175.

\textsuperscript{110}Persson, “Brilliant Performers as Teachers,” 34.

\textsuperscript{111}Persson, “Concert Musicians as Teachers,” 89.

\textsuperscript{112}Niles, 36.
teachers could benefit from an understanding that flexibility is inherent to effective teaching. Exposure to the narratives of successful and well-respected fellow artist-teachers may be of help to those artist-teachers who are interested in learning about their own contributions toward their students’ optimal learning experiences.

While there are countless methods whereby students can reach the optimal learning experience, according to Riggs private lessons have “traditionally been approached in a maestro-like, authoritarian manner with one-directional commands given as law from master teacher to seemingly subordinate students.”\(^{113}\) Persson's study on the teaching approaches of exceptionally gifted performers revealed that many artist-teachers employed the traditional assertion of power and “had a tendency to dominate their students completely, and seldom allowed them to have an opinion.”\(^{114}\) This method, while leaving no room for the dialogue or discourse that fosters a student’s development of their authentic musical self, can increase a sense of belonging in the studio by necessitating peer support. The dominant, one-sided teaching approach sometimes results in “osmosis,” or the phenomenon wherein a student “absorbs values, beliefs, and practices without their necessarily having been explained, but instead by virtue of being a member of a musical community.”\(^{115}\)

Though students might benefit indirectly from the authoritarian teaching approach, it is almost certain they will thrive under the tutelage of a person who is both an experienced performer and a generous, adaptive teacher. Flutist Jeanne Baxtresser is

\(^{113}\) Riggs, 175-6.

\(^{114}\) Persson, “Concert Musicians as Teachers,” 87-8.

\(^{115}\) Jorgensen, 245.
one of those people. She believes that “[t]here are an infinite variety of ways to play the flute and the greatest musicians are always eager to hear more and learn more. It is a process that never stops.”116 A recipient of the National Flute Association’s “Lifetime Achievement Award” and an honorary board member of the Suzuki Association,117 Baxtresser is an artist-teacher known for a dedication to teaching as well as for having built one of the most impressive orchestral careers a flutist has ever had.

Starting at age twenty-one, Baxtresser began a thirty-year career serving in successive principal positions with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra,118 the Toronto Symphony Orchestra,119 and the New York Philharmonic.120 Despite the tremendous inward focus required for a person to reach such mastery of their instrument, Baxtresser has developed an extraordinary ability to connect with others through teaching. She has for decades taught some of the world’s most promising flutists during her years as professor of flute at The Juilliard School, the Manhattan School of Music, and Carnegie Mellon University’s School of Music.121 She believes it is her duty to pass on her knowledge to her students:122

I am confident that today’s generation of classically trained flutists and musicians recognize that the gift of great music and the joy of playing an instrument are universal and timeless contributions to society. They carry this message with

116 Graham, 59.
117 Ibid., 53.
118 Ibid., 47.
119 Ibid., 49.
120 Ibid., 50.
121 Ibid., 52.
122 Ibid., 63.
dedication and love that inspires me and guides me to help them in every way that I am able."123

Most artist-teachers share Baxtresser’s desire to impart their wisdom to students who will then use their unique musical voice to contribute something special to society. In order to do this, teachers must create a safe learning environment in which to honor a student’s individuality. In her dissertation on establishing rapport in one-to-one lessons, Chieh Monica Chang says that students are more likely to “be themselves” in lessons if the teacher avoids hiding behind a “professional air.”124 A famous artist-teacher of professional performing background might find it difficult to let go of the professionalism that served them so well in their performing career; however, Chang asserts that those teachers who never adopt an informal nature are less likely to “respect and appreciate the genuine uniqueness of their students.”125 If a student senses that their teacher is being inauthentic, they themselves will refrain from being authentic.

The artist-teacher who is not afraid of showing their humanness can make indelible impressions on their eager and watchful students. In a tribute to his teacher William Kincaid, flutist Robert Cole expresses his debt of gratitude for everything he learned during the eleven years he played alongside his teacher in the Philadelphia Orchestra.126 His most poignant memory is not of Kincaid’s perfect playing or his polished professionalism, rather, he recalls what an impact Kincaid’s transparency had on him in the most formative stage of his orchestral training:

123 Graham, 61.

124 Chang, 14.

125 Ibid.

After I had been in the orchestra for a couple of months, we were all standing backstage before a Friday afternoon concert and I walked up to Mr. Kincaid and said, "You know, I'm still getting butterflies before every concert. When do you get over that?" His answer: "I'll let you know."¹²⁷

**Heightened Sensitivities in Music Instruction**

There are difficulties involved in the teaching of any subject, but there are several challenges unique to one-to-one music instruction. Music learning is especially complicated. Experts describe it as being both a horizontal process, which relies on “concrete doing” and understanding “experientially and through the senses,” and a vertical process, which involves tacitness and the intake of verbal instruction.¹²⁸ Simply put, music instruction involves use of words to teach wordless skills and concepts.¹²⁹

Becoming a great musician involves the total mastery of many strengths. A player must first develop skills such as embouchure control and digital facility so they can ably express to their audience the countless moods, emotions, and atmospheres that music embodies. In order for a student to develop these abilities in their private lessons, both teacher and student must be able to execute, hear, explain, and understand both the physical actions themselves, and the verbalizations of each of those actions. To succeed in lessons, students must not only play well, they must be able to engage well in communication. As previously discussed, many of the processes involved with playing a

¹²⁷ Cole, 45.


¹²⁹ Ibid.
musical instrument take place inside the body of the player. This challenges the teacher to find the words that best communicate to that student what neither of them can see or touch.

Meticulously-chosen words have the ability to: (a) name and describe a desired sound and the sensations involved in creating it; (b) command the body to employ the specific actions that will achieve the sound, and; (c) train the mind to know when to implement the actions necessary to create the sound. Words also have the power to inhibit the development of complex physical actions. In his bestselling *Inner Game* book series, Timothy Gallwey explains that in a society so oriented toward language, words often become inextricably linked to actions, causing an inability to remember the actual feeling of what it is like to complete the action. Here, he describes how language’s part in memory can inhibit the perfection of a tennis stroke:

> [I]n the interest of being able to repeat that stroke, the person attempts to describe that stroke in *language*. But words can only *represent* actions, ideas and experiences. Language is *not* the action, and at best can only hint at the subtlety and complexity contained in the stroke. Although the instruction thus conceived can now be stored in the part of the mind that remembers language, it must be acknowledged that remembering the instruction is not the same as remembering the stroke itself…

When a person practices a highly complicated physical skill, such as playing a fast technical passage, their tendency is to remember words or technical directives that represent actions, such as “keep fingers close to the keys,” “place the first two notes of

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130 The challenge to describe hidden physical processes involved in playing a musical instrument was previously discussed in this chapter under the subheading, *Verbal Teacher Feedback*, 28.


132 Ibid.

133 Ibid., 52.
the run,” and “play the high notes longest.” In a verbally dominant world, students must consciously work to focus instead on recalling the sensations they experienced during a successful attempt at the action. An artist-teacher who understands language’s role in skill acquisition can better assist their students as they develop their technical abilities.

Given that language has the power to be effective or inhibitive, and given that both language and playing are essential to one-to-one music lessons, it is easy to understand how a teacher’s verbal interruptions while a student is playing can be either constructive or destructive. Roland Persson found through student and teacher interviews that the interruptions which students deem successful are actually appropriately timed interjections spoken over a student’s continued playing, enhancing what the student is already feeling and doing.134 One student expressed how impressed she was with her teacher’s timing, saying “I am surprised that my teacher judges the times to interrupt so well. It’s always helpful.”135 Persson identifies this student’s teacher as being a person who is “very concerned that students should experience and feel a musical context,”136 and attributes the favorable student response to the encouraging nature of the interjections.

Harsh or blunt interruptions are characteristic of the impatient teaching style which many instructors believe to be efficient and therefore appropriate in an industry which calls for “ever-increasing technical standards and…faster skill acquisition.”137 Artist-teachers know that with such a big supply of prospective professional players, their

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135 Ibid.

136 Ibid.

137 Sternbach, 44.
students will have to work tirelessly to get the job they want. According to Krista Riggs, “realistically very few undergraduate music performance majors will achieve success as either orchestral players or as soloists.” The intent of teaching with a sense of urgency is to prepare students for the job scarcity that awaits them upon graduation. Further pressing on both teacher, student, and institution is the fact that one-to-one teaching is an extremely costly teaching model, so music students are expected to learn an astonishing amount in the timeframe which is typical for any other college degree.

The 2006 Music Business Handbook and Career Guide threatens college age players that “[a] top studio player is allowed an occasional flub but is subject to being quickly displaced, sometimes forever, by a competitor who can demonstrate even greater reliability.” The growing competitiveness in the field of music performance and the resulting job scarcity is one looming reality of which all music students and teachers remain constantly aware. With such high standards awaiting them after graduation, students become preoccupied in school with a “survival of the fittest” mentality. “Conservatory life is about talent,” says one artist-teacher. “While everyone at the conservatory ‘has’ talent . . . nearly all students are very much concerned with how much talent they have, and sometimes with whether they ‘really’ have any talent at all.”

The combination of natural self-doubt, talent obsession, and the incessant comparing of oneself with fellow studio members is a recipe for all-too-common studio

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138 Ibid.
139 Carey and Grant, 6.
140 Baskerfield, 471.
141 Presland, 237.
competitiveness which according to Krista Riggs is harmful to deep learning. “Extreme competitiveness and the political hierarchy common in a typical music studio setting can squelch creativity and hinder a student’s possibility to attain optimal experience in performance.”¹⁴² Studio competition thrives on comparisons. In comparing themselves to others, a student’s focus shifts from an inward concentration on personal progress and individual goals to an outward surveillance of peer successes and achievements. Teachers play an essential role by modeling their own productive mindset. Students learn what constitutes acceptable behavior through observing their teacher’s words and behavior; as role models, teachers can either dissolve or perpetuate studio competitiveness.

It is especially crucial that teachers remain aware of their behavior and words in the privacy of the one-to-one lesson. This privacy is a supremely important element of the applied music; the teacher-student dyad is the basis upon which all college-level music learning is centered. One-to-one instruction “happens behind closed doors,”¹⁴³ ideally providing students with a safe place to experiment and grow. This lack of supervision is one reason why private lessons are so effective, but it is also the reason that it is so difficult to study them for the greater advancement of music education.¹⁴⁴ The slow progress of researching teacher effectiveness has begun with exploring the perspectives of students who, as discussed earlier, are often still developing young adults who do not always seek out what is most educationally advantageous to them.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Riggs, 175.
¹⁴³ Carey and Grant, 6.
¹⁴⁴ Carey and Grant, 6.
¹⁴⁵ Purser, 287.
In addition to its complicating the research process, privacy in applied music lessons has been found to, at times, contribute to a hostile learning environment. In some extreme cases, the combination of the lack of supervision in applied lessons, the imbalance of power in the teacher-student dyad, and the physical and observational nature of one-to-one music teaching can unfortunately create a climate in which students are made to feel extremely uncomfortable. If an artist-teacher is not constantly mindful of the boundary between themselves and their students, this can manifest in psychological damage and/or sexual harassment. Ongoing psychological and sexual misconduct in private music lessons is, sadly, not uncommon, but it goes largely unreported for the same reasons that many other forms of abuse go unreported. Students of famous artist-teachers are often too afraid to speak negatively about their celebrated teachers for fear that it may damage their career. Some students may not report misconduct because it is difficult for them to comprehend that the teacher they trust and respect is capable of harming them.

One recent example of this abuse of power spread through the news in February of 2018 when it was released that a “well-renowned flute professor and performer faced accusations of sexually harassing students…over two decades.”¹⁴⁶ A 2016 investigation found evidence of “unwanted sexual advances and verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature,” a "hostile environment,” and conduct that was "severe, persistent or

pervasive,”\textsuperscript{147} affirming decades of what one student more simply describes as the teacher’s “[making] the girls in the studio feel extremely uncomfortable and sexualized.”\textsuperscript{148}

Student interviews explain why such blatantly inappropriate teaching behavior went undiscovered for more than twenty years. The students were scared of what would happen to their reputation if they spoke out. “If you got on his bad side, he could trash your career.”\textsuperscript{149} Instead, they endured the unrelenting abuse. "He just was not afraid. He could say anything he wanted. He was untouchable.”\textsuperscript{150}

\textbf{Words and Music Learning}

Society has, according to peak performance expert and tennis player Timothy Gallwey, become “so oriented toward language as a way of representing truth”\textsuperscript{151} that it has necessitated pocket-sized field guides. Language expert Donna Jo Napoli’s \textit{Language Matters: A Guide to Everyday Questions About Language} meets the demands of those who wish to always “make sensible and responsible decisions about language in their daily life.”\textsuperscript{152} Given that linguists and athletes alike have a vested interest in maximizing the power of words, it is curious that music educators have yet to thoroughly research the

\textsuperscript{147} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{148} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{149} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{150} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{151} Gallwey, 53.

value of words in relation to applied music instruction. This is evident in scanning the
index of every single reference in this bibliography for the terms “word,” “words,” and
“language” to find very few pages that even mention these teaching tools, let alone
discuss them in-depth. Similarly underwhelming are the results of a keyword search for
the same terms in online databases of scholarly music research. While many studies and
publications indirectly speak to the use of language in teaching and learning music, most
research that explores the effectiveness of teaching approaches for specific techniques
does not explore the verbal delivery used in the method. These studies often result in
updates to curricula and the expansion of the knowledge about learning style, but do little
in the way of collecting information about the power of words and language, let alone
understanding teachers’ perceptions of their word choice as a means to improve the
traditional one-to-one model. One example is Carole Presland's 2005 study which
interviewed twelve piano students to further understand the teacher-student relationship
in the rigorous conservatory setting.\textsuperscript{153} The study results in the conclusion that “good
communication and a strong personal connection between teacher and student is vital
within the intense, demanding and rarified environment of the conservatoire,”\textsuperscript{154} but there
is no elaboration on what exactly constitutes “good communication.”

Despite there being little research which focuses on words and music, words are
important to music learning. This is evidenced by their presence in sheet music in the
form of expressive markings, in verbose descriptions of techniques found in method
books, in entire chapters of peak performance books devoted to self-talk, and in the

\textsuperscript{153} Presland, 237.

\textsuperscript{154} Presland, 237.
poetic musings of those influential music educators who “have a way with words.” In *Nurtured By Love*, Shin’ichi Suzuki writes eloquently about the words people use when speaking about music instructing. He emphasizes the importance of the distinction between the words “teaching” and “fostering.” Suzuki points out that the word “teaching” centers on the transmission of information from one mind to another that takes place during instruction. The word “fostering” refers to the nurturing and development that takes place during mentoring. A close look at these everyday words may serve as a reminder to teachers that their job is to serve students in many ways; a teacher’s responsibility is not just to inform but to help form.

One way that artist-teachers rely on words to guide their students as they develop into autonomous musicians is by encouraging the shift between speaking and playing during one-to-one lessons. Helena Gaunt calls the shifts between talking to each other and playing together “powerful opportunities for collaborative creative exploration.” As previously discussed, verbal conversation presents an opportunity for teamwork and for experimenting and inventing. Musical conversation, or playing back and forth, allows for demonstration and resulting mimicry, essential to the Natural Learning Process. Switching between verbal and musical conversation creates a dynamic

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155 Suzuki, 110.

156 Ibid.

157 Ibid.

158 Gaunt, Creech, Long, and Hallam, 40.

159 Dialogue was previously discussed in this chapter under the subheading, *Verbal Teacher Feedback*, 27.

160 Kohut, 4.
dialogue which fully engages both hemispheres of the brain. When students flip between playing and speaking, they strengthen their ability to articulate themselves.

Everyone — teachers included — struggles at times with articulating themselves when speaking about the subjective properties of music. “Despite music’s ‘wordless’ reputation,” write Watkins and Scott in their manual for artist-teachers, “language is an indispensable tool for music teaching, and therefore the struggle to find the best words that describe technical information, expressive ideas, and even the most elusive concepts is a worthy one.” Imagery was already discussed as a useful tool for teaching invisible processes and for explaining abstract concepts. Colloquial phrases can serve the same purpose. Commonplace and lacking in originality, clichés are by definition the tireless overuse of the same old words to describe something universal. Watkins and Scott offer common terms to assist in coaching temporal concepts, such as the word “moving,” which could be used to elicit a more effective performance, and the phrase “get off the ground,” perhaps useful in encouraging a student who struggles with settling in a new, faster tempo.

The Alexander Technique is one school of thought which also emphasizes thoughtful word choice in teaching. Harpist and Alexander Teacher Linda-Rose Hembreiker explains how a teacher’s language can manifest physically in their students:

161 Watkins and Scott, 93.

162 Imagery was previously discussed in this chapter under the subheading, Verbal Teacher Feedback, 28.

163 Watkins and Scott, 24.

164 Ibid.
The words a teacher uses to give directions and explanations can encourage either more or less efficient use of the body in their students. Some words have meanings or carry connotations that are connected to tension or force, while others do not carry this unwritten baggage and thus may help the student avoid interfering with the natural working of the body.\(^\text{165}\)

Hembreiker goes on to describe how the use of the word “pull” almost always results in a collapse of the ribcage, drop of the head, rise of the shoulders, and forceful drawing in of hands, all which contribute to unhealthy posture.\(^\text{166}\) “Bring” is a word that instead reminds students to relax and let gravity help.\(^\text{167}\) Similar to the way in which “bring” replaces “pull” as a relaxing alternative to an aggressive term, “let” and “allow” are suggestive verbs which can both replace the more commanding verb “relax.”\(^\text{168}\) “Drop” is an effective replacement for “put” as it conjures an act of release rather than one of tension.\(^\text{169}\) Hembreiker advises teachers to familiarize themselves with words that promote healthy habits. She warns, “specific words are linked to entire series of habits, and habits are resistant to change.”\(^\text{170}\)

Similar to their having physical ramifications, charged words possess great psychological control. Artist-teachers may benefit from understanding what peak


\(^{166}\) Ibid., 42.

\(^{167}\) Ibid.

\(^{168}\) Ibid., 43.

\(^{169}\) Hembreiker, 42.

\(^{170}\) Ibid.
performance experts have discovered about the use of words in mental self-talk. Timothy Gallwey suggests speaking to oneself in a way that optimizes the feeling of capability. The words “let,” “trust,” “notice,” “experience,” and “observe”\textsuperscript{171} are passive verbs, but they elicit control. The words themselves are not controlling; instead passive verbs enable the thinker to feel calm, capable and like everything is under control. Gallwey also suggests the benefits of removing the words “should,” “should not,” “right,” and “wrong”\textsuperscript{172} from one's mental self-talk vocabulary. These words are frequently used in music lessons when a teacher intends to be clear and precise; however, these words also pass judgment. A student who is feeling judged is likely to dismiss their errors and miscalculations as failures rather than as natural developments in a gradual, ongoing process. “As we begin to use instruction to pass judgment instead of tending to...experience,” Gallwey says, “the gap between instruction and experience is further widened.”\textsuperscript{173}

National Flute Association Lifetime Achievement Award recipient Leone Buyse, as previously referenced, is known for her patient and watchful tending to the student experience. Through her teaching career spanning over fifty years, she has collected many pieces of advice for teachers, including suggestions for improving word choice to optimize communication in private lessons. The first suggestion is to avoid beginning sentences with the word “you.”\textsuperscript{174} “Often that little pronoun will put the person receiving

\textsuperscript{171} Gallwey, 45.
\textsuperscript{172} Ibid., 53.
\textsuperscript{173} Gallwey, 53.
\textsuperscript{174} Buyse, 40.
the comment either on the defensive or on high alert for a scolding or correction,”

she explains. No matter the intended nature of the comment that follows, “you” as an introduction sounds accusatory.

Her second suggestion is to altogether eliminate the conjunction “but” when delivering comments.176 The word is often used to link a compliment and a piece of constructive criticism or advice. Buyse has learned from experience that even the most genuine and uplifting compliment will be forgotten if it is immediately followed by criticism. She recommends offering compliments followed by silence, to let them “sink in.”177 After the student has been given the chance to recognize what they have done well, a teacher can feel free to deliver the criticism; the student will be more receptive to suggestions for improvements.

Buyse’s last suggestion is to remove the word “don’t” from the teaching vocabulary.178 The word is simply negative. Finding ways to convert the word “don’t” to the word “do” will inevitably lead to positive directives and memorable explanations. Instead of saying, “Don’t play the fourth-space E-flat with your left index finger down!” every time the student forgets to lift their finger, Buyse suggests explaining once in detail why the note ought to be played with the finger lifted:

Remember always to lift your left index finger on fourth-space E-flat because the quality of sound is so much more appealing and homogeneous with the D

175 Ibid.
176 Ibid., 41.
177 Ibid.
178 Buyse, 41.
one half step lower. You’re eliminating a strong fundamental, which tends to
dull the sound, by venting the C key, just as you do on the fourth-line D.179

In taking the time to explain in detail why the note ought to be played with the finger
lifted, the teacher communicates not just the important information about tone
quality and the harmonic series; the detailed explanation communicates trust in both
the student’s intellectual capabilities and hearing abilities. Though this thorough
teaching approach takes a great deal of time and energy, it actually saves both
teacher and student from frustration in the long run as it encourages students to self-
correct their own detrimental habits.

Another useful strategy to aid in the understanding of words’ power in music
is to examine the verbiage in best-selling flute method books. Patricia George’s
popular beginner book “Flute 101: Mastering the Basics” contains all positive
language and active verbs presented to students in a clear, simple checklist format.
She avoids telling them what not to do. She uses accessible, age-appropriate imagery
such as “spitting rice”180 to describe forward placement of the tongue when
articulating and “ blowing out a birthday candle”181 to describe the counter-intuitive
slow speed of air required to achieve sound in the flute’s lower register.

Marcel Moyse’s timeless De La Sonorité uses inclusive language to describe
tone development exercises for the advanced flutist. He delivers his suggestions in a
conversational, sympathetic manner. In one instance, Moyse introduces an unusual

179 Ibid.

180 Pyllis Avidan Louke and Patricia George, Flute 101 Mastering the Basics: A Method for the

181 Ibid., 9.
practice sequence by first describing another, more commonly used approach. Then he justifies his printed exercise by calling it “the more logical approach.”¹⁸² This suggests that there are many ways to practice the skill and that, perhaps, even he himself has tried some illogical ones. This minimizes pressure on the student, who sees a glimpse of the process that even the great Marcel Moyse had to go through on his way to mastery. Offering further sympathy is a frequent referral to “difficult notes.”¹⁸³ Moyse’s word choice acknowledges that the skills he is describing are hard-won; he himself finds them challenging.

Summary

This literature review of subjects relevant to teacher word choice can enlighten educators on the responsibilities of the music teacher and the individual needs of the music student. It reveals that all students can learn, and that they learn best when a carefully designed curriculum engages their whole brain through the six stages of cognition. To ensure deep learning, music teachers can employ skills used by ethnographers, salesmen, and performers. College music teachers must maintain an awareness of the stresses, pressures, developments, and transitions that college music students experience and be ready to adjust their responsibilities as their students’ needs change.

The literature review explores research which shows that the teacher-student dyad is an invaluable method for supporting students. Its intricacies are paralleled only by

¹⁸³ Ibid., 4
those in the parent-child relationship. At its worst, the natural imbalance of power can stunt the development of a student’s musical identity; at its best, it can inspire and motivate a student during profound personal and musical transformations.

The literature review finds that verbal feedback is most helpful when it is honest and clear. The use of imagery, praise, encouragement, and dialogue can be powerfully supportive, pushing students to grow into their own best teachers.

The literature review investigates the traditional background of many artist-teachers, whose playing careers have provided them with invaluable performance experience. For some, the lack of formal teacher training leads to inflexible, uninformed, and ineffective teaching. For others, innate interpersonal ability or a concerted effort to adopt conscientious teaching methods can further assist the growth of both underdeveloped musicians and the skilled and self-motivated players who can already learn simply through observation.

The literature review discusses a number of heightened sensitivities associated with music instruction which contribute to music’s being an especially challenging subject to teach. One-to-one lessons are unsupervised, and the relationship between language and learning is extremely complex. Music performance is a highly competitive field, developing into an artist is a personal and complicated journey, music is abstract, and the processes involved to produce sound are often invisible. Music teachers must be able to describe intangible concepts and also ease anxious students who fight self-doubts and face impending job scarcity.

The literature review examines the power of words in music learning by observing their use in method books for both beginners and advanced flutists, in the
Alexander Technique which emphasizes physical health, and in the musings of musician and non-musician experts. This examination reveals that simple, direct, and sympathetic language is favored.

While most of the research that has been conducted on music instruction focuses on technical methods, some research exists which explores the more psychological side of teaching and learning. These studies explore the private music lesson, seeking to understand either the teacher-student relationship through the eyes of students, or seeking to understand teacher perceptions on the ways in which teaching informs performing. There is little in print which addresses teacher word choice, and even less, still, in the flute world. This study seeks to complement the existing research with the current views of today’s leading flute pedagogues. It is the hope that their stories will contribute to the thoughtful and impactful teaching of tomorrow.

**Research Questions**

This study addresses the following research questions:

1. What elements of a teacher’s background influence their word choice in lessons?

2. To what degree does student individuality affect a teacher’s word choice from student to student?

3. How do teachers reflect their goals and values in their word choice?
Chapter 3

METHOD

In order to answer the research questions relevant to the factors that influence teacher word choice in American college flute lessons, the author collected data through in-depth, semi-structured interviews of five expert flute teachers who, at the time of this study, hold college teaching positions at major music schools in the United States. The five teachers were carefully chosen by the author under the guidance of the committee as pedagogues who represent the standard for flute teaching in America at the time of the study. The participants were chosen based on the notable successes of their students, current and former.

The five interviewees who agreed to participate in this study, in alphabetical order followed by their current teaching institution, are: Leone Buyse (Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music), Marianne Gedigian (University of Texas at Austin’s Butler School of Music), Amy Porter (University of Michigan’s School of Music, Theatre, and Dance), Jim Walker (University of Southern California’s Thornton School of Music and The Colburn School), and Carol Wincenc (The Juilliard School of Music and Stony Brook University).

During the interviewee selection process, the similarities found in age, background, teaching experience, and level of expertise of the five subjects were found to reflect those of the majority of revered American college flute teachers. The author asserts that the female-to-male ratio in this panel accurately represents the female-to-male ratio in the American flute teaching community at the present time of the study.
The author obtained approval for the study from the University of Miami Human Subject Research Office (IRB Approval #20180620). An official letter of approval can be found in Appendix C. The interviews were scheduled in advance, and a list of the prepared list of questions was provided to the interviewees ahead of time. Prior to the start of each interview, the author read a verbal consent script which asked for permission to audio-record the interview, explicitly explained that names would be included with quotes in the final text, and expressed the allowance for interviewees to withdraw from the study at any time. Each interviewee gave verbal consent. The list of questions was organized by themes which correspond to the six main topics in the literature review. The interviews were conducted in person, over the phone, or via Skype.

The interviews were semi-structured. Semi-structured interviews are commonly used for collecting reliable qualitative data that can be analyzed for comparisons.184 Each interview was based on a predetermined list of questions designed to engage the informants on the topics explored in the literature review. The questions were purposefully indirect in nature so as to avoid bias and the projection of the interviewer’s personal views onto the interviewees and to allow for the author to ask follow-up questions where deemed appropriate. Straying from the planned questions by following the informant’s digressions is often found to be productive;185 this reactive method of

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interviewing allows the informants to freely express their own thoughts and experiences.\(^\text{186}\)

The interview questions followed the structure of the six themes that emerged in the literature review:

1. The interviewee’s artist teacher background (pivotal memories in their development, their relationships with their teachers, the drawing upon of their performing strengths)
2. The interviewee’s thoughts on the one-to-one teacher-student relationship (boundaries, teaching style)
3. The interviewee’s perception of their responsibility as a teacher (their role, their teaching goals, their perceptions about student needs and expectations)
4. The interviewee’s verbal feedback in lessons (the use of praise and encouragement, whether or not they interrupt, use of imagery)
5. Heightened sensitivities in music instruction (abstract concepts in music, difficulties in teaching flute)
6. Words and music learning (key words, phrases, teaching tools).

The interview outline is provided in Appendix A.

After the interviews were conducted, they were transcribed by the author and sent to each of the respective interviewees for revisions, comments, and questions. The author then coded each of the five transcripts. “Coding,” or aggregating the text into categories, helps to interpret, classify, and describe qualitative data so that it can then be combined

\(^{186}\) Cohen and Crabtree.
with the researcher’s own views and those found in the literature. The author conducted every stage of the research, including the designing, conducting, and transcribing of the interviews, and the performing of all levels of thematic analysis by hand.

The author modeled this coding approach after the method used by Dr. Ksenija Komljenović in a 2017 qualitative interview-based research study conducted at the University of Miami. In order to ensure the reliability of the code and to avoid personal bias or projection of her own views onto the data, Komljenović and research supervisor Dr. Shannon de l’Etoile enlisted a second coder to examine two interview transcripts and to create their own code. Similarly, the author secured a University of Miami graduate student to act as second coder. This student had no prior knowledge of the study or its purpose, and had not seen the literature review, the interview questions, or the names of the informants. After the author had coded all five transcripts once and developed a code system, the second coder reviewed two transcripts and created their own code system. The two code systems were then compared to check for alignment of themes, and the author used the comparison to strengthen the code system. The author then recoded all five transcripts using the revised code system which can be found in Appendix E.

During the course of the interview process, the author strove to gather from the informants a diverse collection of experiences, opinions, values, and beliefs. The intention was to then present their insights in a way that values each unique voice, 

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189 Ibid.
appreciates variant perspectives, and recognizes similarities, both emergent and apparent. The author hopes that this study may contribute to existing research on flute teaching and other forms of music instruction.
Chapter 4

STUDY RESULTS

The author conducted five semi-structured interviews, the design of which was based on the six themes that emerged in the literature review. The interview questions were formulated to reveal leading American flute pedagogue’s insights regarding topics relevant to these same six themes: artist-teacher background, teacher responsibility to fulfill the student’s needs and expectations, the significance of the one-to-one teacher-student relationship, verbal teacher feedback, heightened sensitivities in music instruction, and words and music learning. The ‘artist-teacher background’ theme has been moved to the front of the chapter to reflect the introductory nature of answers relating to participants’ memories of formative years.

The five interviewees were chosen by the author under the guidance of the study’s supervisor, the committee chair, artist-teacher Trudy Kane. These five pedagogues have contributed substantially to the current state of flute pedagogy as evidenced in part by notable successes of their students, current and former.

The five interviewees are shown in the following table, Table 1, in alphabetical order along with their current teaching position, major former performance appointments, the medium used for their interview, and the length of their interview in minutes:
Table 1. Interview Specifics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flutist and their Former Principal/Acting Principal positions</th>
<th>Interview Medium</th>
<th>Length in Minutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leone Buyse Professor of Flute, Rice University Boston Symphony Orchestra</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marianne Gedigian Professor of Flute, University of Texas at Austin Boston Symphony Orchestra</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy Porter Professor of Flute, University of Michigan Atlanta Symphony Orchestra</td>
<td>Skype</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim Walker Professor of Flute, University of Southern California Professor of Flute, The Colburn School Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra Los Angeles Philharmonic</td>
<td>In-person</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carol Wincenc Professor of Flute, The Juilliard School of Music Professor of Flute, Stony Brook University Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra TASHI ensemble.</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The author then coded and analyzed the raw data for prevalent themes and unique responses which addressed the following research questions:

1. What elements of a teacher’s background influence their word choice in lessons?

2. To what degree does student individuality affect a teacher’s word choice from student to student?

3. How do teachers reflect their current goals and values in their word choice?
This chapter organizes resulting data as they correspond to the themes discovered in the author’s literature review: Artist-teacher Background, Teacher’s Responsibility to Meet Student Needs and Expectations, The Significance of the One-to-one Teacher-student Relationship, Verbal Teacher Feedback, Heightened Sensitivities in Music Instruction, and Words and Music Learning.

**Artist-Teacher Background**

When prompted to discuss the beginning of their flute playing lives, all respondents offered insights and anecdotes that corroborated what was discovered in the literature review about the importance of teacher legacy and reputation in this generation. Nearly 50% of every interview was spent recounting in great detail the specific years spent with each teacher, with special attention paid to correctly remembering the city in which early lessons took place, and the calculated age their teachers would have been at that point in time. It is clearly important to them to properly document that relationship – to honor the lessons learned during these years by first contextualizing them in a historical and chronological sense.

Data overwhelmingly gives evidence to the trend of the lack of formal teacher training found in the literature review. All of the respondents stated that they came upon teaching as a natural extension of what they were already doing as professional performing musicians. Only one of the five, Gedigian, explicitly verbalized that teaching was ever a focal interest of hers.\(^{190}\) That is not to say that all five panel members did not repeatedly show obvious interest and even passion for the education side of their lives;

\(^{190}\) Marianne Gedigian. interview by author, September 15, 2018: Appendix D, 154.
only Gedigian mentioned that a shift in priority from performance toward teaching marked the real start of her teaching career. For most of the other panel members, teaching became a part of their life when they were in search of additional income, in a position to quickly and easily adopt a large studio as a result of their appointment to a major symphony, or wishing to transition from the intensely scheduled, travel-heavy performer’s life to a more localized, autonomous day-to-day schedule of higher education.

In addition to confirming both the natural progression of performing into teaching and the memorializing of impactful relationships with larger-than-life teachers, three additional specific themes emerged when the author prompted respondents to discuss their musical backgrounds. All spoke of vivid, pivotal memories which marked vital relationships with early teachers, parents, and later, colleagues. Every panel member referenced the language they remembered these figures using in communicating and addressing them. Lastly, all interviewees discussed the ways in which their performance experience infiltrates the studio.

Each panel member emphasized the significance of their first teachers, whether flute or general music, and how they inspired them to pursue music. Gedigian mentioned that her first teacher was “the coolest person she had ever met,” and that she “was a major influence in [her] thinking that doing music was something slick.”191 Wincenc expressed her gratitude for the foundational work accomplished in lessons with one of her early teachers, Edna Comerchero, by saying, “Thank God for Edna.”192 Buyse remembered

191 Gedigian, interview by author, 149.
192 Carol Wincenc, interview by author, October 9, 2018: Appendix D, 206.
fondly her time with David Berman, complimenting his panache for teaching at such an early age when she remarked that effective lessons were taking place between them when he was only twenty and had not yet had much experience.\textsuperscript{193} Porter shared that her relationship with one of her early teachers was so close there was a “falling out”\textsuperscript{194} when a young Amy Porter’s mother decided to advance her to lessons in a bigger city with a more prominent teacher. This would confirm the overwhelming trend of students gravitating toward prestige and reputation when seeking instruction.

A few of the subjects mentioned their parents’ great influence. Wincenc’s pianist mother and conductor and violinist father had her growing up around constant music-making. Like Wincenc, Walker’s first flute teacher was his dad. Buyse’s immersion in academia from a young age had an influence on her and persuaded her to become a professor.

Not only were early teachers and parents inspiring and impactful; in the beginning stages of some subjects’ careers, peers provided lasting inspiration. Walker discussed how inspiring the guest artists were to him when he was starting off his career as a young man performing with the Pittsburgh Symphony. He named great pianists and violinists, saying, “to be in the environment…as a twenty-six-year-old with Isaac Stern, Rudolf Serkin – all the big name [\textit{sic}] people of those days – was an unbelievable influence on me… And I’d say, within the orchestra, there were probably ten to fifteen really

\textsuperscript{193} Leone Buyse, interview by author, September 9, 2018: Appendix D, 128.

\textsuperscript{194} Amy Porter, interview by author, August 26, 2018: Appendix D, 165.
remarkable musicians that, just being in their presence, you couldn’t help but learn.”

Wincenc discussed how observing the exceptional playing of colleague and clarinetist “Dick Stolz,” taught her how to play singingly. Buyse offered how a conversation with a visiting artist prompted her to begin thinking about retiring. All expressed how much they continued to learn from their peers.

All respondents recalled that their first teachers spoke simply, clearly, and directly. Buyse remarked that she recently found in an old piece of music the words, “Play the page” written in David Berman’s handwriting. It was in a short, three-word message that her first flute teacher communicated a hugely important concept, especially for a developing young player. “That’s where you start in music,” she said, by “[paying] attention to all the rhythmic and dynamic indications.” Porter said she remembers how simply her band teacher described the best way to set a flute embouchure when she was a young beginner. “Put the bottom edge of the lip on the bottom edge of the lip plate.” She emphasized, “That was it… that was it.” Later in life, she would seek out another influential early teacher who had a catchy way of verbally coaching her to successful sound making: “Foo.” Making the sound ‘foo’ is what her first flute teacher told her to imagine in order to form an embouchure that would produce a stable, strong sound in the low register. This prompt was easy to remember and only required one step.

Walker describes the language he remembers from his early years of music instruction as being “strong,” “cut to the chase,” “truthful,” and even “shocking

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196 Buyse, interview by author, 127.

197 Porter, interview by author, 164.
sometimes.” Wincenc called her first teacher’s language “vivid” and “direct.” Buyse recalled not just the directness and clarity of her early teacher’s language, but also its expressiveness and relatability:

“[David Berman] was an academic mind. I mean, he had a way of expressing things that was very clear. He later was asked to serve for several years as an assistant dean at the music school at Ithaca College, and I think just that assignment… indicates his ability to communicate. I mean, you don’t get asked to an administrative job without having a fairly high level of communication skills, to begin with, whether in pedagogy or in meetings with people… He loved music so much that he would describe it, I think, in ways that I, as a twelve-, or thirteen-, or fourteen-year-old could really relate to… and he was not sugar coating anything. I mean, he was a kind person, but so direct.”

Wincenc was influenced by the foreign languages used in her home in Buffalo, New York. In addition to English, she grew up hearing Hungarian, Slovak, and French spoken. She also considered her immersion in live music in the house to be somewhat of a language immersion itself. “Everything was color… everything was string playing,” she said of the string quartet traffic in her home, and “Everything was about articulation… resonance. Resonance!” in reference to her pianist mother’s influence.

Porter described her British mother’s vocabulary as motivational and inspirational. She was always looking forward to her daughter’s bright future, giving her suggestions to prepare her for her inevitable huge success. While Porter fondly speaks of her teaching life and calls herself “better for the hundreds of [students] who have come through the

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198 Walker, interview by author, 189.
199 Wincenc, interview by author, 204.
200 Buyse, interview by author, 129.
201 Wincenc, interview by author, 204.
202 Ibid., 205.
203 Porter, interview by author, 166.
door,” her mom’s charged commentary never referenced future teaching situations. Porter says it was more as if her mother’s suggestions were implying, “when you’re having lunch with the queen, this is how you’re supposed to do it.”²⁰⁴ Her mum’s constructive criticism was so pointed that it motivated her to work toward the level of mastery that would have her dining with royalty.

Walker and Buyse both reference their household language as being reserved. Walker, on his “conservative, kind of WASPish” Western Kentucky community, said that “the words that I grew up with were always very docile.” He reflects that perhaps this provided him a disservice. “The downside was that… the verbal communication was always nice and not very honest and communicative.” Today, “honest” is the first word he uses to describe his teaching style. When asked to briefly describe himself as a teacher in one or two sentences, he did it in three words, without hesitation. “Pretty much honest, compassionate, and encouraging.” He emphasized, “I’m 100% honest about what I hear… My major strength as a teacher is my honesty and my compassion for the student.”²⁰⁵ Now, both Walker and Buyse try to remain open in teaching and playing. They understand how, in many teaching and performing situations, openness, honesty, and communicativeness can be advantageous for student and audience satisfaction. When asked how her self-described “conservative WASP household” influenced her current teaching vocabulary, Buyse credited the reserved language as having taught her to “express things in such a way that would not be hurtful.”²⁰⁶ Now, she sees herself as

²⁰⁴ Porter, interview by author, 172.
²⁰⁵ Walker, interview by author, 193.
²⁰⁶ Buyse, interview by author, 130.
having preserved that empathetic intention while still “[getting] into things a little more with students” and being “more direct.” ²⁰⁷ She believes that this might be a result of thriving under the open atmosphere created by her first flute teacher, David Berman.

When asked how their college curricula prepared them for the teaching they would eventually begin, all panel members unanimously agreed that it was less the curricula and more of life experience that they credit. In Porter’s words, “There was no class to give me the history of my teaching.” ²⁰⁸ She goes on:

> It’s a life-learned thing. Go out and live your life and listen a lot. And, that’s your school. Life is your school. There’s no class, I think, to be a great professor…at all. You have to be empathetic. You have to get down to work and understand it’s all about the student. ²⁰⁹

Gedigian says:

> Everything prepares you for everything you do. And maybe that sounds flip, but it just does. I mean… playing on a basketball team…traveling for a summer festival… it all prepares you… I think that everything prepares you on some level, if you’re paying attention. ²¹⁰

If traveling and playing sports can be accredited with influencing teaching style, then surely the kind of teaching experienced as a developing student will impact the kind of teacher a musician becomes. Porter agrees, so much so that she refers to the influence her teachers had on her as actually having manifested as plain regurgitation.

Asking the panel members to discuss what they remembered about their influential teachers’ use of demonstration reveals overwhelming belief in listening and observing as

²⁰⁷ Buyse, interview by author, 130.

²⁰⁸ Porter, interview by author, 171.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Gedigian. interview by author, 154.
learning tools. “If you’re listening, you learn,” says Gedigian. Both she and Buyse discuss how much can be learned when an eager student watches live performances and then dissects what they hear. The effective performances are not limited to those of the student’s primary teacher. Gedigian describes how transforming it was for her to simply sit near a master flutist in a summer festival or to observe another’s playing in a master class setting:

Julia [Bogorad] wasn’t my teacher but sitting next to her for ten minutes in an orchestra was, you know… mind boggling. Or, hearing Carol [Wincenc] play in a master class for five seconds … all of a sudden, you realize there was another way to look at playing music, and [that there are] other sound possibilities...

When asked to discuss their thoughts on demonstration and its role in teaching, two panel members recalled teachers playing all the time in lessons. “[Julius] Baker was very exacting, ‘it must be done this way,’” Wincenc mimicked, recalling her peers’ lessons with him at Juilliard. “He taught by example, by playing all the time,” she adds, describing the method of rote teaching in which a teacher plays and asks the students to imitate. When recalling lessons with then principal of the Rochester Philharmonic, Joseph Mariano, Buyse discusses how helpful it was to hear him in concert and then again when he would play for them in lessons.

When discussing the role that demonstration holds in their own teaching, many panel members explained that the amount they play in lessons constantly changes throughout one’s teaching career. “I think it’s really, really important to do it as long as

211 Gedigian, interview by author, 151.
212 Ibid.
213 Wincenc, interview by author, 216.
214 Buyse, interview by author, 130.
you can,” says Walker; however, he acknowledges that a number of factors will replace demonstration with an emphasis on words and descriptions. For him, he states that many of his students simply sound better than him these days because the level of flute playing rises every year.\textsuperscript{215} Sometimes the reason for less demonstration is student-driven, and sometimes it is teacher-driven. In the case of Gedigian, she recalls when raising her daughter at home resulted in fewer instances of her demonstrating at school. “There’s been a bit of an ebb and flow, Hannah… because I was holding a baby and not the flute as many hours as I had been.”\textsuperscript{216} Later on in life, her reasoning for demonstrating less frequently is a result of her knowing that, often, a student would benefit most from figuring things out on their own. She says,

I think my teaching is more focused on the student’s…exploration in the lesson. And I do demonstrate now, and I think a healthy amount, which is to say, not a lot, but enough to inform an ear of… [an] up-close kind of concept, but I don’t play a ton in the lessons. I think my students really want to play in the lessons and I try to honor that and interject with abstract commentary, analogies, specific targeted commentary, and then some sound profile offerings, as well.\textsuperscript{217}

Buyse remarks that she also sometimes opts not to demonstrate if she suspects she might not sound her best. For her, reasons may be because she is not a “morning person” and that she often does not sound her best if playing cold in early lessons. She also mentions that, when teaching and smiling a lot, her face muscles get tired and cause her sound to suffer, therefore rendering a demonstration less helpful than a clear verbal description and positive reinforcement.\textsuperscript{218} Walker discusses how he practices less now.

\textsuperscript{215} Walker, interview by author, 191.

\textsuperscript{216} Gedigian, interview by author, 154.

\textsuperscript{217} Ibid., 154-5.

\textsuperscript{218} Buyse, interview by author, 137.
and, therefore his skills have diminished, particularly his vibrato control. He often would rather choose another method aside from playing flute to best exemplify a desired phrase shape or sound quality. “For some reason, [I] can still kind of sing with a more spinning vibrato.”219

Wincenc says she teaches with demonstration because, although she considers herself an articulate teacher, demonstration is the best approach for some students who are not “keen on words.”220 Buyse discussed another realm of demonstration for students which is performing symphony concerts and faculty recitals with members of her studio eagerly watching in the audience. She describes how she felt “a great responsibility” toward her students in these situations:

Well, I think when you perform for students... whether you’re sitting in the Orchestra at Symphony Hall in Boston and your students are up in the balcony, or whether you’re doing a faculty recital and you can see their faces just a few rows back in the recital hall [laughs], you are under pressure to really try to communicate all the things musically and technically that you’ve been establishing in your work with students, and so I felt a great responsibility.”221

Another situation in which setting an example can have a great impact on students is when a teacher inserts themselves into the same environment that their students are learning to navigate. Porter described how she secretly took an audition for a principal flute position in a major orchestra while she was happily employed full time as a professor of flute so that she could share the authentic experience with her students.222

219 Walker, interview by author, 192.
220 Wincenc, interview by author, 216.
221 Buyse, interview by author, 136.
222 Porter, interview by author, 173.
Refreshing her understanding of going through the grueling audition process helped her to better relate to her students who were in the audition circuit. She could give them updated, real-life advice on preparation and mental strategy.

All participants did readily discuss the effectiveness of demonstration and the varying degree of its importance in terms of a teacher’s capacity and student learning style. One respondent did speak to the teaching abilities of some teachers who strictly never demonstrate. Walker said, “I used to think it was impossible. It is possible to be a great teacher and not demonstrate.”

He referred to two “legendary genius teachers” at the Colburn School who do not play for their students: Yehuda Gilad, clarinetist, and Robert Lipsett, violinist. Both teachers do indeed run coveted teaching studios in Los Angeles and it is a well-known fact that one cannot expect to observe any demonstration in a lesson with either of them.

One such non-demonstrating beloved American flute pedagogue has spent decades recruiting fine students who graduate to become competition winners, flute professors, and principal players of major symphonies. Angeleita Floyd, currently Professor of Flute at the University of Northern Iowa, has only recently resumed playing flute after decades of suffering from focal dystonia. This aspect of her teaching style may have, indeed, deterred some students from studying with her, but it cannot be denied that many who did choose to benefit from her expertise would eventually achieve career success. It is worth posturing that, perhaps, it is the exceptionally gifted students who can thrive under the kind of tutelage that Floyd, Lipsett, and Gilad offer.

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223 Walker, interview by author, 192.
Teacher’s Responsibility to Meet Student Needs and Expectations

Three major themes surfaced when subjects were asked to share their perceptions about students’ needs. All panel members described their role in private lessons, discussed the importance of acknowledging students’ individuality, and outlined the value of empathy in teaching music.

Three of the interviewees used parental terms when describing their teaching role; Walker considers himself as a father or uncle figure224 and Wincenc sees herself both as “mothering”225 and as a trusted guide or mentor.226 Porter, however, personally does not categorize her role as familial at all. “My role is a mentor. Not mom, and not best friend.”227 Gedigian chose to articulate her role not necessarily as a figure but as a function. “My role as a teacher is to be present… to change with the student’s development and needs.”228

Buyse addresses the question of teacher role by first insisting that boundaries must be set while student autonomy is still honored.229 In fact, setting boundaries is in itself a way to encourage student autonomy. One simple tactic for laying a strong foundation that sets healthy parameters in the teaching studio and beyond is by carefully choosing a teaching title. Buyse posits that both young teachers and young students

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224 Walker, interview by author, 190.
225 Wincenc, interview by author, 218.
226 Ibid, 217.
227 Porter, interview by author, 174.
228 Gedigian, interview by author, 152.
229 Buyse, interview by author, 138.
benefit from the clear authority that a more formal name communicates. She suggests avoiding the use of first names unless it is preceded by “Professor” or “Ms./Miss/Mrs./Mr.”230 When a clear and firm connection between power and position is made, teachers can lead productive lessons which focus on music and the learning process instead of behavioral issues or conflict. This structure can be loosened over time once trust and respect have built to allow students to take more responsibility. Buyse gives the example of letting her students design their studio recital program.231 Because Professor Buyse has set clear boundaries and long ago established her position of authority, students appreciate this permission instead of interpreting it as the teacher’s lack of interest or incompetence.

Walker, however, shares that he allows students to address him in whichever way they feel comfortable. Many students call him “Jim” and one even called him “Jimmy,” which he found hilarious. He recalls a student who always referred to him as “Professor Walker” throughout her studies with him and even after she had graduated. She divulged to him that she thought she would never get to the point of calling him by his first name, even years after she had left his studio.232

Another prevalent theme that arose in the discussion of their responsibilities is the teachers’ insistence on having an interest in and acknowledgement of their students’ individual identity. It is not enough for a teacher to simply adapt their methods to the unique learning style of each student. Beyond the music and the process of learning the

230 Buyse, interview by author, 138.
231 Ibid.
232 Walker, interview by author, 194.
notes and rhythms, it is important for teachers to understand the way their students see themselves. Porter says, “I need to know how I should treat them. I need to know, often, how they feel about themselves. Because quite often, [the way I see them is] very different from how they see themselves.”\(^{233}\) She gives the example of listening to her students share the sources of their anxiety. Often, she finds, they are anxious for unfounded reasons, and she can share her understanding of the situation to calm their fears. As Gedigian puts it, an artist-teacher’s many years of performing experience can manifest later in the teaching studio as “a good dose of reality”\(^{234}\) for developing players.

Learning needs do not just vary from student to student; they can change from lesson to lesson. In Gedigian’s words, a teacher has to learn to “read the room”\(^{235}\) each time a student steps into the studio. Of the ever-changing dynamic between her and her students, Gedigian fondly states that with each of them, she has a “beautiful relationship, but it evolves over time. So, it depends if you get them in an ebb moment or a flow moment. And that’s part of teaching.”\(^{236}\)

An overarching theme of empathy presented in an analysis of the respondents’ musings on teaching. Each professor has a different idea of what empathy means and what types of empathetic words and behaviors are appropriate from teachers in a private studio setting. According to Porter, empathy is a form of compassion and manifests as

\(^{233}\) Porter, interview by author, 168.

\(^{234}\) Gedigian, interview by author, 154.

\(^{235}\) Ibid., 155.

\(^{236}\) Ibid.
flexibility in teaching.\textsuperscript{237} “The whole role of empathy,” she says, “is to make sure that it’s driven from the… dynamic of respect and love.”\textsuperscript{238} She expands: “Empathetic means, ‘I’ve been through it, I might know how you’re feeling.’” When a teacher reaches inside their memory to recall how it felt when they once endured what their student is currently experiencing, the teacher-student bond is further strengthened. Porter calls it “meeting in the middle” and describes it as their two hearts beating at the same tempo so, together, they can work on music, artistry, and communication.\textsuperscript{239}

In discussing empathy in teaching music, rather than focusing on his own empathetic methods, Walker was instead driven to talk about the importance of students embarking on the professional world as empathetic beings. “A performer has to have empathy,” he says. It becomes a problem for players whose sole orientation is one of precision and technicalities. He believes:

[If one keeps] a barrier so that nothing ever becomes personal or emotional, I think a person can learn to play pretty well. I think there’s gonna be something definitely seriously missing… You’ll never be able to play in tune if you actually don’t have empathy for an oboe player who can’t control the instrument.\textsuperscript{240}

While he does not necessarily consciously employ empathetic tactics in his teaching, he believes in its power and its place in music instruction. “[Empathy is] not a word that I use very often, but I 100% espouse it.” All students will encounter moments where they need their teachers to tread lightly, and sometimes, these moments will come as a

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{237} Porter, interview by author, 175.
\item \textsuperscript{238} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{239} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{240} Walker, interview by author, 195.
\end{itemize}
surprise. “We all have baggage. Every student has got some baggage, some of which they don’t even know about,” \(^{241}\) says Walker.

Gedigian believes that the music community survives on an inherent empathy, because everyone in the business knows how competitive and stressful a life in music can be. Achieving success and satisfaction in this field is a challenge for everyone, and from this place of knowing, teachers provide guidance, suggestions, and support to the developing young artists in their studios. She reminds the flute community that the concept of empathy is huge, and it does not always translate as offering kind words or commiserating. Empathy can be shown in silence. “Sometimes being empathetic is being able to understand something and not express it, but [instead] offer kind of a silent mentoring on something. Sometimes that’s the most empathetic you can be. Is not to point something out.” \(^{242}\) Wincenc would agree, as she says that often her students have come to her saying that the most supported they ever feel by her is when they look out into an audience at one of their performances and see her sitting there. \(^{243}\) Not only can a teacher positively impact their students by saying, “I’ve been there”; showing up in itself can say to them, “I am here. I am here with you now.”

**Significance of the One-to-one Teacher-Student Relationship**

As explored in the literature review and previously in this chapter’s discussion on a teacher’s role, the music instruction dyad is supremely intimate; the gravity of the

\(^{241}\) Walker, interview by author, 195.

\(^{242}\) Gedigian, interview by author, 156.

\(^{243}\) Wincenc, interview by author, 217.
relationship is described as matching that between parent and child. All panel members spoke to the fact that the dynamic between teacher and student is different today. The environments they learned in when they were students were far more intimidating and the relationship between them and their teachers was strictly formal. When Wincenc recalled whether or not she ever felt the need to talk about her personal life with her teacher, she paused and laughed. “Personal. Wow. Wow. Oh wow,” She kept exclaiming, lost in thought. “Nope. Nope,” she said. It was as if she were voicing her shock at the realization of just how much things have changed. “Do my students talk about their personal lives? Oh yeah.”

Gedigian’s memory of her time in lessons is similar in that it contrasts to the normalization of niceness that exists today. She remarks that the word “no” was more popular with some teachers from previous generations. It appears that it was common to study with a teacher who was not inclined to nurture or explain – one who would instead use the word “no” often. Today, the norm is a more patient and helpful teaching style. Gedigian recalls a recent lesson she taught to a particularly articulate dual major, whom she complimented for her word choice. Attention to and command of the language was, apparently, less of a priority in previous years:

You know, your generation... you’re actually instructing us on what that means and how to achieve it.’ Saying things like ‘challenges’ instead of ‘hard.’ You know, there’s just a different way now. We heard a lot of, ‘No.’ And so, nowadays, we would say, ‘Oh, that’s horrible.’ I can tell you that I sure worked hard in practice to crack the code of what a ‘Yes’ might be... and I never, ever

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244 Wincenc, interview by author, 212.

245 Ibid.

246 Gedigian, interview by author, 152.
expected to be given any information that would equate to a ‘Yes.’ I figured I had to sort that through myself.\textsuperscript{247}

As discovered when searching for research on teacher training, many students grow up to eventually teach in exactly the same way their teachers did. For some, this means perpetuating a cycle of bluntness and insensitivity. Gedigian purports that the general trends in society also have great influence on what kind of teacher a person will become. Today, a general shift has taken place. Severity has given way to sensitivity; however, Walker says that a vestige of the old way does exist:

There are people who actually, in a perverse way, get some sort of charge out of seeing someone squirm. Or actually hurting someone. And not a lot of people, but I have known some [teachers]... I mean, there is absolutely a reputation in the 40s and 50s... the whole ‘temperamental artist’ kind of thing, and it still goes on today a little bit.\textsuperscript{248}

Further delving into the significance of the private, individualized nature of music lessons led to the identification of two major themes; teaching style and boundaries. While it proved difficult for the panel members to succinctly describe their teaching style when asked to summarize it in a sentence or two, each of the five created over the course of the interview a composite sketch of their teaching self through talking about their students. Some teachers tended to describe themselves and their teaching style in musical terms, others gravitated toward behavioral or emotional terms.

Wincenc illustrated her teaching self as being very much “about movement.”\textsuperscript{249} She still values sound quality above all else, as she learned in a household in which

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{247} Gedigian, interview by author, 152.
\textsuperscript{248} Walker, interview by author, 199.
\textsuperscript{249} Wincenc, interview by author, 209.
\end{flushright}
“everything was about resonance.”\textsuperscript{250} It is important to her that in their time with their teacher, her students learn to give themselves permission on their journey to artistry. “I’m big about the permission to express… the permission to play, the permission to breathe,”\textsuperscript{251} she says. As mentioned previously, she accomplishes this in part by demonstrating and by boisterously using a colorful vocabulary. “Oh my God. \textit{Lumineau} is one of my favorite words,” she gushes, then translates. “You know, light. The quality of light in one’s playing… I do really love that as a descriptive language thing… What quality of light are you employing here?” she asks students to get them to evaluate their sound profile. She also finds the concept of density a useful tool, as well as calling upon the senses of taste and smell. “I’m always saying things like, ‘What kind of chocolate do you like?’” She laughs and continues. “You know, quality of chocolate, the taste of chocolate. Smells of things. Aromatic things. You know, it probably has some relationship to having spoken Italian and done everything in Italian, because it’s so descriptive.”\textsuperscript{252} Surely her experiences traveling and studying abroad for years have steeped her teaching vocabulary in other cultures and languages. This has become part of her teaching style.

Gedigian considers the lesson time to be like a learning laboratory and does what she can to communicate to the students that the studio is a place for investigation, problem solving, and discovery; a lesson is not a quiz or a test.\textsuperscript{253} One previously

\textsuperscript{250} Wincenc, interview by author, 205.

\textsuperscript{251} Ibid., 212.

\textsuperscript{252} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{253} Gedigian, interview by author, 159.
discussed method that promotes this exploratory atmosphere is by minimizing her
demonstration. “I think my students really want to play in the lessons and I try to honor
that.” She sees her offerings as interjections. Students must feel comfortable being the
object of close examination for one straight hour every week in a private, one-on-one
setting. Gedigian says of this intense, often pressure-filled scenario:

[I]t’s a very personal… relationship, you know. We have a campus of 50,000. When you put it all together and we have two people sitting in a room together
that, you know, hopefully love the craft in which we’re working together the most
of anybody on the campus. So it’s an elite crowd, and a hyper-focused area of
instruction. So, I think there’s an intimacy inherent in the reality of being in a
room together for this kind of targeted instruction.

The student progress and their success in the lesson relies on the careful focus of two
people, and so, their concentration is more than just a goal. To expand upon Gedigian’s
use of the term “targeted instruction,” the two are aiming hard together. To hit a target
takes clear vision, controlled relaxation, patience, perseverance, and repetition. If the
teacher takes on the role of a trainer who pushes and motivates the student, the process
can be made more efficient. Gedigian categorizes teaching music as “a kind of coaching
profession. Like sports, you know?” She laughs and imitates herself acting as that
animated, motivating figure who provides an energetic, sometimes unwanted push during
the exercise, and then rests in satisfaction with the team. “[T]he coach is on the sideline
going, ‘Faster, faster, faster!’ And then afterwards, they’re at peace with their players…it’s very similar to that sometimes.”

254 Gedigian, interview by author, 159.
255 Ibid., 155.
256 Ibid.
257 Ibid., 156.
The second theme discovered was teachers’ degree of openness toward students. While all interviewees agree that there is, in general, a freer and more informal atmosphere in the private teaching studio today, each respondent varied in their comfort level. Buyse creates in her studio the sense that her students can “very definitely” speak freely to her at any time about anything. She acknowledges that the private weekly lesson lends itself to the sometimes delicate discourse that surfaces when students finally get alone time with someone older whom they respect and trust. “[S]ometimes the teacher becomes the one person who can be approached with a particular subject if it’s just too sticky to talk about with parents or anybody else. Our role can be extremely important. Really important.” Buyse achieves this level of trust, she believes, with a willingness and an ability to be “creative in terms of allowing them to develop their own particular voice,” Honoring their individuality means that she avoids teaching all students in the same way. Aside from recommending particular exercises and books to everyone, she tries to remain “open to the issues that each individual might bring in his or her playing” so that students can reveal to her how she can best interact with them.

As previously mentioned, Porter sees herself strictly as a mentor to her students. She believes one responsibility of hers in this mentor position is to make certain that students are healthy and in the right emotional state for maximum learning. She does this by asking them sincerely how they are doing at the beginning of each lesson, just as she

258 Buyse, interview by author, 139.
259 Ibid., 140.
260 Ibid.
261 Ibid.
remembers her teachers doing for her years ago. She insists that part of the two-way relationship is that she must be able to trust her students to speak up if they need her. “[I]f the personal life is that profound, then I’m happy to be invited into it. But if it’s not profound, then I don’t need to know.”

Wincenc reports that her students are comfortable around her and that she is aware that, especially with evidence of ongoing rampant sexual harassment and abuse of power permeating the news today, clear boundaries must be set. While it can be helpful for a student’s musical growth if their relationship is a close one, an appropriate distance must, of course, be kept by both teacher and student.

**Verbal Teacher Feedback**

The words a teacher uses to present feedback to students in their lessons can have a powerful effect on the student and on the progression of the lesson. Interview questions in this project were designed to elicit responses that would give insight into the factors that influence five major American flute pedagogues’ word choices in lessons. While all five of the participants have wildly different teaching styles and vocabularies, four major themes were discovered in an evaluation of their responses. The four themes are honesty in teaching, praise and encouragement, non-music areas of life which inform teaching, and the use of imagery.

The notion of honesty occurred earlier in the chapter when direct language was addressed. One sensitive area in teaching is knowing when to interrupt a student while

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262 Porter, interview by author, 174.

263 Wincenc, interview by author, 212.
they are playing in a lesson. A majority of the participants expressed that they feel responsible for immediately stopping a student to offer insight when they hear something that ought to be improved. According to Porter, she reasons that she is paid too much money to lie; keeping silent for the sake of letting them play is not being truthful. Walker also shared that he has no qualms about interjecting to offer advice or correction, especially in a master class setting when their time together is abbreviated and even more valuable. Buyse expresses that she does aim to allow students to play at least a few lines before stopping them to share her thoughts; however, if something is truly off, such as a student taking a tempo far too slow than is appropriate, she will stop them by asking a polite question such as “how’s this feeling to you?” This offers the student the opportunity to diagnose the issue first.

Gedigian shares that she chooses whether or not to interrupt based on the learning preference of the student. Some students do not mind being talked over or coached while they are playing, which can be an alternative to asking them to stop so criticism can be delivered. She says certain students “respond really well with more active kind of teaching and instruction while they’re playing. I just think it depends on the situation.” Important, too, is the constant checking in on one’s teaching tendencies. On knowing when to interrupt students, Gedigian explains, “It’s not like you sort of wake up one morning and say, ‘Now I know how to do this in teaching.’” Teaching is, according to

\[264\] Porter, interview by author, 179.

\[265\] Buyse, interview by author, 141.

\[266\] Gedigian, interview by author, 158.

\[267\] Ibid., 159.
her, action-packed, and a teacher must always be alert and reactive to the situation at hand.

While teacher preference for interrupting students varies, all teachers agree that feedback should always be truthful and should never bring pain. Walker recalls from decades ago the honest reaction of a prospective teacher that, to this day, informs his teaching. He remembers the time he played for this person and, looking for encouragement was instead met with a painful, “I think the army would be a really good choice for you.” Walker says that, while he did learn something from that comment, it left a stain on him forever, and is careful now to deliver his honest thoughts with great care. According to Walker, “there is never a reason, from my standpoint, to hurt someone as a teacher. I never wanna say anything that is hurtful. I want to be 100% honest.”

Porter points out that one way to be truthful is to be generous with encouragements such as saying “this is better” in response to a student who has not quite executed the task at hand but is clearly exploring and making adjustments none the less. “This is better,” is more positive and uplifting than saying nothing while the student tries different approaches that may not work and may even make the issue a bigger issue. “I mean, why would you wanna feel cut down all the time?” she reasons. Sounding good all the time

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268 Gedigian, interview by author, 159.
269 Walker, interview by author, 199.
270 Ibid.
271 Ibid., 200.
272 Porter, interview by author, 179.
273 Ibid.
is not the objective of a lesson. Making improvements and being willing to experiment in uncomfortable new territory to achieve progress ought to be a student’s goal in the lesson. Positivity can fuel students while they are powering through difficult periods of growth and change.

Participants discussed their use of positivity in the way of both praise and encouragement. Interestingly, many respondents used the words praise and encouragement interchangeably until asked if they thought there was a difference between the two. The agreement was that praise is a type of encouragement. Both types of feedback are positive with praise being the highest form of encouragement; however, these semantics are of little to no importance in the teaching moment. All respondents communicated that the two types of feedback come naturally depending on the teaching situation. Sometimes it is impossible – and unnecessary – to categorize a piece of feedback as either praise or encouragement; it is simply what is called for in the moment. Walker said he is “an unabashedly praisin’ kinda guy”\(^{274}\) and that if he hears a beautiful note, he cannot help himself but to let the student know, “that’s what I’m looking for.”\(^{275}\)

According to Porter, sometimes praise is warranted because the student needs energy or inspiration. A student does not necessarily have to be excelling or even succeeding at a musical task for the situation to call for a little push of positivity from the teacher. For instance, if a student has struggled to play through an étude in a lesson, she chooses to meet them with an understanding and give them exercises to help “inspire

\(^{274}\) Walker, interview by author, 196.

\(^{275}\) Ibid.
them out of the problem.”

Demeaning them or “pushing them down” by diagnosing that the student did not work hard enough is going to keep the student down, she says, to where they can get stuck in the problem. “Well, that wasn’t the most beautiful thing in the world,” she might assess. And then, a proactive “Let’s work on it” will keep the student moving forward. To her, a praising, encouraging phrase can be as simple as, “if you can do it right once, you can do it right again” said in response to a student who is achieving inconsistent successes with a particularly difficult musical passage.

Gedigian feels more comfortable using words like “feedback” and “assessment” to describe the type of positive evaluative commentary she offers her students. “[T]here is praise involved, of course,” she insists, but she does not think of it in those terms. She explains that it occurs naturally on a moment-by-moment basis and that, more than praise and encouragement, her comments are simply observations that hopefully give the student momentum. “I praise to offer a framework to a component that can be improved.”

Buyse offers praise when it is merited and encourages teachers to always find something positive to say before delivering criticism. Both Buyse and Gedigian briefly

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276 Porter, interview by author, 180.
277 Ibid.
278 Ibid.
279 Ibid., 179.
280 Ibid.
281 Gedigian, interview by author, 157.
282 Ibid.
283 Buyse, interview by author, 143.
touched on the negative potential for praise. One cannot forget that praise can be overused. When students expect to be praised, their reliance becomes detrimental to their progress in the long run.

While positivity and honest assessment are universal tools for successful teaching, professors inherently customize lessons by infusing them with their unique personalities and referencing their personal interests and private life. All five respondents discussed how the non-music areas of their life permeate their teaching studio in the ways of story-telling, analogy-making, and problem solving. Walker names his love for sports and competition as an informant of his teaching style, as are inspiring conversations with colleagues. Buyse also credits her fellow professionals and her husband both as being hugely influential, especially when she is deciding how to handle delicate situations with her students. Wincenc and Porter both thank their outside interests for enriching their lives and, therefore, helping them to be better people and teachers. For Wincenc, backpacking in the mountains connects her with the sometimes indescribable beauty of nature. Trudging alone with a heavy pack on one’s back, navigating through grizzly bears on the way to a campsite in the Alpines gives one the solace to ponder unanswerable questions such as, “why does the sun come up?” or “why does that exist?” Music is similarly complicated and mysterious; words just cannot always describe the magic or

284 Walker, interview by author, 196-7.
285 Buyse, interview by author, 142.
286 Wincenc, interview by author, 220.
287 Ibid.
intimacy that is involved with music-making. Hiking, for Wincenc, normalizes the feeling of being utterly astonished and humbled by that which cannot be articulated.

Porter similarly credits running small businesses, working with a nutritionist, and exercising with a personal trainer as being healthy outlets for her. Students need her at her best, so she plans her entire schedule around cultivating the right attitude and getting into the right headspace. She keeps her mornings free to spend doing the things that make her feel good. “I wake up and I address myself first,”288 she states. “I take care of myself first. No one gets me until I’m strong enough to handle that person.”289 This strategy allows her to come into the teaching studio clear minded and full of energy to tackle students’ needs with calmness, patience, humor, and creativity.

Gedigian acknowledges that everything informs her teaching; she does not pinpoint certain elements of her life such as being a wife or a mother as clear, distinguishable influencers on her teaching style or vocabulary.290 “I just think everything informs the whole.”291

The literature review found accessible and age appropriate imagery to be a common and effective tool in teaching, especially when abstract concepts or invisible processes are involved. The five subjects mentioned several descriptive types of language they frequently use in lessons. Porter often likens the intricacy and impressiveness of a rich, resonant sound to the complicated yet harmonious nature of human anatomy. Some

288 Porter, interview by author, 185.

289 Ibid.

290 Gedigian, interview by author, 160.

291 Ibid.
examples of powerful, memorable figures of speech or colloquial phrases are those used by their teachers that have been deeply embedded in their minds. Wincenc recalls how Moyse would ask the students to picture a little fly in order to help them concentrate the miniscule motion required for a quick, nimble, clear articulation. She can recall his thick French accent and how his mouth formed the words, “the big elephant, the big elephant” to get them to conjure up a powerful “big, swinging” sound in the low register.

Walker likes to frequently use the funny phrase, “You’re like a Rolls Royce with three wheels” to communicate a harsh truth in a friendly way. Sometimes, a student has spectacular playing qualities, but also has deficiencies that simply must be addressed before their strengths can truly shine. An expensive, fancy luxury car that cannot go anywhere is useless; however, to say a student’s capabilities lack worth would be hurtful and ineffective. The phrase is a compliment with a message that motivates: “Get in the practice room so you can get on the road.”

Gedigian also uses a somewhat crass analogy, as shock, humor, and drama are effective for engraining an important message. Aware that it must be used appropriately and that it perhaps may offend some, she hesitated to share the last analogy she used in a lesson. “[I]t’s a terrible one. But, I’m gonna say it anyhow, because it works,” she said, and then divulged. When a student is embarking on a huge physical change like an

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292 Wincenc, interview by author, 207.

293 Ibid.

294 Walker, interview by author, 198.

295 Gedigian, interview by author, 158.
embouchure adjustment, she asks them to think of what kind of focus and commitment it takes for a person with an addiction to truly break their unhealthy habits. A student making an important fundamental physical adjustment can either choose to make it into a big deal or minimize it:

The way I like to think about it is, I say, ‘If you think about it and set your intention every single time you go to play – and I do mean every single time, I don’t mean 60 minutes out of 75. I mean 75 minutes out of 75, even if you don’t accomplish it. But that’s your intention – then you will make the change very fast. And that,’ — I usually use the word adjustment – ‘will stick with you.’ And I say, ‘Think of it like a drinker — an alcoholic. They can’t really drop by the bar and say, “I’m just gonna have one.” Because one almost always leads to another one. And, you know, that’s what they’re familiar with. Their brain knows it’s not good for them, but they go and they start down that road. And so that kind of “one day at a time” philosophy is the same thing in the teaching. One phrase at a time, one intention at a time… stay on the wagon.’

Gedigian says her students also hear her say, “make your bed” and “clean your room.” These basic “nagging” from their music teacher are like insistent prompts from a parent to a developing young person that they must first take care of the basics before expecting to go out and get anything accomplished.

Buyse is fond of incorporating physical textures when describing sound to students. She can be found using words such as, “luster,” and “sheen,” calling upon students’ memory of the way light bounces off something perfectly smooth. An action point that involves tactile sensation can take the imagery one step further. For example, a student who is striving for connectivity between notes may benefit from trying to

296 Gedigian, interview by author, 158.
297 Ibid.
298 Ibid., 162.
299 Buyse, interview by author, 144.
“[make] a connection between two notes that is ‘silken.’” To personalize the image, she helps them recall the “caress of a beloved dog or cat.” In this example, the emotional connection to a family pet strengthens the physical memory. This may provide the momentum needed for the student to stretch themselves beyond what feels comfortable in order to achieve a new, higher level of playing. Wincenc capitalizes on the same kind of emotional currency when she uses one of her favorite metaphors. “Have you ever held a newborn?” is a question for students who are working on precious details in a phrase that deserves tender care.

**Heightened Sensitivities in Music Instruction**

As discovered in the literature review, especially descriptive words are helpful for addressing challenges in music instruction. Appropriate speech is also elemental in creating a sense of safety in the private studio where unsupervised lessons take place. During the transitions and uncertainties that take place in the college years, a teacher’s language can assist them in supporting their students through periods of unpredictability. Three themes presented in analysis of the five panel members’ discussion of music teaching’s delicate nature: challenges presented in teaching abstract concepts, handling upset students, and acknowledging their own fallibility.

There are a number of methods that panel members shared for illustrating the abundant abstract concepts that arise in music learning. As discussed in the literature review, so many of the processes involved in flute playing take place inside the body and

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300 Buyse, interview by author, 144.
301 Ibid.
302 Wincenc, interview by author, 207.
are difficult to conceptualize, let alone discuss. The participants expressed similar difficulties in teaching degrees of intensities such as those required to characterize varying air speeds, vibrato width and apparentness, and dynamic contrast. It is also challenging to verbalize to a student how one achieves a certain musical mood or atmosphere, especially when it engenders a sensation or some kind of indescribable phenomenon called for in an expressive marking like “lovingly.” Sometimes, it is the teacher’s own prompt that inspires curiosity. Buyse remembers how Mariano would say something like, “Your tone should be like the dark side of the moon.” For a teenage Buyse, this mobilized an analytic approach to her sound production. This type of priming for deeper thought and more conscientious playing is effective for students like young Buyse who have command of basic skills and seek to polish an artistry in their music making. “Play it like the scent of a rose,” Wincenc has said to a flute student who was an accomplished pianist and especially intelligent pupil. Sometimes an essence is too abstract to put into words; in some cases, Porter resorts to playing recordings so that students may just sit and be consumed by a stranger’s music making.

The flute embouchure and its contact with the lip plate and embouchure hole is a difficult one to navigate physically and verbally. With all other wind instruments, a mouthpiece can be securely pressed against the lips or a reed can be inserted into the mouth. The concept of absolutes – completely sealing a mouthpiece against one’s face or firmly closing one’s lips around a reed – can more readily be agreed upon by both a

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303 Buyse, interview by author, 127.
304 Ibid., 130.
305 Wincenc, interview by author, 207.
teacher and a student than can degrees of pressure or proximity of one’s aperture to the edge of the lip plate when comparing two unique sets of lips and chins. For this reason, it can be easier for a flute teacher to reference other wind instruments when struggling to verbalize the enigmatic sound-producing processes of the flute. Walker explains the spectrum of air speed required in flute playing and how different bottom lip positions can achieve different partials by blowing on a backwards bassoon reed in front of students.306

Wincenc often uses elements of violin playing to help coach her flute students. The visual aspect of a bow drawing sound out of the violin’s strings lends itself to this kind of borrowing by wind players. When Wincenc teaches students how to manipulate the rate and size of the stream of air that passes through the aperture and across a flute’s embouchure hole, she says, “We have an air column, it’s our bow. The bow, you can see. Can’t see the air column! You’ve got to engage it in a very specific way.”307

Additionally, panel members discuss the challenges of teaching vibrato, air speed, and intensities such as dynamics and contrasts. Porter recalls an early teacher of hers using color to help describe intensities, as the color spectrum is universally understood while still maintaining an interpretable nature. She also remembers using Marcel Tabuteau’s number method in which a number is assigned to a note or interval to indicate what kind of presence the vibrato ought to have in the sound. When widely understood symbols for intensities like a color spectrum or numerical devices like percentages or fractions fail, Porter uses the sense of touch to help students understand tougher concepts:

306 Walker, interview by author, 201.

307 Wincenc, interview by author, 205.
I do blow on the hand from time to time. And then they blow on their hand, and I blow on their hand, they blow on their hand, and I say, ‘what’s the difference?’ and they say, ‘whoa.’ [In response from students,] I’ve got everything from, ‘yours is more concentrated,’ to ‘yours is wider,’ to ‘yours is stronger,’ to ‘yours is fuller.’ So, I use definite physical things. But I definitely think the intensities are the hardest things to teach.

One consistent difficulty faced by teachers in weekly one-to-one music lessons is the inevitability that students will become upset or overwhelmed in the intimate environment. Each panel member has a different way of handling when students cry in private lessons, but they all agree that it is completely normal and sometimes unavoidable. “Crying is because they care so much,”308 Gedigian reasons. In such a trusting, private atmosphere while spending a great deal of energy on concentration, self-criticism, and processing evaluative feedback, students’ emotions can sometimes take over and result in tears. Walker heartens his frustrated students by reminding them that the Kleenex in his office are there for a reason: “They get used.”309 It is important for the students to understand that they are experiencing a natural response to the often grueling, slow pace of process-based learning. “Don’t feel embarrassed,” Buyse tells these vulnerable students. “We’re given tears as a way to release emotion…I’ll just pick out a Kleenex and say, ‘Here. That’s what these are for. It’s good to cry,’”310 she assures them. “Water brings the flowers,”311 insists Gedigian. And, after all, according to Buyse, “we’re in the emotions business.”312

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308 Gedigian, interview by author, 160.

309 Walker, interview by author, 195.

310 Buyse, interview by author, 140.

311 Gedigian, interview by author, 160.

312 Buyse, interview by author, 140.
Porter feels most comfortable first offering crying students the chance to use the restroom where they can compose themselves. Allowing the student to change their scenery and pause the lesson for a brief time can sometimes be the refresh needed to stop the tears. It offers the student a moment of silence and personal space to evaluate their emotional state free of outside factors. Porter reenacts how this scenario has played out in her studio:

‘Here, lemme take your flute. Go ahead and go to the ladies’ room and come back and tell me what’s going on.’ And that works every time. Giving someone their space first. Instead of going right in there and demanding an answer. They gotta go away and collect themselves. So do I, I’m like, ‘okay, what did I say? What do I need to amend?’

Here, Porter also points out that this brief reprieve provides an opportunity for the teacher to carefully calculate their next point of action. Gedigian states that she always makes it known to her students that they can communicate to her in the moment, later in person or in writing, or even through a teaching assistant if there is something troubling that she, as their teacher, should know. “I give them the opportunity to sort through why [the crying] happened,” she remarks. “If that’s something that I need to amend, that they can let me know.”

Both Porter’s and Gedigian’s reflections on tearful students offer an entry point into one prevalent theme that all teachers, music and non-music, certainly face. Teachers will inevitably make mistakes. Apologies will certainly be called for at times. In this intimate dyad, these teacher slips can feel larger-than-life to students. Each interviewee revealed

313 Porter, interview by author, 182.
314 Gedigian, interview by author, 160.
that in the constant behavior interpretations and teaching adaptations that are required from them in music lessons day after day, student to student, and even moment to moment, admissions of fallibility and honest conversations are the best tools for amending a bruised teacher-student relationship. Porter says she “will make it known. Always. That, ‘I’m gonna screw up, you guys. And I have no agenda and I have no favorites… you’re all the same. I love all of you individually.’” Not only does Porter own her humanness and share this vulnerability with her students, she even tasks them with helping her evolve and become a better teacher, which she believes can create a sense of togetherness for the students. “It’s a team effort,” she jokes. “They have to help this old woman get into the future.” Buyse’s interview emphasizes this notion that teachers are constantly in a state of growth and, therefore, never stop making mistakes:

You can learn how to be a better teacher by not being successful and then trying something else, and then being successful. But you can also just learn from a comment that they make. A remark that touches your heart and helps you to reaffirm in your own mind how essential what we do can be in another person’s life, and also, I think, in our own lives. Because passing things on is what happens in life. Whether it’s good things or bad things.

Teachers must accept that they will occasionally inevitably misspeak or offend, even when no malice is intended. As time goes on, the grace with which a teacher can amend a negative situation between them and a student becomes more and more natural.

One subtheme found in the comments related to teacher fallibility and upset students is approaching delicate, highly personal subjects, particularly ones that a teacher

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315 Porter, interview by author, 182.

316 Ibid.

317 Buyse, interview by author, 139.
broaches with an unsuspecting student. Porter and Walker\textsuperscript{318} briefly mentioned addressing the physicality of flute playing. Porter strongly encourages all students to exercise. When she says to her students, “Everybody get on the treadmill,” she means that cardiovascular health is necessary for top shape flute playing, as music performance is a physical endeavor.\textsuperscript{319} Some students may falsely jump to the assumption, “Oh, she thinks I’m overweight,”\textsuperscript{320} which may lead to them taking offense. She is mindful that some students may struggle with insecurities about fitness or appearance. It would seem that in order to kindly and effectively weave such a sensitive subject into conversation, one must first, be sure that it is relevant and necessary and second, be aware that not everyone will receive a suggestion to exercise in the same way. Sometimes, it may be best to leave physical health-based advising to experts, such as studio guests trained in Alexander technique or similar practices.

One interview with a participant approached the subject of learning to address transgender students appropriately; the pronouns with which some people prefer to be addressed may not be readily obvious to a teacher. Given the intimacy of a private lesson, the closeness of the music teacher-student relationship, and the mutual trust and respect that lays the foundation upon which lasting learning and development can only grow, it is no surprise that a student should expect to be addressed by their teacher in the way that is most authenticating. Curiosity, earnestness, and compassion are essential for a teacher who may be struggling to change their habits.

\textsuperscript{318} Walker, interview by author, 201.

\textsuperscript{319} Porter, interview by author, 182.

\textsuperscript{320} Ibid.
Words and Music Learning

Chapter two referenced how music teachers can take inspiration from other disciplines, including sales people, ethnographers, and performers to supplement the technical trappings of a music lesson plan. Interviews with these five panel members revealed that music teachers also employ the same tools as comedians, singers, actors, and even physicists when helping students to draw out of themselves. These embodiments enhance what a teacher’s supportive presence and words of encouragement already contribute to the student’s learning process. In addition to discussing the theme of flute and music teachers borrowing from other disciplines, this final section addresses two other themes: extra-verbal teaching methods and instilling complex behavioral concepts.

All five respondents mentioned how they call upon the art of acting. Wincenc credits her childhood years in theater as being impactful on her ability to effectively communicate to an audience as a performer in her adult life. “[T]here’s something you have to sacrifice about your own personal feelings when you’re an actor, because you have to go into the role of the one you’re portraying, and it might be the complete antithesis of your essence.”\(^\text{321}\) Porter also looks to the theatrical discipline saying that attendees at her summer workshop study the art of speaking and speech delivery to better understand how to lose themselves in order to connect to and communicate with an audience.\(^\text{322}\) Observing the ways that an actor effectively enhances certain personal

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\(^{321}\) Wincenc, interview by author, 219.

\(^{322}\) Porter, interview by author, 184.
qualities and reserves others can be helpful for conjuring up a character or atmosphere that feels foreign to a student, especially a shy or quiet one. Buyse encourages her calmer, more introverted students by insisting that “you have to almost play a role and add a personality that’s not natural to you.”

In addition to advocating role play in lessons, four of the five subjects referenced how effective singing can be in flute lessons. Singing allows teachers and students to bridge words and music by calling upon the strengths of both mediums. It can also be embarrassing for some students to hear their untrained voice as the focal point of attention in a lesson that is usually directed toward their flute playing. These brief moments of discomfort not only allow a student to reproduce a targeted phrase free of obstruction by their instrument, they encourage them to embrace the awkwardness with courage and curiosity. Sometimes maximizing uneasiness in the lesson can refresh a student’s perspective; suffering through singing can help a student realize that a seemingly insurmountable feat on their instrument is actually quite manageable.

Another non-musical tool that flute teachers and non-flute teachers alike can employ for more effective studio instruction is humor. All five participants interspersed jokes and sincere laughter throughout their interview answers. Walker discussed how humor can be used to help soften criticism and create an environment in which a student feels comfortable enough to become vulnerable. Then they are more open to feedback. “Telling a student,” he says, “that a note is out of tune should not be hurtful. Especially if you do it with some sense of humor or some sense of compassion. It’s like, ‘It’s a hard

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323 Buyse, interview by author, 144.
note! I play it out of tune, also, but that’s REALLY bad, look!’” In this example, not only is he making the student laugh, he is employing empathy to help the student allow themselves to loosen up and let go of detrimental thoughts of self-blame or doubt. Buyse mentioned how inspired she is by the way her former student and now friend and colleague Gedigian uses humor in teaching. One can get a sense of how comedy might infuse her lessons in hearing her describe the environment of her studio. Gedigian enforces a professional decorum; however, she is mindful that some find her intimidating. She keeps it casual, coolly summarizing what she does in lessons as being “abstract with a side of fries.”

An appropriate dose of informality and joking around can help lighten the sometimes overwhelming gravity of certain imperative subjects that need frequent attention during private lessons. The most difficult concepts to communicate to a young person who is developing their musicianship are the ones that address the non-musical facets of that student’s self. When asked what is the most important thing they communicate to their students, none of the five participants responded with a flute skill or musical concept. They all believe that the most important step a student will take in their transition from academia to the outside world is often the last one, and it is big. “Self-empowerment,” “trust,” and “willingness” are all elemental for developing one’s

324 Walker, interview by author, 200.
325 Gedigian, interview by author, 157.
326 Ibid., 160.
327 Wincenc, interview by author, 218.
328 Ibid., 219.
own musical voice; participants assert that crucial qualities such as these are the most difficult to instill in students. This is not surprising, as students usually lack the extensive performing experience and the earned confidence that comes with it. What they often do not lack is fear about their future and doubt in their own abilities. It is not uncommon for these powerful question marks to manifest in students as an uncertain or apologetic way of performing and playing in lessons. These inhibitors can be further compounded by a humility and submissiveness that often results from years of learning in the one-to-one model – a model which operates on an almost sacred respect for the teacher’s expertise. Success in the music performance profession relies in part on the private lesson model and that intimate relationship between the teacher and student. It is no surprise that students must then be reminded that they, too, have the capability. “Can I do that?” Buyse recalls a recent lesson with an excellent student cautiously experimenting with rubato. “Not only can you do that, you must do things like that more often!” Buyse responded, encouraging this energetic student for whom delicate nuance and a polished artistry are the only missing pieces. She needed to practice trusting herself.

This obedient student is like countless others who are used to being guided and corrected week after week. She had to be reminded that she has all the parts to make the tools for building skills. Teachers do not have all the answers, they are simply the ones who have been there for years asking the questions. It is the student’s interpretations and the student’s renditions that have never been heard. “[T]he world is looking for what you have inside you,” Walker sermonizes. “They’re not just looking for another brilliant

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329 Buyse, interview by author, 144.
330 Ibid.
replication of how to play the flute.” It takes convincing for students to internalize this, so Walker makes it personal. “I wanna know what’s going on with you... I want something from you. And you deserve to give it to me, because you’re a valuable human being…I’ve got a ton more experience — we have the same license. So, do something.” While students may believe when their teacher insists that their individual musical story is compelling already in that it is one of a kind, the challenge is harnessing the conviction to then tell it loudly.

**Summary**

Examining the five interviewees’ answers for common threads revealed several themes in each of the six research categories established during the author’s literature review. Participants recanted lessons with their first flute teachers and pondered how pivotal relationships with parents influenced them during their formative years. They discussed how performance experience and inspiring colleagues continue to impact them throughout their development and concluded that clear, direct language permeated memories of formative years. These recollections impact their teaching vocabularies today.

In discussions about their responsibility in lessons, all subjects described their role and their desired learning outcomes for people who join their studios. Adaptation in response to student individuality appeared crucial to all respondents, as they each insisted that students in college are constantly transforming and experimenting with different ways of being in the world. An empathic approach is never wrong.

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331 Walker, interview by author, 202-3.
Fond retellings of lessons learned during their own student years offered a point of entry for interviewees to articulate their understanding of the impact the one-to-one teacher-student relationship has on students. The perceived significance of the private lesson model informs a teacher’s style and influences their degree of openness toward students. Interestingly, all panel members commented on the evolution of the flute teacher-student relationship and how it has become significantly less formal today.

Positivity ruled as the general characteristic shared by all varying types of teacher feedback. Honesty and encouragement prove to be crucial functions of verbal assessment; using analogies and referencing personal hobbies and interests can assist in illustrating musical ideas with kindness and creativity.

In sharing their strategies for managing the heightened sensitivities in music instruction, the five flute professors disclosed effective analogies, physical demonstrations, and cross-disciplinary teaching methods they use to help describe abstract musical concepts. Humor, song, and acting appear to be universally effective for handling the anxiety and nervousness that often accompanies performance and process-based learning. The interviewees provided examples of kind and compassionate responses they have ready in the event that students should become upset and overwhelmed. Their remarks regarding tearful lessons led to an important admission of human error and the necessity of apologizing and amending.

Finally, study findings revealed that often some of the most important lessons to be learned in private flute study are, in fact, not flute skills or even concepts exclusive to music; it is most valuable for a student to graduate from a studio having made great strides in self-discovery. Learning to communicate an authentic message – and with
bravery – is paramount to a musician’s success. Teachers can and should use diverse methods for embracing each student’s individuality as they guide them gently toward excellence in technical execution and uninhibited self-expression.
Chapter 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Semi-structured interviews with five of the nation’s leading flute pedagogues provided candid insight into the factors that influence teacher word choice in today’s American college flute lessons. The comparison and analyses of the teachers’ answers to carefully selected questions helped the author to answer three research questions:

1. What elements of a teacher’s background influence their word choice in lessons?
2. To what degree does student individuality affect a teacher’s word choice from student to student?
3. How do teachers reflect their current goals and values in their word choice?

The answer to the first research question “What elements of a teacher’s background influence their word choice in lessons?” was most clearly revealed in the autobiographical introductory remarks at the start of each interview. The participants revealed that a variety of factors impact the teaching vocabulary of the five targeted pedagogues. Much of the study’s data correlated with the research consulted in the literature review; respondents confirmed that their relationships with their own teachers were formative and ended up influencing their teaching style. The literature review found comparison between the private music instruction dyad and the relationship between a parent and child. While directly asked about the kind of language used in their household, teachers revealed stronger ties between their current teaching and the memorable things they were told as students than between their teaching vocabulary and the language used
in their household. Several of the participants remembered hurtful and uplifting comments verbatim. Decades later, simple words spoken by their teachers left a lasting impression. One could even say those words are influencing the next generation of flute players.

In answer to the second research question “To what degree does student individuality affect a teacher’s word choice from student to student?” analyses of the transcripts revealed that a majority of the teachers, unlike the few referenced in the literature review, do adjust their teaching strategies and subsequent vocabulary and word choice to fit the unique learning profile and emotional state of their students. Many of them insist that this is not necessarily a conscious decision, but that teaching is a reactive and adaptive art. It often relies on instantaneous interpretation of subtleties such as a student’s body language or tone upon entering the studio for their weekly lesson. While the research visited in the literature review suggested that teachers and students alike would benefit from the instructor’s ability to evolve with the student over the course of their music degree, these interviews emphasized the reality that adaptive skills are needed on a more rapidly changing basis.

Though the interviewees agreed that much of the customization that they do in lessons is natural and almost subconscious, this study did reveal that concerted efforts are made to instill differing, appropriate frameworks for students at various ages and skill levels. These artist-teachers consciously do tailor expectations of and curricula for students who are either just beginning their studies or nearly ending them with the teacher; this can inadvertently affect the words chosen to deliver feedback and assignments.
Studying the participants’ remarks to answer the third research question “How do teachers reflect their current goals and values in their word choice?” proved to be deceptively simple. The glaring similarity of providing students support and always prioritizing forward momentum in the lesson was immediately recognizable; so, too, was the thread that the most important thing that students learn over the course of their college music studies is not even musically exclusive but instead lies in the realm of self-discovery. The short answer is that teachers value students’ values, and their goals are their students’ goals; therefore, the feedback and assessment they provide to their students is funneled, often subconsciously, through a censor. This screening removes painful comments and unhelpful criticism, leaving constructive, honest answers and helpful diagnostic advice. The longer answer to whether or not their word choice reflects teachers’ goals and values would best be answered by methodically analyzing a large sampling of video-recorded private lessons taken over a long period of time.

It proved difficult for the teachers to explicitly articulate answers to heavy questions about their teaching philosophy and style. The candid nature of the semi-structured interview allowed room for tangential meandering away from addressing those questions such as, “Could you describe your teaching style in one or two sentences?” The answer to that question, when the conversation appropriately progressed to it, was rarely in the teacher’s statement that followed. The answer to questions like that and like, “How do your words reflect your teaching philosophy?” is only hinted at in the transcripts. However, studying the transcripts and the teachers’ word choice in the interviews can only provide assumptions about the cross-over between the way they spoke in their interview and the supposed way they speak to their students in lessons. While it is
revealing to take note of where the conversation hovered longest or count the number of times certain phrases or figures of speech were used, these pieces of information serve best not as facts about the words artist-teachers use when teaching, but as inspiration for further study into what they actually say in their private lessons.

**Limitations**

While the study successfully answered the three research questions, there were a number of limitations identified by the author. It is important to note that this study involved only five participants, limiting the generalizability of any conclusions that can be made. Had the author chosen to arrange interviews with more participants, perhaps stronger and more specific trends would appear. The resulting analyses for themes in this limited data sampling should therefore be interpreted as preliminary inferences rather than definitive conclusions; the collection of insights and advice enclosed in these five conversations could best be interpreted as a survey on the current views of the factors that influence a flute teacher’s word choice as seen by five of the nation’s leading flute pedagogues.

It is also worth mentioning that no follow-up questions were asked once the initial interview had taken place, save for correspondence regarding correct spelling of names. Should follow-up interviews or emails have been pursued, further clarifications and resulting, more in-depth analyses could possibly have been procured. In addition, it must be acknowledged that the author conducted the study using three different types of interviews: in-person, via Skype, and over the telephone. Different forums result in different levels of comfort. Technical difficulties and ensuing awkwardness arose more
frequently in the technologically assisted interviews, perhaps inadvertently impacting the answers shared.

The body of research relevant to this subject and others related would benefit from additional study on gender in the private studio. Only one participant featured in this project is male; had a larger pool of participants been involved, information about gender could have perhaps been collected.

Interviewing conductors, choral directors, and instrumental studio instructors – particularly percussion, brass, and string teachers – could provide a greater source of data from which conclusions about the factors that influence word choice could be made.

In an essay devoted to the study of word choice, it seems only fitting to emphasize the fact that all quotes referenced in the body of this work have been extracted from their full, candid context and pieced together to meet objectives put in place by the author. One would benefit from reading each transcript in its entirety to solidify the enclosed pieces of advice by seeing them in their full, original context. This might also honor the many valuable details, memories, and thoughts shared that were not included in the essay body as supporting materials for answering the author’s specific research questions.

**Implications and Future Directions**

This study is perhaps most useful for flute teachers, particularly young or inexperienced ones who who are in the early stages of a teaching career. Other people who may find in it useful advice are non-flute music teachers who seek to strengthen their verbal communication skills and teaching capabilities. Though all interviewees are flute players, their advice is beneficial to all music teachers. As the interviewees’ answers
were rich with dates and specific locations, people from the graduating music classes of the panel members may find their transcripts fascinating and full of history.

Further information could be gleaned by interviewing students of the five teachers who collaborated on this project. It would be fascinating to further utilize the teachers’ perceptions provided here by comparing them with their students’ perceptions of themselves and their teachers. If student satisfaction could be measured qualitatively, much could be learned about the effectiveness of methods such as the use of analogies and metaphors, jokes, singing, and student-led learning. The answer to the third research question regarding how word choice reflects teacher values and goals could be expanded with this study extension.

Lastly, this study focused intently on the influences of verbal descriptive techniques and vocabulary. Body language, inflection, and hand gestures are all facets of communication that were not explored. Further study in the realm of flute teacher word choice would benefit from the investigation into the ways in which physical aspects of conversing influence student perception and overall learning experience.

Conclusion

The language used by flute teachers during formative years served as the clearest influencer of the type of words chosen by today’s artist-teachers. Student experience, age, personal goals, learning style, and emotional state all factor into the decision making that these flutist artist-teachers execute during every lesson. These teachers reveal that their word choice is ever-adapting as their students’ needs and learning capacities constantly evolve. Further, hobbies, interests, and personal experiences color artist-teacher vocabulary during college level lessons. These extra-curricular aspects of life appear in
the studio most prominently in the form of analogies and story-telling to illustrate concepts or incite curiosity in students. Artist-teachers’ relationships with spouses and colleagues also often inform their interactions with students. The artist-teachers revealed that they adopt their students’ values and goals and instruct accordingly.

While these conversations revealed heartfelt sentiments, fond memories, and enriching ideas surrounding the profound impact a music teacher has on their students’ lives, the six major topics extracted from the literature review and the subsequent themes elicited by questions derived from those topics could be further explored. This study focused on teacher’s perceptions about their word choice with emphasis on discovering the aspects of their life which provide the most influence; obtaining lesson transcripts and student testimonials would then provide data with which to challenge or corroborate those perceptions. A logical next step might be to begin consensual audio and video recording of months of private lessons with the five interviewees. Any subsequent studies which continue the conversation about word choice in the private music lesson will validate this project’s efforts to honor the power of a teacher’s words.
Bibliography


Fair, Demetra Baferos. “In Search of the Flutist Family Tree.” DMA doc., The Ohio State University, 2003.


Interviews


Gedigian, Marianne. Interview by author, September 15, 2018, telephone. Audio recording.

Porter, Amy. Interview by author, August 26, 2018, Skype. Audio recording.


Wincenc, Carol. Interview by author, October 9, 2018, telephone. Audio recording.
Appendix A

Interview Questions

Artist-teacher background

1. Tell me about your first flute teacher.
   a) Who were some of the other teachers who influenced you growing up?
2. What do you remember about their use of words?
3. How has the language you grew up with influenced your teaching language today?
4. What was it like studying with your college flute teacher?
   a) What do you remember about his/her language?
5. What do you recall about those college years?
   a) Did you ever feel the need to discuss your personal life with your teacher?
6. When did you first start teaching flute?
   a) What would you say to your young teaching self now, if you could?
7. Why did you become a college flute professor?
8. How did your college education prepare you for teaching college?
9. What does your performing experience bring to your teaching?
   a) What role does demonstration play in teaching?

Significance of the one-to-one teacher-student relationship

10. What is your role in lessons with your college students?
11. Could you describe your teaching style in one sentence?
12. How would you describe the boundary between you and your students?
13. Are your students comfortable talking with you in lessons?
14. How might your students describe you?
    a) How does this compare to the way colleagues or family might describe you?

Teacher’s responsibility to meet student needs and expectations

15. What value does empathy have in teaching?
16. What’s the most important thing you communicate to your students?
17. Do you treat all students the same?
18. Do you find that you need to change how you speak to certain students?
Verbal teacher feedback

19. What are the non-music areas of your life which inform your teaching?
20. What are your thoughts on praising students?
   a) Is there a difference between praise and encouragement?
21. What is the last analogy you recall using in a lesson?
22. Do you see yourself as an articulate teacher?
   a) Can you name someone who you believe to be an articulate teacher?
23. How do you know when to interrupt a student while they’re playing?
24. How do your words reflect your teaching philosophy?

Heightened sensitivities in music instruction

25. Are there any words you avoid using in lessons?
26. How do you know what to say when a student is upset or overwhelmed?
   a) How might you react if a student cries?
27. Have you ever apologized to a student?

Words and music learning

28. What is difficult to put into words when it comes to teaching flute?
   a) Can you remember what it was like for you when you were learning this?
29. Do you share stories from your personal life?
   a) Can you give me an example of a story you use for teaching?
30. When was the last time you learned something new by watching another teacher teach?
31. What do your students hear you frequently say in lessons?
Appendix B

Verbal Consent Script

Hi, my name is Hannah Weiss. As part of my doctoral activities, I am conducting a research study called “Current Views on Teacher Word Choice in American College Flute Lessons” with Trudy Kane at the University of Miami.

You are being asked to participate in an audio recorded interview as part of this study on flute teacher word choice. We are trying to learn more about the factors that influence a teacher’s word choice in private college level flute lessons. You are one of approximately eleven people being asked to participate in the study.

The interview should last no more than two hours. The interview will be audio recorded for accurate transcription. Do you give your permission to have the interview audio recorded?

I will ask you questions about the factors that influence your choice of words when teaching college level flute lessons. The transcript of your audio recording will be given to you to review and revise. Only the final version will be included in my doctoral essay.

Due to the nature of this study, your name and transcripts will be disclosed in the study results. The study results will be published in my doctoral essay with your name included. Per your request, you may receive a copy of the published essay. Summaries of the findings may also be submitted to music education periodicals such as Flute Talk, Pan, and the Flutist Quarterly for consideration.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to decline. You have the right to withdraw consent at any time or to skip any question if you so desire, without any negative consequences to you.

There are no foreseeable risks. Should you feel uncomfortable answering any question, you may feel free to skip without any explanation.

No benefit can be promised to you from your participation in this study.

There is no monetary compensation for participation in this study.

There are no costs.

By you answering the interview questions that I will ask, this means you consent to participate in this research project. Do you have any questions?

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact me, Hannah Weiss (515-229-3407), or Trudy Kane (917-597-8124).

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact the University of Miami, Human Subject Research Office at (305)243-3195.
Appendix C

IRB Approval

July 19, 2018

Trudy Kane
1314 Miller Drive
305-284-2161, ext.7936
tkane@miami.edu

Dear Ms. Trudy Kane:

On 7/18/2018, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Review:</th>
<th>Initial Study</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title of Study:</td>
<td>Current Views on Teacher Word Choice in American College Flute Lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigator:</td>
<td>Trudy Kane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRB ID:</td>
<td>20180620</td>
</tr>
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<td>Funding:</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Documents Reviewed: | Weiss Interview Questions 7/15
Weiss Email Invite 7/15
Weiss Verbal Consent Script 7/15
Weiss Protocol 7/16 |

The IRB approved the study on 7/18/2018.

To document consent, use the consent documents that were approved and stamped by the IRB. Go to the Documents tab to download them.

NOTE: Translations of IRB approved study documents, including informed consent documents, into languages other than English must be submitted to HSRO for approval prior to use.

In conducting this study, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103), which can be found by navigating to the IRB Library within the IRB system. If your study indicates JHS as a performance site, as the PI, you must ensure that you have been granted permission by the JHS Clinical Research Review Committee (CRRC) prior to commencing study activities at JHS. Such approval is reflected...
by receipt of a JHS CRRC Approval Letter. If you have any questions regarding this process, please contact the JHS Office of Research at 305-585-7226.

Should you have any questions, please contact: Vivienne Carrasco, Sr. IRB Regulatory Analyst, (phone: 305-243-6713; email: vcarrasco@med.miami.edu)

Sincerely,

[This is a representation of an electronic record that was signed electronically and this page is the manifestation of the electronic signature]

Khemraj (Raj) Hirani, MPharm, Ph.D., RPh, CCRP, CIP, RAC, MBA
Associate Vice Provost for Human Subject Research
Appendix D

Interview Transcripts

Leone Buyse

Telephone Interview Transcript: 85 minutes

Sunday, September 9, 2018
Coral Gables, FL

Hannah Weiss (HW): Tell me about your first flute teacher.

Leone Buyse (LB): Well, I guess I would say, my first major teacher was David Berman at Ithaca College. I began studying with him when I was twelve. Up until then, I had had lessons with a couple of public school music teachers, a band director, and also, a graduate student. I think she was a teacher. An elementary school teacher who had had a strong concentration in flute. I grew up in Ithaca, New York, so it was a somewhat rarified atmosphere in terms of education. There were a lot of people around who were highly educated and had background and experiences in the arts. But I started studying with David Berman in seventh grade, and he was a remarkable teacher. I worked with him throughout junior high and senior high. He and I are working on a project together right now. He’s ninety-one, I’m seventy-one. And it’s so amazing to have a lifetime connection with a teacher who was so pivotal in my early training. He was a musician to the core. He was always inviting me to sing phrases. Which, at twelve, thirteen, fourteen, I found somewhat embarrassing, even though I loved to sing. He was very much a teacher who wanted the student to do some work. I remember when I didn’t know a musical term, he would hand me a little paperback dictionary of musical terms, and say, ‘You look it up. I’m not going to tell you,’ which I thought was a great procedure to follow so that it wasn’t spoon feeding. It was instead trying to engender curiosity in a student and also explain that a student is responsible for their own growth and shouldn’t expect to be given something by the teacher all the time.

HW: Mmhmm. And it sounds like he sparked that motivation for you to have the appetite for that.

LB: Absolutely, and we played a lot of duets. He would always speak very clearly about the music. I was just looking at my first copy of Syrinx, working on the piece with a student a few weeks ago and I saw his handwriting and one of the first things I saw was, ‘Play the page,’ in other words, pay attention to all the rhythmic and dynamic indications. That’s where you start in music. Before you start feeling, like, ‘Oh, this is my piece, I’m going to express myself,’ you have to really pay heed to all of the composer’s intentions. So, from a very young age I was really influenced by him and I know that he was skeptical about taking a seventh-grade student. My mother had called him and said, ‘I have a daughter who has perfect pitch.’ And he told me later, he thought, ‘Okay, yeah,
lady, we’ll see.’ And then, when I was at my first lesson, he did test me, and saw that, yes, indeed, my mother, who actually had gone to the Eastman School of Music and was a piano major, did know what she was talking about. So, it was a relationship that was very special right from the beginning. And, clearly, he was very, very direct. I remember him just saying how sometimes I was a little bit too straight. A victim of my conservative WASP upbringing. And he seemed a bit exotic to me, because he was Jewish. And, by the way, Hannah. I found out this past year that I have Jewish blood. And I’m so happy! It’s 6.5% Ashkenazi and it was back in the 1840s when somebody came over from Germany. And I had my DNA tested just as an interesting experiment.

**HW:** Yeah!

**LB:** And I’m thrilled! I’m just so thrilled, because so many of my closest friends and teachers are Jewish. So, anyway, I thought that was sort of a cool aside that I wanted to share.

**HW:** Yeah! That’s something special to discover at this point in your life.

**LB:** It really is, it really is, and, actually, I wrote to Professor Trudy, and she said, ‘You know, I think, actually, if we go back, I think that we’ll find that we’re all connected.’ And I agree with her completely. But, that’s David Berman for me, in a nutshell. And he stayed someone whom I always wanted to be in touch with when I would go home from Eastman to Ithaca, and then when I entered my career phase, we were still very much in touch. And it was actually three years ago that he sent me some transcriptions of viola duos by W.F. Bach that he had done on a sabbatical year in Jerusalem in 1981 and he said to me, ‘I’m going through all my stuff, clearing things out, and I wonder if these are any good.’ And last year, I pulled them out of a pile. I was embarrassed that they’d gotten buried somewhere in my studio at school. And I read through them several different times with various students, grad students who were interested, and the bottom line is that I ended up playing one of them with Jean Ferrandis on our shared recital in Boston last fall and I convinced Dan Dorff at Presser to publish them, and so, Dave Berman and I are now in the final stages of working out our editorial comments, and it’s pretty exciting. It’s really an exciting thing for me to be able to do this at this point in my life with a teacher who was so important to me and a real role model as a musician when I was very, very young.

**HW:** Yeah. It sounds like a very special opportunity to connect in that new way with him.

**LB:** Yes. Yes, and sometimes we argue about, ‘Well, I think this should have a slur,’ ‘No, it should be da-da-da,’ ‘But listen, there’s a sort of appoggiatura!’ ‘Well, oh maybe, I don’t know!’ You know, we’re going back and forth. It’s really interesting. Most of the time we are in 100% agreement, but, anyway… So, that was my first experience with, I would say, an extremely gifted teacher. At that point, I was twelve and he was thirty-two, so he was not that much older, actually, or he hadn’t been that experienced at that point. He taught briefly at Michigan State before winning the position at Ithaca College where
he taught until 1989. So, from 1955, I think, until 1989. And he retired to Sarasota. And, actually, I have seen him every summer because I’m at the Sarasota Music Festival on the faculty there. So, it’s been a wonderful way to continue our friendship, and I’m very close with his wife, also, and it’s a gift in my life, that relationship, it really is.

HW: That’s wonderful. I wanna go back to something you mentioned about Mr. Berman’s direct language —

LB: Mmhmm.

HW: … and you also mentioned that there were times that he asked you to try something that maybe you were a little bit embarrassed about doing, like singing a phrase. Can you tell me any specifics you remember about his use of words?

LB: Well. He was an academic mind. I mean, he had a way of expressing things that was very clear. He later was asked to serve for several years as an assistant dean at the music school at Ithaca College, and I think just that assignment — which he did accept, I think for three years, I believe — indicates his ability to communicate well. I mean, you don’t get asked to do an administrative job without having a fairly high level of communication skills, to begin with, whether in pedagogy, or in meetings with people. So… I’m trying to remember specifically… vocabulary… He loved music so much that he would describe it, I think, in ways that I, as a twelve-, or thirteen-, or fourteen-year-old — that I could really relate to. I’m sorry, that was so many years ago. [Laughs].

HW: Yeah.

LB: We’re going back almost sixty years, Hannah. [Laughs].

HW: It sounds like what you do remember is that he had all the tools to articulate whatever it was that you needed to hear in that moment.

LB: Yes. And he was not sugar coating anything. I mean, he was a kind person, but so direct. And I was from a background where, you sort of kept things to yourself or if there was something uncomfortable, you sort of swept it under the rug and didn’t bring it up. And, so, it was really helpful for me at that early age to know someone — you know how teachers are often much more than music teachers, they are psychologists, etcetera. [Laughs]. And one thing I do remember, speaking about the directness, was that he told me about having to talk with students about personal things that they couldn’t mention to their parents. But that’s the kind of personality he was. Being very direct but still having empathy for where a particular student might be in his or her personal life.

HW: Yes, and it sounds like empathy is a huge part of the way you think about teaching, and we’ll definitely get to that. You mentioned that you came from a kind of ‘conservative WASP household,’ as you said. And I wonder how that language that you grew up with in that house, how has that influenced your teaching language today?
LB: It influences me a lot, as I think I may have made clear early on in my Fall 2017 Flutist Quarterly article, “The Value of Empathy in Teaching.” I can’t remember if it was included or not, but, my parents always taught me to think about the other person.

HW: Yes, yes.

LB: I mean, like the cash register person.

HW: Uh huh.

LB: I always mention that. My father, who was first a teacher, and then a public-school administrator, was always concerned about other people’s feelings and trying to express things in such a way that would not be hurtful. And I know that it was very hard for him, being an administrator, because he had to observe teachers, and, in some cases, not recommend tenure and that sort of thing. So, in that sense, I was very influenced by my parents. But, I’m, I think, more direct. I get into things a little more with students than perhaps my family background would have directed me toward had I not seen other ways of teaching, especially when I was young with David Berman as my teacher.

HW: Okay. What was it like studying with your college flute teacher?

LB: Well, Joseph Mariano was… let’s see… he was born in 1911, and David Berman is ninety-one now. Let’s see… when was he born? That would have been… Can you do the math?

HW: Yeah, in the thirties, early thirties?

LB: Yeah, let’s see. Let’s see. 2018 minus ninety-one… or would it be 1927. Yeah, because, on my website, if you want to read about him… On his 80th birthday, I did an interview with him and he talked about being a student in Chicago and the quota at that time for Jewish students at Northwestern at that time. I was flabbergasted because I had never even heard of such a thing. It was not even in my background. So anyway, Joseph Mariano was considerably older than David Berman — twenty-five years or twenty-six years older — and came from an immigrant Italian family. He was extremely, extremely artistic in his word choices — always speaking in metaphors or simile. Um… He was an example to us of just the highest level of artistry. David Berman was, too, but in a very different set up. He was a university professor. I heard him playing chamber groups and faculty recitals, and they were wonderful, whereas Joseph Mariano was principal of Rochester Philharmonic. So, we would hear him in that context. And he would play a lot for us in lessons and then ask for things in a way that often engendered a question mark. ‘Your tone should be like the dark side of the moon.’ Well, if you’re eighteen, and you’re trying to imagine what that might be, that causes some exploration, obviously.

HW: Yeah!
LB: I’m trying to think of some other examples. Something just flitted through my brain, and it disappeared. I’m sorry, maybe it will come back. He was very, very approachable but at the same time, very distant. He was somebody who would always love to play duets, and I think he especially liked me because I was rather effervescent as a personality. I came into my first lesson sophomore year and showed him my wisdom teeth — I actually had them in a box — they had been removed during the summer. And I remember he looked at them [laughs], and said, ‘What fine, strong teeth you have!’ Now that’s being cool, now can you imagine if a student walked into her lesson and said, ‘Look at my wisdom teeth, Mr. Mariano?!’

HW: Yes! You could expect any number of reactions to that!

LB: Yes! Exactly! And so… I have to say, I really, really am grateful to him for being the way he was with me… Accepting me for just how I was. We stayed very close. There was a period where he dropped out of life and retired to the Cape and, unbeknownst to all of his former students, his wife had been worsening with Alzheimer’s. We didn’t know that, and so she kept him from the world, in many ways. They were just very secluded, and I actually brought him back into the world when he was, in his 80s. I showed up at his door in the Cape with a bouquet. And he actually, as a result of that, gradually became more and more involved. And his wife unfortunately had to be institutionalized and then, finally passed away. But, as a result, we had a big party for his 90th. So, the kind of relationship that we had at Eastman, I think, was repaid many years later, one hundredfold. It was really a wonderful experience for me. So…

HW: Wow. Wow. I love hearing that. This is a question to ask you about the beginning of your own teaching. It’s two parts. So: when did you start teaching, and what would you say to your young teaching self now, if you could?

LB: Well, I think I did refer to something in “The Value of Empathy in Teaching” Flutist Quarterly article that I didn’t explain in so many words, but… never assume anything. I had talked to one of my students, it was probably a six or seventh grader when I was teaching at the Eastman Prep. Department. And I said to her, ‘Since your tone is a bit thin, we need to work on that.’ And she looked at me and she said, ‘I wasn’t aware that my tone was thin.’ And so, as a result of that, I learned right away that you need to approach an issue very respectfully and don’t assume that any student hears or would have a concept of a particular issue. So, I’m always careful to ask students what they hear first. And with grad students, especially, I will say, ‘What are some of the things that you feel need to be worked on at this point?’ ‘Tell me,’ first of all, I’ll say, ‘Tell me what you think you’re doing really well right now.’ And they’ll say, ‘Oh, I like my tone.’ There will undoubtedly be something that I can agree with immediately so that I, in a sense, support them and they realize that I like something right away about what they do. And then I’ll say, ‘Okay, are there some things that you’ve been concerned about that you would like to really have us work on together?’ So that, immediately, it’s a sort of team effort idea established. And I got this idea from Stephen Covey’s book, the Seven Daily Habits of Highly Effective People. Do you know that book, Hannah?
HW: Yeah.

LB: I think it’s a profound book. And one of the examples was a particular company where the CEO insisted that everybody be a part of it, didn’t matter if you were a janitor, a desk clerk… everybody had an opportunity to express some kind of opinion and it really made a difference in how successful the company became. So, that was an influence in my own approach, which I think has continued to evolve ever since I first started teaching. And, I guess you could say I started teaching when I was eighteen, nineteen. Even earlier, if you think about the Ithaca High School Band program. I was teaching a younger student, summer after my freshman year at Eastman… I remember now what Mariano said. Now are you ready to let me just slip back to that? In terms of… He said, ‘You’re a good flutist, but you don’t play well.’ That was in my sophomore year. And I remember the black funk that I fell into after that lesson. Thinking, ‘Okay, I’m a good flutist, but I don’t play well. What does he mean by that?’ And ultimately, I figured that he wanted more expression, more depth in what I was doing musically, and so, I’m really interested in how that statement really spurred me to find out a lot more about what it was that I should be seeking.

HW: Yeah.

LB: In a certain sense, that was tough love. And my husband and I were just talking about tough love yesterday because I have one student that I am a little puzzled about and wanted to know how my husband would consider approaching a particular issue that has arisen in orchestra, and this student’s playing in orchestra, and the conductor’s concern, and my concern, so, anyway. That was an aside back to Mariano, because that was, perhaps, one of the most important things that I heard from him in my four years at the Eastman School as an undergraduate.

HW: Yeah, it sounds like it was not just what he said but what it made you think, and how it, as you said, really spurred you to assess your playing and what was missing.

LB: Exactly, and how old would I have been, nineteen? Eighteen? Nineteen? Sophomore year. So that was really important. And, again, that goes along with the idea of not spoon-feeding a student. Like David Berman didn’t say, ‘Oh well this word means such and such, see how much I know?’ He handed me the dictionary, and said, ‘You look it up.’ So, it’s like Mariano said, ‘You figure this out. You’re a good flutist, but you don’t play well.’ Okay, what does playing music mean? What does playing an instrument actually mean? What are we supposed to be doing when we play an instrument? So profound.

HW: Yeah. Very profound. And why did you become a college flute professor?

LB: Well, I grew up in a university environment with both Cornell and Ithaca College just a matter of a mile or two away, because Ithaca is a very small town. Have you ever been in Upstate New York? Are you from New York state, or from Florida?

HW: I’m actually from Iowa.
LB: Oh, huh.

HW: Yeah, the only time I’ve spent in New York state is in the city.

LB: Well, Ithaca is very isolated. It’s beautiful, it’s rural, it’s in the Finger Lakes. And, so, I had a childhood that showed me the benefits of the university environment. All of my closest friends were professors’ kids. I went to concerts at Cornell and Ithaca College starting at age four, with my parents — they took me. And so, I always had loved the excitement of the new school year. And I imagined myself as being a college professor and when, unexpectedly, I won a job in the Rochester Philharmonic after working on a master’s degree at a small school in Kansas, I thought, ‘Well… I’ll try this! And see how it goes!’ And as it turns out, it went very well [laughs], and so… I was actually in the orchestral field for twenty-two years; seven in Rochester, five in San Francisco, and then a decade in the Boston Symphony. And then, I guess I got to a point where — because Ozawa was not moving forward with finding a new principal flutist, and meanwhile, year after year, I was the acting principal flutist —

HW: Mhm.

LB: I got sick and tired of that [laughs], and I thought, ‘Well. Hmm.’ And I was on a tour — this is a vignette that may surprise you — I was on a tour with the orchestra in South America. And, by chance, was seated at a lunch next to the guest timpanist, Gerald Carlyss, whose brother was in the Juilliard String Quartet. And Gerry had left the Philadelphia Orchestra and was teaching at Indiana. And I said, ‘Gerry, how old were you when you left the Philadelphia Orchestra?’ And he said, ‘Uh, forty-six.’ I was about to turn forty-six. And I said, ‘How long had you been playing in orchestra?’ And he said, ‘Uh, twenty-two years.’ It was my twenty-second year of professional orchestral playing. [laughs]. And then, I said, ‘Well, what’s it like?’ Well, he said, ‘It was kinda weird at first. I mean you don’t have to get dressed in black clothes and head off to work four or five nights a week, but you get used to it really quickly and you have so much more freedom to do your own artistic projects.’ And then I told him that I had been contacted by the saxophone professor at Michigan and he had asked whom I would recommend for the job, since the flutist was about to retire. And I was too innocent to realize then that that was a way he was testing my potential interest, and so I gave him some names. But then, weeks went by and I kept thinking, ‘Huh, I wonder if this is a sign.’ So, I called him back when we got back from South America, and I said, ‘You know, I think I might be interested in applying.’ And he said, ‘Great.’ Then two weeks later, Gerry Carlyss called from Indiana and said, ‘You’re not gonna believe this, but we’re looking for a flute professor.’ And so, that was when Peter Lloyd was retiring. And so, I said, ‘Well, I’ve got all my stuff together for Michigan, I’ll send it out.’ And he said, ‘Great, we wanted you to apply.’ And then I got offered both jobs, both Michigan and Indiana. [laughs]. I thought, ‘Well, this is a sign. I’ll consider this.’ And my husband was incredible. He was willing to give up his job at the New England Conservatory where he was leading a wind ensemble and teaching clarinet, he was also teaching at BU. And we made the move together to Ann Arbor. So, it was, I think, the right time in my professional career.
Because I was at a certain age. I had done the orchestral repertoire [laughs], if you want to think of it that way. I had had so many great experiences. I had traveled all over the world, and really felt as though, if I wanted to make a change, later forties was the right age to do it. And I’ve been teaching now a total of… this is my twenty-second year at the Shepherd School of Music at Rice — after having taught four years at Michigan, so I’m now in my twenty-fifth full time teaching year, academically. I’d always been teaching you know, at BU, or NEC, that kind of teaching was always a part of my life in my orchestral career. I taught privately in San Francisco, I taught when I was in the Rochester Philharmonic at Geneseo State, and a small Catholic girls’ college, Nazareth College of Rochester. So, I’ve always loved doing both playing and teaching.

**HW:** Great, and that last little bit you said about the playing and teaching, I’m almost to that part in the questions, but I want to go back to the curriculum that you remember at Eastman, and then you said you did a master’s program at a school in Kansas. Can you think back to the curriculum of your college programs and how that maybe did or didn’t prepare you for your college teaching jobs?

**LB:** Well, Mariano was very free in terms of curriculum. He basically just let us bring in whatever we wanted to bring in. And we played our juries, playing whatever Bach Sonata we’d been working on, or another type of solo. I think that the studio itself really discussed repertoire and sort of inspired exploration in that way. Because, we’d hear someone play something on a recital, and think, ‘Oh that’s a great piece.’ So, it was nothing organized at all. I did do Taffanel/Gaubert with him a little bit. But it was not at all what you would imagine from most schools. For the annual jury, we’d just play whatever we’d been working on. I was the flute teacher at a small school in Kansas where I was earning a Master’s degree and playing with the faculty woodwind quintet, so I played for the clarinet teacher, and I had won a competition from Mu Phi Epsilon and was sent on concert tours for the year that I was there. It was just not at all your typical curriculum. I just did whatever I wanted, and — because I had been in France for two years, I had had so much more work on repertoire as a result of my years of study with Michel Debost, and Moyse, and Rampal, and Gaston Crunelle. So, I am not your typical American, college-educated, degree holder, in that sense.

**HW:** Yeah. I guess not.

**LB:** [Laughs].

**HW:** That’s a lot of big names that you just dropped, and I can just imagine that having all of those voices teaching you about all of that repertoire that was kind of coming at you would serve you as a teacher when you were then teaching it later to your students.

**LB:** Oh! Absolutely! Absolutely! It’s so interesting, when I was a guest in Brisbane last year at the Australian Flute Society Convention, I was a guest with Michael Cox from England and Julien Beaudiment from France, now, and the two of them, after I first rehearsed my Mozart with the flute choir (we were supposed to play something for the opening ceremony), they said to me, ‘You are the most French-sounding American flutist
we have ever heard.’ So, there you go! There you see that that influence which also came from hearing all of Rampal’s recordings —

HW: Mmhmm.

LB: …in my formative years. He was more an influence on me in many ways than Mariano was because I first went to him in the summer after my sophomore year, and Mariano didn’t know what to think because he was from that generation where you start with a teacher and you never play for anybody else, that would be disloyal. But, these were masterclasses in Nice, and American students were starting to go to those, and I went with two other students from Mariano’s studio and I came back all excited about France, and how I was able to speak French, and I’d always love French. It was so interesting to go to this master class kind of situation because we didn’t do anything like that! There were no studio classes, Hannah… we didn’t do things like that!

HW: Yeah.

LB: …you know, in the States in the sixties.

HW: Just fascinating. What an upbringing.

LB: Yeah. It was a very unusual background. And I’m really toying with the idea of writing about it. Enough people have said to me, ‘You really need to write about how this has influenced you as a teacher and player.’ And I’m considering it, I really am.

HW: Yeah, I’m sure it seems a little daunting to just sit down and write it. But yes, I’m another one of those people who’s saying you should write it down!

LB: Oh! Thank you very much! I really have been putting together some ideas and I have notebooks from all of my lessons, including from David Berman, which is pretty astonishing. Because that goes back to 1959. So, if I wanted to do that, I could transcribe a lot of things, and I’m hoping to get to that this fall during my mini sabbatical. I have a few weeks off. I’m starting off in Australia later this month and will be also in Holland and Sweden. But then I’ve some time when I get back. And I’m going to really try to set some time aside each day, so thank you for the encouragement!

HW: Yeah! Yes. I love hearing about the specifics of all of this. I hope you still have some time to get through the rest of the questions.

LB: Absolutely! I am giving a lot of this just because I think it would help you to put my current pedagogy in context —

HW: Yes! Great.

LB: …how a lot of it is me, but the early childhood influences of my empathetic parents and then the kind of different styles of teaching that I encountered from Debost, and from
Rampal. They were so, so influential in my development. It wasn’t just a college teacher and the high school and junior high teacher, so it was a wonderful synthesis that I was able to benefit from.

**HW:** And it kind of works on you throughout your life, right?

**LB:** Yes!

**HW:** As we get older, we remember things. And they start to make sense years and years later.

**LB:** Yes! Exactly. Absolutely. And you know, I’ve been in the position of watching a man who loved music passionately having to give up playing — David Berman — because of Parkinson’s — the onset of Parkinson’s — and for a while, he conducted a great choir at his Humanist congregation in Sarasota, and I’ve seen him become a bit tearful about saying good bye to his library, and he said, ‘Do you want some of these?’ and I said, ‘Yes, I will take some of these things because I would like to see where I got some of my basic ideas.’ And I think it helped him that he could pass that on to me.

**HW:** Yeah. Yeah.

**LB:** I have a box sitting here in my little home office here. I don’t know when I’ll open it, but knowing that it made him feel better makes me feel better.

**HW:** Yeah, that there was a space for that.

**LB:** Mmhmm. Mmhmm.

**HW:** I want to go back to something you briefly touched on, about your decades of experience performing.

**LB:** Mmhmm..

**HW:** And I want to ask specifically, what does that performing experience bring to your teaching?

**LB:** Well, I think when you perform for students, especially, whether you’re sitting in the orchestra at Symphony Hall in Boston and your students are up in the balcony, or whether you’re doing a faculty recital and you can see their faces just a few rows back in the recital hall [laughs], you are under pressure to really try to communicate all the things musically and technically that you’ve been establishing in your work with students. And so, I felt a great responsibility. I felt as though there was no way I could have continued playing in the orchestra without also having various different recitals, chamber music concerts, etcetera, to play. Because, although you have moments of real solos and you have great group moments like when the whole wind section is blending beautifully, it’s not the same as walking out and playing a recital, and you know that very well!
**HW:** Yeah. Yeah.

**LB:** And, so, it made me more conscious of what I would be always working to explain in my lessons, and I would really try very, very hard to be always on top of my game. I mean, of course, you have to anyway. You’re sitting in an orchestra, every concert is recorded, one of them is going to be out on NPR… you have to do your best, and keep focused, but I certainly enjoyed chamber music with colleagues, both in the orchestra or faculty colleagues that is something that was important. And I always would pass along to students that when you play in an orchestral wind section, you must approach it as chamber music and that’s why it’s so, so essential to develop chamber music skills in a woodwind quintet or a woodwind quartet or a wind trio… so that your listening is really honed and therefore ready to be used in the orchestra wind section whenever you sit in the chair.

**HW:** Yes, and it sounds like you modeled that emphasis in your need for performing recitals and chamber music as well. It’s, kind of, muscles that you need to keep in shape.

**LB:** Yes.

**HW:** You know, playing chamber music.

**LB:** Absolutely. Absolutely.

**HW:** I want to ask about demonstrating in lessons. What role does demonstration play in your teaching?

**LB:** Very little, actually. And it’s always been that way for several reasons. One is that I smile a lot when I teach and talk to people and I just don’t feel very good about how I sound when I pick up the flute [laughs]. I do demonstrate some, but, I’m the exact opposite of Joseph Mariano. I think also, the fact that I am not a morning person, and I have never been able to get up and warm up for an hour or an hour and a half or two hours before teaching. I thought I would become a morning person when I left the orchestral world, but, no, [laughs] that never happened!

**HW:** [Laughs].

**LB:** I’m still going strong, you know at midnight at the computer, doing whatever. And then, you know, getting up at 8:30 and making that 10:00 lesson without having really warmed up and so, I will demonstrate when absolutely necessary, and explain if I haven’t played a note yet, ‘First note of the day! Sorry!’ You know, show them, the overall shape of the phrase. But that’s one reason why words have become so essential, and, you know, I’ve been told that I have a very unusual vocabulary in terms of command of more vivid language. I think that that is important, too. It can be very inspiring to people to speak in a way that stretches the vocabulary particularly now because of texting and using pretty short words most of the time in communication.
**HW:** Yeah, so it sounds like that strength really balances out the parts of self in you that are less forward. Like, the demonstrator part of you as a teacher is less dominant than the speaker part of you... and that’s not the case with every teacher. There are some teachers I’ve studied with who are actually not that articulate.

**LB:** Right.

**HW:** And it’s much easier for them to just play and have me kind of dissect what I hear.

**LB:** Exactly. And, I mean, there’s room for both approaches to pedagogy in our world. And I think that having someone just play for you and you’re standing there, going, ‘Ah, that’s great, now how did she do that?’ or ‘How did he do that?’ That’s very, very valuable.

**HW:** Totally, totally. So, moving on to, kind of, a category of questions about your one-to-one teacher-student relationship style... I’m wondering if you can describe what is your role in lessons with your college students?

**LB:** Well, I think that there has to be some kind of boundary in that — to be palsy-walsy with a student —

**HW:** Uh huh.

**LB:** … can become really a difficult thing for the student as well as the teacher. And teaching a student — especially a young student who may not have an innate sense of boundary or professionalism — you must watch your language because you will be encountering professional situations where someone could get the wrong idea about you if you are too forward. I just got a text from my junior whom I love. But, it was like [shouts], ‘PUT FEBRUARY 25th at 5:30 IN YOUR CALENDAR! IT’S MY JUNIOR RECITAL!’ And I thought, ‘Okay, I’ll put it there... I would’ve written, “please put…”’ you know? [Laughs]. And you also, I can tell, by the way you approached me and the way you speak, that you would never say to Professor Trudy, ‘Put thus and such in your calendar!’

**HW:** Right, right.

**LB:** It’s not your thing! You were raised to be a bit more deferential. I actually think that by requesting no first names that helps to set the boundary. In my case, it’s not an issue, I’m fifty years older — fifty or more years older for my sophomore [laughs] — and yet, some people just always teach by first name. I think it’s dangerous for young teachers. I personally think that helps. I think Professor Trudy is a nice way for her to have gone. You know, the professor always having a title. I always like Ms. Buyse or Professor Buyse in the school situation. I think also, I’ve gotten more and more willing to allow the studio as a whole to set things up for themselves. ‘Okay, we’ve got a date for the studio recital. Here are some themes we’ve used in the past: For the Birds, The Voice of the
Flute,’ (which was all unaccompanied), ‘Got Etudes,’ (you know, like the ad)... ‘Those are some ideas. I want you to come up with something!’ Especially since I’ll be gone after I’ve left on the 20th. And so, I think it’s good to allow students some room for self-directing. I always ask, ‘What repertoire is on your wish-list?’ and that way, they can, ‘Oh, I’m just dying to do the Schubert!’ And if it’s somebody who I think could do it one year from now, I say, ‘That would be a fantastic piece for you... why don’t we put it on your senior recital?’ or blah, blah, blah, and then, I’ll suggest things. Am I answering your question, Hannah? I’m not sure if I —

HW: Yes. Mhmhm.

LB: Okay. Okay.

HW: So, the next question is, are your students comfortable talking to you in lessons?

LB: Yes, absolutely. Very definitely. I will never forget the time that a student of mine who’s now in a top five orchestra came in and said, ‘Ms. Buyse, my parents just told my brother and me last night that they’re getting a divorce,’ and they’d been married for 31 years. ‘We just don’t get it.’ And I said, ‘Sit down.’ And you know, we just talked. I mean, there’s no way that that person was going to feel comfortable playing a lesson [laughs]. That’s bad news.

HW: Yeah.

LB: That’s really hard to handle. Even if you’re already twenty-three, twenty-four... your age. So, it was really hard. I think that that’s important. I think that it’s important not to talk too much... if it becomes a pattern, then not enough work is accomplished. But, yes. They can talk to me about anything.

HW: How do you know what to say when a student is upset or overwhelmed?

LB: I use language that I’ve learned in child psychology which, by the way, works for adults as well [laughs].

HW: [Laughs].

LB: You state, ‘You are feeling really overwhelmed. And I totally get that. There are several reasons why you are and I think you could proceed in one of two ways,’ or, ‘two or three ways,’ or, ‘a couple of ways,’ or, ‘in several different ways,’ blah, blah, blah. Whether it’s a relationship issue, or a family issue, or a school issue, and so, I try to help them understand that I’m with them, I can feel their pain. I see that they’re confused. And that that’s a normal thing, at any point in life. Often, I’ll say, ‘This is life, and it doesn’t get much better in the professional world. And sometimes it can get worse! You have to be prepared. You have to be prepared to deal with all kinds of issues that involve relationships or some things that seem unfair to you,’ etcetera.
HW: Mmhmm. Yeah. How might you react if a student cries?

LB: I have a box of Kleenex at my computer desk, and I’ll just pick out a Kleenex and say, ‘Here. That’s what these are for. It’s good to cry. Let it out. It’s perfectly fine.’ I’ve had guys cry a couple of times. And the first thing I say is, ‘Don’t feel embarrassed. We’re given tears as a way to release emotion. It’s good.’

HW: Mmhmm.

LB: ‘We’re in the emotions business.’

HW: Mmhmm.

LB: ‘Don’t feel embarrassed.’ So that was the first thing that I would say. It doesn’t happen all that often, but it does happen. When people are frustrated, especially.

HW: Of course, and sometimes that moment when you walk into that space where you’re just with one other person who you really respect, sometimes the stuff that’s going on outside just can’t help but creep in.

LB: Exactly, exactly. Yeah, as I said earlier, sometimes the teacher becomes the one person who can be approached with a particular subject if it’s just too sticky to talk about with parents or anybody else. Our role can be extremely important. Really important.

HW: Right. There’s such an environment of trust and history there.

LB: Yes.

HW: How might your students describe you?

LB: I would hope that they would say that I am an open person… That I am creative in terms of allowing them to develop their own particular voice. I am not the kind of teacher who has a cookie cutter approach. I will take a different approach for each student because I believe that that’s really the best way to teach. There are certain etudes and technical exercises that I will recommend to everybody, but beyond that, I will be hopefully open to the issues that each individual might bring in his or her playing.

HW: So how does that compare to the way colleagues or family might describe you?

LB: I think that my colleagues and my students would use the word ‘trust.’ That I can be trusted to do a job. I’m also willing to be creative. I just founded a noon-time series called *First Mondays at Noon* because I was sick and tired of there not being anything at our school like that, whereas so many other schools offer performance opportunities for students to try out something before a competition or try out something before a big recital or an audition. And so, I think that my colleagues are really grateful that I’m
willing to take on a new role, in that respect. I’m just hopeful that they would describe me as being someone that they genuinely appreciate for my willingness to help.

**HW:** Mmhmm. What’s the most important thing you communicate to your students?

**LB:** Collegiality… That anything that they are experiencing now could be a real positive in their future. What if one of the grad students playing in one of the school orchestras right now takes a flute or piccolo audition two or three years from now. Perhaps a colleague from school will be sitting on that audition panel. How they’ve comported themselves as a section member and also just as a person will be something that their senior fellow student will remember. And it’s really true because when I was in the finals for my job in the BSO for assistant principal in 1983 the assistant personnel manager called the horn player in my quintet in the San Francisco Symphony who had been at Tanglewood. And the personnel manager, Harry Shapiro (God bless his soul, and rest his soul… he was a wonderful man) said to Bob Ward, ‘We can hear she plays the flute well, now, what kind of a person is she?’

**HW:** Mmhmm. Wow.

**LB:** So, that’s something that I think students may not realize. That how you are when you’re in school — whether you’re trustworthy, whether you’re solid — that sort of impression is important.

**HW:** In lessons, how do you know when to interrupt a student while they’re playing?

**LB:** I try to let them play for at least several lines, unless it’s way too fast or too slow a tempo. I’ll let them go on for two or three lines, and then I will say, ‘How’s this feeling to you? How do you feel?’ I do a lot of the, I guess that’s called the Socratic method, right?

**HW:** Mmhmm.

**LB:** When you ask a question? I’m very much into that, rather than imparting knowledge. I will say, ‘How’s this feeling?’ And hopefully the student will say, ‘It seems really slow,’ and I’ll say, ‘I’m with you!’

**HW:** [Laughs].

**LB:** Or, ‘I’m really nervous, because this metronome marking is blah, blah, blah,’ Somebody came in with a Bitsche etude at the fast marking. And I said, ‘Abby, really, this just doesn’t sound comfortable.’ And she said, ‘Well, my former teacher wanted me always to do the metronome marking.’ And I said, ‘I’m much more interested in hearing you fill the spaces between the notes, get a really great sound, and not seem so physically tense. And she went, ‘Oh! So, I don’t have to play it that fast?’ ‘No, you can work it up! But certainly, when you bring it in you should be able to play it at a tempo where you are musically and physically comfortable.’
**HW:** Mmhmm. Totally. Have you ever apologized to a student?

**LB:** Yes, if I said something that later on turns out to not have been the right thing to have said. I will say so. I will say, ‘I regret having said thus and such.’ Fortunately, that hasn’t happened many times in my teaching life. Apologizing is a teaching moment, because students need to know that you are human and you are willing to admit a mistake. If I say something that could be interpreted as an accusation and it was totally wrong, I will immediately retract it.

**HW:** Mmhmm.

**LB:** I try not to say anything that’s an accusation, but sometimes —

**HW:** Of course. Yeah, like you said, you’re human. And it — it communicates such respect to the student.

**LB:** That’s something else that I hope students would say. That I am respectful of them as people, as well as young musicians who are on their way.

**HW:** Right. The whole person, not simply the flutist.

**LB:** Correct. Correct.

**HW:** What are the non-music areas of your life that inform your teaching?

**LB:** Well, certainly being married. I’m married to someone who is a superb musician and a very fine teacher who is also a great writer. And we proof for each other when we write. And I’ll run a speech by him or run a troubling situation by him and get his opinion. I also consult with colleagues. I think that believing that you know it all is the wrong way to go in teaching. And, we are fortunate at the Shepherd School to have a very closely-knit faculty. There’s no one in the wind faculty that I would hesitate to approach. I would always feel comfortable, whether I’m coaching someone in a woodwind quintet, and I can’t quite get through to this particular person, clarinetist, bassoonist, whoever. I’ll just go to my colleague and say, ‘I’m just wondering what Joe was thinking here? Can you clue me in, what do you think? How could he maybe change?’ And nobody gets offended, ‘What, you don’t like my student?!’ [Laughs]. Nothing like that! *At all.*

**HW:** [Laughs].

**LB:** Instead, there’s a feeling of, ‘Yeah, we’ve been working on that.’ And, ‘I don’t know, maybe you could say thus and such, you could really help me.’ We have recital previews and sometimes a colleague will say, ‘I want you to be the heavy. You’ve got to help me with this. This kid is not getting it. He’s not doing much with dynamics. He thinks he is.’ So, then I’ll just really hit that one aspect in the preview and afterwards, I’ll say, ‘Was that okay?’ My colleague will say, ‘Thank you. Just right.’ And so, I feel as
though my relationship with my colleagues is also always informing my teaching, which is very helpful.

**HW:** And it sounds like it probably demonstrates to the students too just what you were saying before about working together as chamber musicians in a context of an orchestra, you know, you’re modeling how to be in the world when you get along with them.

**LB:** I think so, and by laying a lot of responsibility on the studio as a whole in terms of, ‘I want you to come up with a great program for your recital, and people who are doing mock auditions rather than a recital should play a whole piece, and the rest of you, you could definitely do a whole piece, but to save our studio pianist from having to work hard, why don’t some of you choose great duos or a trio, or something unaccompanied,’ so that everybody gets a chance that’s appropriate, given the circumstances.

**HW:** Professor Buyse, what are your thoughts on praising students?

**LB:** I think that being very positive is extremely important. And I would use as an example a former master’s student who was at a very high level school with a very high profile teacher who never once in five years ever said, ‘That sounds good.’ And I trust this person not to have lied. And I know that another student of mine who had done undergrad — not an extra year, but a regular four year — came to me with the same kinds of inferiority complex issues. And so, I will praise when praise is due. I will find something that’s positive in my first comment after hearing a piece before I launch into ways that I think it might be even better. I always say that, ‘This is good already’ (if it really is, I won’t lie), ‘but I can see several different directions that you could maybe spend a little more time working in,’ That’s what I believe about praise. When it is merited, yes. But find something positive to say about just about everything if you possibly can [laughs], before you start giving constructive criticism.

**HW:** Is there a difference between praise and encouragement?

**LB:** That’s a really interesting question. I would say, yes. Praise is the highest. ‘That was fantastic!’ That’s praise. Encouragement is, ‘You’ve done great work on this so far, and I can see that you’ve put in a lot of time. Here are the places that I think need a little bit more thought, possibly.’ That’s encouragement. So, maybe, when you asked me what I feel about praise, I should have made the distinction between praise. Praise is when it’s really, really excellent. And make sure that it’s not overused. Because that’s something that you don’t want to have students expect on a regular basis.

**HW:** Mmhmm. What is the last analogy you recall using in a lesson?’

**LB:** Oh my gosh. Analogy. I was taught with so many analogies, and I do try to use analogies. But I would have to think about that, Hannah! [Laughs].

**HW:** Okay, yeah. Maybe we can circle back. Any analogies, or metaphors, or similes, or favorite stories you use to demonstrate. We can circle back to that.
LB: I really like the idea of the tactile metaphor. Making a connection between two notes that is ‘silken,’ or ‘a caress of a beloved dog or cat.’ The sense of the smoothness. That kind of thing. Because I feel as though we have to really use our senses. Visual and the tactile — for me, I think — are probably the strongest areas that I would make an analogy from.

HW: Well, there are so many processes and skills that we employ as flutists that are just invisible, you know?

LB: Mhmm.

HW: We can’t point or touch what’s going on with an airstream. And the concept of support in itself. So, I can see how something a little more tangible, or experiential is useful in your teaching vocabulary.

LB: I feel that it is, yes.

HW: So, what is difficult to put into words when it comes to teaching flute? Are there any — kind of along the lines of what we were just talking about with invisible processes — what do you find to be difficult to explain or communicate to students?

LB: I’m working right now with a very gifted student who just can play the flute as an undergrad incredibly well and she’s getting the same comments from everyone for whom she’s played — she’s starting to look ahead to grad school — and that is, ‘You need a little more artistic depth in your music making.’ And her natural personality is extremely bubbly. And she likes to be always doing a lot of things. She’s suddenly gotten involved in school politics, serving on student council. That sort of thing. She has sort of a nervous giggle all the time. It’s just part of her personality. How to work with somebody’s personality and help them to be more of an artist. I have the opposite issue coaching an artist diploma student — very skilled person, not a flutist — who is extremely calm. Very, very calm. And his playing just needs more — more PIZAZZ! [Laughs]. And, I’ve been trying — in that particular person’s case — to emphasize how you have to almost play a role and add a personality that’s not natural to you. I’m actually very shy. Nobody would ever know that because I’ve trained myself to be very outgoing and, and I make speeches all the time. But, I hesitate. And that is from my family… people saying to me in my family, ‘Don’t ever let others know that you think you’re good.’ Which is a very difficult thing to overcome through the years. You know, you should have confidence and come forward, not in an annoying or an aggressive way. I’m off the track right now, but… in terms of putting things into words… I think that that is the hardest thing. When you’re working with someone to develop artistry further. And in the case of my very energetic student, to take more time. She actually took some time in the Saint-Saëns Romance in her lesson on Thursday, and she said, ‘Can I do that?’ ‘Not only can you do that, you must do things like that more often! That’s what’s going to give you more of an artistic sheen to your playing.’ Now there’s a word… I use the words ‘luster’ and ‘sheen’ when I talk about sound. In a sense, that’s an analogy because that’s very visual.
HW: Yeah.

LB: So, there… I finally answered your questions! [Laughs]. The fur and the satin and the… [laughs].

HW: Yeah, yeah! I love that — you’re kind of describing that, when the task at hand is to sort of cultivate someone’s true essence —

LB: Mmhmm.

HW: … it’s really delicate. It’s delicate territory. And it sounds like she had the space to kind of explore and then when she did something that felt a little out of her comfort zone, she had to ask for approval, you know, but —

LB: Mmhmm.

HW: But, as you gain that experience, it starts to feel more normal.


HW: Do you share stories from your personal life? In your lessons?

LB: Oh yes. Oh, absolutely. I do. Especially the auditioning path. My students are really on the audition track and one just won the Houston Grand Opera and another one won the section position, they were both on the same day. And several other students took the audition. One advanced, the others didn’t advance. And I have been very, very clear. One person was in New World and was feeling like she really had to consider whether she should continue, and I wrote a big résumé of what had happened to me in my audition career, and it was something that really made a big difference to her, and she’s now principal in Toronto! [Laughs].

HW: Yeah!

LB: So, it’s that kind of thing which is essential in our profession. To say, ‘It takes a real journey.’ Some people, for some reason, luck out and get something when they’re very young, but other people have to keep going. And it’s those who persevere and continue to take steps to grow. Constantly listening, learning, playing for new teachers just to get some new ideas. That’s what’s going to assure success. And so, that, I think, is absolutely essential. Yes, I talk about my defeats as well as my successes! [Laughs].

HW: What do your students hear you frequently say in lessons?

LB: Ah, let’s see. ‘Fill the spaces.’ Because of the use of air. ‘Fill the spaces,’ that’s directly from Mariano. That’s, I think, the most important thing. I hesitate to use the word ‘support’ because I was of the generation that was taught, ‘Breathe from the diaphragm,’
or, ‘Support from the diaphragm,’ and we now know the diaphragm is an involuntary muscular membrane that just does its thing… you’re not really supporting from there, you’ve got abdominals working. And I, therefore, use the term ‘Energize your air. Energize it!’

**HW:** Mmm.

**LB:** So that you’re feeling directional air. I talk a lot about sounding too vertical rather than horizontal. So, verticality is something that often I will ask them to avoid and to think more in terms of the horizontal line.

**HW:** Okay. When was the last time you learned something new by watching another teacher teach?

**LB:** Oh. I have people here all the time. I’ve always believed in having my students exposed to other ideas. Marianne Gedigian is a former student of mine as you may know. I love the way Marianne teaches because she is very playful at times. She uses a lot of humor. I learned from that. And when she did her demonstration of the book, did you happen to attend it?

**HW:** I didn’t see it. I heard so much about it.

**LB:** Oh it was phenomenal. And I actually heard her give that talk at the Washington Convention, because I was a guest at her table for that Noon Time Lunch, because that’s an honor to be asked to give that speech. And when she gave that speech I said, ‘You know this really has to be a book,’ afterwards. I love her playful aspect and that was something in my background that didn’t exist. We were a very work-oriented family. Everything that I saw was, ‘You have to do your homework now.’ And my father would come from his office as assistant superintendent of schools in Ithaca and do more work at his desk, which was downstairs in the basement next to the furnace, and so I grew up always thinking that work was important. The only games we ever played were *Authors* and *Old Maid*. I remember those two card games [laughs]. If you could believe that! And when I started dating someone who had three boys of different ages, my husband… I learned how to play other types of games. Just because I realized that games are a way you can just sort of relate to somebody without having to get into anything heavy. So I loved learning that from Marianne. And I guess she’s the most recent because hers was last March. And we exchange classes, which is really fun. I’ll go out to UT and she’ll come here, and she’ll be one of my teachers who will be replacing me during my five weeks away. She’s really wonderful for my studio.

**HW:** That’s great. What a special opportunity for your students.

**LB:** It really is. When told them I was going to be gone for five weeks and I said who was coming, they were just so pleased, they were like, ‘Oh this is great for you and great for us,’ so it was really nice to hear that.
**HW**: That’s wonderful. Just to wrap up all of this wonderful material that we’ve been touching on. You’re really coming down to that aspect of empathy that you spoke about in the article and one thing that you said at the beginning of the interview is that empathy is really about respect.

**LB**: It is.

**HW**: Yeah. I wonder if you have any thoughts about the value that empathy has in teaching that you would just like to say off the cuff here.

**LB**: I think the most important thing is to be humble in the sense that, as a teacher, you can always learn from your students. And you can learn in many different ways. You can learn how to be a better teacher by *not* being successful and then trying something else, and then being successful. But you can also just learn from a comment that they make. A remark that touches your heart and helps you to reaffirm in your own mind how essential what we do can be in another person’s life, and also, I think, in our own lives. Because passing things on is what happens in life. Whether it’s good things or bad things.

**HW**: Mmhmm.

**LB**: We can see all the horrible conflicts that are continuing throughout the world between different peoples and that’s the negative side of passing things on, and yet we can see the beauty of our professional field: music. And how we work hard to learn how to explain what it is that we were given — both in terms of a piece, how to present — because our teachers may have studied with someone who was there at the premiere, or whatever [laughs]. So, it’s a continuum. And that’s why being respectful and open to what students have to say and always, I think, asking them what they think and how they feel is really important.

**HW**: I think that’s a wonderful note to end on. I’ve asked you all the questions that I have prepared here —

**LB**: Good!

**HW**: … and have heard so much more. And this has been so enjoyable. Is there anything in the back of your mind that you were wishing you could get out, or something that you expected to be asked, or anything that you had remembered after we moved on that you want to say now?

**LB**: I don’t think so. I would encourage everyone to expand their vocabulary in terms of words. Because words are such a rich resource. And my dear departed father was a high school English and German and teacher before he became vice principal and then moved into the assistant superintendent position. And so, I grew up in a family that loved language. I heard my parents speak French or German to hide something from my brother and me. And I now speak six languages. I’ve just picked things up as I’ve gone along and traveled and been in other countries. And I value communication, even if it’s not perfect.
Even if it’s very childlike, I can speak in Japan, you know! And so, that kind of thing carries over into my teaching. And one of my New Zealand students just sent me an email, she’s a former doctoral student who’s the piccolo player in Adelaide working this year in Gothenburg, Sweden on an exchange. She was just invited by Presser to submit a piccolo trio that I heard her play in Brisbane last year, because my husband had recommended she contact Dan Dorff at Presser, and she said, ‘I’m gobsmacked by this!’ G-O-B-S-M-A-C-K-E-D. And, of course you know what it is by the context, but Michael, my husband, looked it up. And he said, ‘I’m going to start using this word!’ So. I’m going to start using this word! ‘I’m absolutely gobsmacked by that performance!’ and see what the studio says. I think it’s going to be so funny. [Laughs].

**HW**: You have to save it up for the right moment!

**LB**: Exactly! And like last year, when my Armenian student’s mother was coming for parents’ weekend and I’d never met her, I wanted to learn how to say, ‘I’m so happy to meet you.’ And so the whole studio was practicing [chants Armenian greeting] in Armenian. And I had asked Marianne Gedigian to send a book that she’d been using, so, it’s really fun. Words are a great tool. Expand your vocabulary. Find other ways to think about and express things.

**HW**: I’m with you 100%, and I’m so honored that we got to share this time together. There’s just no one better to speak to about this, so thank you.

**LB**: Oh, thank you.
Marianne Gedigian

Telephone Interview Transcript: 49 minutes

Saturday, September 15, 2018
Coral Gables, FL

Hannah Weiss (HW): Tell me about your first flute teacher.

Marianne Gedigian (MG): [Laughs]. My first flute teacher was Darlene Drew, and Darlene was a senior in high school. You may know her, she’s had a very successful career in Broadway shows. Touring Lion King and all that stuff. She’s highly successful. I studied with Darlene for three lessons, I think it was, before she up and went to Interlochen Arts Academy for her senior year of high school! Pretty much thought Darlene was the coolest person I’d ever met in my entire life. She was a major factor — although it was a brief amount of time — a major influence in me thinking that doing music was something pretty slick.

HW: [Laughs].

MG: I remember working on the Mozart G Major exposition with her, and kind of not really understanding what she was talking about but feeling like I was learning some stuff that never would have occurred to me otherwise.

HW: Wow, that’s special to remember.

MG: Oh, for sure.

HW: Who were some of the other teachers who influenced you growing up?

MG: Well, I’ll go through the whole list of my own teachers first. There was Donna Rofe who became Rofe-Olkowski somewhere along the line. Ms. Rofe was my teacher that Darlene sent me to when she left, and I studied with Ms. Rofe for probably eighth and ninth, maybe tenth grade — I really don’t remember now. She had two Siamese cats. And I remember that because she was really, truly the first cat person I had ever met, and she was a real cat person. And my dad would take me. We would sit in the living room, and she was a great teacher, I mean, just so excited about music, so energized, upbeat, kind. She would play music for me to listen to after my lesson. We would listen together, we would play duets. She really started talking about foundation of flute playing. And then, at some point, Ms. Rofe said, ‘It’s time for this to end this way, and for you to go study with somebody else.’ Which I think was quite a remarkable moment in life and a moment that many people don’t offer to their students. It’s not that she couldn’t have continued teaching me, she just feel that I would be better served by studying with somebody else, so she sent me to the great Clement Barone, who was the solo piccoloist of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and I think there are few teachers that would say, ‘It’s time for you to move on,’ but she was one. And truly a god amongst men. I don’t know how else to
say it. A heart of gold. I can’t imagine a student would ever say anything but brilliant, inspired things about him. He suffered major surgery due to cancer, at one point. Doctors said he wouldn’t be able to play. He scoffed at that. I mean, he was just an inspiration in every single, solitary way. Money was never an object. Studying with him was some ridiculous bargain basement fee. Again, my dad would sit outside the room. Mr. Barone was full of energy and analogies and Italian, and ‘sing,’ and ‘cantabile,’ and ‘sing,’ some more, and then I went to BU — Boston University — where I had the opportunity to study with Doriot Anthony Dwyer, who was very much opposite of Mr. Barone. You know, the former principal flutist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra —

**HW:** Mmmmm.

**MG:** … who was a descendent of Susan B. Anthony, if you didn’t know that. And Mrs. Dwyer was really non-verbal in the expected ways, so, whereas, prior to that… well, I should also include that I studied with William Grass for a few weeks at Tanglewood the summer prior to my freshman year, and Bill Grass was a well-known freelancer in Boston, and very much the Boston style, and he pretty much hit me over the head and said, ‘You gotta learn your scales,’ which Mr. Barone had, too, but, Mr. Grass, let’s say, *illuminated* that in a much more direct way. So, I went to study with Ms. Dwyer. And she would never have said, ‘louder,’ ‘softer,’ ‘faster,’ ‘slower,’ you know. She spoke in sort of her own secret code. So, it took a little while to understand that. And while at BU, pursuing my undergraduate degree, Mr. Philip Kaplan, one of the flute professors, offered to fill out some of the training that I was receiving by offering me Taffanel/Gaubert lessons for free — a real foundation of technique — and he really felt that I needed that, so he offered that to me on the side. Additionally, Mr. Louis Moyse taught at Boston University, and his students openly welcomed me — September Payne, Christine Clarke — into their circle of music making. And I did chamber music with September and a violist. And Mr. Moyse was a great influence, as well, in sound and phrasing and French style, and I mean *everything*. So, I really had an incredible opportunity at Boston University with Mrs. Dwyer and Mr. Kaplan and Mr. Moyse to have this sort of influence from major teachers and not get just one perspective. And then I graduated, I self-taught for a while. I, eventually landed as a freelancer right away, and so, I recognized I was getting to the finals but not winning. And so, I started taking a couple of lessons with Leone Buyse, and she was such a finishing teacher. I’m sure we’ll get into that later, but… *Specific instruction*… at some point, the light bulb went on, and I realized how important that kind of specific instruction was and was accepted to go to the New England Conservatory where I pursued, briefly, a Master of Music degree — I was already free lancing full time — so she was my teacher. It was a way to get to study with her on a weekly basis funded by scholarship and to take Baroque chamber music with Fenwick Smith. So, those are my teachers. I would say, influences also strongly include Jeanne Baxtresser, Jim Walker, Tom Nyfenger, and Robert Willoughby. I hate to not include certain people, but those would be — Oh, Carol Wincenc would be another. Later, Paula Robison. Those are people that just boggled my mind. And taught me things that I would never be able to dream up in my own mind’s ear.
HW: I love that. Yes, that’s… a lot of big names. And what a special opportunity you had at BU.

MG: Absolutely.

HW: I wanted to go back and touch on something that you briefly mentioned. You said that Ms. Dwyer had a nonverbal, secret code and that you had to figure it out, and then later on, Ms. Buyse had more specific instruction. Can you speak to those contrasting styles?

MG: Of course. Ms. Buyse would say, ‘The D natural, the third time you get to the D natural, it’s just a tiny bit flatter, not quite as shiny and sharp enough as the first two. Match the intonation.’ Mrs. Dwyer would say, ‘It should sound much more like an elephant washing dishes in a fragile sort of way.’

HW: [Laughs]. Wow.

MG: Yeah, so, super opposite. Once in a while, you know… If you really wanted to learn from Mrs. Dwyer, you stood next to her in the lesson, listened to everything she talked about, listened to the way she sounded, and then got over to the hall, sat in every position in the hall, and then the ‘aha’ moments happened. And also, Tish Kokona — I worked with her one summer at Tanglewood, too — who was Mrs. Dwyer’s protégé… former principal flutist in the National Symphony. And that also really illuminated Mrs. Dwyer’s teaching for me. Hearing Tish Kokona play was revelatory, as was hearing Julia Bogorad. You know… in a summer festival, too, sitting next to her. It’s hard not to include people, Hannah. Because, each person along the way… these great masters, if you’re listening, you learn, you know? And it’s not like… Okay, Julia wasn’t my teacher, but sitting next to her for ten minutes in an orchestra was mind boggling. Or, hearing Carol play in a master class for five seconds… all of a sudden you realize there was another way to look at playing music other sound possibilities, so, yes, Mrs. Dwyer, she was verbal, but she was a very abstract-minded teacher. And Ms. Buyse was much more detail-oriented and process-based. So, she might suggest how to structure a phrase more specifically, and maybe, in the very beginning of her teaching, I didn’t really understand it. Or I thought, ‘How important could that D possibly be?’ but, of course, once you achieve the D the way she’s suggested, you start to recognize how important the D was and how you never would have noticed it, had she not pointed it out.

HW: Yes. Yes. Yes. I love all of this. This is so good!

MG: Oh, good!

HW: [Laughs]. I want to ask, thinking about those years at BU, did you ever feel the need to discuss personal life with your teacher?

MG: Under no circumstances. Never. Not only that, but I would have never uttered a complaint.
HW: Okay. A different time. Because I —

MG: Very.

HW: Yeah. This is a little bit of a change of subject, kind of. How was the language that you grew up with — how has that influenced your teaching language today?

MG: You know, it’s interesting, Hannah. I was actually doing some extra teaching today, and one of the students I was working with is a dual major, and about six times during our work together, I complimented her on her language use, and I said, ‘You know, your generation… you’re actually instructing us on what that means and how to achieve it.’ Saying things like ‘challenges’ instead of ‘hard.’ You know, there’s just a different way now. We heard a lot of, ‘No.’ And so, nowadays, we would say, ‘Oh, that’s horrible.’ I can tell you that I sure worked hard in practice to crack the code of what a ‘Yes’ might be.

HW: Mmhmm.

MG: And I never, ever expected to be given any information that would equate to a ‘Yes.’ I figured I had to sort that through myself.

HW: Okay.

MG: And I think that’s a huge shift. I mean, language aside, just that sort of, *schloozing*… spirit…

HW: Yeah. Yeah. So, I’m curious. How might you describe your role in lessons with your college students now?

MG: That’s a tough question. And since you know me, you know that that’s a tough question. Because, I think that each student is an individual so, that role shifts sometimes by the minute but certainly by the hour, by the person, by the week, by the process, you know, by the, ‘Oh we’re getting to know each other,’ or the… they’ve heard the, ‘Clean your room,’ enough times and they’re rolling their eyes, or the light bulb goes on and the switch is on. You know, that’s a changing process. So, my role as a teacher is to be present… to change with the student’s development and needs. That’s what I would say.

HW: Okay. So, do you find that you also change how you speak to them?

MG: Sure. Do I speak to a freshman differently than I speak to a second year DMA student? Probably. Because I’m providing framework in a process-based way. So, a DMA student — you have a different framework than a freshman.

HW: Mmhmm.
MG: Right? So, yes. I would say that the framing certainly changes. So, the language will change when an assumption of framework is had. Does that make sense?

HW: Yep. Yep, it does.

MG: Yep. You can make that sound nicer, but you know what I mean.

HW: Yeah! [Laughs]. When did you first start teaching flute?

MG: Thirty-four years ago. Well, I did have a couple students in high school, and then I did teach privately in Boston, so... I guess. You know... that’s an insane question. Decades, if you count the high school kids. But, I was teaching beginners primarily starting around the age twenty-one, and then at the university level, I started when I was thirty. So that’s twenty-four years ago.

HW: Okay. Yeah. What would you say to your young teaching self now, if you could?

MG: Hmm. I reserve how to answer that question. Because, things have changed so much that, I don’t know that I can impose this thinking on that teaching, if you know what I mean. That’s like saying, would I say, ‘That’s hard?’ Well, of course not, we don’t say that anymore because we understand that. But, do I want to say that in answer to this question? Not necessarily. I guess, what I would say is, at the university level — at the high school level, the beginner’s level, that was easy — at the university level, I would say, look forward, because, in time, careers are going to change. So, when I was teaching early on, you taught everyone to be principal flute in an orchestra. And so, I wish I had known — if I’m going to put it that way — that that wouldn’t necessarily be my correct fit, nor will it be the correct fit for many, many, many of my students. That’s a little bit of an obtuse way to get there, but that’s what I would say. If I knew I could have facilitated more variety with great feeling about it in my students. Rather than training on excerpts

HW: Mmm. Mhmm.

MG: I think that came incredibly naturally to me because I had incredibly gifted students who had the realization that they didn’t want to do that. They didn’t want to be principal flute. You have to honor that in the student, and you have to recognize that maybe they don’t want to do it, and maybe I don’t want to do it, and there are other ways to get there.

HW: Yeah. Totally. Why did you become a college flute professor?

MG: I was a freelancer at the time. Oh, college professor, not teaching at the college level. Well, I will say that I started when I moved back to Boston at age thirty and I started teaching at Boston University. I’m pretty good at it. Actually, I’m pretty good at problem solving. And so, that was a really fun part of my freelance life, was teaching. And I had great students in those day. You know, Nicole Esposito was a high school student that traveled three hours to come every Sunday morning for a lesson each direction. Michael Gordon came — he’s principal flute of Kansas City — from Rhode.
Island — and took lessons. So, I had incredible students — my two privates, and my college level. So, number one, it was fun, and number two, I had an aptitude for kind of figuring things out with them and it was a wonderful way to get out of yourself when you’re free lancing primarily as principal flute predominately with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. So, it was a wonderful way to be in music without it being about me in music.

**HW:** Mmhmm.

**MG:** And coming to UT — long story, I won’t bore you, but — UT just really made an arrangement that was so attractive to my husband and I. He’s the tuba professor now, here, and, at the time, our daughter was not quite one, and honestly, Hannah, I just wanted to be around to put my daughter to bed at night. I came to motherhood very late. And playing concerts six nights a week — or seven nights as I had done for years — it just wasn’t my priority anymore. And my priority shifted. And teaching was becoming more and more of an interest and focal point for me.

**HW:** Thank you for sharing that.

**MG:** Mmhmm.

**HW:** Thinking back to your college education and that curriculum that you went through… how did that prepare you for then teaching college?

**MG:** How did that prepare me… Well, everything prepares you for everything you do. And maybe that sounds flip, but it just does. I mean, that curriculum, playing on a basketball team, traveling for a summer festival… it all prepares you. Because I’m not a very strong curriculum-based teacher, ‘You have to achieve these pieces by this age, and this repertoire in this progression.’ So, for me, I’m more abstract than that. But, I think that everyone prepares you on some level, if you’re paying attention.

**HW:** Mmhmm. What does your performance experience bring to your teaching?

**MG:** A good dose of reality.

**HW:** [Laughs].

**MG:** [Laughs].

**HW:** You said before that you learned so much from sitting out in the audience and listening to your teachers perform. I’m wondering, what role does demonstration play in your teaching today?

**MG:** Yeah, demonstration has come and gone a little bit. There’s been a bit of an ebb and flow, Hannah, because, I was holding a baby and not the flute as many hours as I had been at one point. So, I think I demonstrated less for a little period of time. I demonstrate now, but, I think my teaching is more focused on the student’s exploration in the lesson.
And I do demonstrate now, and I think a healthy amount, which is to say, not a lot, but enough to inform an ear of a kind of up close kind of concept, but I don’t play a ton in the lessons. I think my students really want to play in the lessons and I try to honor that and interject with abstract commentary, analogies, specific targeted commentary, and then some sound profile offerings, as well.

**HW:** Mmmmm. Okay. Let’s see. So, we talked about how you just didn’t bring up the outside stuff in your lessons when you were a student. So, I’m wondering, how would you describe the boundary between you and your college students?

**MG:** Well, it’s a very personal relationship. We have a campus of 50,000. When you put it all together and we have two people sitting in a room together that, hopefully, love the craft in which we’re working together the most of anybody on the campus, so it’s an elite crowd, and a hyper-focused area of instruction. So, I think there’s an intimacy inherent in the reality of being in a room together for this kind of targeted instruction. Having said that, I am their professor, and I do try to set a professional tone at this school, but, you know me, I can be, apparently — I mean, and it still makes me crack up — apparently, I can be intimidating to some people. So, I do think that I can tend to be sort of casual in my instruction because I think it helps to put my students at ease with me as a person.

**HW:** Mmmmm. So, how —

**MG:** For instance, I’m sorry. If I taught in a more clinical or formal way, I think it would be a very difficult learning process for my students, so I’ve understood over time.

**HW:** Yeah.

**MG:** And I think, you’ve gotta read the room. [Laughs].

**HW:** Yeah.

**MG:** You know, you gotta read the room. You gotta read who comes in each week. You can’t have any expectations.

**HW:** How do you think your students might describe you?

**MG:** Demanding, funny. I don’t know. You’d have to ask them, past that.

**HW:** [Laughs].

**MG:** I know how they have described me, but, I won’t say that.

**HW:** [Laughs].

**MG:** You know, that’s not mine to say. My students and I, for the most part, we have a a beautiful relationship, but it evolves over time. So, it depends if you get them in an ebb
moment or a flow moment. And that’s part of teaching. If your students, every single week say, ‘MG is awesome, I love her!’ That may be the right routine for some teachers and students, and it may not be. So, again, I think it depends on when you catch them.

**HW:** How does this compare to the way that your colleagues or your family might describe you and the role that you play —

**MG:** Probably pretty similarly.

**HW:** Yeah.

**MG:** Yeah. I think I am who I am. I try to be professional. But, I am the person I am.

**HW:** Mmhmm.

**MG:** You know, and it’s a coaching kind of profession. Like sports, you know? [Laughs]. You know… the coach is on the sideline going, ‘Faster, faster, faster!’ And then afterwards, they’re at peace with their players… it’s very similar to that sometimes.

**HW:** Mmhmm. This is a big one, what value does empathy have in teaching?

**MG:** Well, obviously it’s huge. But, empathy is a big word, so, empathy is not always the idea that, ‘Oh… aww, I understand!’ Sometimes being empathetic is being able to understand something and not express it but offer kind of a silent mentoring on something. Sometimes that’s the most empathetic you can be. Is not to point something out, necessarily. So, yeah… it’s really important. And we all know what this field is, and we all know the challenges involved in it, and we all know the pay off. And there should be an inherent empathy in just this sort of community feeling amongst us. Again, we’re a minority in the world, who cares about what we do, really. So, if there isn’t an inherent empathy, then I think that’s a real problem.

**HW:** Yeah.

**MG:** But I don’t think I have to constantly, like, ‘Oh, be empathetic.’

**HW:** Mmhmm.

**MG:** I think we just are by virtue of our community.

**HW:** What are your thoughts on praising students?

**MG:** Interesting. So, I’ve always had a sort of, like, ‘Say something positive and then offer some instruction to improve,’ and, this I would be very cautious about being quoted as saying. Because I don't have enough information yet but what I will say, there are some schools that don’t offer the praise, because that’s all the student then focuses on, is getting more of it. I think I am pretty well balanced in my thought process on what’s
great and maybe needs a more targeted approach. But I will say that I’m very fast, and so my compliment may go by a student very fast, and then they only hear kind of the next part of it. I will say that I do praise. And usually, I praise to offer a framework to a component that can be improved. But what about if I didn’t offer — I ponder this — what if I didn’t offer praise? And I’m just offering simple instruction? Would they thrive that way? I kind of think they would, Hannah. And I kinda think that might be a next part of teaching psychology.

HW: Mmm. That’s interesting, yeah. I have been reading about this. And I’m wondering if you think there’s a difference between praise and encouragement?

MG: Uh huh. Well, you used the word praise, so, I used the word praise. Honestly, I would just call it ‘feedback and assessment’ in my own thinking. I never really think about offering praise. I really think about offering my assessment. So, I’m more comfortable with that word than ‘encouragement’ or ‘praise’. If I say, ‘Vibrato sounds super fluid,’ that’s praising, and, hopefully, encouraging to the student to continue it, but it’s just my observation, really.

HW: Yeah. Yeah. you’re giving feedback. You’re assessing their vibrato.

MG: Yeah. To me, that’s more accurate to what I do.

HW: Okay. Okay.

MG: I mean, there is praise involved, of course, but on a kind of moment-by-moment… I don’t think of it that way.

HW: I see. Do you see yourself as an articulate teacher?

MG: Often.

HW: And can you name someone else who you believe to be an articulate teacher?

MG: Leone is highly articulate.

HW: Yes. Let’s see —

MG: But, having said that, Hannah, I will say that I feel I’m articulate with a heavy dose of abstract.

HW: [Laughs]. I like that.

MG: [Laughs]. Yeah, articulate with a side of fries and abstract, for sure.

HW: [Laughs].
**MG:** And you know, you’ve worked with me. I think you understand that about me.

**HW:** I get it. And… Speaking of fries, what is the last analogy you recall using in a lesson?

**MG:** Oh, this is such a bad one, I can’t believe it… should I be honest? [Laughs].

**HW:** If you wanna think of one of your top go-tos…

**MG:** Well, here’s one. It’s a terrible one. But, I’m gonna say it anyhow, because it works. So, when I’m asking a student to make an adjustment, slash, AKA, [speaks dramatically] a change, and it’s maybe a tweak in their physical structure, they can make it a really big deal if they want or we can minimize it. The way I like to think about it is, I say, ‘If you think about it and set your intention every single time you go to play,’ and I do mean every single time, I don’t mean sixty minutes out of seventy-five. I mean seventy-five minutes out of seventy-five, even if you don’t accomplish it. But that’s your intention, ‘then you will make the change very fast.’ And that — I usually use the word ‘adjustment’ — ‘It will stick with you.’ And I say, ‘Think of it like a drinker — an alcoholic. They can’t really drop by the bar and say, ‘I’m just gonna have one.’ Because one almost always leads to another one. And that’s what they’re familiar with. That’s what they know. Their brain knows it’s not good for them, but they go and they start down that road. And so, that that kind of ‘one day at a time’ philosophy is the same thing in the teaching. One phrase at a time, one intention at a time… stay on the wagon,’ [laughs].

**HW:** [Laughs]. Yeah!

**MG:** … you know, and you will see that the results pay off. You can’t make assumptions, and so, stay intentional in what you do, and… tiny, tiny baby steps.

**HW:** Yeah.

**MG:** To say, ‘I don’t wanna drink anymore,’ is different than having another thing that you do to ensure that that outcome has been affected.

**HW:** Right. I like that word, intentional. It’s powerful.

**MG:** Mmhm.

**HW:** Thinking now to teaching and kind of coaching a student while they’re playing… how do you know when to interrupt a student while they’re playing?

**MG:** Hmm. Well, how do you know? I mean, ‘Do you know?’ I would say. I don’t know how we can qualify and quantify our teaching in that way. It depends on that student. Once again, some students need to play and present in that way. Other students respond really well with more active kind of teaching and instruction while they’re playing. I just
think it depends on the situation. And I can’t say you ever know these things. It’s not like you sort of wake up one morning and say, ‘Now I know how to do this in teaching.’ It’s life — action-packed — and constantly assessing your own teaching, as well.

**HW:** Mhmm. Yeah. I understand. You were talking about your philosophy of teaching. I guess you mentioned that the lesson is really a place for the student and the chance for you to provide your feedback and your assessment. I’m wondering how specifically do your words reflect that teaching philosophy?

**MG:** [Laughs]. So, here it is in a nutshell. If we’re on the same page, and both people in the room feel that the lesson is like a lab class — a laboratory — and not a quiz or a test, then, yeah. Then, I think my words reflect it really, really accurately. If the student is presenting as if it’s a test, or something more along those lines, and not a lab, then, I think my offerings can be more confusing to the students. But, I think of the lessons as hearing what they were able to present after their time working on something and practicing something — kind of tipping it over. And learning is messy. It’s filthy. You’re gonna have some explosions. And if the framework of the lesson is to provide assessment and learning, then, I think, my words are pretty clear toward that end game.

**HW:** Okay.

**MG:** And I think that’s something that students have to get used to in my teaching. What we do in the lesson is what I want them doing all week.

**HW:** Right.

**MG:** I am modeling sort of what a practice week can look like in the lesson.

**HW:** Hmm. Okay.

**MG:** So, I think that’s a very different experience for a lot of students. They’re used to coming in and performing. I call it the ‘wine and roses lesson,’ and we do have those once in a while where you say, ‘Oh, yes, a little bit more cabernet here, a little bit more fertilizer over there,’ but really, a lesson with me is really representative of what they can expand on in their practice room.

**HW:** Yeah. How do you know what to say when a student is upset or overwhelmed?

**MG:** See previous answer. You don’t know these things. That’s where empathy comes in, and that’s where process-based learning comes in, and instinct, and training. We all take training modules at UT that talk about appropriateness and that sort of thing. But this is live performance, like acting, sometimes you have to be out of yourself to be able to present the characteristic performance that you need to. So, I think it’s a trial and error, and lots of asking. ‘Do you need a break?’ ‘Would you like to have a moment?’ I often ask my class, ‘Are there any questions, comments, or complaints.’ Giving people the opportunity to provide feedback as well, but, I think, ultimately, it’s not two flutists in the
room. It’s just two people, you know. Try to grow a sensitivity gene. But, a sensitivity to a student is not always a nurtured kind of, ‘Let’s get rid of this, let’s make sure this goes away,’ and the student just feels great! Sometimes they gotta get there. And I don’t need to know why. It may be very personal and private. Sometimes you just have to sit back and let it happen.

HW: Yep. How might you react if a student cries?

MG: Hand them a box of Kleenex. Tell them, ‘That’s natural.’ ‘They care.’ Crying is because they care so much. Clichés like, ‘Water brings the flowers,’ but, I mean it. [Laughs]. You know, a little lavender spray in the room… Touching of the crystal. I don’t know, sometimes, just shut up and let them cry.

HW: Mmhmm.

MG: You know, they’re gonna apologize 5,000 times, and just let ‘em know it’s okay. And offer them the opportunity that if that’s something that they needed to discuss with me or that I need to amend, that they can let me know that in the moment, in writing, through a TA… Give them the opportunity to sort through why that happened.

HW: Mmhmm. Have you ever apologized to a student?

MG: Sure, of course!

HW: Okay. What’s the most important thing you communicate to your students?

MG: Self-empowerment.

HW: That’s a good one. [Laughs].

MG: [Laughs].

HW: What are the non-music areas of your life which inform your teaching?

MG: Well, I think you get the message with me, Hannah. I feel like it’s everything. I don’t think that I can say it’s, ‘Oh, it’s when I’m in the garden, I have these Zen moments about teaching!’ or it’s, ‘Oh, being a mother,’ or it’s, ‘Oh, being a wife,’ So, I just think everything informs the whole. So, I just can’t answer a question like that, honestly.

HW: Okay. Are there any words you completely avoid using in lessons?

MG: Hmm. Well, I would say, I avoid using the word ‘bad,’ but, I don’t use that word, so it’s not like I have to avoid it. Do you know what I mean?

HW: Yeah.
MG: It’s not like I go, ‘Oh, I better avoid the word BAD!’ I would say that if I used what would be construed as a negative word to a student, I would frame it. So, I don’t know that I sit there and go, ‘Don’t use that word! Don’t use that word! Don’t use that word!’ I guess there are two things that I would say in mocking ways in the lesson, and one is ‘support.’ I try not to use that word, and when I do, I use the word super tongue in cheek with an eye roll.

HW: [Laughs].

MG: …because it’s such an abstract term. I might, at some point, go, ‘Support!’ and then we’ll laugh, because we know how I feel about that. Or, ‘MUSICAL,’ that’s another one I might joke about. ‘You have to be more MUSICAL!’ Whatever that means, that mystical, you know… right in the category of support, in my opinion.

HW: Okay [laughs].

MG: So, I guess I avoid those two words unless I’m being funny about them. Purposefully.

HW: Okay. Well, this is speaking more about these abstract, complicated concepts, like, ‘What does it mean to be musical?’ or, ‘What’s actually going on when you say, “support?”’ so, I’m wondering, what is difficult to put into words when teaching flute, for you?

MG: Physical sensation.

HW: Mmhmm.

MG: So, I think that, nowadays, something that we have ‘right’ in teaching, so to speak, is that there are many more resources. We looked to our teachers earlier — decades ago — to provide everything for us, and also, we didn’t know what we needed to have provided, so, it’s hard to put physical sensation into words without imposing your own sense of that. So, I would utilize resources like body mapping, that great book, and people that are certified in that. That’s a hard thing to teach. We all talk about that super magical unicorn we call ‘the diaphragm,’ but, until a student understands what engagement is, it’s really just, ‘Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah,’ they’re hearing you sound like Charlie Brown’s teacher.

HW: [Laughs]. Yeah.

MG: [Laughs].

HW: Yes.

MG: Right. So, I think that’s one of the harder things for me.
HW: Mmhmm. That makes sense.

MG: But we do physical activities to achieve it. So, I supersede that difficulty in verbiage with physical action.

HW: Mmhmm. Yeah. That makes sense. Do you share stories from your personal life in lessons?

MG: Sure.

HW: Can you give me an example?

MG: My personal life, my professional life… So, professional circumstances, certainly. I might also say something like, ‘Oh,’ you know, ‘we’re at that phase where I’m getting the eye roll, because you’ve heard “clean your room, clean your room, clean your room” so many times. I get that at home from my fifteen-year-old at home.’ You know. ‘If you’d just clean your room, I wouldn’t ask.’ And they’ll laugh. Or, ‘Make your bed,’ that’s a big one. ‘Make your bed, make your bed, make your bed.’ So, something like that, I’d use as an analogy.

HW: Mmhmm. I want to know, what do your students hear your frequently say, or do you have any Gediganisms?

MG: I think you’d have to ask them, and I’m sure I do.

HW: [Laughs]. Okay. What about when was the last time you learned something new by watching another teacher teach?

MG: Oh. Whenever the last sixty seconds was that I was in the room with another teacher…

HW: [Laughs]. Yeah.

MG: And that goes for my students, too. I’m learn something constantly. I’m learning constantly from them. You bet. About them, from them. About me. Constant, constant learning.

HW: It never stops.

MG: It never stops. And if it does stop, then it’s time to do something else.

HW: Yeah, yeah. Exactly. I have asked you all my prepared questions. I’m wondering if there’s anything in the back of your mind, anything that you were trying to remember, or something you wanted to get out, or something you thought I was going ask that I didn’t ask?
MG: No. I didn’t have any preconceived notions. I know how intelligent you are, so I knew it would be thoughtfully handled, which is why I said, ‘Yes.’ I think, the only thing I would say is that, the relationship between a teacher and a student, again, is a personal and process-based relationship and it changes over time. And any time somebody says, ‘What do you think of a certain teacher?’ That moment in time, my reflection on that teacher will be so based on my own experience and self-worth. I encourage students, at least, to give time. I mean, if a teacher’s treating you poorly — I’m not talking about that. I’m not talking about an abusive or a mean teacher, so to speak. I’m talking about letting time breathe and allowing, yourself to, as we call, quote end quote fail rather than trying to succeed all the time.

HW: Mmhmm.

MG: Most of my teaching is based on observing, quote end quote — and I use the word again with a steady dose of eye roll — failing. Because that’s the exploring. If you are constantly in the laboratory and putting together things that you know are gonna work, you’re never going to explore. You’re never gonna discover something. It’s always somebody else’s formula. So, studying music is really for a pioneering spirit. Somebody who can laugh at themselves and who can accept that it’s process-based and that the teacher is honoring that, potentially, too. That it’s not a series of, ‘Do this. Great. Now you’re ready to do this,’ necessarily… Of course, there is that involved, but, it’s not that easy.

HW: Mmhmm.

MG: There is a healthy dose of mess involved.

HW: [Laughs].

MG: And trying to instill in students that that’s part of the celebration… and that’s part of what actually makes the moment — when it all works, or something gets put together the way you mean — what makes it so deeply meaningful.

HW: Yeah, you said before, ‘Learning is a mess… a filthy mess.’

MG: [Laughs]. At least.

HW: Alright, well… this is all I have.

MG: Great.
**Amy Porter**

Skype Interview Transcript: 92 minutes

Sunday, August 26, 2018
Coral Gables, FL

**Hannah Weiss (HW):** So, the first question is: tell me about your first flute teacher.

**Amy Porter (AP):** Well, my first flute teacher was actually a band director. And his name was Mr. Hetrick, and he was at Faulk Road Elementary. Actually, it wasn’t Mr. Hetrick quite yet. Mr. Fry was first. So, Mr. Fry said, ‘Put the edge of the lip on the edge of the lip plate.’ I blew. I made a sound that, apparently, was good enough for me to skip a class and go to the next day. And so, from there, we put the flute together and played Mary Had a Little Lamb. And then it kept progressing every day to where I played three classes in three days taught by Mr. Fry [laughs]. And then, I went to band with the flutes. So, I really didn’t have a flute teacher until about a year in. Because I played piano, and I sang with my parents, so I was only nine years old. They wanted to go a little slowly. But I was throwing so many great signs of advancement on the flute that, I’d say that, my first private teacher was Virginia Atherton who was in Delaware at the time, and now she’s in California.

**HW:** Okay.

**AP:** Long time in California.

**HW:** Okay.

**AP:** Yeah.

**HW:** Okay. So, nine years old, that’s a long time ago. But, do you remember anything about the words that they used?

**AP:** Mr. Fry said: ‘Put the bottom edge of the lip on the bottom edge of the lip plate.’

**HW:** Mmhmm.

**AP:** That was it.

**HW:** The basics.

**AP:** That was it.

**HW:** Okay, and it stuck with you.
AP: [Sings] Ta - da! And guess what… it still works!

HW: Yeah!

AP: [Laughs].

HW: What do you remember about the use of, your first private flute teacher’s words? Anything come to mind when you think of how she talked to you?

AP: Also, very simply and also very colorfully. So, she would often have us do games, color games. For instance, copy the — back then it was Xerox copy — the music. Chop it into staves and put your color over top. And she had flute olympics. So, the games, I’ll never forget. Flute olympics was, ‘Who could play all the major, minor, two chromatic and two whole tone scales in the shortest amount of time?’ And we’d all wait out in the apartment complex common area outside while one person played. I mean, there must have been twelve of us. I got third prize one year, second prize next year. First prize — I finally won! And I won the pitchfork — the tuning fork, I call it a pitchfork — the tuning fork that I tune quintets with in my office. So, for her, I think more of her vocabulary was through music and games. Like, she would accompany me on the piano a little bit. And I’d play just short little pieces and she’d say, like, ‘Bye-bye,’ you know. And she’s like… ‘Let me play a tune on the way out the door.’ It was just so beautiful. After six years, my mother thought, ‘You know… you’re really good. I think I wanna take you to Philadelphia,’ So she did. And Ginny got really mad.

HW: [Laughs].

AP: And they had a little bit of a falling out. And I had to do a little bit of make up with Ginny in my adult life. And now we’re super close. For instance, one time I saw Ginny, and we were starting to get back together, and I was in my thirties or something, and I said, ‘Hey,’ and I found her at Convention. ‘What did you tell me to get a low register? Why do I have this amazing low register? What’d you tell me?’ You know what I mean? You know, so, my direct vocabulary… I was asking for that. She turned around, she said, ‘Foo.’

HW: [Laughs].

AP: Now, you can’t write that down [laughs]. But, I went, ‘Thank you!’ and I walked away.

HW: [Laughs].

AP: So, I think, the direct nature, the direct vocabulary… And, you notice, I haven’t really talked about the flute, necessarily. It’s been about music and the games of music, and the scales behind the flute. She didn’t turn around and say, ‘Well I told you to think of this…’
HW: Mmhmm.

AP: [Laughs].

HW: Yeah, and it sounds like it was dynamic. It was visual, it was physical, it was collaborative. Yeah.

AP: That’s it. ‘Foo.’ Yup.

HW: Cool. So, what about the language that you grew up with. How did that influence your teaching language today?


HW: How did the language in your household influence the way you teach your students today?

AP: Oh sure, my mother came with a lot of directness and a lot of humor and a lot of sarcasm. And she [sings] sang all the time and her voice was so singy that my dogs start, you know… ‘Hi, it’s Hannah!’ You know. Everything was singy. I think, at home, everything was super direct. I know I keep using that word. Maybe I should say opinionated? And she would give me options. So, I could always do this, or I could do that. But, definitely ‘that’ was shrouded in failure.

HW: [Laughs].

AP: And shrouded in, ‘You’ll never be great at doing whatever you’re gonna do if you do ‘that’ thing.’ So, I could be Yo-Yo Ma, or nothing. So, there was always this incredible thing to aspire to in my house. So, the language used in my house was inspirational… Also, you could do the dishes or practice, and you didn’t wanna do the dishes, so…

HW: [Laughs].

AP: Right? Yeah. I would describe it as firm and not flowery. You know, it was a dramatic household at times. There was always some kind of competition happening or concert happening. So, they sang in the Northern Delaware Oratorio Society and they sang in their church choir, and they drove me to youth orchestra, and they drove me to rep. orchestra and they drove me to my lessons. And I was genuinely served a silver spoon that way. Classically trained musicians need parents that were that supportive. So, the language in my house was inspirational, motivational, definitely direct and a little dramatic.

HW: Okay.
**AP:** [Laughs].

**HW:** [Laughs].

**AP:** And British!

**HW:** Alright, I love that.

**HW:** Can you tell me, moving forward, what was it like studying with your college teachers? What do you remember about their language?

**AP:** There was no time for personal language... there was no time for ‘nice nice.’ It was all... the minute you walked in, they wanted to know — all of them wanted to know — how I was doing as a human. And that’s very important to me. So. If I wasn’t doing well, then I could amend the lesson. I could leave or play through it. Or maybe talk about it for two minutes, but not a long time. Samuel Baron once said, ‘Hey, let’s put it all into our music.’ Because I had just probably, I don’t know, broken up with a boyfriend or something, and I couldn’t play. I was a sniveling idiot, and he just said, you know... handed me his handkerchief, as gentlemen did. And said, ‘Let’s get through it.’ Ms. Baxtresser would definitely wanna know how you were doing emotionally. And at that point, make sure that you knew how to handle it. So, she would actually not hand you her handkerchief, but she’d give you a couple ways to think about it. So, it was quite lovely to make decisions with Ms. Baxtresser because she would give you the options. Kinda like my mum [laughs]. So. ‘Oh, you could do this, or you could try this, or you could try this.’ And so, the college teachers were almost as if they took over with the language of my parents and my first teachers and supplemented it with the fact that I was good and the fact that I wasn’t an idiot. Because I’ve asked everybody in my life, ‘If I’m an idiot and I look like an idiot and I sound like an idiot, would you please tell me?’

**HW:** [Laughs].

**AP:** [Laughs]. See, isn’t that direct?

**HW:** [Laughs]. Yeah.

**AP:** So, I think that with Ms. Baxtresser and Mr. Baron... and after graduating Juilliard, going to Trudy... And the reason why I went to Trudy Kane was for her consistency and her endurance. And I quote those two words in my life right now. I always need consistency and I always need endurance, and I finally think that I’ve found those qualities. And those are direct words, aren’t they?

**HW:** Mmhmm.

**AP:** Those are very direct.
HW: Yeah, totally. So, thinking about how you were talking about coming into the lesson, and sort of, like, taking inventory a little bit, with where you were as a person…

AP: Right.

HW: I’m wondering if that’s how it is with you and your students… the way you see it?

AP: Well, I would like it to be, yes. I don’t need to go any further than the professorship. I’m not their mother, and I’m not their best friend. But, I need to know how I should treat them. I need to know, often, how they feel about themselves. Because quite often, it’s very different from how they see themselves. So, how I see them is different from how they see them. So, if they’re in a particular position of anxiety, for instance, there’s one way to say ‘anxiety,’ for instance. It’s come into the vocabulary of my teaching. And so, I’ve asked students to explain to me the kind of anxiety. And now, I’m realizing it’s coming in the form of shortness of breath and it could be for many reasons and could happen at any time. And so, I need to be aware of these conditions. And, I can also influence that anxiety by saying, ‘I don’t see that, and, actually, you’re more beautiful than you would think you are,’ or, ‘The situation wasn’t as anxious as you might have thought it to be,’ and it actually had good results turning the tide a little bit for the student throughout the sophomore year, the junior year. Here’s another example: ‘My parents don’t believe in what I’m doing, but I’m here anyway. I’m paying my own bills.’ And that I need to know. That’s one scenario that a professor has to address… Where they know the person’s doing the best they can. So, if I didn’t know that and they weren't having a good week and they had worked fifty hours at their day job. Then, I would need to understand. So, I’m really going with what space that person is when they come in the door. Now, I do ask them if they can make that lesson their priority, that would be the best [laughs]. We get a lotta work done in a very short amount of time, I believe —

HW: Mmhmm.

AP: …here.

HW: That’s good. That’s great. When did you first start teaching flute?

AP: Hmm. I kinda remember my first lesson. I was twenty-six. Well, hang on a minute, I mean… do you mean my first lesson when I was a teenager? Because I taught trumpet.

HW: Oh, you did? Okay.

AP: Yeah. So, I played trumpet and the young girl… she was younger than me. I was, you know, like, sixteen… she was twelve. I don’t know, she wanted to play trumpet, so I taught her.

HW: [Laughs].

AP: I just followed the method book.
HW: Mmhmm.

AP: But I didn’t really teach flute until I hit the Atlanta Symphony, believe it or not.

HW: Mmhmm.

AP: Now I did teach — that was serious college. I taught in New York City. And I taught Japanese business people. Men and women. And they could pay $40 and $50 — as I got better — an hour. I would go to their apartments and take off my shoes and have a regimented lesson [laughs]. And I was in this circle of engineers, nurses, housewives that all, like, took the flute. And they were new to New York City, and maybe they were living there for two years… so they called Juilliard and Juilliard would call me. And I had gone to Japan, you know, I started going to Japan very, very often. So, literally, Japan became my second home. So, I would say that was twenty-three, twenty-four years old. So I cut my teeth for two years teaching these private lessons to some of the most organized humans on the planet [laughs].

HW: [Laughs]. Yeah.

AP: [Laughs]. And it really helped me! They loved the fact that I had a five-part lesson. We warmed up with the Moyse, and I always got their sound. You know how I go in on your sound immediately, right?

HW: Yeah. Yeah.

AP: And then Part 2: technique. Had they done their Taffanel/Gaubert that week? Were we going to play Maquarre? Were we going to take a foray into the transpositions of Moyse and the tone development? And then we’d get to the étude, and then we’d get to their pieces. And then we’d do whatever they wanted to do as far as their chamber music, or if they were gonna play for someone, or if they wanted to audition — lots of them wanted to audition for the, like, the ‘Manhattan… Metropolitan-Whatever Symphony…’ I did have some young kids. I don’t remember them. I do, like I said, remember the two famous ones from Atlanta — Rachel Ciraldo and Erin Goldman — and they really remember my teaching [laughs]. They might remember.

HW: [Laughs]. Okay.

AP: So. I don’t know, I was twenty-eight at that point, twenty-seven. You know, just cuttin’ my teeth, and then Kennesaw State hired me.

HW: Mmhmm.

AP: And then I taught Barbie Riskin, and Tammy Evans, and… Oh my gosh. And then, I left. I took Barbie with me. And Barbie’s in the Fife and Drum Corps in Washington D.C.
HW: Oh, okay!

AP: So, she’s a Blue Flute! She’s an original Blue Flute from Kennesaw State!

HW: Wow.


HW: Okay, so you had this, this five-part lesson that worked out pretty well from the very beginning, right?

AP: I still stick to it, pretty much, you know that.

HW: Yeah. Yeah!

AP: You've had all my lessons.

HW: I wonder if there was anything when you think back to when you were first starting that you didn’t do that well, that you learned as you went…

AP: Communicating how I do what I do. That was super hard.

HW: Mmhmm. Okay.

AP: Without playing. Right?

HW: Yeah, because —

AP: You know, I know a lot of teachers would say just [sings] ‘Da da da da da… Just play like that!’

HW: Right. But, actually articulating how, because you can’t see what’s going on in the mouth, and everything.

AP: Yeah, and they’d say, ‘How do you do that?’ And I’d go, ‘I don’t know. I just thought of it.’

HW: [Laughs].

AP: [Laughs]. ‘That’s what I do!’ And then, now, I have to go, ‘Okay.’ And that’s where I started to do the Jerry Schwiebert kind of teaching. Where I got into the vocabulary of, ‘put yourself in the meadow,’ ‘put yourself in the heat,’ ‘do you feel your skin clammy?’ ‘are you breathing the air hot or cold?’ You know. The Jerry Schwiebert thing.
HW: Mhmm.

AP: That totally shifted me, the Anatomy of Sound teaching. So.

HW: Thinking back to your schooling at Juilliard…

AP: Yeah.

HW: …how did your college education prepare you for teaching college? What about classes or lessons…

AP: It didn’t. [Laughs].

HW: Okay.

AP: [Laughs].

HW: So, so you had to learn as you began teaching.

AP: It’s interesting, the fact that I’m taught the way I was taught, so, in a way, I had nothing to learn, I just regurgitated it. There was no class to give me the history of my teaching. Fortunately, I’m able to articulate what it is that I did, and maybe, I’d create a class on it, but… If you’ve noticed, I don’t have a pedagogy class, I don’t have a rep. class. I teach it in the lessons.

HW: Yeah.

AP: I teach it in the studio classes. And if you walk out knowing what you’re supposed to know, you don’t need a class for this.

HW: Mmhmm.

AP: It’s a life-learned thing. Go out and live your life and listen a lot. And, that’s your school. Life is your school. There’s no class, I think, to be a great professor… at all. You have to be empathetic. You have to get down to work and understand it’s all about the student.

HW: So, why did you become a college flute professor?

AP: Because I wanted to get back to a solo career. Peter Witte was standing there at Kennesaw State University, and he’s the dean of, like, Pacific University. And, remember, he was dean of UMKC.

HW: Mmhmm. Yeah.

AP: And now he’s the president of, like, many colleges, right? He’s got this super eagle
eye view, but, at the time, he was just my buddy, Peter. And he handed me this piece of paper. ‘Here, are you gonna apply for this?’ and I said, ‘Why would I wanna do that?’ and he said, ‘Because. They love when you go out and say, “Michigan,” and I thought you wanted to do your solo career,’ ‘Cause I was telling everybody in Atlanta who would listen, ‘I’m a soloist. I’m really nervous when I play Brahms.’

**HW:** [Laughs].

**AP:** ‘Let’s do a chamber group!’ We had the Atlanta Winds for many years. I was in the Atlanta Chamber Players, we were making CDs. I was trying to play as many concertos as I possibly could. And I was doing competitions and I decided to go to Japan and that changed my life. And then, guess what I did. I came back and sat in the orchestra and did nothing. And about, let’s see… four, five, six, seven, eight, nine… six years after Kobe, I woke up and said, ‘Maybe somebody else might want what I have to offer.’ My heart wasn’t singing. And Peter Witte was the oracle. He was the person who said, ‘You should try for this.’ And guess what, Hannah, I called Don Sinta’s number and Don Sinta answered the phone.

**HW:** [Laughs].

**AP:** Like, Don Sinta never answered the phone. And, all these things went right. Like, we just fell in love, Michigan and I, and it was just such a great process for them to welcome me in my space as a soloist. Not as the former member of the ASO who was tired. So, in my interview, he said — and are you ready for these great words? And I ask them all the time — ‘What irons do you have in the fire?’ Right?

**HW:** [Laughs]. Yeah.

**AP:** What a great interview question! ‘Well, lemme tell ya! So, there’s this guy, Sigfrid Karg-Elert and I’ve been playing him for so long, and people have recorded him, but nobody knows how to play it.’ And then that man started smiling, and in the interview, he did this, he raised his hand like this and said, ‘Your star is rising.’ And I liked that, you know. And it was such a great transition. So, it wasn’t the fact that I was wanting to be a professor. I’m a soloist with a very serious teaching job. And I happen to have a vocabulary for teaching. But if you’ve ever seen me shine my brightest, it’s in a premiere. It’s collaborating with a pianist. It’s standing there with my colleagues. And, no offense, the lessons are fabulous and super inspiring, and I am a better person from knowing the hundreds of you that have passed by me, but, I’m telling you, I can remember every single concert I’ve ever played. Because that’s my whole heart and soul. And that’s what my mummy trained me to do, right? [Laughs]. Right?

**HW:** [Laughs]. Yeah.

**AP:** Right? She wouldn’t say, ‘When that student shows up,’ she’d say, ‘When you’re having lunch with the queen, this is how you’re supposed to do it,’ so. [Laughs].
**HW**: [Laughs].

**AP**: I’ll let you know when that happens. Should be soon [laughs].

**HW**: Should be soon, yeah. So, what does what does all of that performing experience with the Atlanta Chamber Winds and the Atlanta Symphony and the concerti all over the world… what does that experience bring to the lessons that you have with your students?

**AP**: A thirst and a hunger. Because I’m always redefining and I’m always reinventing and I’m always responding. And I’m always current. And I’m trying to keep up with the trends. But, I’m on stage and I’m working and I’m bringing back to them a freshness, I believe. You know, it’s a regeneration. if I just stay in the studio to teach, I’m not doing them a favor.

**HW**: Mmhmm.

**AP**: So, let me give you another example. In 2006, I decided — because I had heard through word-of-mouth that someone was already gonna win the audition — I decided to take that specific orchestra’s audition. And, that person — just fast-forward — that person did win the job. So, I used that system, paid my $100, got invited [laughs] to do a major orchestra audition. I did not want to leave the University of Michigan. I wanted to use [laughs] an orchestra to see how far I could get, and I got really far. I got through to the final nine, and they chose the person. And I, you know, didn’t screw up badly. And I knew what I practiced, and I told the studio — when I got back — how I practiced, which, if you’d like to know, in a nutshell: all my scales every single day up to E. And back down. Yeah, pretty much not —

**HW**: [Laughs]. I believe you.

**AP**: …not much needed. [Laughs]. Not much else is needed at my level of auditioning. So, I just need to have a good day, I need my rest, I need my attitude. And, let me tell you, that hall. I would kill to play in that hall. And, there I was. No wonder I kept making it through the rounds, because I had all this stuff from memory, you know, and I was in this hall. I was like, ‘Oh my God! I’m in this hall!’

**HW**: Mmhmm.

**AP**: That’s what jazzes me the most in life is a great hall, you know, great instrument…Great audience, great music. Yeah. So, it wasn’t about the outcome of the audition, it was, ‘Can I go back to my students and play these excerpts and say, “I got down to the final nine of a top ten orchestra?”’

**HW**: Mmhmm. And practice what you preach.

**AP**: Yep.
HW: Yes.

AP: [Laughs]. Oh, yeah. And keep refreshed and regenerated. It’s not enough to just go around and do teaching. That’s not what I need.

HW: Mmhmm. Mmhmm. Yeah, I get it. I’d like to know, what do you think is your role in your lessons with college students?

AP: As a mentor. And a mentor is what we just talked about briefly. Someone who can go out and come back and be an example.

HW: Mmhmm.

AP: Someone who can, when they walk in the door, ask them, ‘How are you and are you in a condition to do what we’re about to do?’

HW: Mmhmm.

AP: ‘Do you have the life skills — do you know how to eat? Do you know how to shop for food?’ You know? I’m all about taking them down to Bob Sparrow’s and showing them how to buy protein or what protein actually looks like. That kind of teaching, I think, is a holistic approach.

HW: Yeah. The whole person.

AP: I mean, yeah. If you’re gonna miss the F# all the time, that’s not on me. [Laughs]. If you’re not gonna refuse to get outside your mezzo forte box, then you’re gonna have to just have a come-to-Jesus with yourself. But, if there are things that you don’t know, I’m happy to tell you. I’m happy to tell you. If there’s things your mom didn't tell you… But, there are points at which I’ve said, ‘And now, I will defer to your mom,’ and they go, ‘Okay!’ [Laughs].

HW: [Laughs].

AP: [Laughs]. And then I move on.

HW: Mmhmm.

AP: So, I think humor is also really important.

HW: Yeah. Mmhmm.

AP: To bring to a lesson. But my role is a mentor. Not mom, and not best friend. But you always know, if the personal life is that profound, then I’m happy to be invited into it. But if it’s not profound, then I don’t need to know.
HW: Yeah, totally. Can you describe your teaching style in one sentence?

AP: [Silence].

HW: [Laughs]. Or two?

AP: No. [Laughs].

HW: Okay, what about this one? What’s the most important thing you communicate to your students?

AP: Love. Respect for one another as flutists. If you haven’t noticed.

HW: You mentioned before that the lessons area all about the student. And I heard you even use the word ‘empathetic.’ So, I’m wondering, can you put into words, what value does empathy have in teaching?

AP: Music. What value does empathy have in teaching music?


AP: Because… the value of empathy is only if you’ve been through it.

HW: Mmhmm.

AP: Now, ‘empathetic’ means, ‘I’ve been through it, I might know how you’re feeling.’ And so, the two hearts can be at the same level, the same tempo. We’re gonna meet in the middle of where we are to work on the music. We’re gonna make you, hopefully, a better musician, a better artist, a better communicator — a better flutist, yes — but, I think the whole role of empathy is to make sure that it’s driven from the dynamic of respect and love. For instance, I have a neutral gender. She wants to be considered a ‘he.’ And I’m going to have to learn a new vocabulary. I’m even discussing from one of my students to my priest. I said, ‘How is the vestry,’ — because I’m on the vestry — ‘How is the vestry going to adopt a new vocabulary?’ And he said, ‘It’s not coming from on high yet, I think it’s coming from the grassroots effort.’ So, can I be empathetic to him when he walks through the door as a new person? Because the audition held a female and this new lesson will hold a male.

HW: Mmhmm.

AP: So, that is a change that I have to make. Empathetically. Even though I haven’t been there, I can understand that, as a transitioning human. The only thing constant, Hannah, is change.

HW: Mmhmm.
AP: So, change is happening all the time, and so, if I can handle her walking in the door as a changed person — him — *him* walking through the door as a changed person — I’m ready.

HW: Yeah.

AP: If I make the lesson about me, and I need that Andersen étude, it’s not gonna work.

HW: Right, and I think it’s powerful that the vocabulary change sort of mirrors what that person is experiencing. Because, as you said, you have not been through that but the very least you can do is to reflect that and honor that in the way that you address that person.

AP: And not judge.

HW: Exactly, yeah.

AP: Because I know, some others will. So, I had a ‘they’ this summer at MPulse. This girl lit up the room when she smiled. And I screwed it up three times that week [laughs], I said, ‘Wasn’t she good? Oh!’ [Laughs]. But, she wrote me a thank you note. *They* wrote me a thank you note. And was just so big-hearted.

HW: Mmhmm.

AP: So, I was like, ‘Okay, I screwed up, but I think I’ll be okay.’ So, I know I’m shifting right now in my vocabulary and in my respect.

HW: Mmhmm.

AP: It’s gonna be a lot.

HW: Mmhmm.

HW: Yeah, but if you’re honest with yourself and wanting to be better and to do better and to learn more, you know, where can you go wrong?

AP: So, at my age, I’m understanding that I am doing the best that I can.

HW: Yeah. Yeah, and you’re not afraid to say, ‘I’m sorry, I messed up.’ Or, ‘I’m sorry. My bad.’

AP: Yep, and I’m not ready to run away from it.

HW: Right. Yeah. Yeah, I love that. So, how might your students describe you?

AP: I have no idea. I actually don’t even think about it.
HW: Okay.

AP: I honestly don’t even think about. [Laughs]. Oh gosh… I suppose, perhaps, I should?

HW: No, no, that’s okay!

AP: The reviews never tended to come past me in the form of needing to change a whole lot. As I changed and matured, the student, kinda went with me, so, yes, maybe I had some bad reviews in the beginning based maybe on getting my feet wet, so I learned to look past — no offense, students, but — I’m learning to look past what people think of me.

HW: Mmhm.

AP: And if it’s that bad, you need to come to me.

HW: Yeah.

AP: And tell me if it’s that bad. And then, oh my gosh, I would change in a heartbeat, and, I mean, you know me personally, for me to say that.

HW: Yeah.

AP: But, if I started to really think about what countless of students thought. I think I’d get hung up on the wrong thing. You know how we can go down the wrong path?

HW: Mmhmm. Yeah.

AP: Yeah. So, my mental path is: I hope that people were challenged. I hope they had laughter and I hope they keep back in touch with me. And I wish them love. And you don’t need to go off and play the flute. So, it’s not that I don’t care. What’s a good way to put it? I don’t consider it.

HW: Okay. Is it the same with colleagues and family? Considering how they view you, or concerning yourself, or wondering —

AP: Of course, when you’re talking about family, of course you wanna be someone who’s great to live with. Someone who’s compassionate and easy going and knows your flaws and sees your warts and loves you anyway. Colleagues hold a very unique position in your life because you have to watch what you say. So, for that, I would say, I need to consider what they’re thinking of me. And, I need to also to clarify: so, I’m fortunate enough to work with people that, if I have an issue, I can talk to them and they can talk to me, so there’s transparency, for sure. But if I were to worry about every ‘rate my professor’ comment or every comment throughout my review process, it would be
different, so I’d maybe say it’s a tiered level. that’s a whole interesting concept to talk about.

HW: Yeah.

AP: It’s a perception versus reality, it’s, you know, ‘Do I care what people think of me or not?’ People get really consumed —

HW: Yeah. Yeah.

AP: …with what others think about them.

AP: Just a little too much. [Laughs].

HW: Yeah. Okay.

AP: But if my son Jake was running around hating me, that’d be a problem, right? [Laughs].

HW: Yes! That matters. That matters. [laughs]. You mentioned this a little bit before when you were talking about, you know, ‘You gotta live your life, you gotta know how to eat right and how to shop for groceries,’ and that kind of thing. So, can you tell me, what are the non-music areas of your life which inform your teaching?

AP: The non-music part of my life. Training with a personal trainer informs my teaching in such a major way, because [laughs] we’re all the same underneath.

HW: Right, right.

AP: No matter our weight or our height…

HW: Mmhmm.

AP: We are all the same underneath. So, if I’m more informed about the wrists, the hands, the shoulders, the face, the whole cardio system, the better I can inform others.

HW: Mmhmm.

AP: My nutritionist. That’s another great doctor in my life. She’s very light and says things like, ‘Well, if you’d like to try on keeping on doing this wrong thing… that’s fine.’

HW: It’s the options again like you said with —

AP: Yes! [Laughs]. ‘But, if you cut out the oatmeal, you’re gonna feel a lot better.’ And I’m, like, so much lighter from no oatmeal, it’s just the silliest thing. So, nutrition, and
Larry, training. He’s like a teacher. It’s like a training session. Have you ever gone with me?

HW: No, I haven’t.

AP: Oh, please come with me sometime.

HW: I definitely have heard a lot about him.

AP: Merryl’s been. Erika’s been. He has names for all of you. [Laughs].

HW: That’s awesome.

AP: So, you gotta come visit.

HW: Okay!

AP: I would say small businesses inform my teaching from a perspective that I don’t live in a silo and that I can meet other people outside of music and not be a flutist. I can just cultivate Amy Porter the woman.

HW: Mmhmm.

AP: And have friends outside of music. That’s really important, I think, for me now. I like making women feel beautiful, and I have a bigger heart. I take my big heart lessons and I put ‘em into my teaching.

HW: [Laughs]. That’s great. Well, speaking of making people feel beautiful, this is kind of switching gears a little bit to talk about praise and encouragement. What are your thoughts on praising students in lessons?

AP: I think it’s important to be honest when they’ve succeeded. Samuel Baron said, ‘If you can do it right once, you can do it right again.’ So, they do it right once, I praise them. And I’ve had my adult students, when I’ve praised them, say, ‘Amy you’re lying.’ And I said, ‘No, you pay me too much money to lie.’

HW: [Laughs].

AP: [Laughs]. ‘I’m just merely telling you, it was better than the last time you did it.’ So, I’m also one to say, ‘Well, that wasn’t the most beautiful thing in the world… let’s work on that.’ So, I really like to kind of always teach through encouragement and always teach through, ‘this is better,’ ‘this is better,’ ‘this is better.’ I mean, why would you wanna feel cut down all the time? Now, there have been moments where a student’s said, ‘Be really, really hard on me.’ I’ll never forget. I don’t know, you might have been there when Seth Morris said that to me. Were you there with Seth at all?
HW: No, but are you gonna talk about the time that he played Carmen?

AP: Yeah. So, I mean, I could do that. I could do that. But, you know what good is. I mean, that’s good, but I had to do that in front of people. Just do that to yourself. I’m working on bigger concepts. So, yes, encouragement has to be there. Let me tell you… Did I ever tell you about Charles Delaney, ‘thou shalt not pass’?

HW: No.

AP: TSNP. So, at Florida State, if you played your Andersen étude and you made one wrong note, thou shalt not pass. You had to go back the next week and play it again. If you made one wrong note that second week, thou shalt not pass. You’d go back and do it a third week. So, that’s one way to do it.

HW: That’s one way.

AP: Or, there’s a way of understanding through encouragement that the student could actually get through that whole étude through so many different exercises. I like to teach with exercises. And when you get an exercise out for a certain passage rather than pushing and demeaning down the person and demeaning, you know, their, ‘you didn’t work hard enough,’ you give them an exercise to inspire the problem — and what the problem is — and inspire them out of the problem.

HW: Mmhmm. Yeah, and help motivate them so they’re not —

AP: Energy out of the problem. Yes. You don’t smoosh them down. So, you know, they’re stuck in the problem all the time.

HW: What is the last analogy you remember using in a lesson?

AP: Oh, I have some great ones. ‘The Anatomy of Sound’ was my most famous one.

HW: Mmhmm.

AP: But, I don’t know. I don’t know, I’d have to think about it.

HW: Think about it, like —

AP: Really, just comedic. They’re just comedic.

HW: Yeah.

AP: I was teaching A seventy-five-year old woman in my church, and I said something that really helped her, and I’m not remembering what it is but let me continue down my path, and if I remember it, I’ll tell you.
**HW:** Okay. Okay.

**AP:** Yeah, I teach a lot of adults. You know.

**HW:** And yeah, the way that we address adults who are in a totally different place in their lives is very different than, you know, from a beginning college student.

**AP:** You know, though, half the time they pick up the flute, they become that college student all over again. They have the same, ‘I can’t play. I’m no good.’ ‘Yeah, yeah.’ So, we have to get them out of that. Yeah. And, like I said, ‘You’re paying me too much money to lie.’

**HW:** Right. Right, so you gotta be honest. How do you know when to interrupt a student while they’re playing?

**AP:** Oh, I interrupt them the moment it happens. So, if I’m working with a keyboardist, or there’s a whole thing, then I’ll start taking notes. After three or four issues, I’m gonna say, ‘Stop!’ And we’re gonna go back. Because it’s worth it to not get too far in. And then — you know this — after senior year almost, I can sit back and drink my coffee and stop interrupting. But I’m gonna interrupt the moment there’s an issue. There’s an issue, you have to stop them.

**HW:** Are there any words you completely avoid in lessons?

**AP:** [Laughs]. Yeah, I kind of. My friend Mark Weiger, remember him? Remember how creative he got without cursing? Do you ever remember that?

**HW:** Yeah.

**AP:** ‘Snickerdoodle.’ [Laughs]. I’m like, ‘What?’ [laughs]. ‘Anything you don’t say in a lesson?’ There are so many things I could say right now.

**HW:** Yeah, okay, so, like, definitely no profanity.

**AP:** Yeah and kind of along the lines of current news. The student just wants their music teacher to be their music teacher.

**HW:** Yeah.

**AP:** Just stick to the musical fact. And, if I’m gonna tell a story about myself — and I usually start with a story — I go, ‘Hey!’ And then I tell the whole story. My student Ayana was trained from fourteen years old, and every single lesson, she heard a story. And she came back and told me that. She didn’t talk, either. So, I would have to just talk to her. That’s the other thing about students who are just shy — you just talk — like, that’s my empathy. So, teaching the music and me being the music teacher is the whole premise, so there can’t be any personalized threats.
HW: Yeah.

AP: No threats from the music teacher. Now, I said to the mom, or her, ‘Could we have a different dress next time for the competition?’ Or, you know, that’s a personal thing. Or, here’s one thing I do say, ‘Everybody get on a treadmill.’ Now that could be taken as, ‘Oh, she thinks I’m overweight.’ No. We’re actually talking about a physical endeavor here. We need some cardiovascular health and so you’re gonna have to get on a treadmill. So, yes, I will talk about their body in its capacity for expression, but that’s it. Not as a personal tool for my own goals. So, oh my gosh. I think that’s super important. But the poor girls and boys, they just want their music teacher to be their music teacher.

HW: Right. Right.

AP: You know?

HW: So, then, when they do get upset or overwhelmed in a lesson, how do you know what to say?

AP: I ask them to go to the ladies’ room. Because they know what to say to themselves. Or, I immediately ask them, I say, ‘Why don’t we go to the ladies’ room and, when you come back, you can let me know what we’re doing.’ And so, they go wash their face, they blow their nose, do whatever they need to do. And, any number of scenarios, you know, could happen. So, they come back, ‘Thank you so much,’ start playing. Come back, make an admission and say, ‘I’m going through a lot,’ and they can’t play, and I’ll say, ‘Hey. Let’s quit, then.’ Like I said, when they walk through that door, I need them to be excellent, and if they’re not excellent, then we can’t work. And it’s gonna happen. It’s gonna happen this year. Gonna happen this year. I’m gonna wonder. And here’s the other thing: I’m so clueless sometimes, they can be crying, and I don’t know it. And then I go, ‘Oh! Oh goodness! I’m sorry!’ And that’s when I say, ‘Here, lemme take your flute. Go ahead and go to the ladies’ room and come back and tell me what’s going on.’ And that works every time. Giving someone their space first. Instead of going right in there and demanding an answer. They gotta go away and collect themself. So, do I, I’m like, ‘Okay, what did I say? What do I need to amend?’

HW: Yeah.

AP: And I kinda will make it known. Always. That I’m gonna screw up, you guys. And I have no agenda and I have no favorites. And you’re all the same. I love all of you individually. And you’re all here to help me, by the way.

HW: Yeah.

AP: So, I think if they think it’s a team effort too, that they have to help this old woman get into the future. When a student feels part of a team, it works.
HW: Mmhmm. I love that you said, ‘Hey, I’m gonna screw up.’ You know, just being totally honest about your humanity and all that. I’m wondering, have you ever apologized to a student?

AP: I’ve never had to. I’ve cried one time with a student. And it was over that whole thing of, ‘But you’re not telling me that I’m bad.’

HW: Mmhmm.

AP: ‘But, you’re not telling me that I’m bad. You’re not telling me enough. You’re letting me play too long. There must be something wrong.’ And I threw my hand down on the desk and I said, ‘I’m gonna stop you when something’s wrong, don’t tell me how to teach you. You are fine. You don’t believe me?’ You know? ‘C’mon, okay, well, start at this first note.’ You know. She played it. ‘Yes, that’s how it goes, now, let’s play the second note,’ She played the second note, I said, ‘Yes that’s how it goes.’ I think it was, like, Sequenza. Third note, ‘Yes, that’s how…’ You see, I have to kind of… right? And I started crying, like, and I was like, ‘Why don’t you believe me when I tell you this is excellent, and this is how it goes and this is going to get you somewhere in your career if you play this piece this way. I’m not lying.’ I think that I never had to apologize. I would never apologize for that, you know? I didn’t say, ‘Gosh darnit! Why can’t you believe me?! When I tell you you’re good!’ That’s really my biggest, biggest fight with people. They think they suck.

HW: [Laughs].

AP: They think they stink! And they got in here, they’re amazing.

HW: Yeah, and different people have different needs, as far as what encourages them, I guess, right? In this case, maybe this student had a unique, kind of hunger for a unique kind of feedback or something.

AP: Yes. Now here’s one thing. Early on, a student sat down — can you believe this? — and said, ‘Okay. Now this is how my teacher taught, and this is how you’re teaching.’ Now, that taught me a lot. Number one, that she had this attitude. But the second thing was that I needed to solidify my teaching, and not the teaching of that other teacher.

HW: Yeah.

AP: So, I said, ‘Okay. I’ll show you the difference between us.’ And that’s when I came up with the fifty minute per hour practice. Because the girl didn’t know how to practice. So, does that answer your question?

HW: Yeah. Yeah. Okay. What is difficult to put into words when it comes to teaching flute? What physical skills or, you know invisible processes —

AP: Airspeed.
HW: Yeah.

AP: Vibrato speed. I think, intensities.

HW: Mmhmm. So —

AP: Intensities of, like, tension, vibrato speeds, dynamics, contrasts. I think that’s the hardest for somebody to get, because, who am I to say to someone they’re not feeling it? Again, teaching Ayana from age fourteen. Oh, even Mimi Tachouet, she was seventeen. They were turning these phrases that were stunningly beautiful. And then the rest was like, Ooh boy.’ So, I knew I had to say, ‘Crescendo to that note, and then vibrate, and then pull away.’ Instead of, ‘Go over the top of that phrase.’

HW: Yeah.

AP: See, the two are different. They do mean the same thing. And I can’t ever say, and nor will I ever say, ‘You’re not feeling it! You’re just not feeling it!’

HW: So, when you feel like they may not be feeling it, what can you say to help draw them or motivate them?

AP: It’s the Anatomy of Sound. This diaphragmatic tendon from where they speak. Then, we talk about speaking in plays and delivering as an artist instead of just a conversation. So, that’s where they get into it. They get into that place of, ‘Where are we when we play music? Are we from a conversational head, a judgmental head? Or, are we actually from this place that we have no vocabulary for?’ You’re from a beautiful spirit place. You know?

HW: Mmhmm. Yeah.

AP: You know?

HW: Mmhmm.

AP: To connect them into their spirit place is my job. So, you know, we listen to the Native American Indian music from Kokopelli to get them into their spiritual place. Not my spiritual place. We listen to the Marais for the viola de gamba string, so that they can get their own air speed for the string. Now, I do blow on the hand from time to time. And then they blow on their hand, and I blow on their hand, and I say, ‘What’s the difference?’ and they say, ‘Whoa.’ I’ve got everything from, ‘Yours is more concentrated,’ to ‘Yours is wider,’ to ‘Yours is stronger,’ to ‘Yours is fuller.’ So, I use definite physical things. But I definitely think the intensities are the hardest things to teach.
HW: Okay, so. When you were learning your range of intensities, back when you were a young student, can you remember the ways that your teachers addressed that with you?

AP: Well, remember the color story?

HW: Yeah. Mmhmm.

AP: How we colored? Another one was to pick the Tabuteau numbers, one through ten. The Paula Robison thing where you put words to it. So, you can find devices, other devices to get you back there.

HW: Yeah. You talked about keeping somewhat of a boundary and remaining strictly the music teacher, which is what the student needs in the lesson, but I’m wondering if you ever share stories from your life as teaching tools, to meet someone in the place where they are?

AP: I think as my teaching tool, it would help the person know where I am in my life, so, if I was going through the divorce, If I was going through the malady of anything — the wedding — I think that informs the student of where my headspace is also. But, hopefully, I wouldn’t become a burden with that. So, again, it’s a two-way street. The student, would kinda wanna know where my headspace is, I’m not the same every day.

HW: Mmhmm.

AP: I’m trying to be strong. And so, just to solidify that, I get my schedule around that whole attitude. So, I wake up and I address myself first, I take care of myself first. No one gets me until I’m strong enough to handle that person.

HW: Yeah.

AP: So, if I do tell a story. It’s, ‘Oh, my dog did this.’ Or, ‘My husband and I are gonna go here.’ And if it’s a relevant story to what they’re going through, I will absolutely share my story. So, yeah. When necessary.

HW: Okay. Let’s see. When was the last time that you learned something new from watching another teacher teaching?

AP: Concertmaster at Brevard this summer. They drive the orchestra. [Laughs]. I learned so much about orchestral playing being chamber music more than anything, this summer. I took a class in orchestra this summer. I knew all the rep. I knew how to do it. I knew everything, but the communication skill was tremendous. I was able to kind of lead a section without over-leading, watching the concertmasters lead a section. And then, we could gift the guy up on the podium with orchestral playing. So, for me, it was that symbiotic relationship with orchestral playing, because, again, I was — granted, it was only six concerts — but they were magical. I’m glad I didn’t have more than six concerts. [Laughs].
HW: That sounds gratifying! Playing those concerts and kind of reframing it like chamber music rather than orchestral. Yeah.

AP: ‘Oh my gosh! That person thinks I’m out of tune.’ And… you know?

HW: What do you think people learn when they watch you playing in orchestra?

AP: Well, one kid told me — the fourteen-year-old — he realized that he didn’t need to move so much. And then the twenty-two year-old realized she could breathe while watching me. Like, not by [breathes loudly] breathing — but just breathe the way I breathe, so, I think that they learn from me how to play seated, you know, versus standing. And that’s a big deal. They watch me like a hawk. Like that. I don’t think it’s orchestral playing. Well, actually what they did say, it’s really cute. ‘You play like you!’

HW: [Laughs].

AP: But, you can’t tell, like, I would never go overboard with the vibrato or anything.

HW: Yeah.

AP: You know what I mean? I would never. I don’t think you play differently.

HW: Yeah. Well, yeah, I like that. You play like you, and I think you teach your students to play like them.

AP: That’s right, I hope I do.

HW: Well, speaking to that individuality of each student, would you say you treat all your students the same?

AP: Oh my gosh, yes. I hope I do, yes. I hope I do. I treat them as humans. I don’t say, ‘I’m going to teach three people.’ I say, ‘Bye, I’m teaching Maguette and Neil.’ Whatever their name is that day.

HW: Okay.

AP: I may not seem like I’m touchy feely if my student is needing me and not telling me, and I’m not paying enough attention. They certainly can say, ‘Oh, she’s her pet!’ Well, my question to the student is, ‘Did you let me know you were in need of me?’

HW: Mmhmm. So, do you find that you need to change how you speak to certain students?

AP: No.
HW: Okay. What do your —

AP: No. I remember this, too, from a student who wouldn’t speak. And she played piano, too, and the teacher would say, ‘She doesn’t talk!’ and I’d say, ‘Teach anyway.’ You teach these people anyway. You teach them if they’re not practicing. You teach them if they’re not doing well. You just keep teaching them, because later, the lesson will take shape. So, I’m not gonna change. I mean, empathy is a form of that compassion. To be able to be flexible in teaching, but I’m not changing my teaching style, is that your question?

HW: Yeah. So, I’m wondering if it morphs from student to student to student?

AP: No. You all get the same information. That’s why I make the DVDs [laughs].

HW: [Laughs]. That’s awesome. So, what what are the Porterisms? What do your students hear you say in lessons?

AP: Okay. Amy Porterisms. ‘Intonation is not an opinion. Intonation is not an option.’ ‘Just play in tune and in time, and you’ll win an audition.’

HW: [Laughs].

AP: ‘Show up, do your job, and leave’.

HW: Mmhmm.

AP: And those three things are very difficult. If I remember more, I’ll jot them down and then send them to you.

HW: Yeah, send them to me. It’s okay. No, those are good. That wraps up all my premeditated questions.

AP: Really?

HW: Yeah! Is there anything else that you can think of that you were wishing I’d ask you about?

AP: Oh!

HW: Did you remember the thing that you were teaching that student about, that she said, ‘Oh you helped me so much!’ And you said, ‘Oh, I can’t remember, but maybe later,’ and —

AP: Oh yeah, the seventy-five-year old. Oh. Okay. So. It’s just to teach the flute like it’s an instrument of physics instead of that it’s a personal attachment. So, the fact that it’s open holes and you have to get air under open holes. You just talk speed and physics. It’s
reduced a lot of my students’ anxiety to just put it, ‘Okay, well you’re not sending enough air down the tube.’ Not, ‘You don’t have a low register,’ Well, physics is involved. So, once I taught from a line of physics, this woman got it much better between her delivery of air into this instrument of physics.

HW: Yeah.

AP: I always say, ‘You can hold a flute up in a tornado and it won’t play.’

HW: [Laughs].

AP: ‘You are the instrument. This is the instrument and that’s your voice.’ That’s an Amyism right there. That’s the biggest one. ‘The body is the instrument.’ And, ‘The flute is your voice.’

HW: That’s good. That’s a good Amyism. That’s beautiful. I think that’s a great place to end.
Jim Walker

In-Person Interview Transcript: 54 minutes

Friday, August 10
Hyatt Regency, Orlando, FL

Hannah Weiss (HW): So, tell me about your first flute teacher.

Jim Walker (JW): My first flute teacher was my dad. I was ten years old in the fourth grade. My dad, Bob, was a jazz clarinet sax player, music ed. degree. At that time was working at a farm implement store. Within a year or so he became the band director at the rival high school. And then, ultimately, he became my band director, so he was my first flute teacher and actually my only real flute teacher pretty much through high school, although I did have two summers with Sarah Fouse at the University of Kentucky Institute in the tenth and eleventh grade summers.

HW: Hm. Okay. Were there some other teachers during those years who influenced you?

JW: Yeah, Sarah Fouse. That was pretty much it. That’s all I had.

HW: Great. Can you tell me what you remember about their use of words?

JW: No. I mean, I can tell you, there was nothing significant. I would say this: my dad was always very, very clear, especially as a band director to all the kids. His reputation was that he didn’t mince words. He was never really verbally, like, strong, but he was very cut to the chase, like, ‘This sounds terrible,’ ‘Your rhythm is not good,’ ‘You’re out of tune.’ I would say that the words that both he and Miss Fouse used never were painful, but they were very truthful, and, to that degree, shocking sometimes.

HW: Hm. I see.

JW: Throughout my whole life, I never had any teacher who was verbally at all abusive or even on the border of unkind. Some of the things were not encouraging. But I never really had anyone who used anything that hurt me.

HW: Okay. How was the language that you grew up with? How did that influence your teaching?

JW: Oh, it was very, very civil. No swearing in my household. Not by rule, this was Western Kentucky, very conservative, kind of WASPish community. And kids swore. But, in our whole family clan, there was never any swearing. The downside was that the verbal communication was very much always nice and not very honest and communicative. So, the words that I grew up with were always very docile. Very kind and very nice. I mean, if I had to apply the philosophy that I grew up with it would be, you know, “Don’t say anything bad about anybody. Don’t use bad words.”
HW: What was it like studying with your college flute teacher?

JW: More or less the same. My college flute teacher was Francis Fuge at University of Louisville. And he was another version of my dad, with just the narrow view of being a Classical flutist — principal flutist of the Louisville Orchestra. He had a decent pedigree from Cincinnati Conservatory. And he rarely if ever said anything that gave me pain. If I happened to have a bad day — a bad flute lesson — unprepared or having played a rock 'n roll gig the night before, I had no embouchure — he might laugh and say, ‘Well, sounds like you were playing the saxophone last night,’ but, never hurtful.

HW: Okay. What do you recall about your life during those college years. Did you ever feel the need to discuss your own personal life with your teacher?

JW: You have to understand, I mean, it’s a different day and time. And that wasn’t even an option that I thought about. I was pretty carefree and having a great time in college, and making some progress as a flutist, but not really dedicated to becoming a great Classical flutist. I was flirting with the idea of being a woodwind doubler or a jazzer, and I didn’t really shift into kind of straight Classical flute until maybe my sophomore year, but my personal life was pretty much completely separate from my life with him. I dated through college. I don’t recall him ever saying anything or even winking like, I don’t know, like, ‘You have a girlfriend?’ or anything like that. In that day and time… It’s quite different than my own teaching experience. I feel like in many, many, many of my situations, I’m a father figure, if not an uncle. And I try to keep an open atmosphere so if there is something wrong, let’s don’t bury it. If I can help you, I want to. But that was not at all what I experienced as a student.

HW: Okay. We’re gonna talk a little bit more about what you just mentioned, about being kind of like a father or an uncle figure. Can you tell me about when you first started teaching flute?

JW: I actually started teaching in college. There was a band director, it was a french horn player, a young guy, who had graduated from Louisville. And he arranged for me to actually teach some of the middle school, junior high school kids private flute lessons. So, I was doing some private teaching — flute and clarinet as a twenty, twenty-one-year old.

HW: What do you wish you could say to your young teaching self now?

JW: Not in any sort of arrogant way, I was a pretty good teacher. Because the role model that my dad had given me was just incredibly strong. He was way, way about the fundamentals. The downside — or let’s say, the flip-side — of that was that I really was not an expressive musician at all. I didn’t even begin to get the concept of how to phrase, how to do any of that stuff. I was a really good high school band flute player. I could play all the notes. Good sound, good intonation. But, making a phrase beautiful was absolutely something that was not on my radar. So as a teacher I was great with fundamentals. And
when you’re dealing with middle school kids, I mean that’s really what it’s all about. My first real experience teaching flute players came after I graduated and was in the West Point Band and I got the opportunity to teach some flute students at Vassar College. So that was the first time I really moved into that department. So, honestly, I was really a good fundamentals, basics kind of teacher as a college student. And then as I moved in, based on my lessons with Harold Bennett, whom I was studying with at the time when I was starting to do my flute teaching, I started moving into other territories.

**HW:** Why did you become a college flute professor?

**JW:** The first time I did it — then, and then when I was in the Pittsburgh Symphony — started when I was twenty-five — I wanted some extra income [laughs]. Having the legitimacy of being in the Symphony, the colleges: Ducquesne University, Carnegie Mellon, Chatham University, Carlow College, and University of Pittsburgh… I actually did some teaching at Pitt and at Duquesne and at Carnegie Mellon in the eight years that I was in Pittsburgh. It was pretty much that I liked to teach but I liked to teach because I liked to make a little extra money. And I did have quite a private studio over those eight years. Mostly high school students.

**HW:** Okay. Let’s talk a little bit about how that worked in tandem, your professional performing and teaching. What did the performing experience bring to the teaching?

**JW:** Being in a major symphony orchestra is like getting a super doctorate degree. Because you are around a core of people in the symphony — I would say 10-20% of the members of the symphony were absolutely extraordinary players. The strongest influence was in the guest artists who would come through and play with the orchestra, and to be in the environment, you know, as a twenty-six-year old with Isaac Stern, Rudolf Serkin — all the big-name people of those days — was an unbelievable influence on me. And I’d say, within the orchestra, there were probably ten to fifteen really remarkable musicians that, just being in their presence, you couldn’t help but learn.

**HW:** That’s amazing. What role does your own demonstration now play in your teaching?

**JW:** Less and less. As you get older, you’re not practicing — well, I’m not practicing as much — my skills diminish. And so as much as there are some things I feel like I can demonstrate well, there’s no reason for me to try to play something that a student can play better, and I’m real clear on that. I would say as of ten years ago, it became very obvious to me that some of my students could play things better than I could play at that point of my life. Maybe in my prime — maybe I was you know thirty-five to forty-five — maybe I was in that league. But, the level of flute playing is higher and higher. The only kind of things I will demonstrate still and probably even past the point where I’m not performing anymore will be alternate fingerings. Demonstrating how those can work. But in terms of playing with a beautiful sound and playing a beautiful melody, at this point, I don’t feel I’m capable of really demonstrating it the way that I hear it — the way it needs to happen. So, I think it’s really, really important to do it as long as you can. The
The disclaimer is this. At the Colburn School where I teach, there are two teachers. Yehuda Gilad, the clarinet teacher and Robert Lipsett, the violin teacher, are absolute legendary genius teachers. They don’t play for their students. They don’t demonstrate. So, it is possible. I used to think it was impossible. It is possible to be a great teacher and not demonstrate.

HW: So, would you describe then when you choose not to demonstrate — and you mentioned that you teach with a great deal of honesty — would it either be more like describing what it’s —

JW: Yes.

HW: …what it’s supposed to sound like, or —

JW: It would be describing, but also — I’m not a good singer, but, I can sing it.

HW: Mmhmm.

JW: And —

HW: Or coach them, instead of —

JW: Yes, yeah. And a lot of the things that I’m able to talk about and to hear and not demonstrate the way I want to are vibrato-related issues where… or what’s happened with me is that my vibrato slows down. I mean, when you get into your seventies, even before, sometimes, that mechanism slows down. And I, for some reason, can still kind of sing with a more spinning vibrato. And so, that’s the way I will do it. But, at this point, having taught at least fifty years, I know where I think something should happen in a phrase.

HW: Right, okay. So, how would you say your own college education prepared you for what you just described, you know, knowing how to teach and what way to teach?

JW: I would say my college experience probably had some effect but I can’t really draw any specific… it was a really comfortable experience flute-wise. I will say this: the strongest influence from my college days was the wind ensemble conductor. He was the principal trumpet player in the Louisville Orchestra, and he had an intensity about rhythm that I had never had since my dad, and that really, really affected me. To this day, I can hear that guy singing demonstrations. And that was really, really strong.

HW: It sounds like your immersion in performance was hugely influential in how you teach now.

JW: Absolutely. It really was. I think I’ve always been a good teacher. I know I’ve gotten better, year by year. But I think, maybe twenty years ago, I came to grips with the fact that I really am, by nature, a teacher. Both my parents were public school teachers,
and I kind of grew up with that mentality. And it’s very interesting, I have three children, and the youngest one is an incredible teacher. He is a bit of a musician. He’s a writer, he’s an incredible golfer. He is able to articulate how to do something and also to do it with compassion and with passion. So, I think some of us are really born to teach. And it gets cultivated. And I finally admitted that about myself. I would say, you know, probably until I was — see, I left the LA Phil when I was forty, and was doing studio work, and doing a lot of the Free Flight jazzy things along with some Classical chamber music — I pretty much thought of myself as 70% a performer, 30% a teacher. And, I’d say, by the time I was in my mid-forties, I was becoming more teacher-oriented. And then I left. I retired from the studios in 2010, and, I think, what would I have been, like, sixty-five… yeah. And, at that point, the percentage shifted a lot to probably 75 to 85% teaching.

HW: Mmhmm. You were talking about being articulate, and people who are articulate. Can you name someone else who you think is an extremely articulate teacher?

JW: In my experience, every teacher I worked with was pretty clear with their communication, but I don’t remember thinking, ‘Wow, that guy has a way with words.’ And I think the only female teacher I ever worked with was Sarah Fouse, and she was very clear, so, to that degree, I mean, they were all articulate. There was never any mystery about what was being said to me. But I think there’s some people who really have a way with words. I don’t consider myself necessarily ‘articulate.’ I think fairly clear. I’m 100% honest about what I hear. But, my son is absolutely, like, brilliantly articulate with words. I’m not bad with it, but, I don’t consider it my major strength as a teacher. My major strength as a teacher is my honesty and my compassion for the student.

HW: If you could, in one or two sentences… how might you describe your teaching style?

JW: Pretty much: honest, compassionate, insightful, and encouraging.

HW: How do you describe the boundary between you and your students?

JW: Well, my wife would say that I don’t put up the boundaries as much as I should because I’ll get a text at 11:00 at night. And I mean, she says, ‘Your students are your children.’ And, to that degree I would say it’s one step removed from my actual fathering of my children. But, I do care about the kids. And I definitely could separate more. I mean, most of my students call me, ‘Jim.’ That’s pretty unprecedented. I mean, you don’t call Trudy, ‘Trudy,’ probably, or do you?

HW: ‘Professor Trudy.’

JW: Yeah. And a lot of people completely disagree with that, but, that’s what we’ve always been comfortable with. It’s very interesting. Elizabeth Rowe was one of my
former students, and I think when she was thirty-five she said, ‘It’s so hard for me to call you ‘Jim.’’ But, she changed. She learned to call me ‘Jim.’ And, meanwhile, I never will forget, I had a student when I was first in the LA Philharmonic. A thirteen-year-old kid who called me ‘Jimmy.’ It was hilarious. ‘Hi, Jimmy, it’s Jacky’ [Laughs].

HW: [Laughs]. That’s funny, I was gonna say, ‘Are your students comfortable talking with you in lessons?’ Sounds like —

JW: Yeah.

HW: …some of them are.

JW: Yeah. Yeah, I think so, I don’t wanna dig. If I sense that something’s going on, I’ll try to make it clear that it’s an open forum for them… if there’s something they need to talk about. I definitely am very free in suggesting that counseling might be something to look into.

HW: You said your wife describes them as somewhat like your children. I’m wondering how would your students describe you?

JW: Probably as a father figure. As sometimes fun. Probably most of them would say that he’s a great teacher and I can talk to him. Not all father figures [laughs] have that characteristic.

HW: Yeah. Yeah, and I’m curious — and this is going a little bit into it, but — the way you just described how they might speak about you. How does that compare to how your colleagues or your family might describe you as a person?

JW: My wife describes me as the nicest guy in the world who drives her crazy.

HW: [Laughs]. That’s honest.

JW: Yeah. I’d say my colleagues describe me as a good person who’s really talented. At both schools that I teach at, I’m a little bit of a weirdo in that I do have the jazz side, and even though USC has a jazz component, I’m completely in the Classical division, and at Colburn, there’s nothing like that so my colleagues probably would describe me as a little bit of a jack-of-all trades who’s had a good career.

HW: You talked about being very honest yet compassionate in your teaching. Can you tell me what value does empathy have in teaching?

JW: Does what?

HW: What value does empathy have in teaching?

JW: Well I think it’s absolutely critical. I think, if one is, like, a brilliant technical teacher
from all of the technical aspects of flute including the technical part of being musical… if that’s your sole orientation and you keep a barrier so that nothing ever becomes personal or emotional, I think a person can learn to play pretty well. I think there’s gonna be something definitely seriously missing. I think a performer has to have empathy. You’ll never be able to play in tune if you actually don’t have empathy for an oboe player who can’t control the instrument.

HW: Yeah.

JW: And as a jazz player, you have to be incredibly empathetic to the struggles and the brilliance of the people you’re playing with.

HW: Mmhmm.

JW: And, as a teacher, I think it’s always important to assess the hour as you go into it. Like, ‘What is actually going on with this student that I know is going on that we’re not gonna talk about, but I have an understanding that, in fact, that’s in play here.’ So, I don’t wanna hit that hot button that just brings the tears rolling down. It’s not a word that I use very often, but I 100% espouse it.

HW: How do you know what to say when a student is upset or overwhelmed?

JW: Well, first of all, the Kleenex is always handy. And, I have to reassure them that it’s there because it gets used a lot. Not daily, but, in a course of a year of lessons, there are gonna be times, especially for a young person, especially an undergrad. What was the question?

HW: How do you know what to say when a student is upset or overwhelmed?

JW: I think you don’t just go by the book, you feel out the situation. I think a great therapist really has that empathy and that feeling of, ‘We definitely need to talk about something here that’s gonna be a little uncomfortable,’ or, ‘We don’t wanna go there.’ We all have baggage. Every student has got some baggage, some of which they don’t even know about, and sometimes, I’ve unearthed some of that inadvertently and that’s when it’s like, ‘You know what, I wish I were qualified to help you go through this. You need to be talking to a professional just to help you dig into something.’

HW: Have you ever apologized to a student?

JW: Probably, I don’t recall it. I’m sure. Yeah… I can’t think of anything specific, but I can imagine a scenario where I might have said something that triggered the tears. And I’ve said, ‘I’m sorry’ but, I actually can’t remember ever doing that. But, it seems like if that did occur, I’d be comfortable apologizing. I’m not Donald Trump.

HW: [Laughs]. How do you know when to interrupt a student when they’re playing?
JW: Oh, I don’t have any issues with that. An hour is a short time. In a masterclass I really have no problem stopping the minute I hear something needs to be addressed. Sometimes I will let a student, depending on the forum, play beyond where I need to be saying something. But, I don’t have any trouble. And, I will apologize. And actually, almost every master class I teach I give an apology at the beginning and say, ‘I’m sorry, you’re probably not gonna get to play the whole movement’ so, that’s my apology. But I’m hoping that over the course of this twenty minutes or in this one hour, I can address two or three things that really will have an impact on you rather than just a litany of, ‘Alright, thirty things to think about.’

HW: What are your thoughts on praising students?

JW: I am unabashedly a praisin’ kinda guy. If I hear a beautiful note, I’m gonna say, ‘That’s what I’m looking for.’ If I hear an out of tune note being played beautifully in tune, I’ll point that out. Because most of my teaching is based on finding problems and solving problems. I will have a student occasionally play something that’s like — I don’t have anything to say — it’s like, ‘Great.’ But I mean, I just taught a lesson before you got here with a brilliant, brilliant student of mine… and I had to decide — he’s in the competition tonight — and I had to decide, ‘Am I going to tell him what I hear that’s wrong?’ Because I haven’t worked with him before this. Or, am I just gonna be encouraging and say, ‘Yeah it’s happening.’ I had to be honest. And it’s like, ‘Okay, I wanna change the order of what you’re doing, and, specifically, here’s what you need to do on this piece to get it up to the level that you’re capable of.’

HW: And in that way, your being honest is encouraging.

JW: It is.

HW: Because you’re —

JW: It is.

HW: …you’re trusting in their abilities, and —

JW: Yeah. Yeah. And I did apologize about that. I said, you know, ‘I just feel like I need to say this to you. And I know you can deal with it. And I’m really looking forward to working with you because I know that this is not gonna throw you for a loop. But, this needs to be fixed.’

HW: Mmhmm. What are the non-music areas of your life which inform your teaching?

JW: I’m a sports junkie. I’m very competitive. I love to play sports games. Golf and tennis, in particular. And my experience over the years in the various pressure-performance areas that I’ve had help me in my amateur sporting life, so my music really does inform that. But I would say, a couple of my musician friends, we do talk about some of the nitty gritty. Especially one in particular, we talk a lot about phrasing and how
that works, and I think we’ve learned a lot from each other in that regard. But, my domestic life, it’s not all that comparable. Because, as a husband, as a partner, I’m not being paid to be critical. I’m pretty easy going. And I’m definitely a ‘let live’ kinda guy when I’m not teaching the flute. So, I’m definitely a different kinda guy. Sometimes, my wife will say, ‘What if I paid you $250 to be honest with me?’

**HW:** [Laughs]. Yeah, and what would you say?

**JW:** Yeah. And I’d say, ‘That’s hard, I’m afraid.’ [Laughs].

**JW:** Because, see, in the forum, I’m in control as a teacher. And so, I don’t ever need to swallow my tongue. I’ll be careful about not saying something I shouldn’t say, but I’m never going to withhold an honest opinion because that person is gonna get ticked off. So, to that degree, I’m really, really comfortable and happy in teaching. In a marriage that’s, you know, thirty years now, I have to work very hard to be honest and completely forthright about what’s going on with me. And so, I would say [laughs], I wish my teaching informed my personal life a little more.

**HW:** Mmm.

**JW:** But, once again, back to what I grew up in. I grew up in a family that was 100% docile and peaceful and quiet. However, the word ‘love’ was never mentioned once when I grew up. But it was clear that my parents at least were kind to each other. And it was a very typical Southern kind of existence. Never a verbal altercation, I mean, you know, I got a few spankings along the way when I just… misbehaved… You know my personal growth — which has probably informed my teaching — has been in trying to become more honest with myself. More honest as a being. But, in general, I’m rarely going to be in a confrontational situation. It’s just not who I am. But as a teacher, I wouldn’t call it confronting, but I’m absolutely comfortable telling the truth.

**HW:** Do you share stories from your personal life?

**JW:** Yes, a lot. Maybe not so much from my personal life, but definitely from my career.

**HW:** Can you give an example of a story that you use for teaching a concept or…?

**JW:** Oh, God. let’s see. [Laughs]. You know, I’m flooded with all sorts of things. It’s kind of in the moment of what would come up. I can think back to, you know, what I said about my college teacher when I would come in from playing a rock ’n roll job the night before —

**HW:** Mmhmm.

**JW:** …his comments about that. My dad — when I was in high school, my band director — he told me one time, he said, ‘You know, you think you can get away with a lot of stuff and you really can’t.’ As a young player, a member in the Pittsburgh Symphony,
one of the stories that I do share is that, as a hungry young player, I really looked at the conductor all the time. But, turns out, he did not like eye contact, and it put him off a little bit. I never was told that, but I could tell that something was going on, so I had to learn to look basically at him without eye contact. I share that story. You know... a lot of audition stories, of what happened. It’s interesting because, I mean, there are probably a thousand episodes that, you know, if anything triggers that, it’s like, ‘Oh.’

**HW**: You’re very open.

**JW**: Yeah. Yeah, I don’t have secrets. There was a school of teaching before. I would say in the 40s and 50s it was very much the temperamental artist-teacher, and there was absolutely no personal communication, at all. It was like the teacher was on the throne — the guru, the master — and you had to be careful, and you hoped that they would say something to you. One of the stories I do share a lot is that a well-known, successful professional told me that when he was in college, he was getting nowhere in his freshman year with his teacher and, just, like... there was nothing going on. ’Til finally the fourth, fifth, sixth lesson, he just broke down and cried, and the teacher just completely opened up. And so, for the rest of that year, he cried in every lesson to get the teacher to give him...

**HW**: Wow.

**JW**: So, one of my philosophies is, as a student, you need to figure out what hot buttons get your teacher going.

**HW**: Yep.

**JW**: And —

**HW**: Because it’s a two-way street.

**JW**: Yeah. Yeah, I mean, I definitely had a lot of experiences. So, there are a ton of stories there. At some point I know I’m gonna hopefully have enough memory to chart it.

**HW**: Oh, great. I’m looking forward to that. What about analogies? What’s the last analogy you recall using teaching? You have any go-tos?

**JW**: Oh God. I use ‘em all the time. I mean, I really do. And they aren’t so much stock analogies. And I’m sure a lot of them are stock. But, right now I just think of, like, ‘This is like this,’ you know. One of the ones I use a lot is, ‘You’re like a Rolls Royce with three tires.’

**HW**: [Laughs].

**JW**: It’s, like, so great, except, something’s missing.
HW: Yeah.

JW: I use that one a lot.

HW: That’s great. What is difficult to put into words as far as teaching on the flute, specifically?

JW: The most difficult thing is when you know that there is a lack of ability. There’s a lack of talent or a lack of sharpness, intelligence... and you know that there’s a limitation. And so, I don’t go there. I never have told a student I don’t think you’ve got what it takes. I always feel like I can help you improve. I can’t guarantee that it’s gonna work out the way your dreams are, but it’s very, very difficult for me. Whereas I did have lessons with one teacher one time who very clearly had the reputation of telling people they don’t have what it takes. And I didn’t get that message, but I was not encouraged. And that definitely left a stain on me.

HW: What kind of stain?

JW: I never forgot it.

HW: Yeah.

JW: It was like I was hungry to be encouraged, and it didn’t happen. And — no names will be used — but, this person, a person with a reputation... It wasn’t that I didn’t learn something, but that lack of encouragement really was painful for me. That probably informed my teaching a lot.

HW: Was it an attitude, was it a vocabulary, was it a combination?

JW: It was the words, it was just, like... and, it was a lack of words. I was looking for, like, ‘Yeah, I’d be happy to have you audition for me.’ It was like, ‘Uh, yeah, I think the army would be a really good choice for you.’ Which was honest.

HW: Yeah.

JW: So, yeah... There are people who actually, in a perverse way, get some sort of charge out of seeing someone squirm. Or actually hurting someone. And not a lot of people, but I have known some.

HW: Performers? Teachers?

JW: Teachers, yeah. I mean, there is absolutely a reputation in the forties and fifties... a couple well-known schools where there’s absolutely the whole ‘temperamental artist’ kind of thing and it still goes on today a little bit. I totally reject it. It’s just total BS as far as I’m concerned.
**HW:** Can you describe in more detail what you mean when you say, ‘temperamental artist?’

**JW:** Oh, temperamental is like [shouts], ‘Oh — this is — how can you *do* this?’

**HW:** Yeah.

**JW:** ‘This is poop.’

**HW:** Yeah.

**JW:** I heard this said by a very famous teacher. And the person was just crushed. And I also have seen firsthand in a master class setting just a kind of capricious choice of, [pointing] ‘Oh, you are the second coming, you are crap, oh, you are…’

**HW:** Comparison of their peers.

**JW:** Yeah. Honestly, in the forties and fifties, probably, you know… twenties, thirties, forties, and fifties… that was definitely part of teaching.

**HW:** And you feel that the trend has generally shifted away from that?

**JW:** Yes, absolutely shifted away from it. There is still the vestige of that. But, there is never a reason, from my standpoint, to hurt someone as a teacher. I never wanna say anything that is hurtful. I want to be 100% honest. Telling a student that a note is out of tune should not be hurtful. Especially if you do it with some sense of humor or some sense of compassion. It’s like, ‘It’s a hard note! I play it out of tune, also, but that’s REALLY bad, look!’

**HW:** [Laughs]. Yeah. In your years of teaching, have you found there are certain words that you must totally avoid using?

**JW:** Not that I’m aware of.

**HW:** What about specific skills or physical fundamentals that you have to talk about — like, I’m thinking things that are internal and invisible — what are some of your techniques for describing those things that go on?

**JW:** Well, I talk about learning to control the vibrato is a little bit like learning to wiggle your ears or control your fourth toe. Because, it’s not something that you think about. The muscle and the musculature that you use in making the right kind of vibrato definitely is controllable, but it’s not something you think about as a non-flutist. It’s interesting, I just did a little video for the NFA last week, and I went back to a book that my dad got me when I was thirteen by Frederick Wilkins called, “A Guide to Flute Playing,” That’s where I learned vibrato. And he used the word — which I didn’t remember — called the
‘constrictor muscle.’ I’ve always called the muscle that we control the vibrato with ‘the epiglottis.’ Some people call it the larynx. I think the larynx is the area. He called it ‘the constrictor,’ and, in fact [makes throat stop noises], it is a constrictor! I didn’t remember that part of it. So, with regard to embouchure, I definitely have my ideas about what the flute head joint is looking for in terms of the airstream, but the way your embouchure looks is gonna be radically different —

HW: Yeah.

JW: …between different sets of lips. So, I rarely will change a person’s embouchure, but I will do a demonstration, especially… I like to use a bassoon reed turned around backwards to show the way an airstream works on an aperture the way — if you move it forward, you get a higher harmonic.

HW: Whoa.

JW: And that, to me, is the most clearcut way of teaching that an embouchure needs to be flexible. But, if you compare Denis Bouriakov’s embouchure to my embouchure, they’re totally different things. We play similarly. I mean, he’s a ridiculous player, but… Roger Stevens was my predecessor in the LA Phil and also at USC. He wrote a book, and I forget the name of it, but it was a really well written book. At some point he has a couple of pages of twenty-five different professional flute embouchures. Every one of ‘em is radically different. Not radically. Everyone of ‘em is different. So, I definitely don’t do much embouchure adjustment. The only thing that I would talk specifically about is if it’s clear that the lip plate is too high on the lips. If it’s too high in the pink, then you’re limiting the flexibility. And, so far as breathing, posture, Alexander, that sort of thing… I don’t really go there. It’s not my world. But I do talk about strength and physicality and muscle tone when you play… support without tension, if possible. But, playing the flute — playing a woodwind instrument well is a strong physical activity. So, I talk about those kinds of things.

HW: And it sounds like you also believe it’s not only a physical activity but an individual activity in that you teach the student in front of you.

JW: Yeah. Oh, absolutely. The only formulaic aspect of my teaching is that… [Laughs]. I do have a formula: It’s a clean slate. When you come in, I’m definitely open to whatever I’m hearing and what I feel needs to be addressed.

HW: When was the last time you learned something new by watching another teacher teach?

JW: I can’t really think. I don’t do it that often. I would say this, the few times that I’ve observed a guest master class. For the most part, I’m fairly critical [laughs].

HW: [Laughs].
JW: And the things I learned is basically that, ‘I wouldn’t do that, that doesn’t work.’ Or… ‘This is just a formula. I think this is just a thing this person says every time in a masterclass and it’s kinda cool, it kinda works… but… doesn’t seem necessarily timely.’

HW: Are there any common pitfalls for teachers in terms of teaching masterclasses that when you see this or that you kinda think…?

JW: I think the most common pitfall that I see in some masterclasses is that it’s way more about the teacher than it is about the student. And also, in a master class, I think it’s really important to engage the audience. I think it’s not just about the one-on-one with the student. I don’t look at it as a private lesson that people are peeking in on. It’s a performance for me. And I want to get the best performance out of the student, but I also want to keep the audience engaged. So, a lot of my word choices will be maybe more general and less flutistically driven.

HW: What do your students hear you frequently say in lessons?

JW: ‘Use more vibrato.’ ‘Why did you not vibrate on that note?’ ‘Why did you vibrate on that note?’ ‘You’re not working hard enough on your C#s.’ Pretty much, that’s it. I mean, you know, any time there’s technical issues, I mean… I say that a lot. But, I would say the main thing really has to do with expression and use of vibrato, and… I haven’t said much about this, but I think gaining comfort as a performer, as a human being is what the journey is all about for most college students. They’re in an incredible growth phase. And so much of it has to go beyond just the technical aspect of the instrument — which needs a lot of work always, but — to be able to stand up in a pressure situation and to communicate and to express at a high emotional level as well as a technical level. I would say, the essence of a lot of my teaching is in teaching performance. Teaching how to communicate when you play, rather than just how to play well. And, you know, most of my students, myself included, grow up kind of in a closet, in a social closet. Very few of my students who come to any of my schools have had what I would consider as a valuable social background. And so, they’re shy, they’re insecure, and a lot of my teaching is encouraging them that, ‘You don’t need to be shy. It’s your nature to be quiet and maybe withdrawn and a little shy, but, as a performer, you can’t do that. So, I need you to become an actress. I need you to act like you’re comfortable, like you have a message.’ So that’s probably more of my focus as a teacher than the technical stuff, ultimately.

HW: Okay. You might have answered this; I’ll phrase it this way: what is THE most important thing that you communicate to your students?

JW: I think that. That, you know, the world is looking for what you have inside you. They’re not just looking for another brilliant replication of how to play the flute. They want to know what’s going on when you play the Bach Sarabande. I don’t wanna just hear perfect intonation. I want something from you. And you deserve to give it to me, because you’re a valuable human being. Your artistic license is just as valid as mine. I’ve
got a ton more experience — we have the same license. So, do something. That’s another one of my analogies.

**HW:** Mmm. That’s a nice way of putting it. Is there anything else you would like to share about these influences on your voice, your vocabulary, on your teaching…?

**JW:** I would say, I don’t recall, in my whole life, of being in a situation where I actually walked away thinking, ‘Wow that person is really articulate.’ I know it’s probably happened, but that doesn’t ring a bell. I would more obviously walk away thinking, ‘That was really an effective lesson,’ but, truthfully, I haven’t seen many of those. But, I also am incredible antsy. Like, for me to sit through a two or three-hour flute master class, as an audience member, I can’t do it. I really can’t do it, so… I’m glad I’m the teacher.

**HW:** That’s all I have. This was really fascinating. Thank you so much.

**JW:** You’re welcome.

**HW:** So, I’m gonna type this up —

**JW:** [Laughs]. Have fun.

**HW:** [Laughs]. I’ll email it to you so if there’s anything that you wanna take out. I’ll just email it in a Word document so you can delete it, you can change it. Whatever you send back to me —

**JW:** Yeah, I think I’m comfortable. I mean, It’s like a recording for me. You want it to be perfect, it’s never gonna be perfect. And, you know, as an improviser, I can’t tell you how many times I’ve replayed a solo, a jazz solo twenty times and the first one was probably as good as the last one. And none of ’em are any good [laughs]. So.

**HW:** I guess you get more comfortable with that, with the more experience, you know…

**JW:** Well, you have to accept your imperfection as a human being. You always try to do better, but I’m completely at home with the fact that I’m a very imperfect human being.

**HW:** I don’t think everyone can say that, so that’s —

**JW:** [Laughs]. Yeah!

**HW:** That’s great. That’s awesome. Thank you so much for your time.

**JW:** Good luck.
Carol Wincenc

Telephone Interview Transcript: 69 minutes

Tuesday, October 9, 2018
Coral Gables, FL

Hannah Weiss (HW): Tell me about your first flute teacher.

Carol Wincenc (CW): Oh, God! Edna Comerchero and Joseph Wincenc, my father. That’s why, if you look up all the old Flute Talks, you’ll see that. There’s a whole thing about Edna Comerchero. Everything about her.

HW: Okay, great —

CW: She studied with Moyse, she was Paris Conservatoire. She was in Buffalo, New York, and then she moved to Sacramento.

HW: Okay. Ms. Wincenc, what do you remember about her use of words when she was teaching you?

CW: Everything was extremely, vivid, direct. Probably all over my music are the indications, ‘sing,’ ‘sing,’ ‘sing,’ ‘melody,’ ‘support,’ ‘chin,’ ‘use your chin,’ that’s where I come up with this — thanks to Ali Ryerson — I call it chin-tonation.

HW: [Laughs].

CW: Because I’m very very specific about use of the angle of the head to help correct intonation. In micro, micro movements. You know, some of these people are dead against using the angle of the head, I don’t get it! We have a twelve-pound bowling ball pivoting on top of our spine. It’s an incredible tool, the angle of the air — the angle of the head. So, amen! [Laughs].

HW: Yeah, amen! I love it.

CW: Thank you, Hannah!

HW: What about the language that you remember your father using when he was teaching you?

CW: Well, everything was color. Everything. He was a violinist. Violin, violin. That’s all I had. That was my sound example: violin and piano. I was born in an orchestra. My father had three orchestras, so everything was string playing. String Quartets in our home. Budapest String Quartets, if you can imagine. How lucky was I?

HW: Wow!
CW: My mother was a concert pianist. Everything was about articulation, length of the note. Resonance, resonance! That’s why I just gave a flute retreat called, ‘Creating Resonance,’ did you see it online?

HW: Yeah, ‘Resonance!’

CW: Yeah, you should come. It’s unbelievable and it’s every bit that — it’s a retreat about how to find the resonating sonority in the flute, and it has a lot to do with your human body and how we’re resonating and singing… singing, singing, singing, we all sang, my sisters and I. Everybody sang in the car. All the time. We sang… we could sing complete Swingle Singer. Swingle Singers, do you know the Swingle Singers?

HW: [Laughs]. I don’t! It sounds like a group I should look up.

CW: Swingle Singers did all interpretive works of Johann Sebastian Bach and we could sing every part. We could sing five-part fugues. We could sing anything. We memorized, we memorized. We all had fantastic ears. My father was unrelenting. He was an extraordinary artist and symphony conductor, and the rest is history. And consummate, incredible violin sonority. Oh, I didn’t know any better. I copied his vibrato. If you listen to my earlier recordings, do you hear all that spin in that vibrato?

HW: Yeah, that’s from violin, right?

CW: I had incredible spin, right? When you’re up on the E string… Yeah. Vibrate. You know, it’s like, what’s the difference here? We have an air column, it’s our bow. The bow, you can see. Can’t see the air column! You’ve got to engage it in a very specific way.

HW: Mhm.

CW: Did I study measured vibrato? Oh yeah. Yeah. Charlie Delaney, you know, all of them, from the get-go… and do I use it now? Never. Now, that said — I’m sure vibrato is gonna come up in your questions — thank God for that tool of being able to control the speed of the vibrato at — what do you call it — “turn on a dime” kind of thing. We had to do duples, triples, quadruples, quintuples, sextuples, septuples, eight-tuples. You know, we had to be able to do all that. Be able to measure the vibrato and do it rhythmically. However, after working with Moyse so long, he was dead set against, you know, any kind of measured vibrato. Alright, next question. Is this helping you?

HW: Yes. This is fascinating. I love thinking of you growing up with all of that wonderful music in the house. Can you tell me about the language that you grew up with —

HW: Yes! Classical music.

CW: I mean, we had everything. It was a multi-cultural home that way, because when you’re in music, there is no racial distinction, you know. I’m sorry… It was a very whitecollar neighborhood in Buffalo, where all the money was in the schools, so we had fantastic bands. My band was an award-winning band. That’s why I wanted to play the flute — so I could play in the band!

HW: Aww.

CW: …and, never mind that I got to play in my father’s orchestras ever since I was eleven, twelve, thirteen… went to Eastman Prep… studied with Mariano — boy — was he about sonority — amazing! And technique. I mean, technique is everything. You can’t do anything without technique.

HW: Right. Right.

CW: And that’s all part of it, the whole vibrato thing. Sound… Air speed. Thank God for Edna Comerchero. Air speed. Spin in the air. Air velocity. Air speed. Air. Forward air. Forward. Everything was forward. Forward. Forward motion. Because I was a dancer. I was a serious dancer from seven to fourteen. Five classes a week.

HW: Wow!

CW: And I was in a theater group! Theater group.

HW: All of those things, for sure, would inform each other, as being different forms of art, definitely.

CW: Yeah.

HW: Okay, so, tell me about what you remember about the language that you grew up with in your house. How has that maybe influenced your teaching language today?

CW: Oh my God! Well, there were many languages spoken. My parents were from Slovakia — Austrio Hungary. So, I was hearing Hungarian, Slovak, English, a lot of French. So, this gets to articulation. You know, when you get into the whole language thing —

HW: Yeah.

CW: … and sensitivity of the ear. So, there was literal multi languages going on that, you know, helped me in that way. And then, in terms of language, let’s see… Okay, there’s a fantastic Flute Talk article where Tanya Witek — do you know Tanya? She plays in New York City Ballet, Orpheus, everything…
**CW:** …she’s one of our top, top pedagogues. She was in the running for the New York Philharmonic — never mind, she’s got two children, she’s devoted to her children, they’re all musicians. Polish-speaking husband. She’s from Croatia. Grew up in Canada. Anyway, Tanya has this fantastic article where she said what it was like to study with me. Oh! Conor Nelson! Conor Nelson wrote, *Best Lesson I Ever Heard.* That’s in Flute Talk. Oh, *Best Lesson I’ve Ever Had in My Life* — and he wrote a whole thing about working with me.

**HW:** Great. Oh yeah, those are so special. Yeah, okay.

**CW:** Okay. You want to look that up in Flute Talk. *Best Lesson I Ever Had.* I think many people were being interviewed for that. But it was published in Flute Talk, not too long ago. And that’s going to help you.

**HW:** Great.

**CW:** So. Tonya. So sweet. You know, I would say… [laughs]. She said, ‘Everything was so descriptive,’ and was probably largely influenced by, not only my father, but Moyse. And Moyse was influenced by nature, so he would say [speaks in a French accent], ‘The little fly, the little fly.’ ‘The big elephant, the big elephant.’ You know, how does the little fly articulate? That tiny, tiny, micro, ‘Tu tu tu,’ you know, ‘The big elephant,’ was that big, swinging, low sound you need to make, that kind of thing.

**HW:** Yeah!

**CW:** So, she would say — I once said to her, ‘Play it like the scent of a rose.’ Okay, so… she goes into this whole thing about, ‘What does that mean?!’ You know! [Laughs]. Fortunately, she was incredibly gifted, and a beautiful pianist, as well, so, she got it! She knew what it meant to play it like the scent of a rose. Or, big one for me (I don’t know if you remember): ‘Have you ever held a newborn?’ That’s my *big* one.

**HW:** Yeah.

**CW:** ‘Have you ever held a newborn?’ So, these kinds of references to human reactions to things. But, on the flip side, when I’m trying to get somebody to make a kind of resonant staccato, you know, that kind of thing.

**HW:** Mmhmm. So, you have mentioned Mariano, Delaney, Moyse… can you talk to me about your college years, and lessons with your college teachers?

**CW:** Yes. Okay, So. First, I have to interject that summer time was vastly important.
And all those teachers in the summer were every bit as vital as my primary teachers. I always tell my students, I changed environments every two years. I graduated early from high school, so I could study with Gazzelloni. You know how to spell that, right?

**HW**: Yep!

**CW**: I studied with him for a whole year in Rome, I got my diploma My [speaks in Italian accent] *diploma* from Santa Cecilia Conservatory in Rome. And that was paramount. Talk about language. Okay. Everything was in Italian, he didn’t speak English, so you’ve got the language of Italy — the Italian language — and when you’re studying music, I mean, how phenomenal is that, right?

**HW**: Yeah.

**CW**: So, that was incredible that year and then I went back for successive summers to Sienna to the Chigiana. It’s a famous summer institute. I think Gallois was doing it for a while. I don’t know who’s teaching flute there now, maybe an Italian… because the Italian school of flute playing was horrible when I was there, it was really mediocre. And now it’s so strong. You know, that has been fascinating to see a whole generation of students from when I was there 1966 in Rome until now. It’s really, really quite something. Yeah. So, I was with Gazzelloni that one year and then, I went right away to Oberlin, and I was with Bob Willoughby. And Bob was not terribly florid when it came to descriptive language about how to play. He wasn’t — how should I say — emotionally effusive like Gazzelloni was, and that was a difficult transition… and my father was emotionally effusive, and my mother, too. I mean, the way they loved to express music… and warmth. Warm, warm. Always warm, loving… love. ‘You have to love the phrase, da da da.’ Picturesque storytelling, that kind of language. So, Bob Willoughby was… some of it is somewhat of a blur because I was so homesick for Italy. He was very exacting, very precise. He was about placement of the phrase, articulation. Phrase length. But, the kind of music he had me studying was probably very helpful, you know. More romantic kinds of things as well, because I was so into the world of 20th century contemporary music when I was with Gazzelloni.

**HW**: Mmmmm. Mmmmm.

**CW**: I did Berio Sequenza, Schoenberg, all those… Takemitsu. I mean, it was amazing. That was Darmstadt — that was the German, contemporary music school going on and he was the man with the golden flute, that was Gazzelloni. Before Rampal even was emerging. So then, now I’m at Oberlin with Bob Willoughby but, that first summer, I got to Albert Tipton, and that was really interesting. He knew the physics of the flute so well — I mean, so did Bob. But you know, we did that intonation exercise. Do you know Mr. Tipton’s intonation exercise?

**HW**: I don’t think so, no.

**CW**: Yeah, so… You know how to find the resonance within the partials of the flute, you
know in the overtone series, ‘Am I in tune with that?’ So, my intonation was always very good, because, growing up with string players, you know, they’re constantly striving to find the perfect intonation. [Laughs].

**HW:** Mhm. Yeah.

**CW:** So, that kind of meticulousness came to me quite naturally, but I loved Albert Tipton for that. And Bob, I loved for his energy. Energy is a big deal with me when I’m teaching. It’s challenging for me to work with students who are — I don’t want to say *sluggish* energetically — you know what I mean? Energy is a big thing because I’m about movement and communication. And I also had, alongside with my dance background was theater. I was in a very active small theater class ever since I was nine so, how to interpret the script, and movement, and sensibilities, sensitivities. And projecting of feelings. So, my dramatic training was really paramount in all this and maybe that’s why language is so helpful, because I learned how to select things that hopefully could conjure up an image, emotionally, right? Are you with me?

**HW:** Mhm. Mhm.

**CW:** Yeah, and that would be translated to some kind of movement.

**HW:** Yeah.

**CW:** You know, movement in the phrase.

**HW:** Right, right.

**CW:** And also, language, you know, I’m always likening how to play a phrase like conversation. You know, you don’t say [said with no inflection], ‘*Today, I am going to school,*’ well, you say, ‘Today, I’m going to *school.*’ It’s my *first* day at school,’ if it’s a little kid. Well, that wasn’t a good example, because a little kid would go, ‘*I’m going to school today.*’

**HW:** [Laughs]. Yeah, so, using those examples of inflection.

**CW:** Right, right. Language inflections. So, that was really great. Bob Willoughby, Albert Tipton, James Pellerite. He was one of my summer time big time people at Chautauqua, when I was younger. Actually, this is the pre-college. And he was very articulate about what he wanted in terms of articulation and technique. Then, after Oberlin and Tipton. Oh, Charles Delaney, I mentioned, you know that was at Brevard Music Center when I was just a kid… I went to Brevard ever since I was four, first, as a child, because my father was a conductor there. Then, I got to work with Delaney from eleven, twelve, thirteen, those ages… formative years. And he was tough. Are you talking to anybody that studied with Charlie Delaney?

**HW:** No. I think it’s you!
**CW**: Oh wow. So you might want to look at all of those articles.

**HW**: I think it’s you. Yeah.

**CW**: Anyway, yeah, he conducted me on the Foss Renaissance Concerto at one of those conventions ages ago. It was so sweet, to make full circle with your teacher. When you engage them for something. Like Rampal! Rampal, I employed Rampal at my international flute festival. Oh! That enters into it, too. I was a very avid folk dancer and folk music lover. So folk music! Look at that. We haven’t even talked about that.

**HW**: Yes! Such a —

**CW**: Talk about language! They don’t use language. Well, spoken language so much, other than vocal language. When those guys play together, it is so intuitive. And I haven’t used that word yet. Intuitive… because, that is oral tradition all the way, right?

**HW**: Right, it’s its own vernacular.

**CW**: You got it. You got it. So, in a way, listening to all that violin and string quartet playing, you know… the use of a double bass in orchestra — how to find rhythm through the use of, ‘What’s the bass section doing?’ Also, having a pianist. Hearing all that counterpoint. Everybody studying Bach. So, I left Oberlin after two years and went to New York, and I was supposed to go study with Julie Baker, but, Juilliard was taking their home school up where now Manhattan School is, 125th. You’ve been to New York, right?

**HW**: Yeah! Yeah.

**CW**: So, they were leaving that beautiful building, which is now Manhattan School, and they moved to Lincoln Center, but they couldn’t accommodate transfer students. It was heartbreaking! Because Julie Baker said, ‘Oh my God, you’re coming to Juilliard.’ He heard me at Aspen. Or, I was heard at Aspen as principal flute of the The Aspen Chamber Orchestra. And so, the dean said, ‘Why aren’t you at Juilliard?’ And I said, ‘Well guess what. I was admitted, but then they sent me a letter and said they’re moving to Lincoln Center and they couldn’t accommodate transfer students.’ So, I went to Manhattan School, I got into Manhattan School and I started with Harold Bennett. And Harold Bennett, oh my God. He was quite clear with language. How do I describe Harold? We did a lot of études, a lot of orchestral excerpts. Very good. He was really about homogenizing flutes. Are you talking to anybody that studied with Harold?

**HW**: Yes.

**CW**: Okay, good. Well, maybe they can fill in some of the gaps about Harold. But, during those summers. Where was I now? ’70, ’71 ’72. That was Aspen and Tipton. Then, I went to Juilliard and I studied with Arthur Lora. I did not study with Julie Baker,
much to his chagrin. I forget what that was about. I just opted to study with Arthur Lora because of the Italian thing. I’m sure it had to do with the Bel Canto … operatic. Arthur Lora played under Toscanini. And Harold Bennett was at The Met, so I was starting to get the whole Bel Canto thing going. You know, the Met influence, the opera influence. So, when I met Moyse in 1975, the rest of was history. It was like, ‘Wow. I just came home. I just got home.’ And at Juilliard, it was Arthur Lora, he was quite elderly then. He just loved my playing. I don’t think he added so much. He did talk about the opera, but, Sam Baron was my woodwind quintet coach. And Sam was fantastic. Sam Baron just had the mind of an Einstein. He was like an Einstein of music. He was sort of the professor type. Always very eloquent at describing what music was about, and phrases, and coloration, too. So, I’m just giving you the teaching pedigree. What was the actual question?

**HW:** Oh, I was just asking what was it like studying with your teachers. And that’s exactly what you’re telling me.

**CW:** So, then I was with Moyse, and that was like a whole chapter, because I was with him a good twenty years, until he died… when did he die?

**HW:** It was in the eighties, right?

**CW:** Yes. Maybe you can look that up. Was it ’80… You know it’s interesting because Rampal died right around 9/11, 2001. And Moyse died in the late 80s. Is that right? Maybe you can look that up, that would help me.

**HW:** Yeah, I’m Googling it now. Let’s see… Yes. 1984.

**CW:** ’84, so. Sorry, not twenty years, what am I saying? About a decade, right? And what was so remarkable about that was, like, all of a sudden, Edna Comerchero looming in front of my face, because now I was full circle, and everything was about *sonorite.* All over my music with Edna was the sonority, in the French, ‘The *sonorite.*’ And so, now, I’m with Moyse, and I’m like, ‘Wow, this is a little spooky.’ Because, ‘I’m home. I made it home.’ That decade with Moyse was really quite something. And have you seen the videos, the teaching videos?

**HW:** They’re so special.

**CW:** The one with the G Major Concerto? Okay, you might want to see it. I can send you a link to my documentary, I can privately send you a link to my documentary, the video. It’s formatted for PBS, that kind of thing. Now we’ve got Moyse. And I don’t know how many Moyse people. Are you talking to Paula?

**HW:** No, not to Paula.

**CW:** Okay, who else from the Moyse…?
HW: I’ve spoken with Leone Buyse.

CW: Oh, good. Oh, she’s great. She’s very good with staying concise and everything. Alright, so, Moyse was, as I mentioned in the beginning, he drew on nature. Movement, light. Light. Luminosity. Oh my god. Lumineau is one of my favorite words. Or luminous, because, you know, light. The quality of light in one’s playing. And that’s really very interesting because, now we’ve got people who have synesthesia, who see in colors. I’m not one of those. I’m more about light in terms of texture or brilliance of sound. It’s probably why I play a silver flute. I have a platinum head, but, I do really love that as a descriptive language thing. What quality of light are you employing here, and density — density of light or density of color, or, I’m always saying things like, ‘What kind of chocolate do you like?’ [laughs]. Quality of chocolate, the taste of chocolate. Smells of things. Aromatic things. It probably has some relationship to having spoken Italian and done everything in Italian, because it’s so descriptive. You know?

HW: Yeah, and kind of indulgent.

CW: Yeah, so. Luminosity, sonorite, Quality of light. Let’s see, Moyse. How can I sum him up? Singing, singing. Now they’ve got this accompaniment to the 24 Melodies, you know that, right?

HW: Yeah, yeah.

CW: Yeah. So, it’s very sweet to do that in groups. We’ve been doing that in groups.

HW: Can you tell me, did you ever feel the need to discuss your personal life with any of these teachers, or was it all about flute?

CW: Okay. So, these were all men, right? Except for Edna. I was just eight or nine when I went to Edna, so we didn’t talk about that stuff. And I’m a Cancerian, I was born June 29th. So, Cancers are extremely emotive that way. They’re empaths, you know… being connected that way — fluidity of water. But we’re also the moon children, so moods are very, you know… like, I started this whole interview shouting, forgive me, [laughs]. Now I’m fine, because now I know where I am. So. Uh. Personal. Personal. Wow. Wow. Oh wow. Nope. Nope.

HW: Okay.

CW: Do my students talk about their personal lives? Oh yeah. You know, and what’s interesting is that… you have to keep an appropriate boundary… Incredibly so, now, with all those sexual harassment things. Why did you ask that question? Because it’s a wonderful question.

HW: Yeah. It’s a little bit of a segue into exactly what you’ve just done, which is start viewing yourself and your own understanding of the boundary between you and your
students just as a way to kind of frame the kind of environment that you expect in your studio.

CW: Aha. Right. Okay. Shall we say, I’m big about the permission to express… the permission to play, the permission to breathe. You know, that’s a big thing. If you read any of the forwards of my books, my editions. Do you have the Reichert edition, the edition I did of the Reichert?

HW: No, not yours.

CW: Okay, you might want to look at that, because there’s a whole forward about breathing. About the breath, and breathing, you know, you might have it. It’s Lauren Keiser Music. They’re very affordable editions. And then, I did the Andersen études with two flutes and the Berbiguier with two flutes and the Mozart Concertos for two flutes. Do you know about these editions?

HW: Yeah, yeah.

CW: Okay, so, in the prefaces, I do speak about Moyse, who — rather than using words — he would expect a student to be able to sing and understand the phrase length, and what was the melody line. You know, then — sorry — rather than use words, he placed a big emphasis on the singing style and the breath. The breath is our very specific link, and so, I’m about the permission to breathe, like a singer. Because I always think, students who are struggling, like with Mendelssohn Scherzo. You know…This whole quandary about, ‘Do I do the Faune in one breath? Aye aye aye aye!’ That has become a monkey on everybody’s back. It’s a shame, because everything depends on who’s on the podium. Everything.

HW: Right.

CW: Fortunately, Prélude à l’après midi d’un faune is a conducted orchestra piece, unless, luckily, you're in a chamber group and do the thirteen instrument version, which I’ve done many times. The one that uses the harmonium, have you ever done that?

HW: Oh, wow. No

CW: It’s for thirteen instruments. It’s like Appalachian Spring. Different instruments, but… I always say, ‘When have you ever seen a Met Opera star apologize for where they needed to breathe? When?’

HW: [Laughs].

CW: Never, you know? Every great singer never apologizes! They sometimes do, they say, ‘Oh! That phrase length is so long!’ You know, ‘That’s gonna be a problem for me,’ yada, yada, yada, but, ‘If I breathe here, is that okay?’ You know, if you’ve ever done chamber music with vocalists. Have you done much with singers?
HW: Yeah. Yeah. And they’re unapologetic about it.

CW: Yes. So, that’s my approach. Let’s find a way that makes musical sense without having to suffer. I mean, we are going to suffer. Because the old flute, the traverso, was the instrument of the time and, I’m sorry, it takes less air to play the Partita — to play the Allemande — it was a different animal, because it just takes less air.

HW: Yeah. That’s just logical and practical advice!

CW: Right, so everybody suffers terribly. And I was a victim of that. I was a gasper. I was a noisy breather, because I was a troubled breather. I was an anxious breather. Because our Western music really doesn’t accommodate the breath very well, a lot of it. Especially Johann Sebastian Bach. Any of the oratorios, and the Mass, the Passions, all those arias, everything. So, permission. That was a big thing. So, when you say, ‘Do personal matters come up?’ I’m trying to think if I ever had any students that I can really let down about what was going on personally. I’m really delving into that, because when I was with Moyse, I was in this huge decision about, ‘Do I leave?’ He was so persuasive and seductive. And he adored me. I mean, he just adored me. And he expected me to follow him. He wanted me to follow him as his apprentice to Bastille, to France. He had his summer thing that he did in Bastille, France. And Julia Bogorad was my best friend throughout all of that. And she followed Moyse, she did. But, I was gainfully employed with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. So, interestingly enough, I did leave the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, probably for the very reason of wishing to express myself in a very free way. And luckily having five seasons with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. But, I was playing principal flute with the Grand Teton Festival for years! Five years, six years. So, I was playing big symphony orchestra as well as chamber orchestra. And then, I toured with TASHI. Do you know, TASHI, that ensemble?

HW: Uh huh.

CW: I toured with them for years, and that came out of all my years at Marlboro. You know, they knew who I was and they wanted me. So, I did a lot of touring with them. And that was really interesting that whole time period with Marlboro, Moyse, TASHI, leaving the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, and having a life sustained by being a soloist.

HW: Yeah. Yeah.

CW: But luckily, I went with ING Artists. My first manager who just passed away, Charlie Hamlin… I started with Hamlin Management and then that became ING Artists. And then, that’s where Galway went. Are you interviewing Galway in this?

HW: No, I’m not. Just American.

CW: Could be really interesting! Maybe you don’t want to.
HW: No, no it’s a great suggestion. Can you tell me, Ms. Wincenc, what does that performing experience with TASHI and in all those years in the Tetons and leaving the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra — what does that performance experience bring to your teaching now?

CW: Okay, well. First of all, I might add that I was a serious backpacker and I’m still a serious hiker. I just went up Overlook Mountain.

HW: Oh, cool!

CW: And you know what’s so cool is that I hiked alone this time. Because my son couldn’t come. He is an amazing hiker. We love to hike. So, we didn’t get out West this summer for hiking, but, all my backpacking was at the American and Canadian Rockies. So, that kind of solace when you’re camped in an Alpine lake and you’ve trudged in twenty miles with your pack…

HW: Yeah!

CW: …Dealing with grizzlies. All kinds of stuff. You know, in the Rockies, have you ever gone?

HW: Yes, yes!

CW: So, that contact with nature is really a lot with what I’m all about. And so, I draw a lot on nature. That’s why I always felt so comfortable with Moyse. Because he was always referring to that. But, with Moyse, even the shape of his mouth — the contour of his mouth — when he spoke, it was so heavily inflected with French inflection. So that really lent itself to the coloration of sound and the luminosity, that kind of very exacting language of French is just perfect when you’re talking about how to arrive at a sound on the flute. I think the French approach, and all those years working with Rampal… I was with him for five years. I had a Fulbright to France, but, I got the Saint Paul job at the same time, and I was in such cahoots about, ‘What do I do? Do I go run off with Rampal into the sunset?’ You know, because, having been with Moyse all these years? But, I said, ‘No.’ My father was Austrio Hungarian, you know, you have to work, you have to have a living. So, I went with the employment end of things. And Rampal came every single season to St. Paul and we’d have the most incredible — I probably got much better quality time with him that he came to Saint Paul.

HW: Mhmhm.

CW: But, you know. And in the summers, and all that Nice stuff. I didn’t actually go to Nice. But, you know. We played duos all the time. We played with the orchestra. We played every single double concerto there was. Like Ransom. Are you talking to Ransom?
HW: No, no.

CW: Because that could be interesting. He was with Rampal for a really good chunk.

HW: Yes. Can you tell me —

CW: So, TASHI, Marlboro. I would say. They were such riveting performers. Especially being with Dick Stolzman and TASHI — a clarinet player was fascinating to me to hear how he sang on the clarinet back in the old days. And what he was doing. Here I was surround by American School of Wind Playing, the whole Chicago style. That was what was going on. Because at Juilliard, it wasn’t so Frenchy, even though Sam Baron and Arthur Lora had their European connection, but it was really about a big symphonic sound, because Mr. Baker was so influential. There were four generations of flutists who you could pick out and say, ‘Wow. That’s a Baker student.’ It was really quite remarkable, that his impact was so powerful. And, there’s Trudy. She worked with Julie for how many years? For five or six years. She got her master’s with him too. Was she with him the whole time?

HW: Yeah. Yep.

CW: And Baker was like Moyse. I mean, very exacting. ‘Do it this way. It must be done this way.’ And then, he taught by example, by playing all the time, right?

HW: Do you teach with demonstration?

CW: Totally, I have to. Because there are so many things that words can’t do. But, I’m pretty good with words, I think. Maybe it works best with students who can kind of get that approach. The ones who are not so keen on words… they work with a different kind of students, maybe, I don’t know.

HW: I see.

CW: So, I try to use both. I have one foot in the sort of big Chicago flute orchestral thing. And flutes were changing so much, right? When I go back to my old Haynes flute from 1964 when I got my first heavy wall Haynes flute that Joe Mariano ordered for me. I can’t even — I mean could barely sneeze into that instrument.

HW: [Laughs].

CW: No, I’m not kidding. I moved towards something that would give me power, but also intense expressivity. And that’s why I like the silver for a body. I played gold for eight years. But, for some reason, it wasn’t dancy enough for me. You know, perky, and dancy. And that’s what I was trying to imitate. The string bow and the articulation… staccato, pizzicato… the high register brilliancy. But, that platinum head, The Burkhart
head I have… that is really gorgeous. You know, to give me sort of a balance. But anyway, sorry. The question was…?

HW: You were talking about demonstration and what a powerful tool that could be.


HW: So, can you tell me what is your role in lessons with your college students?

CW: So. I’m there as their trusted guide. Okay. Their trusted mentor. In fact, probably one of the greatest compliments is, ‘Ms. Wincenc. It makes me feel so much better when I see you out in the audience. I feel so calm…’ whereas when I was in school, my teachers were — I don’t want to say they were harsh. Some were harsher than others, but, you know, it made me nervous. Maybe not Edna. If she hadn’t moved to California, that probably would have comforted me. But, they feel so much better if I am there. They feel maybe some sense of permission to really find your inner musician. You know, ‘How am I going to do that?’ So, I think there was a time when maybe people could say, ‘Oh, that person studied with Carol Wincenc.’ A lot of people can do that. But now, I think it’s not so easy to put your finger on it because I really work with what the student comes with. I’m like a psychologist. I assess that.

HW: Mhmhm.

CW: And. You know, I also see their degree of openness. ‘How does that work?’ You know, ‘What style of teaching works for them?’ So, I’m really about adaptation and flexibility within myself and how to work with someone. I can tell when somebody is resistant and not as comfortable opening up in a certain way.

HW: Right.

CW: And probably, my most prized student at the moment, in terms of the effect… the impact… I discovered him in Italy. Giorgio Consolati, I don’t know if you know about him. It was just a dream to have him at Juilliard, and he’s doing great. He just did the Rouse at Geffen Hall with Alan Gilbert because he won the concerto competition.

HW: Yeah.

CW: I mean, that’s a big deal to play the Rouse in Geffen Hall. And, he’s funny. I’ll try to get him to sing as a way to figure out what to do with the phrase. Or maybe something about intonation, I’ll often have people sing. And many people are embarrassed, they say, ‘Oh, I can’t sing,’ and I say, ‘Oh, yes you can.’

HW: [Laughs].

CW: So, I encourage them. He just hates singing! And he has the most beautiful, espressivo sound, isn’t that interesting?
HW: Aww.

CW: Well, that’s just a personal thing. So, when you have to work with something like that to try to make a student feel that they can find that zone in themselves, maybe where they can try something and challenge them that way. I don’t know if you want to say that I’m a mother to everybody but I think I have a sort of nurturing, mothering quality, maybe.

HW: Mmhmm. What’s the most important thing you communicate to your students?

CW: Did that answer that question, by the way?

HW: Oh yes, yes.

CW: Okay. Say that again? ‘What’s the most important…?’

HW: What’s the most important thing you communicate to your students?

CW: The most important thing? God, there are so many important things. I can’t say the most important thing. Wow. Wow. Oy! [Laughs]. That’s going to be hard to say the most important thing. But, wow, what a great question. Wow. Wow. It’s hard, I mean, I would say ‘trust.’ Trust as a vehicle — as a channel for how to improve. Do you know what I’m saying? Maybe it goes along with that feeling of permission?

HW: Yeah.

CW: Because if there’s trust in the teacher — with the teacher-student relationship — and if there’s trust that you build within yourself, you’re going to get to a place of inner confidence. Right?

HW: Mmhmm. Yeah.

CW: So, I think, obviously, from a technical standpoint [laughs], the most important thing is rhythm! And sonority!

HW: Yeah. Yeah.

CW: You know, rhythm and sonority… without rhythm, without logic, without a sense… what is the order of this work that you’re working on? I mean, rhythm is everything to me. That probably comes from my dance background… the folkloric background. Without a really keen sense of really deeply within yourself rhythm — not an external thing from the metronome but something that arises from getting it from a motion standpoint, from a movement standpoint. When you watch dancers, depending on what they’re dancing to, something is communicated about structure, order, architecture, design, and rhythm and sonority — rhythm and sonority and coloration. It’s very hard for
me to say the most important thing. They all play into what makes a great artist. And then, there’s a whole thing about communication. Okay, so, I grew up watching my father come out on the podium. And watching 1,000 people… 3,000 people — adoring people applaud, so I knew that dimension. I got it. I was in it. That dimension of how to communicate from afar. As if someone were in the living room with you. Like you’ve got three, four, five thousand people out there — well, likely five hundred, if you’re in a smaller hall. Or even two hundred or if you’re in a living room.

HW: Something about that sincerity.

CW: Yeah, how to communicate… how to project yourself. And that comes from acting training. There’s something you have to sacrifice about own personal feelings when you’re an actor, because you have to go into the role of the one you’re portraying, and it might be the complete antithesis of your essence of who you are. If you have to portray an angry, racial drunk, if you’re a church-going, communion-taking, [laughs] person who doesn’t like loud voices…

HW: Right.

CW: It’s really interesting. And I think, as a musician, you have to be willing. There we go. There’s a willingness — trust, that goes with the trust — the willingness — the willingness to try something that maybe you don’t like.

HW: Yeah.

CW: … Maybe something you don’t like to do. So, the friction. The friction, the rub of, ‘How do I do that?’ And because, if we’re gonna try to save this world, I’ll tell you in my closing statement… if we are gonna try to effect change and help this planet heal, clearly, we all know the arts are going to play an absolute crucial part in this.

HW: Yeah. Yeah.

CW: Because language — how ironic — you’re talking about language — language does not work at a certain level. Look at all this mess with Kavanaugh. You’ve got this woman speaking her language, and you’ve got him speaking his language, and you’re saying, ‘Who do I believe here?’ And you’ve got a judge who’s got to interpret it [laughs]. And here he is, our Supreme Court Justice. It’s quite astounding, isn't it, language?

HW: Yeah, it’s fascinating.

CW: So. You have to listen to your inner. And maybe that’s it. The outer is incredibly important. How you project yourself as an artist. How great of a concert series you can invent, da da da da da. How you can parlay and network, blah, blah, blah. How you can do your social media and stay on top of the pack. But, what about the inner? What about the inner? And that’s what my retreat had a lot to do with — trusting the inner, and trusting the other people. We did a group improv, and, I’ll tell you, anybody who was
there could tell you, it was like, ‘What was that magic that just happened?’ What happened in the room that might not be able to take place during the academic year when you’re pulsating and trying to get everything done, and da da da da da. You know, we need these quiet times to have the permission to just be and try and trust something of our inner musician and our inner person that wants to communicate X, Y, and Z. It’s so interesting! Alright, did that help?

**HW:** Yes, yes. Oh my gosh, it’s so beautiful.

**CW:** I used a lot of interesting words.

**HW:** Yeah. You did.

**CW:** So, I think ‘trust,’ ‘permission,’ ‘inner.’ The balance of inner and outer. That’s it. You know?

**HW:** Yeah.

**CW:** Because, when you play an instrument, it’s so intimate.

**HW:** Yeah. Yeah.

**CW:** I mean, why did God give us voices? Or the divine, for lack of a better word, whatever you want to call it… Energy, bliss, I don’t know. Why does that exist? Why does the sun come up? These are all questions we can’t answer. But it affects us.

**HW:** Thank you so much.

**CW:** I’m going to be fascinated to read this.
## Appendix E

### Code System

**Table 2. Code System**

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Subtheme</th>
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<td><strong>Artist-teacher background</strong></td>
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<td>Pivotal relationships recalled</td>
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<td>Colleagues/peers</td>
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<td>Reported language remembered during development</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Clear, direct, or instructive</td>
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<td>At home</td>
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<td></td>
<td>In lessons</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Vivid, artistic, or inspiring</td>
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<td></td>
<td>In lessons</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Genesis of teaching career</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Demonstration</td>
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<td>As remembered from their teachers</td>
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<td>Their own in lessons today</td>
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<td><strong>Teacher responsibility to meet student needs and expectations</strong></td>
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<td>Their role</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Self-identifies in parental terms</td>
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<td>Does not self-identify in parental terms</td>
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<td>Perceptions about student individuality</td>
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<td>Each student should be treated differently</td>
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<td>Acknowledgement of different learning styles</td>
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<td>Acknowledgement of shifts in emotional state</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reported use of empathy in teaching</td>
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**Significance of the one-to-one teacher-student relationship**

<table>
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<th>Teaching style</th>
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<td>Described in behavioral terms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Described in musical terms</td>
<td>21</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Boundaries they draw between them and their students | 17 |

**Verbal teacher feedback**

| Reported use/importance of honesty with students | 14 |
| Reported use of imagery | 0 |
| Visual depictions | 16|
| Tactile/experiential depictions | 8 |
| Non-music areas which inform | 12|
| Reported use of praise and encouragement | 12|

**Heightened sensitivities in music instruction**

| Teaching abstract concepts | 16 |
| Handling upset students | 7 |
| Reacting to students crying | 5 |
| Need for teacher apology | 6 |
| Admission of one’s own teacher fallibility | 15|

**Words and music learning**

| Non-musical disciplines referenced | 0 |
| Acting | 5|
| Psychology | 5|
| Extra-verbal teaching methods | 4|
| Singing | 0|

| They sing or remember singing | 4 |
| They ask students to sing | 1|

| Complex behavioral concepts to instill in students | 10 |