


EXPLORE, INVESTIGATE, DISCOVER
YOURSELF





“The ability to be aware is part of our makeup and potential; our task as human beings is to understand this potential based not on invented concepts of the spiritual world but on our knowledge of the human being.”

A NEW MODEL OF THE HUMAN BEING

For centuries, man has been on a quest to find his higher nature and purpose. Religions and contemplative practices locate our higher nature in the spiritual domain, while science explains—and tends to place a limit on—our human faculties by elucidating the material underpinnings of our complex biology. Man has thus been split into matter and spirit, like two souls searching for each other.

At the heart of our philosophy at the Dimon Institute is the recognition that, far from being a thing apart, our highest spiritual faculties are rooted in our complex design, the elucidation of which is the key to unlocking our inner capacities for development and learning. Just as we, as human beings, are part of the natural order, our highest “spiritual” attainments are part of our natural and biological makeup. At the Dimon Institute, spirit and body are brought together in a model that integrates consciousness and biology, mind and body.



THE BODY IN MOTION

The human being is the most complex structure in the known universe. Our upright posture, the hand and upper limb, the voice, vision, our complex nervous system—all of these combine to form a structure so vast in its complexity that it is hard to fathom. Although the biological sciences have elucidated the working of these systems, we have omitted, in our conception of educational development, the practical study of how to use these systems in an efficient way based on a working knowledge of our upright design.

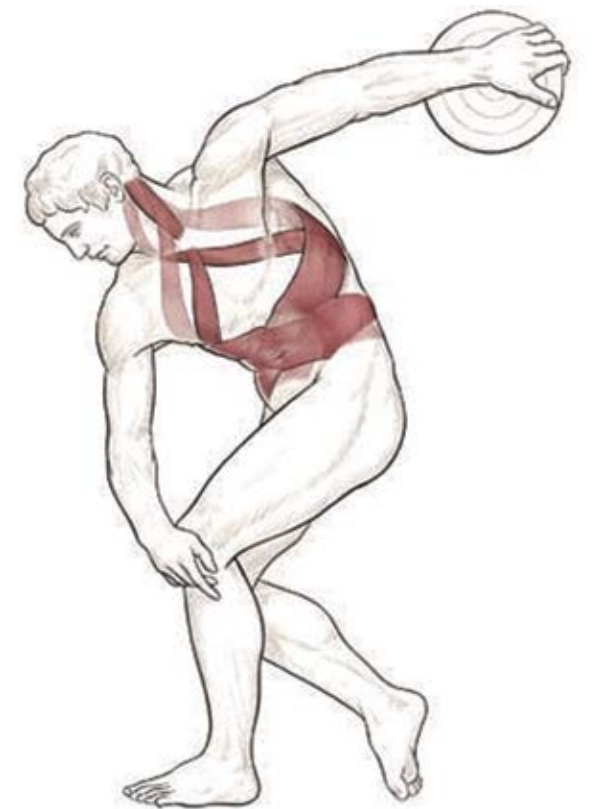
At the Dimon Institute, we study these systems at the practical level, forming the foundation for coordinated action that goes far beyond traditional forms of treatment, relaxation, and exercise. Motivated by the insight that the body is organized around our upright posture and, based on this, is designed to function effortlessly, the study of our human anatomical design and function is given new meaning, transforming empirical knowledge into a vital and meaningful subject.

SKILL AND THE ART OF NON-DOING

All learning is done by means of the functioning mind and body as “the central instrumentality upon which all learning depends.” Without a true understanding of the system’s design and control, many elements of learning are haphazard and left to chance. Understanding how the body is designed to produce action makes it possible to gain greater control and mastery over the process of learning skills by, first, giving us a more accurate and developed kinesthetic measure for assessing the performance of actions and, second, by enabling us to learn in a more organized and rational way based on an understanding of ends and means.

A key objective of the Institute is to help people develop more effective teaching methods and to provide educators with a means of re-evaluating existing methods, based on an understanding of how mind and body function holistically in activity. This includes exploring one’s habitual ways of doing and thinking and articulating principles that can help people achieve their full potential by learning to break skills down into manageable elements, remove harmful habits, and gain mastery over the central element of learning: oneself.

“It is not an overstatement to say that the human body is the vehicle of the soul, for without it, none of our singular human achievements would be possible. The hand that allows us to explore and create, the voice as a vehicle of communication, the muscles that make action possible—all are tangible aspects of our higher selves. To understand our physical design is to understand the underpinnings of our intellectual, artistic, and spiritual lives.”



A NEW APPROACH TO LEARNING

Central to the Institute's philosophy is the recognition that learning is not just an affair of the mind but of the whole person. Our Western tradition has put so much emphasis in school on learning subject matter (as opposed to, for instance, the study of the arts) that it is difficult, if not impossible, for us to think about functioning and development, in both children and adults, in a truly holistic way. But a child does not learn simply with his or her brain but as a psychophysical whole, and an education that omits an understanding of the workings of this total system is lacking knowledge that is fundamental to the child's development, ability to learn, and well-being.

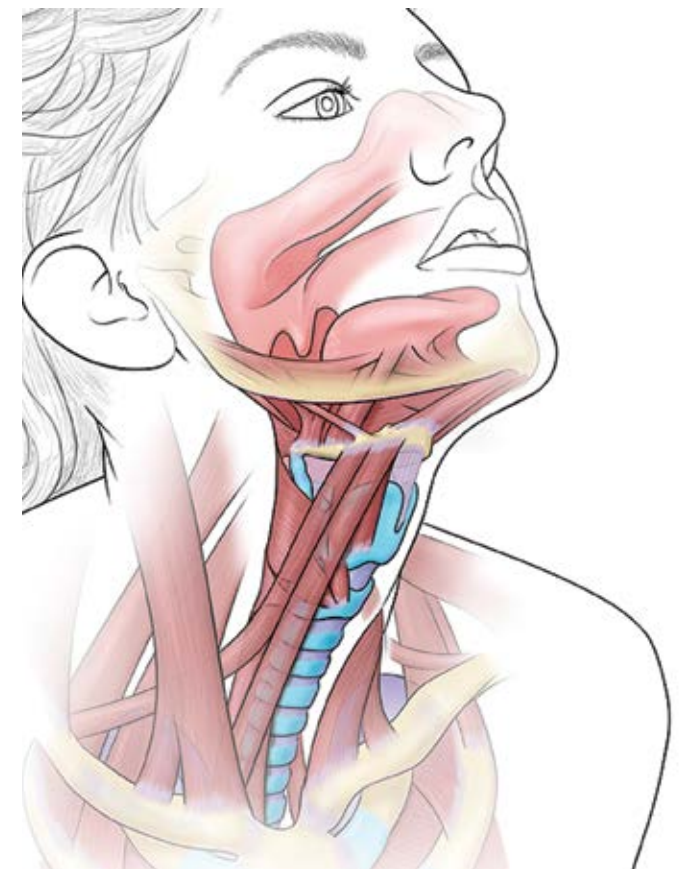


The study of this system is the foundation for a holistic model of development and forms an essential foundation for a normal—as opposed to clinical—model of child development. The Institute's ongoing study of the unified working of mind and body offers parents and teachers a means of evaluating performance based on a comprehensive understanding of psychophysical functioning in activity, and provides practical strategies for improving attention, performance, and motor skills. The Institute has also begun research with children, and is providing foundational training for the first-ever doctoral program at Columbia University, Teachers College in the field of Psychophysical Education.

PSYCHOPHYSICAL HEALTH

The human organism is a complex machine, and how we use it can profoundly affect our health. If, for instance, we habitually strain joints and shorten muscles, back trouble and joint pain can develop. Constant rushing and worrying can cause stress-related symptoms. And collapsing while sitting interferes with breathing, muscle tone, and organ function.

All of these problems can be medically treated after the fact, but we can understand their causes only by understanding how the organism functions in action based on a comprehensive knowledge of its design. This cannot be achieved simply by exercising, learning about body mechanics, or practicing forms of relaxation. The human body functions as a complex psychophysical whole, and understanding this system requires a knowledge of how it is designed for movement, how action is produced, and how to gain greater awareness and control of this system in action. One of the key missions of the Dimon Institute is to study, teach, and research how the human body functions in action as the basis for a more complete and comprehensive approach to health.



A HOLISTIC MODEL OF AWARENESS

Cultivating a mindful attitude toward living is central to the Dimon Institute's philosophy. At the Institute, theory and research are put into action, providing a path for students to live more mindfully and healthfully based on a working knowledge of mind and body. More than a method or clinical practice, we explore psychophysical education through the practical science of increased awareness and control in activity. Learning to be mindfully aware is a two-fold process that includes attention to everyday actions as well as the self-knowledge that comes from daily practice.

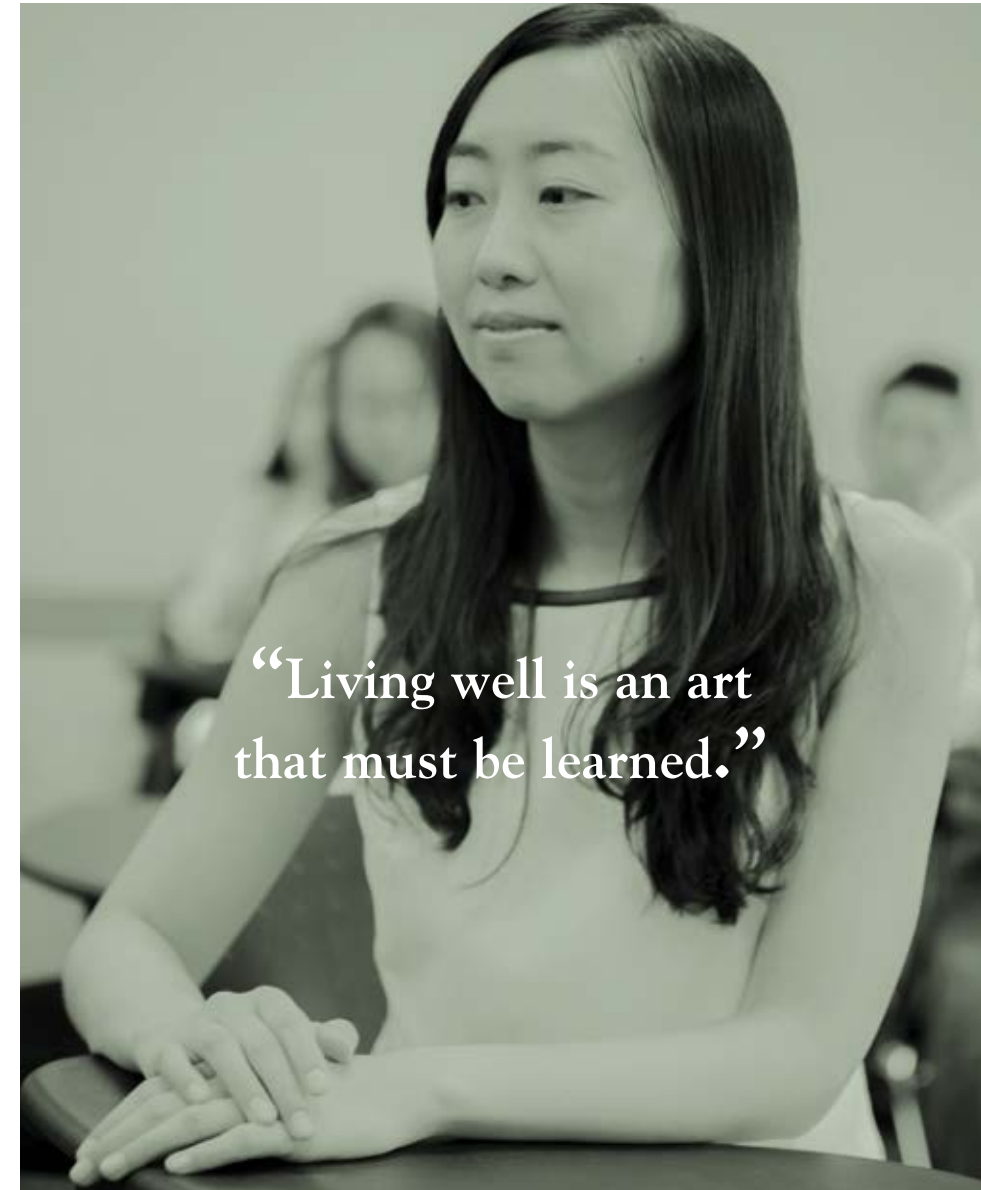
At the Dimon Institute, we study mindfulness based on a unified model that combines an understanding of the body in action with the processes of attention as related aspects of a unified system. An understanding of these functions leads to practical knowledge that is both physical and psychological, constituting a truly holistic model of awareness that includes both mind and body, spirit and matter, combined into a complete model of the human being.

AWARENESS IN ACTION

Although we initiate action voluntarily, action itself takes place, as in animals, at a largely automatic and instinctive level. To perform actions in a balanced way, actions must be broken down and mastered at a conscious level. Assisted by daily guidance from a teacher, the student acquires detailed knowledge of how the body works in action, which leads to an increasing command of coordinated action. By focusing on simple actions, normally unconscious and habitual actions can be raised to a conscious level, establishing a new level of poise, balance, and calmness in action.

AWAKENING THE CONSCIOUS MIND

Awareness in humans emerges in stages, beginning with the purely instinctive attention of infancy and leading to the ability to selectively attend and, along with this, to engage in formal learning. But these given stages of awareness are superseded by higher stages that include the ability to attend mindfully to what we're doing, to quiet the mind, to maintain awareness without becoming distracted, and ultimately to see oneself more clearly.



“Living well is an art
that must be learned.”



“The essence of the Dimon Institute program is founded on the understanding that each of us possesses the capacity to become fully conscious in thought and action. This possibility rests on a knowledge of our biological, psychological, and moral faculties and how to develop them.”

PSYCHOPHYSICAL EDUCATION: THE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Designed for serious practitioners and future teachers of this work, the Institute offers a three-year course of study leading to professional certification in Psychophysical Education and the Alexander Technique. Classes are held Monday through Thursday from 9:30am – 1:00pm and include both in-depth practical study and theoretical coursework. Graduates of the program are invited to continue on as student teachers and gain practical hands-on experience in a classroom setting. Advanced students are encouraged to pursue professional specialization in areas of psychophysical development such as vocal study or mindfulness under the guidance of the Institute. Those interested in child development, a core focus of the Dimon Institute, may have the opportunity to work with children as part of their ongoing study.



CURRICULUM // EXPERIENTIAL SUBJECTS

ONE-ON-ONE TEACHER SUPERVISION

Also known as the “primary control,” the postural neuromuscular reflex system (PNR system) refers to the automatic working of the musculoskeletal system, based on elastic muscle length, reflex activity of the nervous system, and the head/trunk relationship as the basic organizing principle of vertebrate movement in space. When working properly, this system ensures effortless muscular support against gravity as the background against which all action takes place. In most people, this system has been compromised by harmful habits and cannot work properly without guidance and help from a skilled teacher.

In the first year of the course, and indeed throughout the course, a great deal of personal attention will be aimed at restoring the working of this system, leading to improved muscle tone, balance, postural support. The changes that occur during this process can often be quite dramatic and are the single most important part of the process of psychophysical re-education..

READING: The Use of the Self, by F. Matthias Alexander

KINESTHETIC AWARENESS AND “DIRECTION”

Each of us possesses a personal biofeedback system that makes it possible to influence muscle tone, to release chronic tension, and to bring about an improved working of the PNR system. In the first year, a great deal of attention will be devoted toward learning how to use this personal biofeedback system to notice harmful tension and to restore this system, first with the teacher’s guidance and eventually without help from the teacher. This makes it possible to bring about beneficial changes in oneself, to maintain an improved working of the PNR system, and to become increasingly aware of what we are doing during daily activity.

THE STUDY OF “POSITIONS OF MECHANICAL ADVANTAGE”

Although it is possible to influence muscle tone simply by “thinking” kinesthetically, an essential component of restoring the PNR system is to provide the support for the musculoskeletal system, beginning with the semi-supine position and progressing to more active positions. Like learning a karate kata or form, mastering these positions greatly benefits the student in learning the principles of kinesthetic awareness and control. Some time each week will be devoted to utilizing this and other positions as a way of learning to “direct” in action.

GUIDED ACTIVITIES

Every week, time will be devoted toward observation and exploration of particular movements such as walking, using the arms, and vocalizing. Paying attention to a simple activity such as walking is much more than body mechanics or kinesthetic awareness but must be rooted in an understanding of the ability to perform actions effortlessly based on the natural working of the PNR system. Time will be spent analyzing these actions in order to understand the body’s function and design, and in order to learn to prevent the unwanted actions and tensions that interfere with this design.

DEVELOPMENTAL MOVEMENT

Human upright posture is the most complex movement system in the animal kingdom and evolved sequentially from earlier and more primitive forms of movement. Studying these developmental movements makes it possible to effect improvements in the working of the muscular system, to gain insight into how to move more efficiently, and to progress from more basic to more advanced forms of balance and support. Various stages of movement will be explored, from the earliest total body patterns, crawling and creeping, to anthropoid and human movement.

READINGS:

- Skill and Poise, by Raymond Dart
- The Evolution of Movement, by Robin Simmons

THE “MEANS-WHEREBY” PRINCIPLE

Learning to think “kinesthetically” as the basis for an improved use of the self is fundamental to psychophysical education. To change harmful habits of use, the student must learn to prevent his or her habitual way of performing actions by stopping, by learning to break actions down into steps, and by paying attention to how an act is performed rather than focusing on the goal. This form of “thinking-in-activity,” as John Dewey called it, makes it possible to bring about fundamental changes in the use of the self, and to become increasingly aware of harmful habits that interfere with the system in specific activities.

READING: Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual, by F. Matthias Alexander

MINDFULNESS IN ACTION

Learning to be mindful during activity is one of the most difficult—as well as one of the most advanced—elements of our work. In the early stages of learning, the student focuses mainly on physical actions, learning to perform them more carefully and efficiently. As the student progresses, however, he or she realizes that the process of using the musculoskeletal system more efficiently is not just a matter of being kinesthetically aware but of learning the art of mindfulness. This art includes an awareness of what is going on around us, coupled with an inward attention to the balanced working of mind and body. During the training, we will periodically examine what attention is, explore how to maintain attention, and gain insight into the process of learning to be attentive as a fundamental discipline in living.



CURRICULUM // THEORETICAL COURSEWORK

THE SCIENCE OF NEURODYNAMICS

In this course we will look at the basic neuroscience underlying the Alexander Technique: how the human neuromuscular system can be brought under greater conscious control by describing, first, how the muscular system works in action; second, how it becomes misdirected and imbalanced and can be brought into greater balance; and third, how this system can be brought under control by understanding muscle function, proprioception, and increased consciousness. In addition to covering relevant aspects of current neuroscience, the seminar will present a new scientific and theoretical view of the use of the self—the culmination of Ted Dimon’s many years of study in anatomy, neuroscience, psychology, and education—including the design and working of the PNR system, new and critical elements of muscle physiology that are central to the study of neurodynamics, and what is meant by mind/body unity and conscious control. Other topics covered will include inhibition, ideomotor action, the special role of neck reflexes, stretch reflexes, and more.

READING: Neurodynamics: The Art of Mindfulness in Action, by Ted Dimon

AWARENESS: ARTICULATING A NEW DIMENSION IN EDUCATION

What is awareness, and why is it good to be aware? Many of us practice forms of awareness designed to help us to notice tensions and to reduce stress, to become aware of our reactions, and to promote general health and well-being. But what exactly are we doing when we practice awareness, and how is this different than being generally aware? Many philosophers have maintained that we are capable of higher levels of awareness, but what do they mean by this, why do we need to be more aware, and is it something worthy of striving for? Because we inherit these practices as part of contemplative traditions, we are often unclear about what mindfulness is, why we are doing it, and how it fits into educational practice as a whole.

In this course, we examine awareness in its broader context by understanding, first, what it is, how it relates to mindfulness, and what we mean by higher levels of awareness. Second, the course will examine why awareness is not a thing apart but exists on a continuum with other faculties such as thinking and deliberation. Finally, the course will also examine how, as a way of becoming more conscious of one’s thoughts and actions, awareness can function as a legitimate educational aim, how it can be developed throughout the lifespan, and how it applies to such diverse areas of education as health and child development. In this course, we will explore a variety of topics including kinesthetic awareness, attention, and behavior. We will also discuss mindfulness and its practical application to everyday conduct including speaking and thinking.

NEUROSCIENCE AND MOVEMENT

This course explores neuroscience as it relates to movement and the PNR system. Topics include an overview of the brain, spinal cord, cranial and peripheral nerves, parasympathetic and sympathetic nervous systems, stretch reflexes, and the various motor, sensory, and proprioceptive systems.

READINGS:

- The Neuroscience of Movement, (talks), by Ted Dimon
- Principles of Neural Science, by Eric Kandel

FUNCTIONAL ANATOMY

In this course, anatomy is presented from a functional perspective—that is, how we are designed to move and function. Understanding our anatomical design is one of the most exciting aspects of psychophysical education and provides unique insight into the body and how it works. The lectures are specifically designed to present functional anatomy from the practical perspective of learning to increase one’s awareness and control, as well as acquiring the knowledge necessary to teaching professionally. The course covers basic comparative anatomy of the human upright design, major anatomical systems such as the extensors, flexors, spine, shoulder girdle and upper limb, pelvic girdle and lower limb, the spiral musculature, and breathing and voice.

READING: The Body in Motion, by Ted Dimon

VOCAL ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY

The human voice is a marvel of engineering and design. This course explores the remarkably subtle and intricate design of the human voice and how it serves as an instrument of expression. The course will cover the anatomy and mechanics of breathing, the design and function of the larynx, the suspensory mechanism of the throat, support, registers, muscles of the throat, vocal placement, and the relation of the voice to posture and overall coordination.

READING: Anatomy of the Voice, by Ted Dimon

BASIC MUSCULOSKELETAL ANATOMY

Basic musculoskeletal anatomy is presented as a way of introducing students to traditional anatomy—the location of particular bones, muscles and related structures. Familiarity with basic anatomy helps the student develop professional confidence; provides the student with a vocabulary that makes it possible to communicate with other professionals; and most importantly, provides the groundwork for acquiring further knowledge and skills. Musculoskeletal anatomy includes: bones; origins and attachments of muscles and related actions; joints, ligaments, and actions at joints; discussion of major functional structures such as the pelvis, shoulder girdle, ankle, and hand; terminology and etymology of anatomical terms; major landmarks and human topography; and structures relating to breathing and vocalization.

READINGS:

- Anatomy of the Moving Body, by Ted Dimon
- The Thinking Body, by Mabel Todd
- Anatomy Trains: Myofascial Meridians for Manual and Movement Therapists, by Thomas Myers



CURRICULUM // THEORETICAL COURSEWORK

THE PEDAGOGY OF SKILLED PERFORMANCE

This course examines practical issues in teaching performers. Topics will include: how to address basic learning problems; tension in performance; and the role of habit in skilled performance. We will pay special attention to working with children with learning problems, how to teach performers, and how to observe and identify problems in performance.

MIND/BODY UNITY IN RELATION TO EDUCATION AND HEALTH

In our current educational system we are taught how to use our minds through study and how to use our bodies through physical activity. But all activity, whether 'mental' or 'physical,' is performed by means of a total psychophysical system, and little or no attention is given to educating ourselves in the working of this system as a unified whole. This course will define what is meant by psychophysical education in contrast to other 'mind/body' methods, and show how this subject can be applied in the classroom. Part lecture-based and part experiential, the course will explore a variety of topics including kinesthetic awareness, learning, skill and performance, the control of habit, mind/body integration, holistic health, and mindfulness.

READINGS:

- A New Model of Man's Conscious Development, by Ted Dimon
- Human Nature and Conduct, by John Dewey
- Talks to Teachers on Psychology, by William James
- Man's Supreme Inheritance, by F. Matthias Alexander

PREVENTION AND HEALTH

The course will examine problems of tension and stress from an educational perspective. The course will examine the role of "use" in causing specific physical problems; the fallacy of corrective exercise and relaxation techniques; the limitations of medical diagnosis and the medical model in understanding and treating tension and stress; the fight-flight theory of stress and the limitations of stress-reduction techniques; faulty action and the need for prevention in activity; medical diagnosis and the problem of defining a psychophysical standard of health; empirical criteria and the need for a positive concept of health.

READINGS:

- The Control of Tension and Stress, by Ted Dimon
- The Universal Constant in Living, by F. Matthias Alexander

VOCAL TRAINING AND PEDAGOGY

This course will examine practical issues of vocal training and performance. We will explore the role of listening in coordinating the voice: vocalizing and the role of the "ear"; placement and listening; placement and the larynx; the role of facial muscles and practical techniques for activating these muscles; opening the throat; and the role of inhibition in speaking and vocalizing.

The course will pay special attention to the "whispered 'ah'" as a central element in learning to use the voice in a coordinated way. The "whispered 'ah'" will be taught systematically and sequentially over the term by breaking it down into its component parts, beginning with performing the "whispered 'ah,'" then looking at how it provides the basis for understanding vocal support, and finally examining how to produce sound.

READINGS:

- Your Body, Your Voice, by Ted Dimon
- Breathing and The Voice: A Practical Guide to the Whispered 'Ah,' by Ted Dimon

THE USE OF THE HANDS IN TEACHING

The ability to convey kinesthetic experience with the hands is the special craft on which teaching the Alexander Technique is based. To learn this craft, students take part in apprenticeship-style groups in which they are supervised through a step-by-step program that progresses sequentially over the three-year training program, establishing a foundation of basic techniques from which more advanced skills can develop. Based on these procedures, students learn the practical and highly refined hands-on skills necessary to teaching, which they will then be qualified to apply in various professional settings.

READING: The Use of the Hands in Teaching, by Ted Dimon

PRACTICUMS IN TEACHING AND PEDAGOGY

Although skill in using the hands is the special craft on which teaching the Alexander Technique is based, teaching in general requires additional skills, including the ability to communicate verbally, to convey difficult concepts, knowledge of the subject, and the ability to manage interpersonal situations. In the teaching practicums, these topics are covered in depth, giving the student crucial tools for developing a successful teaching practice and for applying the knowledge in professional settings. Taught primarily in the 2nd and 3rd years of training, this course explores practical teaching methods, ethics and professional conduct, and starting and maintaining a teaching practice.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Theodore Dimon, Ed.D., is Founder and Director of The Dimon Institute and an Adjunct Professor at Columbia University, Teachers College. An internationally renowned expert and teacher of the Alexander Technique, he created the Dimon Institute in 1997 to research, develop, and train teachers in the field of Psychophysical Education. He was certified in the Alexander Technique from the Constructive Teaching Centre in London by Walter Carrington in 1983. To establish national standards for teacher certification in the United States, he co-founded the American Society for the Alexander Technique (AmSAT) in 1987. A graduate of Tufts University, he received both his master's and doctorate degrees in education from Harvard University.

He has written ten books, including *Anatomy of the Moving Body*; *The Body in Motion: Its Evolution and Design*; *Anatomy of the Voice*; *Your Body, Your Voice*; *Breathing and the Voice*; *The Elements of Skill*; *The Undivided Self*; *A New Model of Man's Conscious Development*; *Neurodynamics: The Art of Mindfulness in Action*; and *The Use of the Hands in Teaching*. He is the editor of Frank Pierce Jones' *Collected Writings on the Alexander Technique*.



ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

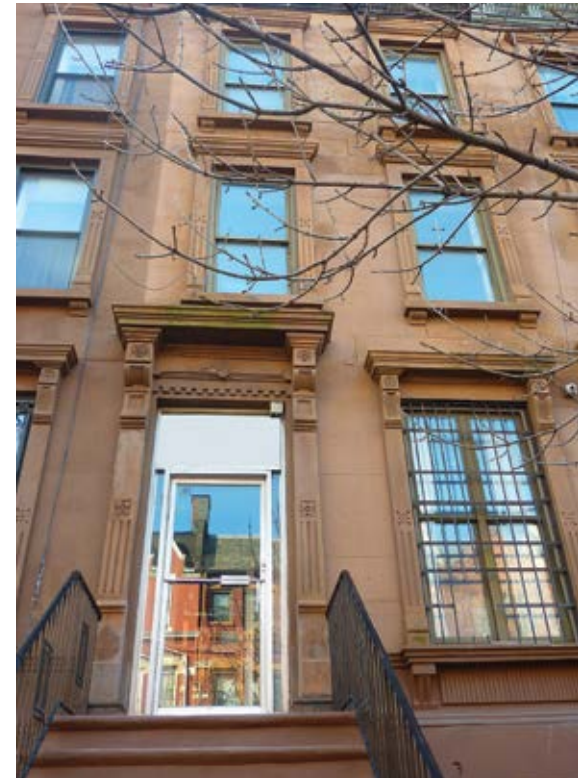
Founded in 1997, The Dimon Institute is located in a historic brownstone in Harlem in New York City just steps away from Columbia University, Teachers College.

The Dimon Institute is a world renowned center for the study of the Alexander Technique, and is dedicated to creating a culture of excellence, developing the field of Psychophysical Education, and preparing highly effective teachers and leaders to make a difference in real-world settings.

Students from around the world come to The Dimon Institute for professional training and certification. The Institute offers a three year program that leads to American Society for the Alexander Technique (AmSAT) Teacher Certification, as well as programs for professionals to develop advanced and specialized skills. As part of its commitment to advancement in education, The Institute also works with Columbia University, Teachers College to offer programs that culminate in Masters and Doctoral degrees.

The Dimon Institute is open to the public for private and group lessons, and also houses a major historical collection of research and correspondence on the work of F. Matthias Alexander and Frank Pierce Jones, which can be consulted by appointment.

The Dimon Institute is a 501(c)(3) non-profit and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, sex, or sexual orientation.





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FOR MORE INFORMATION

about The Dimon Institute, or to schedule an appointment to visit,
email info@dimoninstitute.org.