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# Pedagogic View to the Teaching of the Flute



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## Pedagogic View to the Teaching of the Flute

The aim of this thesis has been to deepen the author's pedagogical skills as a flute teacher with the latest learning and teaching experiences in the pedagogy of the flute playing. In this thesis, an interview has been used as a method of fact-finding. Also, reflection on the author's ideas, teaching habits and experiences related to flute pedagogy have been used. With interviews, the author has wanted to find out from some flute teachers in various music schools and conservatories what teaching and practice methods they have used as experienced flute teachers, what challenges they have faced in their flute teaching work and how they have solved the problems.

As a result of the thesis, the author explains her personal view of how a flute teacher can constantly develop herself/himself by studying her/his personal goals and experiences in depth, by considering the learning outcomes of her/his flute students, as well as new ways and opportunities to teach the flute. The thesis includes a list of the most commonly used teaching materials in the teaching of flute playing and the technical difficulties associated with flute playing, as well as some clues to overcome them.

The author of the thesis has found the thesis process useful, because the new concepts learned have been processed and organized in it becoming a new capital for her career as a flute teacher.

Keywords:

flute, flute playing, flutists, flute teaching, pedagogy, music pedagogy, music, teaching.

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## Pedagoginen näkökulma huilunsoiton opettamiseen

Opinnäytetyön tavoitteena on ollut syventää kirjoittajan pedagogisia taitoja huilunsoitonopettajana uusimmilla oppimis- ja opetuskokemuksilla.

Tässä opinnäytetyössä on käytetty haastattelua tiedonkeruumenetelmänä. Lisäksi on reflektoitu kirjoittajan ideoita, opetustapoja ja huilupedagogiikkaan liittyviä kokemuksia. Kirjoittaja on halunnut haastattelujen avulla selvittää eri musiikkikoulujen ja konservatorioiden huiluopettajilta, mitä opetus- ja harjoitusmenetelmiä he kokeneina huiluopettajina ovat käyttäneet, millaisia haasteita he ovat kohdanneet huilunsoitonopetuksessaan ja miten he ovat ratkaisseet erilaisia ongelmia.

Opinnäytetyön tuloksena kirjoittaja kertoo henkilökohtaisen näkemyksensä siitä, miten huilunsoitonopettaja voi jatkuvasti kehittää itseään tutkimalla omia tavoitteitaan ja kokemuksiaan, pohtimalla omien opiskelijoidensa oppimistuloksia, sekä uusia tapoja ja mahdollisuuksia opettaa huilunsoittoa. Opinnäytetyö sisältää listan huilunsoitonopetuksessa yleisimmin käytetyistä oppimateriaaleista, huilunsoittoon liittyvistä soittoteknisistä vaikeuksista ja vihjeitä niiden päihittämiseksi.

Opinnäytetyön tekijä on pitänyt opinnäytetyöprosessia todella hyödyllisenä, koska siinä opittuja uusia ajatuksia on käsitelty ja jäsennelty niin, että niistä on tullut uutta pääoma hänen uralleen huilunsoitonopettajana.

Asiasanat:

huilu, huilunsoitto, huilistit, huilunsoitonopetus, pedagogiikka, musiikkipedagogiikka, musiikki, opettaminen.

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## **A glossary of useful pedagogical concepts**

These pedagogical concepts helped me to deepen the approach of the new pedagogical world during my pedagogical studies in Finland. I think these concepts are relevant and it is really important for the teacher to know these.

### **Affectional bond**

In psychology, an affectional bond is a type of attachment behavior one individual has for another individual. (Wikipedia.c. Affectional bond.)

### **Critical thinking**

Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning or communication, as a guide to belief and action. In its exemplary form, it is based on universal intellectual values that transcend subject matter divisions: clarity, accuracy, precision, consistency, relevance, sound evidence, good reasons, depth, breadth, and fairness. (The Foundation of critical thinking.)

### **Key competencies**

Key competencies are the sum of skills (basic and new basic skills) needed to live in a contemporary knowledgeable society. Any of several generic skills or competencies considered essential for people to participate effectively in the workforce. Key competencies apply to work generally, rather than being specific to work in a particular occupation or industry. (Unesco-Unevoc.)

### **Learning needs**

Basic learning needs refer to the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary for people to survive, to improve the quality of their lives, and to continue to learn. (Unesco.)

**Learning outcomes**

Learning outcomes are sets of competences, expressing what the student will know, understand or be able to do after the completion of a process of learning, long or short. (Creating learning outcomes.)

**Lifelong learning**

Lifelong learning is the concept of pursuing additional education and the development of further skills beyond an individual's formal or compulsory education. Lifelong learning is generally voluntary and self-motivated based on a pursuit to learn more, gain new skills, or support professional development. Often lifelong learning is based on personal fulfilment or enjoyment. (Higher education.)

**Mentoring**

Mentoring is a positive, supportive facilitation of learning and development between a person with more experience, knowledge, or expertise in a certain field, and a person who is less knowledgeable or who is new to that field. In the tertiary setting, mentoring programs take on many forms and structures, with a range of objectives such as support for transition, academic supplemented instruction, and social support. (Oxford research encyclopedias.)

**Proximal development zone**

The zone of proximal development refers to the difference between what a learner can do without help and what he or she can achieve with guidance and encouragement from a skilled partner. (Simply psychology.)

**Scaffolding (supported learning)**

Scaffolding refers to breaking up new concepts so that they can be learned more easily. It is a process that many teachers have used for decades but that has recently received much more attention as an instructional approach. By implementing scaffolding, teachers can improve the likeliness that students will grasp new materials and retain what they have learned. (Education corner.)

## 1 Introduction

It is important for an inexperienced music teacher to define and become aware of what it means to teach. It is also important to be aware of the importance of continuous learning in their own pedagogical work. Every teacher needs to improve their coaching and mentoring skills and continuous learning skills, which are more important at the beginning of the teaching than the teacher's advanced playing skills. Teaching implies "learning how to teach", and it means continuous learning, which is the most important skill a beginning teacher can try to pursue.

Definitions of teaching differ from each other: in the English vocabulary the word "teaching" is explained as a teacher's profession, especially in primary school, upper secondary school, or university. (Teaching.)

Another definition of teaching is "the process of participation in student's learning needs, experiences, and emotions, and it is also a teacher's intervention to learn certain things and to develop the student beyond taught things. (What is teaching?)

Is progress "beyond the given teaching" necessary only for the student or also for the teacher? We may ask how long it will be necessary for the teacher to participate in the student's learning needs.

The quality of educational content is the starting point for good teaching. Studying the material to be taught and choosing the most important teaching content means that the teacher can choose the materials that can promote key competencies of the students. (Picture 1.) Each country has official guidelines based on specific learning outcomes for each school, educational institution, or university. Every teacher must be aware of them and know them.

Today's teachers are greatly helped by using technology for learning purposes. These provide a vast source of information that the teacher can freely exploit and thus use valuable teacher's academic freedom applying a critical choice regarding the selected materials and create a personal database of learning contents.



Teaching is vocational education, based on the ability to communicate with a new community of learners, to convey critical thinking, but is also guiding and giving/receiving continuously ideas and reflections. To stabilize a good connection with learners, the teacher should maintain and promote a healthy lifestyle (i.e., be themselves in healthy condition) including psychologically, because the starting point for good teaching is also an exemplary influence on the learner.

Teaching is also based on the personal experiences of both the teacher and the learner: the mentoring relationship and the teacherhood are topics that have recently received great attention.

The flute is an important instrument and is widely studied in music classes, especially in primary and secondary school. The flute has seen many changes in its construction throughout history. For children, the lightness and portability of the instrument is an advantage. In addition, it is easy for children to listen to the high tunes of the flute.

Young flute students, who are at the concrete operational stage of the cognitive development theory of Jean Piaget, can quickly adopt and understand the specific content discussed in flute class, for example, how music and notation work. At that age, children can spontaneously also create an empathetic affectional bond with the music teacher because they need an emotional secure base to feel ready to face life difficulties, and therefore they are trainable.

The music is “the joy of playing” in addition to an artistic language with which the flute students can communicate, building personal constructs (George Kelly) that are fundamental to increase their knowledge for their long-term memory.

All these are related to the pedagogical concepts like lifelong learning, “Spiral approach of the learning process”, “scaffolding” (supported learning) and proximal development zone.

This thesis includes a literature review and interviews with experienced flute teachers to help me find answers to the following research questions:

What effective teaching methods have teachers of flute playing found in various situations of the teaching of the flute? What common issues have the flute teachers found concerning the technical challenges of flute playing, and how they have solved them?



Picture 1. Pedagogy, in education, more than just a buzzword. (Pedagogy.)

## 2 Exploring teaching of the flute using interviews

To better explore teaching of the flute, I interviewed a few experienced flute teachers and asked them to tell me about their vision of flute teaching, the different general problems and solutions of flute playing techniques and other curiosities about teaching. I'm very grateful to all of them for sharing their invaluable professionalism and dedicating part of their time to this thesis.

### 2.1 Oleg Sytianko

Oleg Sytianko is a flute lecturer in the Turku Academy of Applied Sciences in Finland. He has been my flute pedagogy teacher during my studies in Finland. His opinions received during this interview are very important to me at this point of my career as I enter the world of flute teaching.

Silvia, S: What recommendations would you give to a beginner flute teacher?

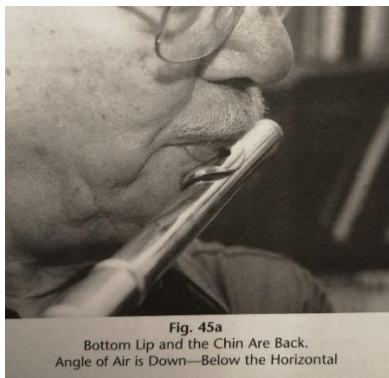
Oleg, O: I recommend teaching in a personal way and trying different means and methods with the students that seem more effective dependent on the situation.

S: What are the most common problems you have encountered in students and how to find the solution?

O: One of the most common problems that both small and adult students have is the superfluous tension and the stress that comes from that. To solve the problem, Angeleita Floyd shows in the book "The Gilbert Legacy" different solutions. (Pictures 2 and 3.) It is good to take a deeper breath through the stomach using the diaphragm to avoid unnecessary extra tensions, and to remove the tension that usually accumulates in the jaw through massages and specific treatments. In the chapter "the position of the jaw and the chin", it is explained in this way:

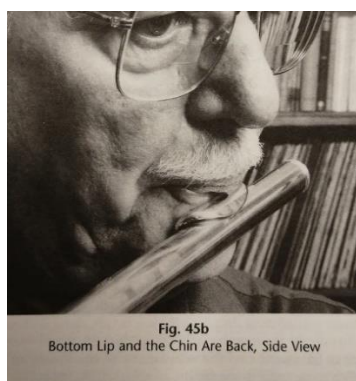
- *"Basic position of the jaw and chin (Picture 2.) - After positioning the lips in a relaxed, pouting formation, the next step is to consider the position of the jaw and chin. The jaw is lowered down from the back joint, allowing the*

*chin to remain relaxed. This position creates a larger mouth cavity, which helps to free the flow of air and allows for greater control and flexibility of the angle of the air stream.” (Floyd 1990, 57)*



Picture 2: Basic position of the jaw and chin. (Floyd 1990, 57)

- *“Position of the chin in relation to the movement of the lower lip - For practice, Gilbert suggested locking the teeth together and moving the lips forward, away from the teeth. Even with the teeth clamped together the lips are free to move in any direction without movement from the jaw. Drop the jaw down and notice the natural, relaxed position of the mouth. Blow enough air to separate the lips. With the lower lip pulled back and the chin down, notice the direction the air is traveling—angled down, below a horizontal plane”. (Floyd 1990, 57)*



Picture 3: Position of the chin in relation to the movement of the lower lip. (Floyd 1990, 57)

S: What books and methods do you use daily in flute lessons for beginners?

O: I usually use, among others, the following books:

- Vivo
- Huilu ja minä (The flute and me)
- Trevor-Wye: Practice book for the flute, volume 1–5;
- Rampal and Marion: Methode pour Henry Altes

S: What kind of perspective do you have about flute pedagogy?

O: All teachers have different experiences. A good flute teacher needs to find a good way to solve technical problems of all kinds e.g., the articulation of the tongue that can be solved through the same methods that are used in speech therapy.

A teacher's job is to find different technically suitable "keys" for the student, and to advise on their correct use. Practices can also be done without the flute to remove a certain problem. The use of clear and comprehensible examples is particularly important in the case where the pupil is a child.

## 2.2 Signe Sjölund

Signe Sjölund is the lecturer of music perception as well as a teacher of the flute in the Turku Conservatory in Finland. I interviewed her to learn how she manages both teaching (Picture 4.) and the flute. This interview was important for reflecting on music teaching.

Silvia: What difficulties have you had in teaching beginners in flute playing over the years and how have you solved them?

Signe: With young flute students, a common difficulty is to find the right direction to the blowing and directing of the air stream into the flute hole. The teacher can show and explain verbally to them how to find the right way to do it, but the students need to find the correct way to do it themselves, because it is something invisible, and it is not easy to explain just by words. The most difficult thing is to

explain the concepts understandably and to correct things that are invisible to the eyes. For young children, giving a concrete mental image is very helpful e.g., comparing the flute blowing with a candle blowing, or comparing rapid inhalation and exhalation with a rubber duck that expands after pressing.

Silvia: What difficulties you have faced with advanced flute students, and how you have solved them?"

Signe: The challenges of advanced students are different. For example, the bigger difficulties are not so much technical, but motivational. It is also up to the teacher to give the students sufficient options and motivate them to become independent musicians, meaning to become flute players with their own opinion. The teacher should encourage the students to form their own musical vision. It is useful to give them enough musical pieces to study and let them decide how they can find their own way. Doing so they can expand their knowledge and view.

It is also important to give the student enough material to play, listen and discuss what he liked or disliked; to learn to read and analyze, to find the harmony of music and to talk about the musical content.

Silvia: "Which flute playing material and methods do you use daily?"

Signe: With children, I usually start with the Vivo book, after which I do not follow the flute method books but choose songs that are suitable for them on a case-by-case basis. With children, it is also important to maintain a high motivation for flute playing, so I also look for repertoire pieces that can help them to build a mental image of different musical styles and historical periods, and to keep their flute playing motivations as high as possible.



Picture 4: Names of the notes. (The photo from the Flute class, Silvia Raia.)

### 2.3 Francesco Baldi

University teacher and flute professor, Francesco Baldi, has been my flute teacher for many years in the “Santa Cecilia” Conservatory in Italy. I wanted to ask him about some general difficulties that the Conservatory-level students have.

Silvia, S: What problems have conservatory flute students often encountered and how have they been solved?

Francesco, F: This is a complex question for which there is no single answer. Every flute student has different difficulties, in some cases even to the opposites. Some students may find a very difficult technical matter when playing, while others may find the same point very easy: some of them can have a developed technique but still have sound difficulties, while other students can play the opposite way.

I have also encountered personal factors among my students that the teacher cannot ignore. I have tried to choose different teaching methods for each student,

taking into consideration also the student's personal problems. For example, health reasons; periods of depression; etc. I have always opposed applying the same teaching methods to all the students as I have seen some of my colleagues do over the years.

S: What is your vision of flute teaching?

F: Studying and teaching an instrument in my opinion is like a research laboratory. The teacher and the student must find solutions together to the various difficulties, which can differ with each student. The results matter, not the validity of my personal way of teaching. If a student gets the result by adopting a different solution than mine, I absolutely agree. Rather, I think that for a teacher it is wrong to impose his own teaching regardless of the results.

#### 2.4 Marco Ferraguto

Marco Ferraguto has been one of my first flute teachers during my studies in Italy. He taught me the basics of flute playing. Marco teaches music and flute in an elementary and middle school in Rome, Italy. The interview with him helped me to understand how to better organize a flute lesson.

Silvia, S: What kind of difficulties are more common with young flute students?

Marco, M: A general difficulty I have met with young students is in assembling the flute, i.e., assembling it with the headjoint too inward or outward (it is a matter of millimeters), to find the exact balance between the headjoint, bodyjoint and the footjoint, because there should be a perfect balance. Once it is found, there is a greater balance, and the sound works.

Another important general difficulty that should be resolved in the right way is the position of the hands and the fifth finger, which should be arched like all the other fingers. (Picture 6.)

S: How do you recommend resolving this difficulty and in which situations have you experimented these methods?



M: To resolve this difficulty, in the first volume of Trevor Wye - Practice Book for the Flute, he talks about the way the flute should be assembled and shows how the headjoint and the foot should be placed in line with the keys. However, the solution is not written in the books, since everyone has a different shape of lips and mouth. So, because the (physiognomy) physical structure is different with every student (the jaw, the chin, the lips), the flute can be settled differently. I experimented these methods in all the instrumental lessons: at school, during the individual study, during specialization courses and masterclasses, during the teaching lessons and in all those situations and contexts in which there is research of the sound and technique.

You can also experiment with your own methods in any situation where you need to tell someone how to play. You can give a simple advice during a flute lesson.

S: During the warm-up of the flute playing, what would be the most important technical parameter in your opinion? What methods do you consider the most useful midst the warm-up? How long does this part of the lesson usually take?

M: The most important parameter during the warm-up is the research and development of the flute sound. According to my experiences, some sounds, for example the whistle sounds are quite functional for technical improvement. With the intermediate-level flute students, I highly recommend playing those kinds of tones. There are other useful and interesting sound exercises for opening the throat, such as the double sounds, the harmonics, and singing while playing e.g., arpeggios or long notes. This part of the warm-up can take about 30 minutes of a lesson.

S: What warm-up exercises do you use every day during the flute lessons of young students, and what methods do you recommend for warm up?

M: In the beginning of a flute lesson, I highly recommend playing some long notes, starting from a comfortable note like g1 and going higher or lower by whole tones and semitones. After doing that, I recommend playing some scales and arpeggios. If children are small, it can be good for them to study, step by step, the major scales and the minor scales up to three sharps and down to three flats.

S: Why do you think that the research of the technique in the flute playing is fundamental?

M: The playing technique is fundamental to express musicality and personality through the sound of the flute. With good sound quality, the deep voice that is in each of us comes out naturally.

### **3 A personal view of the progress of a flute teacher.**

In this chapter, I write about the most relevant things I have had the opportunity to better explore and deepen my knowledge of during this last academic year.

#### **3.1 Personal experiences and key-learning**

During this multiform course at the Turku University of Applied Sciences, I had the opportunity to deepen many concepts, but most of all I was interested in the idea of positive pedagogy, which has been almost unknown to me. I became more and more aware that the proper formation of thoughts is based on progressive teaching.

I also understood that in teaching methodology it is not useful to use phrases that contain bans, nor to highlight some technical shortcomings, but to show the student how to do something to learn: for example, something that the student can't yet do it doesn't mean he/she can't learn it.

From the first instrument hours onwards, in order to develop playing techniques it is very useful to introduce exercises that can help activate the diaphragm. The diaphragm simply needs to start working. At the next stage, the student will better understand how the diaphragm moves automatically, and then he/she can create his/her own mental representation, an image of the diaphragmatic breathing.

It's also more convenient to set up the lessons with methodical and progressive exercises; not to do too long lessons for the students who have not yet solid foundations, because they could progress hastily. The results count, and when the student reaches their goals, it is important that the teacher gives positive feedback to the student to reinforce the most important key concepts.

Teacher's constant personal instrumental practice and the sight reading, are fundamental to not lose the mental processes of learning and conceptual representations, and not to confuse the order of the basic learning concepts of musical constructs and the flute playing technique.

The research of the repertoire, the choice, and the adaptation to the learning needs of each flute student are important.

About methodology, I understood that the practice books (the flute methods that are also used in the academic environment) are useful for those students who still need to set up a solid foundation, because these books include gradual exercises and are designed to be studied under the guidance of a teacher. There is a wide selection of these kinds of books for various age groups.

I have seen more clearly that the learning context and environment are fundamental to positive learning and that cooperative learning, i.e., playing music together with fellow students, leads to visible results much faster.

I learned that good teachers must have high social skills, must be well aware of their social role, expert in their field and must be able to set up a specific study path from the very beginning and then gradually adapt it to the learning needs of the students. In addition, they must have good research skills for the study materials, i.e., the research of the methods.

The repertoire needs to be adapted to the student's learning needs, considering his "zone of proximal development". According to Vygotsky, a proximal development area refers to the difference between what a learner can do without help and what he can achieve with the guidance and support of a professional partner or in cooperation with his more capable peers. (Simply psychology)

A good teacher also considers the age of the child and his/her growth factors; is aware of the concept of fair teaching contents; knows the school programs learned simultaneously by the schoolchild (interdisciplinarity of the musical contents), gives voice to the interests of the learner, is empathetic and does not inhibit the various personalities of his students. He/she takes into consideration any learning need (including learning disorders), so it is necessary to stay always updated and develop some alternative methods for the teaching of the instrument and the music. A good teacher also asks questions to stimulate the student to create his/her own perception of the instrumental technique and metacognition

about the learning path, aimed at educational goals. A good teacher frequently revises and evaluates their academic curriculum.

My first teaching experience was when I gave private flute lessons while I was attending the last few years of my academic flute studies. I soon understood that teaching fits well with my personality and that it could also train me in continuous learning.

Teaching the flute is a source of precious stimulus, to establish solid interaction and organizational skills and to learn concepts regarding the study of the flute and of course the teaching of the flute.

After graduation, I entered the school environment in Italy in the Rome metropolitan area by participating in some musical projects. I worked privately, in private schools and took part in some associations. After these work experiences I decided to continue my pedagogical studies in Finland.

These experiences made a deep impression on me. Through them my sense of community and responsibility and teaching skills have increased and developed vastly (the perfect triangle of education, research and development).

Fun in teaching should not be left as the last thing (“if I see — I remember, if I do — I learn”, and the best way to learn is to have fun).

I learned to better manage the use of words; to better manage stress, emotions, and schedules; to adapt my pace to the student’s pace and to not lose the final sight of the teaching framework, always considering the learning outcomes.

These are just some experiences I wanted to share in this thesis, but the “good teacher” in me is also aware of the fact that the training process is very long (even a lifetime, because “we never stop learning”), in which direct experience is fundamental and the desire to improve oneself every day is the most important thing.

### 3.2 Personal goals and learning opportunities.

It is important for a teacher to set specific personal goals also in the working life, and above all it is important to seize the learning opportunities that the educational environment and working life offers to us, since we live in a society that allows us to choose between the various training on offer and to choose the one, we believe is the most suitable for us.

Building one's own life goals and practicing and studying to complete them is, in our current society, a strong factor in personal progression. Having clear ideas at the beginning certainly helps to shorten the time needed to reach those goals and achieve the overall results, but our personal skills, abilities, and knowledge also play an important role in progression and attainment of goals for each of us.

All this leads to the concept of metacognition, which — often without knowing it — we begin to use already from primary school. I often wonder at which stage my metacognitive process is, and what role I will hold in society; and in which one, after I decided to undertake postgraduate studies in Finland instead of Italy.

Among the many countries where I could have chosen to study music pedagogy, I chose Finland because I already knew the basics of the language, and because I knew that Finland and the Nordic countries are investing in lifelong learning, in schools, universities and in work life. It was also a personally important decision to improve my Finnish language skills as much as possible, from the moment my current goal became to teach music in public schools in Finland.

In Finland I found a vast selection of possible educational branches. Through the Erasmus project I was accepted onto a study program in Finland. The fact that through this Erasmus project both the Finnish state and the Italian state made me feel supported was important.

In Finland there are many students. They are important assets of the society: in my opinion the country tries as much as possible to make them feel comfortable and supported. Because of this, I feel lucky to have had this beautiful opportunity to study pedagogy in Finland.

It is very important in this phase of defining and achieving personal goals to learn well how to manage emotions, anxieties, and fears, just as it is important to learn how to manage them before, during and after concert performances, competitions or exams.

The indications of the ministry of health and the guides for university students can be a valuable source of reflection and help for each of us. I found accidentally an excellent guide, Finnish Student Health Service's guide no 7, where is explained the importance of controlling breathing, and I want to give an example of some of the interesting concepts:

*“Getting excited is a natural part of life, almost everyone sometimes gets excited. The functional impairment caused by social tension can be seen in many ways. In the studies of adults, it has been found that social anxiety causing significant harm develops for 75% by the age of 15 and for 90% by the age of 23. Social anxiety often develops during adolescence and young adulthood. People often look for pop art and a quick way to relieve tension, however, there is none.”*  
(Jännittäminen osana elämää. 7. Vanha opas)

*“Living with stress, anxiety and tension is a skill that can be learned. Good ways to live with excitement are those that genuinely increase your well-being.”*

*“The means of relaxation are individual. Breathing is a bridge between mind and body. It is connected with mental experiences, for example emotions. A tense and anxious person holds his breath or breathes violently or shallowly. A fearful person does not dare to take up space, even to breathe freely. Even though breathing is partially automatic, we can influence it through the movement of mental images or sound.”* (Jännittäminen osana elämää. 43.)

## 4 Personal experiences as a flute teacher

### 4.1 Teaching from general to particular

The arts are important for complete development of logic, fine motor skills and visual skills. Studying the flute develops the brain of the flute player, especially during the learning phase, when music notes, or visual stimuli, are encoded. In this case, more abstract concepts, such as music series, are built from the notes read and repeated in a way that they are recorded to the flute player's mind.

Studying the flute trains the brain through visual, auditory, and tactile sensory stimulus, which are important for the development of all the multiple knowledges and memories to which the human being is capable (i.e., musical/ rhythmic and harmonic, visual/ spatial, linguistic/ verbal, logical/ mathematical, bodily/ kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal).

Studying the music and the flute objectively helps the students to improve abilities, for example, to create personal interactions and to have a more complete personal vision of the surrounding world; to mentally recall sounds and melodies; to maintain and improve innate skills and qualities. Musical studies are especially important for a more complete construction of an inner world; of a personal point of view; for experiencing visual and physical gestures in a more precise, artistic way.

Having followed flute lessons in the Turku University of Applied Sciences also helped me organize better my mind: how to better plan and set-up a lesson, how to explain playing technical things in a different language, how to choose the learning materials, as well to study the research of all these aspects. This have all been an invaluable help.

I have played the flute about 17 years and since the beginning of my studies I have always tried to follow the words of the professors and take their guidance, never doing things entirely on my own without instruction. I have attended many different types of musical courses, not only instrumental courses. I have decided



to go on by following my curious and investigative nature. This has been a solid basis for me to become a flute teacher. During my academic career, I have had the opportunity to experiment with multiple study methods, based on books, many repertoire pieces, ensemble music scores also with piano or guitar accompaniment and music sheets received and collected from different teachers, etc. (Picture 14.)

#### 4.2 Structure of the flute lesson

The search of material for teaching the flute is quite complex, but I am greatly helped by the many well-stocked bookshops in the city of Turku, as they give everyone the possibility to order books of any kind and they make available research materials to everyone. The greatest help comes from my professors and especially from my current flute teacher and pedagogue Oleg Sytianko, who is always available to give effective advice, as he has been a university teacher for many years and therefore a great connoisseur of his subject. Furthermore, the enormous amount of information and scores, methods, online books, and everything else that the internet provides help greatly in the research.

I generally organize my flute lessons in a way that the student does some warm-up exercises from memory, e.g., playing long notes, sometimes with the support of the tuner. After that, I highly recommend some breathing exercises, e.g., breathing exercises where the student counts how many seconds, he/she can inhale and blow —whether by standing, sitting or lying on the ground.

Next, we start playing of scales and arpeggios, also deepening the music reading/perceiving, then playing some pieces or exercises taken from flute books that I think suitable for the age and level of the student. Playing always comes after making the student listen to the complete exercise to figure out what the result can be.

As I followed flute lessons for students of different ages and grades in the conservatory, I noticed that the general level of flute playing education in Finland

is high. Below there is a summary of the observations I made as I followed the flute lessons.

- Play first some warm-up exercises, e.g., from flute books.
- Explain the articulation, cutting the air flow with the tongue by using the spelling "DU", "TU" or "TA".
- Use different colors to better distinguish the notes if the student has difficulties in note reading.
- Talk and discuss with the student to let him/her express himself freely.
- Use piano accompaniment to support the flute playing of the student, when possible.
- Keep the classroom clear and in order, also use decorations that can be colorful.
- Talk clearly and explain by giving clear instructions (not too many at the same time).
- Use a notebook and write the homework there.
- Show and always check that the student cleans the flute in the proper way.
- Make questions to let the students think about what the right answer could be.
- Sing "TI" for the short notes (or) and "TAA" for the long notes.
- Use a curved mouthpiece of the flute (Picture 9.) if the student is a small child.
- Put a visible fingering table and a picture of the parts of a flute in the classroom. (Picture 11.)
- Do not play so often as a model with the little ones, so that they do not play by listening to the teacher but by reading the notes.
- Check that the student always has the correct position of the body and that the fingers are always arched.
- Help the student to find a pure sound by exploring the topic together.
- Help the student to connect the movement of the fingers with the tongue articulation.
- Give students as homework music pieces with different music styles and degrees of difficulty.

- Keep the maintenance supplies of the flute in the classroom you teach.
- Follow the safety instructions rules not to leave anything in the way of the classroom corridor.
- A good lesson duration is for beginners 30 min., for those who have studied for a few years 45 min., for advanced students 60 min.

I also followed piccolo lessons, because the study of the piccolo is very important for a professional flutist. It is good to set up the piccolo lesson similarly to the flute lesson, but only changing the repertoire.

### **Well-recognized rehearsals for flute lessons**

- Start with different interval exercises to achieve good sound and correct flexibility.
- Make staccato exercises using the diaphragm: articulation exercises with “HO” and with “TA”.
- Make double tongue stroke: articulation exercises with “TAKA” or “TUKU”, “DAGA” or “DUGU”.
- Play standing like in concerts or sitting like in orchestra. The teacher can follow the music (e.g., orchestral parts) from another sheet or a tablet.
- It is important to always play well (with tone colors, dynamics, etc.), to think musically and do not close the mouth and the lips even if tired.
- Play the pieces at different speeds to reach step by step clearer notes and articulations.
- Musical interpretation.

### 4.3 Some general playing technical difficulties of flute playing

Below there is a list of some general difficulties I have noticed flute students usually have.

- Sometimes it is challenging for a student to assemble the flute properly and make the tuning; in this case, the teacher can check, adjust, and tune the flute, if necessary. The tuner can also be used as an aid.
- Blowing into the mouthpiece of the flute in the same direction can be difficult for some flute students. In this case, the flute teacher can help by showing some technical aids e.g., putting a finger instead of the flute as an embouchure and trying to blow in the same way as they would do with the flute, or buying some special aids for this purpose. (Picture 8.)
- Keep the given order of the road when practicing the flute playing e.g., doing the warm-up exercises first, then playing the music scales, then playing the pieces. The flute teacher can remind the student that it is better to do some warm-up exercises before starting to play the pieces.
- Explore and analyze a long music piece to get a perfect view of the musical piece or work. The flute teacher can support the student by asking him/her to repeat the music work several times and get him/her to listen to it so that the student can memorize it and thus extend the length of the part that should be remembered.
- Thinking about many things at the same time requires concentration throughout the lesson. It is useful to take a break if the student seems tired.
- If connecting the movement of the fingers with the articulation of the tongue while playing does not work, do more technical exercises to better succeed.
- Keeping the fingers curved in the proper position on the keys and in the center of the keys is not easy for all flute students. (Picture 6.) There are different kinds of aids for the flute, e.g., thumb supports and cushions that can be used. (Picture 5 and 7.)



Picture 5. Thumb support for the right hand. (Flute center of New York. a.)



Picture 6. Position of the hands on the flute. (Etsy.)



Picture 7. Cushions for the support of the flute. (Flute center of New York. b.)



Picture 8. Wind director for blowing exercises. (F-musiikki.)

Flute students can have difficulties with maintaining the air stream while articulating the music. It would be useful if the flute teacher gave specific images to explain some concepts. We can imagine many things. For example, we can think about ourselves as a bust of a statue upon which we can lean, then breathing and controlling the air stream while exhaling; or imagine that a thread is pulling us from above the head, hanging on it like puppets, or imagine that the respiratory tract is like a pipe from which the air comes.

If the flautist is small, it is possible to insert in the body of the flute different kinds of head-joints. (Pictures 9 and 10.)

The quality of the flute is also important for sound quality.

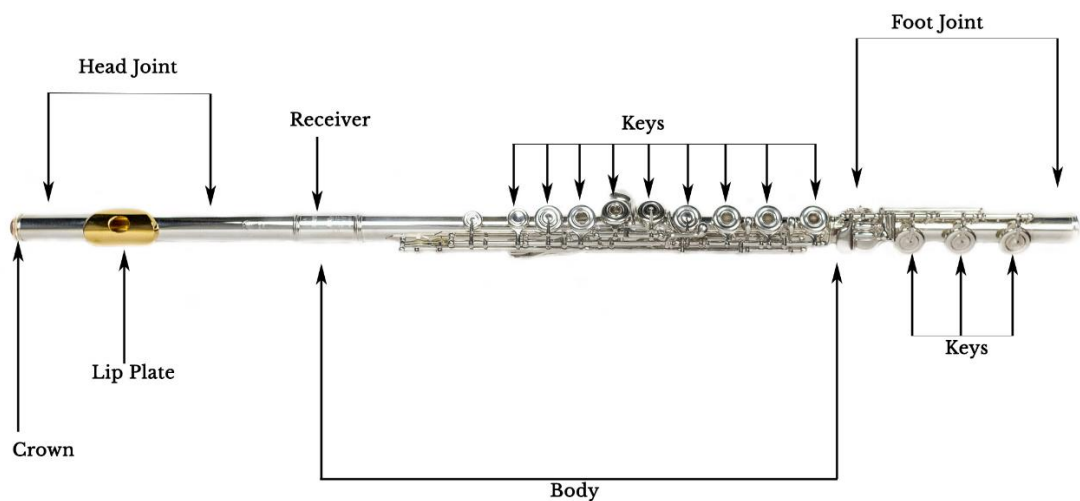


Picture 9. A curved headjoint. (Music & Arts.)



Picture 10. A loop headjoint. (Jupiter.)

It is also important to explain to a beginner flautist the different parts of which the flute is composed (Picture 11.) and to give him/her an idea of the functioning of the respiratory system. (Pictures 12 and 13.)



Picture 11. The different parts of a flute. (AMRO music.)

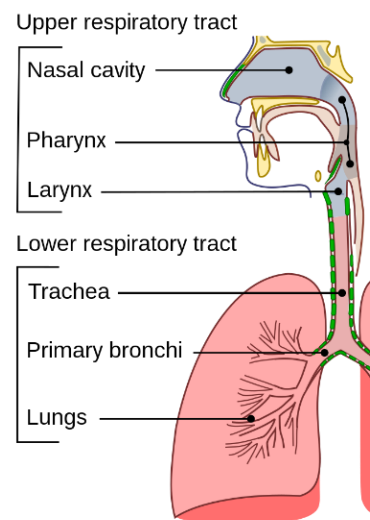
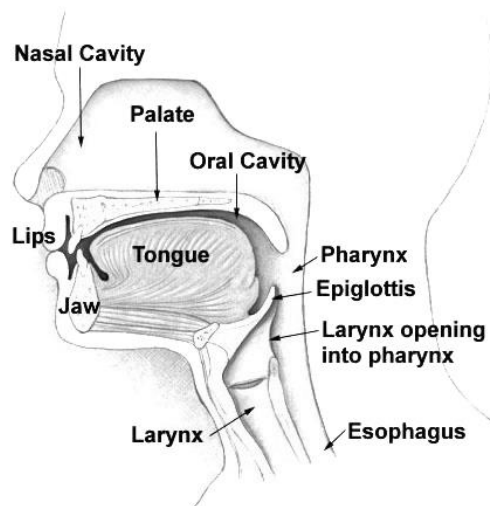
### Some useful exercises for the warm-up

One of the best and most useful stretching exercises I experienced is a stretching exercise for the lips, where the flautist must keep steady the head-joint changing intonation through the movement of the lips, which can move forward and back until the flautist plays with a full resonance.

Another stretching exercise is to keep the mouth completely open for about ten seconds. The flute player can stand leaning the head against the wall and arch the back from side to side for a few minutes trying to feel the diaphragm activating.

**Relaxing exercises** can be done at any moment of the flute lesson.

The player is alternating long and short breaths in a lying position, trying to preserve them for as long as possible. While listening to music and visualizing images it is possible to stretch the neck and the shoulders such as in the Alexander technique. This is a work amount that should be divided in successive phases and studied over separate days.



Picture 12: Human mouth - head and neck. (Wikipedia.a. Human mouth)

Picture 13: Trachea – conducting passages. (Wikipedia.b.Trachea)

4.4 Lists of the flute and the piccolo methods in order of difficulty, from easiest to most difficult:

Here is a vast list of methods, used internationally, that I love and that I have experimented with and have also found useful during my studies:

- “Vivo”-book (I discovered it in Finland, and I recommend it for children)
- Trevor Wye – “Practice book for the flute” vol. 1-5; “Breathing & Scales”
- Suzuki – “Suzuki flute school” vol. 1-5
- Rampal and Marion – “Methode pour Henry Altes”
- Galli – “30 exercises for the flute” Op. 100
- Gariboldi – “20 studies” Op. 132

- Ernesto Köhler – “Daily studies for the flute”; “15 easy studies for the flute” Op. 33; “The flutist’s progress” Op.33
- Bàntai-Kovàcs – “Selected studies for flute”
- Isabelle Ory – “La flûte traversière”
- Barbara Gisler – “Magic flute”
- Philippe Bernold – “La technique d' embouchure”
- M. A. Reichert – “7 daily exercises for flute” Op. 5
- Sigfrid Karg-Elert – “30 studies for flute” Op. 107
- Marcel Moyse – “The beginner flautist”; “24 little melodic studies”; “Scales and arpeggios”; “De la sonorité, art and technique”; “De la sonorité”; “Gammes et arpeges”
- Taffanel et Gaubert – “Complete flute method”; “17 big daily exercises for the flute”; “Grands excercises journaliers de mécanisme”; “Méthode complète de flute”
- J. Andersen – “24 studies” Op. 15, Op. 30, Op. 60, and Op. 63,
- E. Kohler – “30 virtuoso studies” Op. 75
- G. Briccialdi – “6 grand studies for the flute” Op. 31
- J. Herman – “12 grandes etudes de style”
- B. Fürstenau, Op. 107
- N. Paganini – “24 caprices” Op. 1

Some methods for the piccolo:

- Edition Peters – Orchester Probespiel
- Trevor Wye & Patricia Morris – A piccolo practice book.

I have also played the following baroque flute exercises:

- Janice Dockendorff Boland - Method for the One-Keyed Flute.



In addition to the lists above (Picture 14.), if I would have included all the repertoire pieces I have collected over the years, (with or without piano accompaniment, guitar accompaniment or any other instrument) the list would be endless, so I will leave the personal research and elaboration of flute playing materials to the reader.



Picture 14. Books for the flute. (A photo from Silvia Raia's library.)

## **5 Teaching the flute – an act of love**

The thesis process has been a new experience for me. My developing does not end after writing this thesis and it will most certainly continue also, because it is important to me to continually learn and develop.

This is my first pedagogic thesis. I have written it both in English and Finnish language neither of which is my mother tongue. The process has demanded adaptation to timetables and writing styles that I had not experienced before.

The study and teaching of flute playing are a daily subject for me, and I am sure that these will be for the rest of my life. Maintaining a positive, holistic, and detailed vision of flute teaching and of the relevant learning of the student at the same time may be one of the greatest difficulties of this job. Since teachers can often take the risk of getting lost in their teaching routine, sometimes there is a need for updating and refreshing oneself with experimenting what the mind of a student can be like. Personally, I like the thought that since it is possible to learn much from students, a teacher is himself/herself also a student.

Exploring different teaching methods, collecting different points of view, communicating with colleagues and students, instrumental practice, comparing oneself with others, continuous updating, good insertions in different academic and scholastic contexts, and maintaining a lively interest and love for one's profession, are all a great act of love, since the love for one's work is fundamental. For a flute teacher, teaching and playing music is an act of love for both you and your students.

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