Contemporary Alexander Teacher Training Programs

Thank you for your interest in our teacher training program in Contemporary Alexander Work. We offer self-paced, non-residential, contemporary teacher training programs based in Santa Fe, NM and Portland OR, with full time, part-time, and academic-calendar training options. The emphasis is on being able to teach the fundamental principles of the Work to individuals and groups within the activities of their lives. We are the only USA branch of the Alexander Alliance International, which has been offering immersion-based teacher training through a contemporary pedagogy since 1982.

Here is a basic overview of this uniquely flexible training program.

**The Philosophy**

There is an underlying principle which guides the essence of the training, best expressed in a quote by philosopher Ram Dass:

“The only thing we have to offer another being, ever, is our own state of being.”

At its core, the training is about you. Your state of being. It is a kinesthetic study of being. We notice, question, and transform our habitual ways of doing, thinking, and feeling. It is a profound study of making conscious choices about who and how you are. It is truly life-altering.

Expect to question everything. Expect to awaken to your full presence and potential. Then, and only then, will you be able to assist your students in their own transformation, without judgment, manipulation, or ego.

This unique training program is specifically designed to be possible within the reality of people’s busy lives. Each individual may design their own program according to their needs, and within their own time frame, following a basic format, detailed below.
The Curriculum

This program offers a very contemporary style of the Work, in the lineage of Marjorie Barstow, the first person F.M. Alexander trained to become a teacher of his Work. The CAS training program is unique and quite different from more traditional Alexander programs, as has been graduating successful Alexander Teachers for nearly 40 years.

2 Trainings in 1
The CAS training program is really two trainings: one in the profound embodiment of Alexander’s Work and one in the teaching of Alexander’s Work. Thus, trainees focus on both their understanding and incorporation of the Principles in their daily lives, as well as the skills necessary to teach those Principles to others.

Emphasis is on being able to teach the fundamental principles of the Work to individuals and groups within the activities of their lives. We work with people while they are doing whatever they do – riding a horse, playing an instrument, working at a computer, rehearsing a play, walking their dog, cooking a meal, singing an aria – whatever. We focus on making the Work accessible, understandable.

Personal Application: “USE”
You can only teach what you know. Therefore, there is consistent, ongoing study on recognizing and changing your own personal habitual patterns (physical, mental, emotional, etc) – what we call your “use”. As with all Alexander studies, this is a fundamental aspect of the training – how you are being while you do whatever you are doing.

Sophisticated hands-on skills.
The teaching style is primarily hands-on and experiential. Trainees use their hands from the first day on. You will learn how to see, feel, and understand how and why people are moving and organizing themselves as they do. You will be able to offer them new alternatives for pain-free, easy movement. You will be able to communicate sensitively and accurately with your hands.
Trainees learn to use their hands not only to feel, but also to ‘see’, ‘hear’, and ‘sense’, what is happening within another person’s being. Trainees are introduced to a multitude of intuitive skills as they increase their ‘ways of knowing’. They learn to discern and transform the patterns and belief systems which create stress, tension, injury and limit life choices. They become proficient at working both on the table and in activities; and equally skilled at working with both individuals and groups.

**Teaching through Activities and Situations**

It is one thing to learn about your patterns of organization while sitting or standing quietly, paying attention solely to what you are doing. It is another thing entirely to notice your sitting while performing music, working at a computer, or throwing a pot. *That is why we learn to teach in activities.*

We all know that no matter how much you practice choosing a new response in your lesson, the moment you are in the ‘real-life’ situation, it is almost impossible to not return to your habitual response. *That is why we learn to teach in situations.*

The point is to have the skill to make the Work “user-friendly”. To meet the student in the moment that they need the most help. To offer them the experience that they can make this change for themselves – even and especially when it counts the most.

To help learn how to work with students in the moments of their real lives, *we go to wherever people do whatever they do* – to an artist’s studio, a horse-riding arena, a belly dancing class, a rock climb, an office, or a rehearsal of the local symphony. We work with people while they do their activities. And if we can’t go to their situation, we learn to help them re-create it in the lesson or class.

**Learn by Experience**

We learn by doing – we try something, evaluate how it went, make different choices, try again, and so on, over the course of hundreds of mini-practice moments. In this training, you will have thousands of chances to practice your new craft. Trainees get to practice explaining the principles of the Work, to use their hands with multitudes of people, and to learn how to analyze people’s habits of use. There are many opportunities to watch and co-teach actual private lessons. Trainees have the opportunity to observe and participate in hundreds of actual lessons, learning firsthand how to discern what a person needs in an individual lesson.
**Introductory Workshops**

Trainees also get to observe and co-teach many introductory workshops for all types of groups: choirs, runners, dentists, rehabilitation, performing artists, equestrians, senior citizens – any population that they choose. These intro workshops are integrated into most of the training events. As a result, CAS graduates are proficient at introducing the Work in a simple, clear, and playful manner, which is one of the most important tools for building a successful career as a Contemporary Alexander Teacher.

**Immersion Residencies**

CAS hosts 2 annual month-long residencies at leading music programs in the US. In the summer we are at the renowned Meadowmount School of Music, teaching some of the world’s top young musicians; in the winter we are at the Oberlin Conservatory, teaching singers, instrumentalists, actors and dancers. These longer immersions allow trainees to learn how to build content over many lessons and small group classes, an essential skill for creating a lively private practice.

**CAS Road Trips**

The CAS/AAI faculty also travel to the communities of the trainees and graduates, offering them an opportunity to introduce their town/city to the Work, and begin to generate future students. CAS has supported trainees and graduates in many places worldwide, including New Mexico, Colorado, Oregon, Ohio, Iowa, Alaska, Oklahoma, NY, Switzerland, France, UK, Germany, Latvia, Japan, and South Korea.

Additionally, there are courses included in the curriculum which offer additional and essential skills: *Living in a Body™*, an experiential body mapping course, and *Body, Breath & Sound™*, offering a deeper understanding of the use of your own breath and speech as a teacher. Trainees are introduced to complimentary skills through basic study of Cranial Sacral, Visceral, Unwinding, Deep Imagery, Reality Creation®, and Matrix Energetics® and other studies of transformation. These additional studies are designed to offer the trainee basic tools for being fully present with themselves and others.

Utilizing a blend of personal exploration, detailed hands-on and pedagogy skills, clear body mapping/anatomy, frequent apprenticeship teaching opportunities, and a deeply embodied understanding of Alexander’s principles, graduates of CAS can create an extraordinary career helping people change their lives through choice.
This Work is at the most sophisticated end of all touch-based modalities. Your hands and eyes will become extremely educated. Your ability to teach will become profound. Your way of being in the world will change. It takes time to master the skills.

**Everyone does it at their own pace, in their own way.**

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**The Training Events**

**In order to become certified to teach Alexander, trainees must study a minimum of 3 years and 25 Training Events.** Most trainees take 4 or 5 years to complete the program. Events are primarily offered in Santa Fe (NM) and Portland (OR); with additional events offered in a range of locations, including Iowa City (IO), Anchorage (AK), Claremont (CA), Boulder, (CO), Victoria (BC), Mexico, Germany, and Japan throughout the year.

Essentially, the format follows the Seasons, with **4 Long Events** (5 - 8 days), offered Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer, which, generally, all trainees attend. Using these 4 main immersions as a guide, the rest of the year is subdivided fairly evenly. The Long Events offer the opportunity to introduce themes of study which will carry through the shorter training events, as well as study groups and personal practice.

These Long Events are held in beautiful, inspiring places, often right on the ocean or high in the mountains. We usually rent a large group house, or sometimes go to a retreat center, and spend the week totally together. We cook our meals communally, we work, play, rest, socialize, and just hang out - together - inside a container of profound questioning and deep study. We go hiking and kayaking, we read and have lively debates, we play ping pong and make music together.

Equally spread between the Long Events, there are **4 or 5 Short Events** (2 - 4 days). Pedagogically, the Short Events allow trainees to focus in depth on a particular skill or theme.

Between each of the Short and Long Events, there are **One Day Events**, which are intended to address particular themes from the Long Events, or specific applications (like spending a day hiking and overnight camping, or at a horse barn, or at a artist’s commune).
The Summer Event is the highlight of the training year. In addition to being the CAS summer event, it is also the Alexander Alliance International Annual Summer Retreat, bringing all of the Directors and many of the faculty of the Alliance schools worldwide together for 10 days to Team Teach, a pedagogical form which we have crafted over decades. Every school also has trainees and graduates represented at the Summer Retreat. It is a time for students from Europe, Japan, and the US to form friendships, study together, and create the ‘webbing’ which bonds the larger Alliance community and supports future generations of teachers working together. I highly recommend that you visit the summer website: www.alexandersummerretreat.com.

These 16 training events, ranging from 10 days to 1 day, form the base of the program.

In addition to this base, in any areas where there is a group of trainees/graduates, there are weekly study groups, run by CAS apprentice faculty members. If a trainee does not live near anyone else (a common occurrence in America), they join more short events, online discussions, host introductory workshops in their home cities, and observe lessons taught by Alliance graduates and other Alexander Teachers. Essentially, if they can’t get to us, we find a way to get to them. Again, this is possible because there is a community of teaching support.

In this model, everybody wins: the local trainee gets a chance to observe/assist at lessons and workshops, receive direct mentoring, and learn how to organize and advertise a workshop. A young faculty member, usually joined by some graduates, has a chance to teach introductory workshops, mentor the trainee, and build their resume and experience. And, importantly, the local community is becoming educated about the Work and often supports the trainee by becoming ‘practice students’. By the time a person graduates, they usually already have a practice in place. Everybody wins.

The remainder of the training opportunities are divided into 8 categories:
1. month-long immersions
2. special events
3. community service
4. introductory workshops
5. complimentary workshops
6. Post-Graduate workshops
7. observing/assisting at lessons
8. online study (book club & personal progress)
9. personal study and application
Full time trainees are expected to attend at least 6 Events each year. Academic trainees often study 4 - 5 weeks between the summer and winter breaks, with one additional week (or equivalent) required sometime during the year. Everyone creates the schedule that makes it possible for them to participate, as long as they maintain a minimum amount of study annually.

In addition, trainees may participate in trainings at Alexander Alliance schools worldwide (US, Japan, Germany) for no additional tuition cost. All home-based Alliance trainings are included in the tuition: for example, when the German school training is in Germany, the Portland school is in Portland, etc. There is a reduced rate for trainees to attend Events and Retreat which are held in other locations, known as Special Events. Please note that the Summer Event is always considered a Special Event, and therefore has additional tuition.

Events are often held in amazing locations: at the beach, on a horse ranch, high in the mountains, deep in a cave. We use the power and beauty of the landscape to inspire and inform us.

**Graduation**

**Graduation is dependent on proficiency.** When you have the skills to impart the essence of the Work, through touch and language, it is time for you to graduate.

The requirements for graduation are:

1) attendance at a **minimum** of 3 years and 25 full Events
2) payment of the full tuition cost
3) teaching proficiency

Not everyone becomes proficient within the same time span, and everyone has different schedules for training. Graduation is determined by mutual decision between the international Alliance faculty and the individual trainee, and occurs at the August NM event. Most people take about 4 years, some people take 6 years, some take 3.

**As a full time student, you may study as much as you desire for one tuition price, including study at the international schools.**
**Tuition**

Contact us directly for the current tuition costs. [mailto:kavaloncas@gmail.com](mailto:kavaloncas@gmail.com)

Tuition includes:
- unlimited ‘home-based’ training events at CAS  
  (tuition for the Annual Summer Retreat and International Retreats are not included, although there is a large trainee discount)
- apprentice opportunities in private lessons, group classes, and workshops
- complete Living in a Body™ and Body, Breath & Sound™ courses
- opportunity to study at *Alexander Alliance Germany* and Japan
- tuition-free apprenticeship opportunities following your graduation

Each trainee works with the CAS Financial Officer to design a payment schedule that best suits your needs. (All Santa Fe-based Events are subject to NM tax)

Thank you for your interest in this extraordinary Work. I am available for questions and ‘wonderings’ at [robyn@contemporaryalexander.com](mailto:robyn@contemporaryalexander.com) or 505-670-2596. Please consider attending one of the Events as a guest, as this is the best way to experience our style and perspective on the Work.

This information and much more is available on our website: [www.contemporaryalexander.com](http://www.contemporaryalexander.com)

Be in touch,

Robyn