# M TNA
# e-journal

# From the Editorial Committee

## Group Piano and Piano Pedagogy Forum

This past summer the National Group Piano and Piano Pedagogy Forum (GP3) convened in Austin, Texas, for two jam-packed days of panels, presentations and group discussions. If you missed it, you missed an exciting event, as is evident from the reports we share in this issue.

The biennial conference has three stated goals: share in concrete ways what we are doing in our day-to-day teaching; discuss how the direction of our field is affecting our approach to professional development, program initiatives and teacher training; and plan how we must contribute to the course of group piano and piano pedagogy now and in the coming years.

The theme this year was *The Synergy of Teaching/Learning/Sharing*. Synergy occurs when things work together to create outcomes whose value and importance exceed what could be produced individually. Group Day Friday involved participants in discussions regarding NASM and proficiency requirements; sessions explored modern trends and innovative and creative approaches to group piano teaching. Pedagogy Saturday examined international and domestic certification programs and focused on cognitive coaching, a framework for creating synergy through structured conversation between colleagues, mentors and mentees. New this year was a recital featuring participants performing obscure gems of the pedagogical literature.

Also new this year is the creation of a "cloud-sharing project" for the sharing of files. All previous participants are invited to join. Simply download Dropbox and send a short e-mail to the administrator, Courtney Crappell, at Courtney.crappell@utsa.edu requesting an invitation to the shared folder. Include the subject line "GP3 Cloud Sharing Project" in your message. Handouts and PowerPoint files from the forum are available here and all who join may share syllabi and other documents relevant to group piano and piano pedagogy instruction.

If you haven't attended GP3 in the past, check out the MTNA website for more information from past Forums; information about the 2014 Forum will be posted on the website as it becomes available. Ask anyone who has attended and they will likely tell you they come away from the forum feeling energized and inspired!

—*Tom Pearsall, NCTM*
*GP3 Executive Committee*



*Tom Pearsall, NCTM*
*GP3 Executive Committee*

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## MTNA e-Journal ◄◄ November 2012

### Reports From The 2012 Group Piano and Piano Pedagogy Forum

# The Mariposa Elementary School Group Piano Teaching Project
## A Journey Of Success

*Reported by Catharine Lysinger*

At Mariposa Elementary School in the Brea Unified School District, in Brea, California, students participate in weekly curricular music classes taught by Phyllis Chiles in a state-of-the-art Roland Corporation Music Lab. Mariposa is a California Distinguished school, earning this ranking from 2004 through 2012. The student body is mixed socio-economically and racially. Through a partnership with the Roland Corporation, Mariposa Elementary houses a lab with 36 five-octave keyboards. The school district provides two-thirds of the requisite funding, including teacher stipend; Roland Corporation supports the remaining one-third of the costs. A primary goal of the class is that all students in Grades 2 through 6 learn music reading through piano study. Students in kindergarten and first grade participate in general music classes. Most students are unable to practice at home and a curriculum is created with this reality in mind. Students with more advanced skills are given special instructions during the group piano class.

Chiles noted that one of the most impor-tant elements of successful group piano classes, especially classes with 36 students, is classroom management. Much of her lecture elaborated upon this concept. The arrange-ment of the lab is important; the lab at Mariposa Elementary is arranged so every child has a front or sideways view of the teacher—no instruments are rear-facing. To help facilitate an efficient learning environ-ment, stickers identifying the right and left hands and including finger numbers are attached to the music rack on each; each piano also has a flag with a clipped-on nametag raised to a level easily read by the teacher.

A structured environment with virtually no "downtime" keeps all 36 students actively engaged and involved. Students' attention is continuously directed to specific instructions on the white board, listening skills and track-ing skills. When a student encounters difficul-ty, pairs of students are matched to facilitate learning.

Well-established ground rules are an impor-tant element of structure in Chiles' classroom. Before entering the room, the classroom envi-

ronment is well under control and expectations for behavior are made clear. Students are lined up according to assigned seating alternating boys with girls. All must use antibacterial gel on hands upon entering quietly. The children understand from day one that headphones go on right away, the microphone may be used only if instructed to do so and digital sounds also may be used only when instructed to do so. A review assignment is written on the board for them to complete within the first 2 to 3 minutes. Books are closed when the teacher is speaking or asking engaging questions of the students. The teacher roams the room to assist posture and hand position; she may also stay at the teacher center and listen through the headphones to any individual student's piano, a group of pianos or the entire class as needed throughout the course of a class period.

Chiles understands that her students are motivated to learn for many reasons, including the ongoing positive reinforcement given them as well as the clear, concise instruction they receive every class period. Her method book of choice is *The Perfect Start* published by the FJH Company. While she has tried various methods and resources, this series seems to best fit the need to reach a varied age group; she uses the same books for Grades 2 through 6 and can adjust pacing as needed.

Children who require extra attention with the learning process typically attend an alternative course that focuses less on music reading and more on music appreciation, including exposure to a wide variety of music from Marsalis to Saint-Säens's *Carnival of the Animals*. Students with prior experience in piano are allowed to bring their own music during piano class and practice with headphones.

For many of the children at Mariposa Elementary, this class is their only exposure to music. The program is a model of a positive, fun, thorough introduction to learning the language of written notation, made possible through the support of the school principal, the area superintendent the Roland Corporation and a very dedicated instructor.

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*Catharine Lysinger, DMA, is a senior lecturer in piano pedagogy and piano at Southern Methodist University. An active soloist, chamber musician, lecturer and adjudicator, she enjoys teaching pianists ages 8 to 88 and supervising graduate students in piano pedagogy.*

# Rubrics: The Universal Grade-Leveling Device

*Reported by Aaron Mathews*

Zachary Lopes, a DMA candidate in piano performance and piano pedagogy at the University of Cincinnati, presented a session on the inclusion and application of rubrics into the group piano grading system. Lopes asserted that rubrics are a powerful tool and an invaluable asset for performance evaluation and standardizing learning objectives in group piano teaching. In addition, Lopes demonstrated how to develop rubrics using specific criteria and scoring levels, transforming abstract concepts into concrete evaluations.

Lopes began by introducing a mock scenario of what he called the "old intuitive grading system." In the scenario, a student, "Johnny," plays a scale decently but with a few errors and tempo fluctuations. Meanwhile, the teacher's mind might be influenced by previous students who played the scale perfectly, or the teacher could even be distracted by thoughts of what's for lunch that day. The teacher might assign a grade of "B" to Johnny; however, is this grade justifiable?

Lopes suggests that our judgment of Johnny's playing is deeply influenced by the context of the performance, our current state of mind and our personal opinion of the performer. Could one really explain why Johnny received a "B" for his performance? Moreover, when Johnny inquires why he received that grade, what would the teacher's response be? Here is where rubrics become useful, necessary and effective tools for evaluation.

In a quick survey of the session participants, Lopes discovered that only about half of the participants had used rubrics in their grading. Therefore, he facilitated a "crash course" in developing rubrics, beginning with two main questions: "What is a rubric?" and "Why should one incorporate rubrics in group piano courses?"

## What is a rubric?

Rubrics are scoring tools that define and describe essential criteria comprised in a complex performance skill. Rubrics help to define quality, with gradations of quality associated with the students' performance.

## Why should one incorporate rubrics in group piano courses?

Rubrics clearly define the teacher's expectations. If the rubric is given at the beginning of the semester along with the syllabus, students will know the level of proficiency they need to achieve for the grade they want to receive in the course. Essentially, rubrics blur the line between instruction and assessment; the teaching corresponds directly to the exam content.

In addition, rubrics provide an objective

measure of assessment of the students' work or performances. They also allow for teachers to give more thoughtful feedback.

Lopes has found that using a grading system based on a rubric ultimately will improve the quality of students' work. The students become more thoughtful judges of their own performances as well as others.

There are two types of rubrics—quantitative (numerical) and qualitative (descriptive), the former aligning better with the group piano setting. In a detailed handout, Lopes offered a valuable step-by-step guide on the creation of a quantitative rubric. The following are his suggestions:

1. Evaluate Learning Objectives
2. Determine the Criteria
3. Assign Scoring Levels

First, decide which learning objectives or skills will be assessed. These might include repertoire, scales and arpeggios, harmonization, sight-reading, score-reading, transposition and/or improvisation. Think about why these skills are important and how they will help students. Next, determine the three to five criteria for evaluating each chosen skill, with the understanding that criteria will vary per skill. For instance, if one is evaluating a repertoire piece, criteria might be fluency, tempo, musicality, fingering and pedaling. Lopes suggests creating a hierarchy that determines the weight of each criterion. For example, if the teacher regards fluency as most important, place it at the top so it receives the heaviest weight. Lastly, assign scoring levels for each of the defined criterion. Choose a scale, such as 0 to 100, and place a numerical value for the highest, average and lowest level of performance.

In conclusion, Lopes reiterated that music performance stands as one of the most difficult areas of study to objectively assess and quantify. Rubrics prove invaluable in providing unbiased feedback to students' performance and in outlining learning objectives. They place students on a path to success. Lopes empha-

sized the importance of students receiving the rubrics before exams, seeing the feedback after exams, and the feedback being clear so that they can ultimately improve the quality of their performances and improve their learning.

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**Sample Quantitative Rubric Template**

Student Name: _____
Total Points:                                      /100
Skill:
Criteria:

| A | (First Criterion) | | 25 |
|---|---|---|---|
| a | (Describe highest level of performance) | 15 | |
| b | (Describe middle level of performance) | 10 | |
| c | (Describe lowest level of performance) | 5 | |

| B | (Second Criterion) | | 25 |
|---|---|---|---|
| a | (Describe highest level of performance) | 15 | |
| b | (Describe middle level of performance) | 10 | |
| c | (Describe lowest level of performance) | 5 | |

| C | (Third Criterion) | | 25 |
|---|---|---|---|
| a | (Describe highest level of performance) | 15 | |
| b | (Describe middle level of performance) | 10 | |
| c | (Describe lowest level of performance) | 5 | |

| D | (Fourth Criterion) | | 25 |
|---|---|---|---|
| a | (Describe highest level of performance) | 15 | |
| b | (Describe middle level of performance) | 10 | |
| c | (Describe lowest level of performance) | 5 | |

***Aaron Mathews*** *is pursuing a doctorate degree in piano pedagogy from the University of South Carolina. Mathews received his master's degree in piano pedagogy from Georgia State University and a bachelor of arts in piano performance from Morehouse College.*

# Apps That Engage

## Reported by Margaret Perry

George F. Litterst's presentation focused on the incorporation of multiple technological devices and music apps in the classroom. He discussed the best type of tablet to use and demonstrated a variety of apps that engage students in the music-making process.

### Choosing A Tablet

Litterst recommended using the iPad for three reasons:

1. Apple dominates 70 percent of the tablet market.
2. Compared to other platforms, Apple has more quality music apps available for its mobile operating system, iOS.
3. Apple's iOS supports MIDI better than the other platforms that are on the market.

### Integrating The Technology

To connect and effectively use classroom technology, teachers must understand how to wirelessly project iOS devices. Litterst suggested following the steps below:

▶▶ Connect your Mac or PC to a projector or monitor.
▶▶ Make sure the computer and iOS device are on the same network.
▶▶ Run *Reflection* (Mac) or *AirServer* (Mac or PC).
▶▶ Turn on *AirPlay* with mirroring on the iOS device.

As an alternative, Litterst suggested following the steps:

▶▶ Connect Apple TV to a projector or monitor with HDMI cable.
▶▶ Make sure the Apple TV and iOS device are on the same network.
▶▶ Turn on *AirPlay* with mirroring on the iOS device.
▶▶ Run *AirParrot* to mirror a PC or pre-*Mountain Lion* Mac screen wirelessly.

Litterst reviewed the features of *AirPlay*. It sends audio to the *AirPlay* device you have selected. This device would be your computer that is running *Reflection* or *AirServer* or your AppleTV. *AirPlay* also mirrors your iOS screen if you turn on the mirroring option. Unfortunately, the mirroring option is not available on the original iPad, early iPhones and iPod touch. Litterst also reviewed how to turn on *AirPlay* by following these steps:

▶▶ Double-tap the home button of the iOS device to reveal all of the currently running apps.
▶▶ In the case of the iPad, swipe the screen from left-to-right to reveal the playback controls and the *AirPlay* button.
▶▶ In the case of the iPhone or iPod touch, swipe the screen twice to get *AirPlay*. Tap the *AirPlay* button and choose your computer. Turn on mirroring if you wish to project your screen.

During group piano classes, teachers may deem it necessary to remain at the teacher

station to control the computer and iPad. This is not the case; teachers are free to leave the teacher station. Litterst demonstrated how to make the iPad become the wireless monitor/touchscreen for the computer. To do this, follow these instructions:

- ‣ Install *Air Display* on your computer and iOS device.
- ‣ Activate *Air Display* on both devices.
- ‣ Use *Air Display* on your computer to select the desired iOS device.
- ‣ Mirror your computer screen to your iOS device. Your device becomes a touchscreen display for controlling your computer.

The final step in linking our classroom technology is to connect the iPad to a MIDI keyboard. According to Litterst, the best way to accomplish this is to use iRig MIDI. iRigMIDI is an interface that allows you to plug your MIDI cable into your iPad. A nice feature of iRig is that it will charge your iPad battery. Other MIDI interface options include the Yamaha iMX-1, the Line 6 MIDI Mobilizer II and the iConnectMidi from iConnectivity.

Litterst highly recommended using a dock extender cable to connect the MIDI interface and iPad. This provides extra cable length and minimizes the stress placed on the dock port. Litterst noted that the extender cable needs to support audio, video, sync and charging.

If your MIDI keyboard has only a USB connection, use the Apple iPad Camera Connection Kit to add a USB port to your iPad.

## Music Apps

*Home Concert Xtreme* is a music display and accompaniment software program. Litterst, co-author of the program, demonstrated how to download a MIDI file (score) to *Home Concert Xtreme*. He also explained the three practice modes that are available while using *Home Concert Xtreme* with a MIDI keyboard. Students can practice pieces in learn mode, jam mode or performance mode. In the learn mode, the computer waits for the student to play the correct notes. In jam mode, the student plays a piece with accompaniment tracks. The computer does not wait for the student. In performance mode, the computer follows the performer's tempo and even moves ahead if the performer skips some measures.

*50 in1 Piano* and *Piano Apprentice* are apps that project a piano image, with MIDI capability, on the screen. If you are using *Piano Apprentice*, be sure to select the piano jam option.

*Subdivide Metronome* is a superb metronome app. You can drag the sliders up and down for different subdivisions of the beat. Litterst explained how to have the sound of the metronome come over the keyboard lab system. Connect the headphone port of your computer to the AUX input of the teacher keyboard. Send the sound of your iPad to the computer via *AirPlay*. The sound of the metronome will go through the piano and likewise through the lab's audio control system.

# Apps That Engage

*Maestro XL* is another metronome app. It has the regular audio feature of a metronome as well as a visual component of conducting beat patterns. Students can follow the beat patterns while practicing their pieces.

For simple recording, Litterst suggested using the iRig MIDI Recorder or the MIDI Memo Recorder. The iRig MIDI Recorder requires the iRig MIDI interface and the MIDI Memo Recorder requires the MIDI Mobilizer II MIDI interface.

You have many choices in apps when it comes to displaying your *Finale* or *Sibelius* PDF scores. The PDF score display apps are

often free or inexpensive. Some of these apps include *PDF Sheet Music Reader*, *MusicReader PDF*, *forScore* and *piaScore HD*.

The AirTurn BT-105 is a wireless page-turning device for PDF display programs. The foot pedals advance or turn back the page. The AirTurn BT-105 uses Bluetooth to communicate with the iPad.

*MIDIBridge* is an app that allows you to send MIDI data wirelessly between iOS devices and a Mac or PC. It can be tricky to set up, but it allows you to send student performances wirelessly to the teacher's computer or iOS device.

Finally, Litterst noted that the process of copying files to and from the iPad using *iTunes* is cumbersome. He recommended using *DiskAid* to organize MIDI files on an iPad. *DiskAid* mounts the iPad on your computer as though it were an external hard drive.

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**Margaret Perry** *is the coordinator of the group piano program at the University of the Pacific's Conservatory of Music. She teaches group piano, piano pedagogy, aural perceptions and is the accompanist for the opera department.*

# Self-Publishing

## The New Frontier

**Reported by Tom White**

Michelle Conda is professor of piano and coordinator of secondary piano and piano pedagogy at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. She is also a self-published author. Her presentation on self-publication follows the story of how she created and published her textbook *Sensible Piano Skills for the College Age Musician.*

The project began years ago at the University of Cincinnati when Conda realized that her curriculum required a textbook that would cater to the specific skills being taught in her class. After developing a textbook specifically designed to satisfy the needs of her group piano class, Conda's next logical step was to seek publication and distribution to her students' music racks. Publishers, however, thought the book was too specialized and were more interested in a book for beginners.

Still in need of a customized textbook, Conda turned to a custom publishing company. She quickly found that while the company provided the right kind of services, it lacked the software required to handle musical notation. To make matters worse, the company did no proofing and the final product went to print containing several errors. Conda later found that she had no control over the supply of her text and the publishing company charged students an exorbitant price while paying her next to nothing in royalties. Frustrated with the situation, Conda took her materials and entered the world of self-publication.

Conda had some personal goals when she began to publish on her own. First, she did not want to be involved in the monetary side of the business. Conda also realized that she had no time to invest in advertising her product. Finally, she wanted her text to be available to students both online and offline. This eliminated the possibility of using iBook Author which creates interactive textbooks for the iBook or iPad only.

Using this set of criteria, she waded through the various self-publishing software until finding CreateSpace.com. Not only did the website satisfy her publishing goals, but it was easy to use and offered print-on-demand distribution. Although the website offers a great deal of technical assistance,

experience using other software such as Finale, Sibelius, Preview or Adobe Reader helps when uploading files to the site. Her presentation takes us through the step-by-step process of creating, editing and publishing a text with CreateSpace. Using an introductory video from the website and a fictitious anthology, *Christmas in Austin,* as a potential project, Conda's presentation highlighted the website's accessibility and the advantages of its services.

### Making A Book

To start the publishing process, one must open an account on CreateSpace, which requires a valid e-mail address and the creation of a password. Once the user sets up the account, the website offers an intuitive set-up, which guides one through the process of creating a book one step at a time.

### Title Information

To create a title, one will simply fill out the fields for the book's title, author, description, contributors, subtitle and volume number. Potential customers will see the content of the description field on the book's detail page on Amazon.com.

### ISBN

An ISBN, or International Standard Book Number, identifies a title's binding, edition and publisher. CreateSpace assigns users a number for free or authors may customize their number for a $10 fee. Once the ISBN is assigned, it cannot be changed.

### Interior Design

On the interior design screen, authors choose the print color, paper color and paper size. (Most textbooks are formatted on 8.5- by 11-inch paper.) The interior design screen also allows users to choose their method of submitting their content. One may do this by uploading a PDF, DOC, DOCX or RTF file, and the program will only accept files that are at least 24 pages long. Once a file is uploaded, the program will convert it into a PDF. This does not mean the content cannot be changed, and there is no limit to the amount of edits or number of uploads. Once a file is uploaded, the site's proofer checks for any formatting errors. Users may also chose a professional design service that will design and format a manuscript. This service starts at around $250.

### Your Cover

Again, authors have the option to use the site's professional design service to create their cover but several free templates are also available. Designing a cover is as simple as using the task bar, which takes users through each step of the design process. Once each step is accomplished, the program shows a green light, and the cover is ready for review.

## Review

After the setup process is complete, the program checks the formatting of the manuscript, and the author is given the chance to proof the book. For Conda, one of the most important proofing elements was to make sure everything fit inside the specified margins, leaving enough space for the binding, page numbers and headers.

## Royalties

To collect royalties, the author must complete a Royalty Payment Profile. The program requires some personal information, such as current address and tax at this point. The website describes royalty payments for each unit printed as "the sale price less the per-book charge, the per-page charge, and a 20% revenue share." The website allows authors to choose the optimal price of their book, and also allows them to track the number of sales and royalties of their work from their member dashboard.

## Distribution

The free standard distribution service will make a book available on Amazon.com, Amazon Europe, CreateSpace eStore and eBook for Kindle. For an additional $25 authors may expand their distribution to include bookstores and online retailers, libraries and academic institutions and CreateSpace Direct. The site includes a print on-demand format, which means students have better access to texts. Books are not printed in advance and once an order is received, the book is printed and shipped.

## Conclusion

Conda's presentation gave an overview of CreateSpace's functions and benefits. By relating her experience using the site, the daunting task of publishing a textbook seems only a click away. By distributing through Amazon.com and eKindle, millions of consumers have access to self-published books while the print on-demand feature allows authors control of price, quality and supply. The simple step-by-step process of designing, proofing and distributing makes sites like CreateSpace easy to use and accessible for amateur and professional authors alike.

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*__Tom White__ is a doctoral candidate studying piano pedagogy and performance at the University of Oklahoma. A native of Pennsylvania, he earned a master's degree from the University of Northern Colorado.*

# What Can Cloud Computing And Storage Do For You?

**Reported by Michael Seregow**

Courtney Crappell, NCTM, assistant professor of piano pedagogy at the University of Texas at San Antonio, presented a session exploring the uses of cloud computing in the teaching of group piano and piano pedagogy. He first defined "the cloud" as a metaphor for the Internet itself. He then cited two main uses of the cloud: storage and the use of processing power from another computer. Through the cloud, we can now have reliable storage somewhere other than our own devices or drives. We can also use the processing power of another computer, with our own device as an interface or display.

Crappell next talked about various cloud storage services currently available, which were listed on a handout along with their web address:

▸▸ Apple iCloud (https://apple.com/icloud/): Users can create a document, save it on Apple's servers, and it can then be accessed immediately from other devices, such as an iPhone or home computer. Users can also update their calendar or contacts through iCloud.

▸▸ Google Drive (https://drive.google.com/start): Google provides hybrid storage and computing. Crappell offered Google Docs as an example. Users can create a file on Google's servers and work with someone else in a different location to edit a file. It is no longer necessary to e-mail various versions of a file back and forth. Multiple people can work on one document together, simultaneously.

▸▸ Amazon Cloud Drive (www.amazon.com/clouddrive/learn-more): Crappell noted that Amazon's service works especially well for things they sell (such as audio and video files), and they have an easy-to-use cloud player. A possible application for this is creating a playlist for class.

▸▸ Dropbox (www.dropbox.com): Users can save files to a drop box folder on their computer, which automatically saves to the drop box website. Access to this folder can be given to someone else, making file sharing easy.

▸▸ SugarSync (www.sugarsync.com): Crappell uses this service in his studio class to record performances of piano students on his computer. He can then share these files with everyone in the class.

▸▸ SoundCloud (soundcloud.com): Users can upload an audio file or create a new one and then create comments within the file. Crappell noted that this

feature has possible teaching applications, such as including comments or reminders at specific points within an audio file.

Crappell suggested that perhaps the best application of the cloud for group piano teaching is the ability to share files with students that can give them modeling or feedback. We can create audio or video files so students can practice with modeling outside of class. Furthermore, this file sharing can be done instantaneously.

Crappell next spoke briefly about the possibilities of cloud computing. Noting that most music applications are not very processing intensive, he suggested that a practical use of cloud computing is for remote access. For example, in a group piano lab used by multiple teachers, one can maintain the desktop for the classroom's computer from home, organizing file folders, adding new files, or upgrading software. Crappell mentioned several services for remote access:

▸ LogMeIn (www.logmein.com): Users can access their computers remotely, however, Crappell cautioned that one should check with the school's IT department before using this type of program for security purposes.
▸ Splashtop (www.splashtop.com): An app for iPad, users can remotely access

their desktop. With this software, the iPad can become a display and interface for a more powerful computer.

After taking a few questions, Crappell concluded by offering ideas on how cloud computing might be used. He suggested that cloud computing offers new possibilities for collaboration. Referencing open source computer programming, Crappell suggested the creation of an open source piano method, with many contributors, from which individual teachers could select material tailored to each individual student's needs. Another possibility could be a place where music teachers store their favorite lead sheets. The cloud provides a powerful tool for us to do these kinds of things.

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***Michael Seregow*** *is a doctoral student at the University of Oregon in piano performance with a supporting area in piano pedagogy. A graduate teaching fellow, he teaches both group and applied piano. Seregow has received numerous scholarships and awards.*
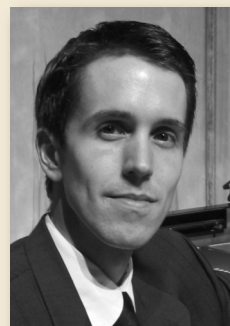
# Group Teaching Thoughts

**Reported by Terry Lynn Hudson**

G P3 Forum attendees were divided into groups to discuss three topics related to group piano teaching. The resulting conversations were open and spirited, encouraging us all to reflect on the value of our programs and the depth of our field. This report is based on the compilation of discussion leader notes submitted from each group.

### What is included in your typical group piano lesson plan?

One of the great benefits of a forum such as ours is the opportunity to share teaching materials, activities, techniques and philosophies. The level of discourse on this first topic highlighted the strength of group piano instruction across the country and the tremendous passion of the instructors involved, with many wonderful and practical ideas generated for possible implementation at our home institutions. Participants considered how to begin a class and prepare the students for learning, how to present and reinforce both old and new material, how to use the group setting as an advantage, which skills are most crucial to our students, and the best ways to approach examinations. A number of broader themes and observations also emerged, and will be outlined at the end of this section.

Starting the class:
- Technical warm-up
- Brain warm-up
  - Rhythm and cross-body activities to get the students moving and thinking
  - *Rhythm Games for Perception and Cognition* by Robert Abramson
  - Participants tried several such activities, and as often the case in a class situation, the atmosphere lightened and greater stimulation and engagement were noted.
- Sight-reading
- Review material from previous class
- Brief individual progress check

Presentation of new material and review of older material:
- When asked which specific components of a lesson plan are given more emphasis, many participants responded similarly:
  - Technique was often said to be the most important component of a group piano lesson plan. Participants seemed to feel that all other lesson components hinged on students' abilities to master basic piano technique.
  - Other participants strongly felt that music reading was the most indis-

pensable skill a student should gain within a group piano context.

- ‣ Harmonization and improvisation were mentioned as "synthesis" activities that require students to draw information and experience from several areas/skill sets in order to create a successful performance.
- ‣ Additional areas covered include repertoire, score reading and accompanying/ensemble work.
- ‣ How can we create a strong balance between the presentation of new material and the reinforcement of skills already learned?
- ‣ A drill/application approach is effective in promoting transfer and mastery.
  - ‣ Teach a skill through a basic, highly focused drill.
  - ‣ Then allow the students to apply that skill in areas of repertoire, harmonization, and accompanying to build an understanding of why they are learning the skill.
- ‣ Include specific instructions on how to practice and maintain each skill.

### Using peer evaluation:
- ‣ This can be a good way to make more efficient use of class time. For example, if a teacher wants to determine if the students are comfortable with a set of pentascales, (s)he might have students check these for a partner rather than taking up a large segment of class time to do it themselves.
- ‣ Group work that requires those with more experience to mentor weaker students may help with the issue of varying levels within the same class. This offers students an opportunity to solidify their own knowledge as they explain a concept or assist their partner.

- ‣ Students may feel more accountable to a peer rather than the teacher.
- ‣ Peer evaluation can also create a smoother transition from practicing alone to performing for the class or teacher.

### Preparing for the final/proficiency exam:
- ‣ Each class goes through a "mini-test" or "fake jury."
- ‣ Games can be used to solidify skills and pieces that will be tested.
  - ‣ Split-class performance contest
  - ‣ Scaleathon team competition
  - ‣ Jeopardy-style challenge ("I'll take LH white-key scale for 100" or "RH black-key scale for 200")
- ‣ The teacher increases in-class performance opportunities so that students are regularly practicing performance under pressure.
  - ‣ An open master class setting allows them to develop skills in playing, listening and commenting in an insightful way.

### Additional observations and concerns:
- ‣ Most participants agreed that teaching to the group took up most of the class time; the general consensus was that about 80 percent of class time consisted of the teacher addressing the group or the group playing together in some fashion. However, a number of teachers brought up the difficulty of teaching classes containing students of varying skill levels, stating that they sometimes resorted to teaching several individual lessons within a group piano context instead of truly teaching a group piano class.
- ‣ A group lesson should be sequenced in such a way that one skill or assignment

leads smoothly to the next. Skills such as scales and chords require immediate application in repertoire, harmonization and accompanying so that students gain an understanding of their importance.

▸▸ A common concern was the lack of instructional time afforded to group piano classes, both in the number of semesters required and the number of weekly class meetings. Given this recurring theme, efficient and effective lesson planning must be considered a significant issue.

▸▸ Assessment was an important topic of discussion, specifically as it relates to maximizing instructional time and promoting consistency of practice. Although regular assessments serve as strong practice motivators, they also take up valuable class time. Some have experimented successfully with video submissions of short performance exams, and others give weekly reading exams that require only five minutes per class session. All participants seemed to agree that larger, comprehensive performance exams remain necessary, although they might require a full week of class time to administer.

▸▸ The discussion of sight-reading, harmonization and improvisation led to a larger conversation on how group piano benefits students. Not only should our courses enhance the students' broader musical learning, but they should also provide marketable, real-world skills. It is essential that we plan our class activities in such a way to accomplish this goal.

**What are your class exit requirements, and what do you do if students don't pass?**

There has been a shift in recent years; whereas it used to be that a separate proficiency exam was required at most schools to complete the secondary piano requirement, an additional model has emerged that requires completion of a series of courses, with all keyboard competencies assessed within the course sequence. Such courses often require that students pass the final exam or barrier in order to pass the class. This policy may or may not be allowed depending on the institution, but weighting the final exam heavily gives it the appropriate significance. Some schools have final barriers or proficiencies only at the end of the first and/or second years, while others give them each semester.

Passing requirements for the exam itself vary:

▸▸ Some schools require an overall average of 70 or better to pass, while others require that each segment of the exam be completed successfully.

▸▸ An institution might allow retakes of the segments failed at a later date (typically allowing only one additional chance, for full or partial credit).

▸▸ All require that the student retake the class should the standards not be satisfied.

There were also different formats discussed for administering the exams. Most participants stated they are the only ones to hear the exams, although in many of these cases the exams are videotaped or recorded. Several schools use committees to hear the final exams. Exams are given as part of the class or outside of class at a designated time (during finals week, for instance).

Participants were asked about their curriculum requirements. Most schools have a four-semester requirement, a few require three semesters and several have varying requirements depending on the degree track (two for instrumentalists and four for vocalists, for example). A lesser number of schools require a third year in the form of applied lessons for vocal majors.

The course content covered and tested is important both for the students' growth and to uphold standards for NASM accreditation. Typical elements include:

- ▶▶ Repertoire
  - ▶ As a means to work on technique
  - ▶ As a means to develop practice habits/musicality/ownership
  - ▶ As a functional skill (accompaniments often used for this purpose)
  - ▶ For enjoyment, as a motivator
- ▶▶ Technique
  - ▶ There were differing opinions expressed on how to present scales and arpeggios–hands separately (for technical fluency, also as seen in pieces) or hands together (for coordination). Exam requirements varied accordingly.
- ▶▶ Harmonization/transposition
- ▶▶ Sight-reading
  - ▶ A crucial skill! Students should gain familiarity with the process of reading new music and absorbing it quickly.
  - ▶ Examples should be stylistically and texturally varied.
- ▶▶ Score reading
- ▶▶ Improvisation.

## What effect does NASM have on group piano?

The discussion groups were comprised of participants with varying degrees of experi-ence with NASM. Some had been significantly impacted by an NASM review, while others had not yet applied for accreditation.

**Keyboard competency** is listed as part of the "Common Body of Knowledge and Skills" in Section VIII:B:1:e of the NASM *Handbook*. The wording of this guideline allows much room for interpretation, and some felt that the vagueness that NASM employs in making its keyboard recommendations could work both ways to enhance and/or limit a program. There was also a good deal of discussion on the difference between "competency" and "proficiency," viewed by most as a matter of degree, with proficiency seen as a higher, more thorough level of preparation. Competency is adequacy; proficiency allows for transfer and decision-making in a fluid manner. It was generally agreed that striving for proficiency in group piano allows for greater retention of skills and future marketability.

Programs ranging from 120 to 146 credit hours were represented. With pressure related to federal aid, individual state funding and general budget cuts, programs are being encouraged to shrink. The concern was expressed that if mere "competency" is the goal, administrators looking to save money or student hours might view more comprehensive secondary programs as overly rigorous. In a number of instances, required hours in group piano had already been reduced. A majority of participants felt that a four-semester secondary requirement is reasonable and necessary, but various institutions no longer offer the full four-semester sequence. Ethical and practical considerations of requiring only two semesters to gain a lifetime skill were explored.

How can we make the most effective use of the time we *do* have with our group piano students?

# Group Teaching Thoughts

- ▸ Focus more on the development of foundational skills.
- ▸ Narrow the scope of skills presented. Slow down the pace to allow for a greater sense of mastery.
- ▸ Coordinate course content with the theory area so that a transfer of learning can occur.
- ▸ Carefully consider the types of skills that will be practical in our students' futures.

Advice was provided for those who are currently participating in a self-study; first and foremost, document everything! As an example to underscore this, the Visitor's Report for one institution noted a lack of evidence that improvisation was being taught, and as a result, new syllabi were designed to include improvisation and tests now include the skill. One participant had done site visits for NASM and stressed that while they are guided by a basic set of criteria, there is considerable flexibility to adapt these criteria to many different types of schools. It was also mentioned that if NASM views a standard as not met, a probationary period is typically granted before accreditation is dropped. Removal of accreditation is a very rare occurrence.

Participants had experienced both positive and negative outcomes of NASM visits. These included:

- ▸ Improved coordination of keyboard requirements between music theory and group piano
- ▸ The addition of new faculty positions
- ▸ Integration of improvisation into the group piano curriculum
- ▸ Reductions (sometimes significant) in the number of semesters offered within a program.

Becoming accredited represents a large outlay of funds, and this may work against a school pursuing accreditation. It was recommended that a good deal of pre-planning take place in departments intending to apply for NASM accreditation in order to determine the budgetary implications.

Evaluations by NASM force us to reflect on our programs and make adjustments as necessary. Considering the following three questions can initiate this process of self-examination, and can help direct us to healthy and positive changes for our programs and our students:

- ▸ What are we seeking to achieve in group piano?
- ▸ Are we being effective given the constraints/limitations that we have?
- ▸ What are the steps we can take to improve our current approach?

In summation, our attitudes and philosophies related to group piano pedagogy should be challenged periodically so that we continue to grow and evolve in our field. GP3 2012 offered a fine opportunity to consider pertinent issues, and the discussions of all three topics encouraged lively and supportive interactions with fellow teachers, provided an array of new instructional ideas, and led to fascinating discoveries of how and why we teach group piano.

*__Terry Lynn Hudson__ is assistant professor of piano at Baylor University, where she teaches applied and class piano and serves as director of secondary keyboard studies. Hudson is a committed performer, presenting recitals as soloist, duo pianist and accompanist.*

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# Maximize Your Teaching Time With Cooperative Learning

**Reported by Carol Gingerich**

Judie Meulink gave an informative session titled "Maximize Your Teaching Time With Cooperative Learning." She opened by defining a desired outcome of cooperative learning, that of synergy. Synergy was the focus of this GP3 Forum, and she utilized part of the conference definition: "Synergy is created when things (people) work together to create outcomes, the value and importance of which exceeds what could be produced individually." She also defined "maximize" as "making the greatest you can out of something " and indicated that cooperative learning is "all about synergy" in which "peers maximize the learning experience of each other." She acknowledged that this doesn't always happen in the piano lab, but that cooperative learning methods can help students flourish as learners, musicians and peer coaches.

Meulink's doctoral dissertation, "Cooperative Learning Methods for Group Piano: The Development of a Teaching Guide," contains lesson plans adapted from the cooperative lesson plans of Alejandro Cremaschi (2000) and Christopher Fisher (2006), as well as plans created by Meulink.

She mentioned that cooperative learning is popular in elementary classrooms and is now becoming more present in upper grades. Currently, she incorporates cooperative learning out of necessity since her college allocates only one 50-minute class per week, and she needs a method that will maximize her time in the classroom. Originally, she did not know she was utilizing cooperative learning when she asked students to help each other. She did this by having an advanced student teach the names of the piano keys to a beginning student and by having students work together to discover a harmonization for a melody. While doing so, she noticed that students seemed to enjoy this type of learning more than when the teacher led the learning.

She framed the situations in which cooperative learning can create a form of synergy in overcoming possible issues in group piano situations. These issues include:

▶▶ Students who don't have a good attitude about taking piano class; they don't see the value of it; they want to spend time on their "major" instrument.

# Maximize Your Teaching Time
# With Cooperative Learning

- ▶ Students who need remedial help and get discouraged because they are so far behind the other students.
- ▶ Students who are advanced and do not need to spend much time in piano class, but do need to learn one or two deficient skills; they may feel that they are wasting their time.

Cooperative learning methods may help in the previously mentioned classroom struggles in the following ways:

- ▶ When students are paired they experience camaraderie and, thus, tend to enjoy learning the piano more. Because the students encourage each other, they perform at a higher level, and they feel a sense of teamwork and accomplishment.

- ▶ Students working together gives the advanced students a chance to teach and coach the other students. This helps them learn the material securely, and provides a real-life teaching situation for them. The less advanced students enjoy learning from their peers and benefit from individual attention.
- ▶ Grouping students helps all students to be engaged in active learning; the teacher can then give attention to one student who needs it. This situation allows the teacher to customize the lessons and give each group of students activities for the specific skills that they need to work on.

During her session Meulink provided the following lesson plan:

**SKILL: HARMONIZATION**

**Lesson #1: Harmonizing a Familiar Melody**

Adapted from lesson plans by Alejandro Cremaschi (2000) and Christopher Fisher (2006)

| | |
|---|---|
| Functional keyboard skill objective | Student pairs will harmonize a familiar melody with appropriate chords selected from options provided by the teacher. |
| Cooperative skill objectives | The students will share ideas and reach a consensus of answers. Pairs of students will share answers with another pair, making changes to the answers as needed. |
| Cooperative learning method | *Think-Pair-Square (Kagan)* |
| Cooperative method definition | The teacher assigns a task and the students work individually to devise an answer. The students are then paired with partners who share their answers and discuss any discrepancies. The pairs work to reach a consensus of answers, seeking to disagree politely, affirming partners' answers, and exhibiting patience as they work together. After a pre-determined period of time, each pair combines with another pair to share answers; more discussion occurs as the group compares answers. This grouping ensures that more students are actively participating in the sharing process, since groups of four are sharing simultaneously rather than the entire class evaluating one answer at a time. |

**Cooperative method application**

*Think-Pair-Square* is an effective method for helping students learn and improve harmonization skills; student pairings create effective use of class time as students receive individual help from each other. Students may struggle with knowing how to choose chords when harmonizing a melody and in knowing whether their chord choices are accurate. When students share their answers with a partner, discrepancies can be clarified and discussed. Pairing students may create a non-threatening way to learn material, as peers may exhibit patience while helping their struggling classmates. If both partners are not adept at harmonization, the pair can work together to improve answers and a sense of teamwork might result. Pairs then check the work of other pairs and provide necessary feedback to correct answers and clarify understanding of the material.

**Time required**    15–20 minutes

**Group size**    Pairs

**Preparation**    The teacher chooses melodies appropriate to the students' skill levels and provides a list of possible chord choices for harmonizing each melody (see Appendix A for suggested melodies for harmonization). Each pair receives a different melody.

**Plan**    Step One (3 minutes)
> Students work individually to harmonize the assigned melody. The students may be instructed to write the chords without playing them on the keyboard (relying on audiation and knowledge of theory) or they may be permitted to play the chords on the keyboard.

Step Two (3–4 minutes)
> The teacher sets the controller so that partners hear each other.

> Pairs compare answers and decide if changes need to be made.

> Pairs practice for their performance (both students play melody and harmony).
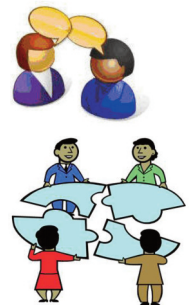
Step Three (5–8 minutes)
> The teacher sets the controller so that two pairs of students hear each other.
> The pairs take turns performing the melodies for each other (both students play melody and harmony).
> After each performance, the listening pair uses the performance rubric (Appendix B) to assess the performing pair's chord choices, suggesting changes that may need to be made.

# Maximize Your Teaching Time
# With Cooperative Learning

**Assessment**

4–5 minutes

<u>Functional skill:</u> Assessment happens in Step Three.

<u>Cooperative skills:</u> Each group of two student pairs discusses with the teacher how well they were able to share ideas, make changes to answers, and work in a positive manner.

Meulink emphasized the importance of the various bolded sections of the above lesson plan. While most teachers consider the Functional Keyboard Skills Objective to be important, what is of unique importance is the Cooperative Skill Objective. For this particular lesson plan she recommended that students be allowed to choose the chord by ear, by playing and/or by using music theory. They are also encouraged to create their own plan for practicing and playing for each other. During the assessment phase it is important that they assess not only the traditional musical outcomes, but also the novel cooperative outcomes, such as whether they were "nice" to each other.

In regard to room set up, Meulink mentioned that pairs facing works well. Another option is to have them sitting side-by-side so they can observe their partner's hands for things such as fingering. She recommended placing the less advanced students closest to the teacher's piano. She provided a diagram of her room set up and indicated various options for pairings across from each other, side-by-side and diagonally.

During the question and answer session, Meulink suggested groups completing their work early can receive additional assignments or work by themselves on something else. In conclusion, Meulink stated that "we do our students a disservice if we only allow them to work by themselves." It is important to "mix it up" by providing not only group learning, but also working in cooperative pairs.

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## Resources

Cremaschi, A. (2000). Cooperative Learning in the Piano Classroom. In *Forum on Group Piano* from Piano Pedagogy Forum on-line journal. Retrieved from http://www.music.sc.edu/ea/keyboard/ppf/3.2/3.2.index.html.

Fisher, C. (2006). Applications of Selected Cooperative Learning Techniques to Group Piano Instruction. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 67*(03), 769A. (UMI No. 3212008)

Link to *Cooperative Learning Methods for Group Piano: The Development of a Teaching Guide:* http://cardinalscholar.bsu.edu/bitstream/123456789/195137/1 /MeulinkJ_2011-1_BODY.pdf.

***Carol Gingerich*** *is an associate professor of piano at the University of West Georgia where she teaches applied, collaborative and class piano, pedagogy and keyboard literature. She has given recitals and presentations in Europe and the United States.*

# Meta-Skills In The Group Piano Class

**Reported by Sarah Evans Moore**

Kathryn Sherman, NCTM, assistant professor of piano pedagogy at the Crane School of Music, SUNY Potsdam, presented "Meta-Skills in the Group Piano Class." Sherman asked teachers to imagine our first year music students as successful in their studies, knowing how to organize materials and time, being effective and efficient in practice, and able to self-assess their own skills. The meta-skills that students can learn in group piano can be transferred to other areas of their life and college experience.

## Independence And Organization

The first meta-skill discussed was **independence and organization**. Often new students come to college unable to organize their time or to work independently. Sherman recommends designing the course so control of information can be systematically transferred from teacher to student. Students get a detailed exam schedule at the beginning of the semester, and students are directed to the exam schedule when questions arise. This allows students to look up answers to questions and helps them

learn professional skills. As the semester progresses, reminders are less frequent as students are encouraged to know for themselves when exams are and what elements are required. For example, she might ask, "Are there any questions that are not addressed on the course syllabus?" Sherman suggests using the course schedule to help students learn how to manage daily practice time, and set both short-term and long-term goals to stay on track with the course.

## Practice Skills

The second meta-skill Sherman examined was **practice skills**. The brain is non-discriminatory and remembers what is put in. Sometimes students don't know that not all practice is good practice, but better strategies and techniques will provide better quality practice. To facilitate practice skills, Sherman says listening to students practice individually and providing feedback is essential. She benefits from planning teaching sequences, where the instructor disseminates information, the student attempts the skill, then the instructor provides feedback to help ensure success. Sherman also teaches

students specific practice techniques such as isolation and repetition, starting from the top, shadowing, working small segments and setting goals for accomplishing tasks. While she teaches one practice technique at a time and may focus on it for several weeks, students will eventually have a larger toolbox of practice techniques. Many of the practice techniques she uses are explained in Philip Johnston's *The Practice Revolution*. Two questions she has her students ask when practicing are "Am I good at it?" and "Does it feel easy?"

### Assessment And Critical Listening

A third meta-skill students learn in group piano is **assessment and critical listening**. She asks students for musical listening right away and suggests guiding students through your own listening and grading process so they can learn to listen like you do. Early in the semester, she gives a "mock test" where students play out loud, discuss each student's performance and suggests what the grade would have been if it were a real test. Students also play in pairs for each other and provide feedback. Whenever suggestions are made, students should also give a possible solution. Asking for a high level of musician-

ship further allows students to showcase their own musicianship skills that they have gained in their principal instrument. After each test, students are also required to fill out a self-evaluation. They must write what went well, what could have gone better and what grade they believe they earned.

### Performance Skills

The final meta-skill Sherman discussed was **performance skills**. Students learn how to react to stress from performance, and she systematically builds in strategies using discussion, peer activities and reflections. She tries to help them understand the wide range of normal reactions to performance anxiety. Some resources Sherman recommends include Bill Moore's lectures, *Courage, Trust, and Acceptance*, and *Rhythms of the Game: The Link Between Musical and Athletic Performance* by Williams, Gluck, Thompson and Simon.

Once students have learned these skills, she calls on them to use them to organize their time and practice sessions. Students set specific goals for class dates one class before the performance. Sherman asks the students to plan the work over the course of several weeks, and asks students what they will accomplish toward their goals.

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**Sarah Evans Moore** *is a DMA candidate in piano pedagogy at the University of South Carolina. She teaches private and group piano, and her current research explores self-efficacy in adults returning to piano.*

# Why Johnny Can't Read
## Improving Music Literacy In Group Piano Classes

**Reported by Michelle Wachter**

A literate musician is one who comprehends the syntax of musical language. Rather than reading strings of individual notes, literate musicians have the tools to recognize patterns and understand the larger context of the music. In this presentation, Diane Helfers Petrella, associate professor of piano and piano pedagogy at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, explored ways to develop, improve and assess music literacy in group piano classes.

Petrella advocated a curriculum that requires students to own and comprehend each skill in the learning process. She emphasized that class time should revolve around providing students with tools to improve music literacy, which then helps students recognize common musical elements in a score. This increased understanding of the context, or "big picture," of the music ultimately allows students to categorize relationships and efficiently execute patterns at the keyboard.

Literate musicians automatically see these relationships when they look at a score, and they have a firm grasp of the following skills and concepts:

- ▸▸ Knowledge of keys by sight and feel
- ▸▸ Understanding of phrase and cadence patterns, sequences and form
- ▸▸ Automatic recognition of intervals and pitch relationships
- ▸▸ Direct categorization and translation of the score to the keyboard

These skills allow literate musicians to realize what they see on the score in real time,

and Petrella stressed that instructors must emphasize complete understanding of these concepts in the group piano classroom to help students achieve music literacy and comprehension at the keyboard. Petrella pointed out that duplication of a certain skill or piece does not equal music literacy; therefore, we must find ways to instruct and assess students in a way that requires proficiency and not just replication.

One of these ways is to encourage ownership of each skill at the keyboard. Ownership is the measure of a student's accessibility to the information, skills and tools necessary to understand and realize musical language. So in music study, every skill needs to be owned to be beneficial.

These ideas of comprehension and ownership of musical language affect not just what we teach in the group piano classroom, but also how we teach, what we expect and how we assess our students. Petrella organized these ideas into three broad categories and discussed how to approach music literacy through comprehension and ownership within each stage:

1. Designing a curriculum for literacy
2. Providing tools in class lessons
3. Assessing through sight-reading and transposition

### Designing A Curriculum For Literacy

Petrella suggested a curriculum design that uses the end goal of music literacy as the basis for each day's lesson plans. When outlin-

ing a curriculum, instructors should first determine the skills students need to demonstrate proficiency at the keyboard. Petrella then proposed the creation of a course that moves step-by-step through the necessary skills, requiring students to own each step of the process leading up to the final goal. For example, pentascales would be introduced before tetrachords, which would then lead to the introduction of scales, with the ultimate goal of hands-together performance. Furthermore, root position triads would lead to the use of inversions and finally to common chord progressions. Throughout the introduction and study of each concept, students would be expected to master each skill and then transfer their knowledge to other musical contexts.

Petrella then provided a sample workflow for lesson plans:

- ▶▶ Warm up
- ▶▶ Introduce a concept
- ▶▶ Apply the concept in various settings
- ▶▶ Conclude with a piece that applies the concept in real music
- ▶▶ Point out connections along the way

She stressed the warm-up as a critical point in the lesson plan, as this is the step where the instructor provides the tools that help students build toward music literacy.

### Providing The Tools

Often, class time is largely devoted to activities, but Petrella proposed that classes should also include an emphasis on keyboard tools. She suggested the following categorization of teaching, and recommended that instructors directly relate these tools to the activities to facilitate students' music literacy:

| Tools | Activities |
|---|---|
| ▶▶ Technical Exercises | ▶▶ Harmonization |
| ▶▶ Chord Progressions | ▶▶ Transposition |
| ▶▶ Logical Use of the Hands | ▶▶ Repertoire |
| ▶▶ Keyboard Geography | ▶▶ Sight-reading |
|  | ▶▶ Improvisation |
|  | ▶▶ Score Reading |
|  | ▶▶ Ensembles |
|  | ▶▶ Accompanying |

Each of these tools contributes to a student's ability to realize the music on the page quickly and easily. By gaining ownership over each of these keyboard tools, students can apply their knowledge to the contexts of each above activity.

### Assessing For Literacy

Petrella suggested sight-reading and transposition as two of the most effective ways to assess music literacy. Sight-reading requires that students draw on tools they have previously learned and apply them instantly within a new context. The use of transposition, either prepared or (more preferably) at sight, demonstrates true ownership and comprehension of material, and it is for this activity that Petrella strongly advocated in every activity. Finally, when assessing literacy, Petrella recommended that tests require comprehension and understanding of patterns and context rather than just duplication of a piece or specific skill.

In conclusion, Petrella reiterated the need to provide students with the proper tools to help them actualize music quickly and easily. Through an emphasis on ownership at each stage in the learning process, and a focus on comprehension of musical context and language, students will learn to recognize common elements in a score. Mastery of the tools therefore leads to greater proficiency in activities, and ultimately, literacy at the keyboard.

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***Michelle Wachter** is currently pursuing a doctoral degree in piano pedagogy at the University of South Carolina, where she holds an assistantship in group piano and accompanying.*

# Fusion

## Amalgamation Of Technology And Music In Class Piano

**Reported by Eunjung Choi**

Ka Man "Melody" Ng shared her experiences using social media and gadgets to enhance her teaching strategies, and explored the idea that these technologies can be used to help students learn better and faster. These days, everything is connected to the Internet. "Generation Z" represents the "World of Instant Connectivity," using sites such as Facebook. These digital natives have grown up with technology. The challenge to teachers lies in understanding how music students react to this technological trend. Ng had three important suggestions for teachers: keep up to date with new innovation, have open conversations with students, and incorporate modern technology in the class piano setting to add value and efficiency to students' learning processes. Ng defined this incorporation as "Fusion."

Fusion aims to create new sensations for both teachers and students in the classroom and even beyond the classroom setting. It can be achieved by incorporating familiar technologies into our teaching. According to Ng's summary, there are three benefits to this approach: increased student engagement, learning beyond the textbook and improved communication, which she referred to as "staying tuned."

1. Student engagement is one of the important factors that results in faster learning and better retention. Ng suggests that teachers view their class as a community. In this way, students who are shy could engage and contribute to class activity.
2. Internet access has broadened the learning environment beyond the textbook, the classroom and the hour, allowing students and teachers to exchange and communicate ideas more freely.
3. Staying tuned helps teachers relate to the younger generation and keeps us youthful. In this regard, it is essential for teachers to stay abreast of trends that will help keep students receptive to learning.

Ng emphasized how social media became prominent in this century and cited United States presidential candidate Mitt Romney's, use of social media to foster his 2012 presidential campaign. Social media has become

# Fusion: Amalgamation Of Technology And Music In Class Piano

a great tool to network, to stay in touch with friends, family, and even with former students, and to create a group as a teaching tool in the class piano setting. There are several examples of social media sites that have applications for group piano:

- ▶▶ Facebook (www.facebook.com) is one of the most popular sites that can be used to create groups that include students and the community, to post videos and class announcements, and to foster class discussion outside of class time.
- ▶▶ Twitter (www.twitter.com) is another popular social media application among the student population. It is limited to only 140 characters and would be a precise communication tool to exchange ideas, just like Facebook. In the class setting, it would be helpful to update Facebook and Twitter at the same time by using the "connect accounts" feature in the Twitter settings.
- ▶▶ foursquare (http://foursquare.com) is a geo-social application, launched at the South by Southwest Festival in Austin in 2009. FourSquare can be an effective motivational tool in the class piano setting. Students can compete to get incentive badges and "Mayorships" can function as psychological rewards for coming to class even before the class begins.

Ng also discussed the use of gadgets in the classroom. Smartphones, iPhones, tablets/iPads, and computers provide access at the tip of a finger and can be used not only to facilitate social connections, but in development of new teaching strategies in the class-piano setting.

Some examples include "Silent Quiz," group projects, harmonization and transposition. Ng showed a video of one of her experiences with the iPad for the "Silent Quiz" in her piano class. She also uses iPads during class when students need to do "make-up quizzes." In this way, she can adjudicate the quiz while the class continues their own work. Using such techniques not only closes the gap between students and the instructor, it also shows how familiar technologies can increase the effectiveness of class piano instruction.

Ng explained how she teaches chord progressions (I-IV-V-vi) and transposition with Adele's song, "Someone Like You." Ng demonstrated how students can access online resources for learning accompaniments to popular songs, and to locate free scores in a PDF format. This idea can easily turn into group projects where students explore, locate and perform music in styles that they like.

Increasing student engagement via social media and gadgets, as well as using all different aspects of technology and resources to complement our teaching is very important. Using communication tools available online can enhance the relationship between teacher and students and can enhance motivation in the learning environment. Gadgets can improve efficiency in the classroom. In addition, this strategy combines traditional music learning with new materials, to strike a balance between the virtual world and reality, and to blend academic work with social life. Most importantly, it is fun to use all the technology innovations in our class piano settings and provides practical learning activities for students and effective teaching strategies.

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***Eunjung Choi*** *is assistant professor of piano and coordinator of keyboard studies at Claflin University. She holds degrees from the University of South Carolina, Ball State University and Dongduk Women's University in Seoul, South Korea.*

# Coaching Thinking

## Strategies For Developing Reflective Teachers And Students

**Reported by Mary Tollefson, NCTM**

In their quests to become greater communicators, Linda Berger and Catherine Schmidt have found a tremendous value in cognitive coaching. While true cognitive coaching would require a dedication to training through the formal cognitive coaching seminars, which are extensive and much more in-depth, the sessions in Austin allowed GP3 participants to have a glimpse into the possibilities, the opportunities and the value that cognitive coaching and training might bring to the role of pedagogue.

For many sessions at the 2012 GP3 Forum, presenters provided a great deal of information to help shape us positively as teachers: applications of technology, discussions of what to teach and how to teach, rubrics for evaluating student work, and better understanding of skills and processes within the framework of group piano courses and piano pedagogy. Essentially these preliminary discussions and presentations were about how to teach in a typical teacher-pupil relationship.

Berger and Schmidt provided a different perspective by focusing not on how teachers shape students' performance behaviors, but on students' thinking processes. That is, a teacher can guide a student's thinking into his or her recognition of a need for change. Rather than simply accepting the teacher's instruction through compliance, training a student's thinking yields self-directedness.

A brief video of a coaching was provided. Within this video clip, one notices the student does the majority of the talking, not the teacher/coach. The coach's role for the majority of the clip is to reflect what the student is saying and guide the student toward detecting the true problem or issue.

The presenters allowed the audience to converse about their observations, and my conversations yielded similar responses as other participants: while listening to the student's initial concerns, my mind was organizing a list of successful strategies that would solve her problems. Participants observed that a coach actually talked less than the student, often rephrased the issues without adding more information and asked open-ended questions that did not necessarily have one solution or answer.

The facilitators of this session outlined four roles we perform as teachers: expert resource, collaborator, coach and evaluator. In their estimation, the coach really has the potential to create the greatest growth of a

student, because the focus is to promote reflective thinking and musical independence. Additionally, cognitive coaching stems from four premises:

1. All behavior is produced by thought and perception.
2. Teaching is constant decision making.
3. To learn something new requires engagement and alteration in thought.
4. Cognitive development is necessary for true change.

To demonstrate the role of coaching, the presenters asked a question for audience participants to discuss in small groups: What thoughts might be surfacing regarding the roles of advice, coaching and thinking in promoting a person's self-directed learning? I can only speak for my small group, but one of the thoughts was not necessarily that we do not use all of these tools, but that, in an effort to expedite changing behaviors, we might not use these tools to their optimal potential in changing the way of thinking in our students. This led the discussion and the presenters to acknowledge that there is a continuum of learning interactions, and to remember that coaching might lead to more effective change in our students.

While this presentation was an introduction to cognitive coaching, Berger and Schmidt provided five tools toward developing this role as teacher: trust and rapport, listening, pause, paraphrase and questioning to support thinking. While trust must be cultivated, rapport can be established more immediately with physical attributes, such as body position and tone voice. The presenters provided examples of good listening and less-focused listening. Good listening includes being active in the moment as well as intentionally focusing on the student and letting go of our own agendas. Some ways to improve one's listening is to pause, which signals respect and confidence, and paraphrase, which is a different way of conveying that you are listening. These tools can be developed over time and

are one of the focuses of the cognitive coaching seminars available. The coaching pause is simply a technique to allow the student to continue to think and encourage him or her to express thoughts without the coach taking charge of the discussion's direction. Paraphrase is not a way of responding, but a way of demonstrating effective listening. If a coach can summarize the student's ideas, it shows attentiveness toward the student's issue(s) and keeps the focus on the student. The paraphrase included levels with different purposes: acknowledge/clarify, summarize/organize and shifting the level of abstraction. The presenters provided examples and illustrations of each level of paraphrase. The final tool, questioning, was also multifaceted and invited complex thinking, directed at the spirit of inquiry are open-ended and non-judgmental.

This concluded the opening session.

## Discussion

The discussion session was basically putting into practice what had been presented in the opening section. My session was the one presented by Linda Berger. She presented more resources and also recommended collecting assessment data for a student, but waiting to share it until after students have expressed ideas and issues. Rather than beginning with the teacher's assessment, the data is studied from the perspective of seeing how it aligns with the student's perspective.

While one would really need to attend a cognitive coaching seminar, GP3 participants had an opportunity to try cognitive coaching through an exercise. Partner conversations allowed us to take turns being the coach and being the student. This gave us an opportunity to ask questions along with trying to paraphrase the responses, each person taking the role of the coach. We faced each other to create openness.

Following the exercise, Berger answered questions from the audience:

**GP3 Participant:** In thinking and interacting with someone, are you never supposed to share a personal experience?

**Linda Berger:** If I choose a certain mode of operating, will it positively change their thinking? Then you should do it. Think of adding coaching to your current strategies rather than eliminating your current mode of interaction.

**GP:** Are we never supposed to share a personal story in an effort to keep the focus on the student's experience?

**LB:** Not necessarily. The idea is that coaches focus on listening to the student's experience and that we empathize but not turn the experience around to our own. Having said that, empathy will help "filter" good listening.

**GP:** As I participate in this discussion, my efforts are divided between becoming more aware through questioning and simultaneously determining a response.

**LB:** You're wondering how this changes with contrived structure? Trying to stay in pause and paraphrase mode for as long as possible allows a person to have a flow of thinking. If you're not getting any new information, then it's time to move on. Benefits of paraphrasing prior to asking a question take out the negative when posing a question.

**GP:** If I think of myself as a coach, I think of myself as an expert. I find it difficult to do this with a colleague when I don't feel like an expert.

**LB:** Are terms influencing expectations of dynamics? If another word (other than coach) works better, use that. For example, with a colleague, you might simply say "Would you like some help with your thinking?"

Berger concluded this session by outlining the differences between a psychology counselor and a teacher, who is focused on getting things done. She stated that a counselor allows you to reflect and you come up with the solution. Berger reminded us that, as teachers, we need to allow students to find their ways on their own more often so they will continue to grow beyond our short term interaction with them.

Finally, Berger reminded us that a coaching session is any time people are using the tools to mediate someone's thinking. It is about your intention and it can happen anywhere; it is the idea of moving someone to where they want their thinking to be.

**Final Assignment:**

By the end of the day, the presenters and audience could identify many connections where coaching and the other ideas intersected. Along with illustrating where the many ideas overlapped at the 2012 GP3 Forum, Berger and Schmidt reminded us that cognitive coaching takes training and practice, and their most effective growth was accomplished through partnering and attending the cognitive coaching seminars as a team. Additionally, they recommended not trying to integrate all of the listening tools at once—maybe start with learning to pause in a conversation that would allow the student greater opportunity for expression.

As with any great session, we probably ended with more questions than conclusions. And, like music, we found that practice and genuine effort are the keys to becoming a better listener and a more mindful learner.

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*Mary Tollefson*, NCTM, is associate professor of piano at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. She teachers group piano, applied piano, piano pedagogy and music appreciation.

# Two Certification Paradigms

**Reported by Cheryl Pachak-Brooks, NCTM**

Andrea McAlister, NCTM, assistant professor of piano pedagogy at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, and Stephen Pierce, assistant professor of music at the University of Northern Colorado, discussed the relationship between college and university pedagogy programs, the MTNA Certification program and the Teaching Diploma Qualification from the University of South Africa (UNISA).

## MTNA Certification

McAlister presented an overview of the requirements for the five MTNA Certification Teacher Profile Projects and demonstrated how she applies them in her pedagogy course. She found that many aspects of the projects worked quite well with how she was presently teaching. She modified her syllabus to incorporate other aspects of the projects, which made it a stronger and better-rounded curriculum.

*Project #1—Write Your Teaching Philosophy*
This writing project gives students guidance and focus in their writing. In addition to writing a teaching philosophy the candidate is also asked to give a response to one of four questions. Through the course of the semester McAlister covers each of the questions either through discussion, students writing

blogs and reactions to each entry, or a three to four page paper.

*Project #2—Analyze Four Teaching Pieces*
Following submission of the application and payment of fee, MTNA provides four intermediate teaching pieces representing the four major musical eras. McAlister uses the form MTNA provides to help guide the students in analyzing the pieces. She requires a 150-word minimum response and expects her students to use prose, not bullet writing.

*Project #3—Present Your Teaching*
McAlister has her students record each lesson, which they then upload to a server and are watched and evaluated by the class. She uses the self-evaluation form provided by MTNA. She likes the format and wording, which has her students provide a detailed evaluation of their teaching. They also discuss the student's learning modality versus the teacher's teaching style. Each student provides a video segment from the beginning, middle and end of the semester so they can see the progress they have made in their own teaching. She uses the writing of future goals for each student they teach as part of the final project. In lieu of the assessment portion she has students write weekly lesson progress reports. MTNA requires a video of the teacher

performing to assure a level of competency. Since her students perform and are evaluated in other courses she does not require this as part of her course.

*Project #4—Share Information About Your Teaching Environment*

This project is approached from a hypothetical view point. The discussion includes the needs of an independent studio teacher. Some of the topics covered are space requirements, whether to rent or buy, and materials and equipment needs.

*Project #5—Discuss Your Business Ethics and Studio Policies*

McAlister finds discussing business ethics to be a very beneficial part of her course and added this topic when she incorporated the MTNA certification process into her syllabus. The students are given different scenarios involving colleagues, parents and students, and then they discuss how best to handle the situation. The students write a studio policy, interview questions and a hypothetical budget.

Incorporating the requirements for the MTNA Certification Teacher Profile Projects into the pedagogy curriculum benefits the student by providing a nationally based structure and a well-rounded curriculum. Students may prefer the ease of completion in an academic setting over certifying at a later time when other responsibilities might prevent or delay completing the process.

For more information, visit www.mtnacertification.org.

## UNISA

Stephen Pierce presented an overview of the UNISA Teacher's Licentiate, which is based on the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) graded model of entry level to level eight, followed by diploma/licentiate examinations. Licentiates are available in performance, chamber music and vocal accompaniment. There is a music theory and history requirement at each level. The licentiate is a comprehensive, all-encompassing exam much like a bar exam for law students or a CPA board exam for accountants.

The exam consists of three separate parts:
1. A written exam;
2. A practical exam, which includes performance and sight-reading;
3. Viva Voce or oral exam.

The written exam is comprehensive and includes three parts; repertoire, pedagogy and fingering. The fingering section is unique. Students are given a piece of music and must write in fingering for every note without the aid of a piano.

# Panel: Two Certification Paradigms

For the practical exam the student must prepare and perform four works from different style periods for a panel of two examiners. They must also sight-read and pass a practical musicianship (aural) exam.

The Viva Voce exam consists of three parts. The examiners play two works that include mistakes such as wrong notes, rhythms, inappropriate tempo, stylistic inconsistencies and the like. The student is asked to detect the errors and discuss how they would work with the student to correct them.

The student arrives one hour before the exam and is given two works to prepare, one early-intermediate and one early-advanced. The student must perform these at a high artistic and stylistic level and be prepared to discuss all aspects of the pieces including pedagogical issues.

The final portion is an oral exam in which the examiners ask teaching method questions. They might focus on a portion of the written exam where they believed the student was weak.

The pedagogy course at the University of Northern Colorado is a two-semester course. It is based on the UNISA model but without

**Cheryl Pachak-Brooks**, NCTM, is an instructor of piano and coordinates the freshman seminar/learning communities program at Eastern New Mexico University. Pachak-Brooks has served as Southwest Division director and MTNA secretary-treasurer. She is the chair-designate for the MTNA National Certification Commission.

the practical exam because that material is covered in other courses in the degree. The class meets twice weekly. One class is devoted to lecturing and the other to repertoire performance and discussion, and detection and discussion of inaccuracies.

Throughout the semester there are weekly quizzes based on the material covered in class. He encourages discussion because he believes the students have to know the material thoroughly to be able to discuss it open and freely. The mid-term and final exams include questions relating to repertoire knowledge, pedagogy questions and fingering following the UNISA model. They are also given an oral exam that includes listening to works and detecting errors followed by discussion on how to correct them. Pierce usually gives them four examples representing different style periods as opposed to the two that are part of the UNISA exam. They are given repertoire that they have a short time to learn and perform followed by discussion. The final part is an oral exam in which the student answers teaching method questions. He gives the students around eight questions to consider for the final oral exam, rather than having it open-ended as is the UNISA exam.

This model of study provides a very comprehensive study of repertoire from elementary through advanced. The students also cover the pedagogical aspects of teaching from elementary to advanced levels. They learn how to listen critically and engage in problem solving techniques in their teaching.

For more information, visit www.unisa.ac.za/contents/faculties/humanities/mus/docs/Pianosyllabus%202008%20final%20Piano.pdf.

# Pedagogy Thoughts

## Discussion Group 1

**Reporter: Janice ChenJu Chiang**

This report is a summary of group discussions with a conclusion of the reporter's personal thoughts. Participants were divided into four groups in different rooms to exchange "Pedagogy Thoughts" within 30 minutes of discussion. Discussion participants were asked to respond to the following four questions:

1. How do you use your own performance skills in teaching?
2. What performance oriented projects/assignments do you include in your pedagogy courses?
3. What pedagogy projects/assignments do you use that require pedagogy students to apply improvisation and applied theory?
4. How do you teach artistry in your pedagogy class?

### How do you use your own performance skills in teaching?

One of the approaches that could be beneficial for students, especially for first time or less experienced performers, is that teachers can share their own performing experience such as overcoming stage anxiety or the physical and mental preparation before the performance. Another idea is sharing strategies for practicing sound production in a lesson.

### What performance-oriented projects/assignments do you include in your pedagogy courses?

Many participants support the idea of a quasi-planned repertoire project by categoriz-ing their levels and addressing the problematic areas. For problematic areas, one participant asks students to find three practice strategies for each and requires them to practice the selected repertoire to ensure good performing quality in the demonstration. Another challenging activity that could be included in the pedagogy courses is to give students some composers' names and allow them 15 minutes to create a graded list of pieces, then immediately ask students to play and present in front of peers as in a public workshop. One participant also described how the PLD, performer level discussion, is involved in performance-oriented projects in his school's pedagogy courses. Students were assigned a certain time period of repertoire to perform at an artistic level and discussed what level would be suitable or appropriate for the students. They also discussed the pedagogical elements of the piece, what the challenges are and what pedagogical purposes could be in the pieces. Students were individually required to compile all the pieces into a literature catalogue including levels, pedagogical elements and purposes.

### What pedagogy projects/assignments do you use that require pedagogy students to apply improvisation and applied theory?

One option for introducing students to improvisation is to learn a folk song by ear, then ask students to play on the keyboard with applied theory skill. Another option is to use classical models. For instance, Clementi's preludes or a Czerny exercise can show students how to improvise with basic chord pro-

gression in various patterns such as Alberti bass or broken chords. When students are comfortable with improvisational skills, teachers can even apply music history and musical forms ranging from the baroque period to modern musical style. Teachers can also ask students to roll dice or draw a card from a hat with specific instruction on keys or chord progressions in a certain musical form, and ask students to improvise in front of the class. One participant suggested a fundamental but beneficial exercise: Students could practice chord progressions in every key every week as a learning process for improvisation. Teachers could invent 10 to 15 chord progressions starting with simple I-IV-V and gradually adding secondary chords and secondary dominant chords to the progressions.

Thoughts naturally lead to composition when one talks about improvisation. Nevertheless, how might composition be useful to piano pedagogy? One possible assignment is asking students to write some elementary pieces with criteria that covers one or two musical concepts or to write the arrangement for the songs in which students might be interested. Teachers could also ask students to write the first three or four units of a piano method with their own choice of approach and to compose all the music on their own including all the important pedagogy.

### How do you teach artistry in your pedagogy class?

YouTube was discussed as a useful pedagogical tool and helpful resource to discuss the elements of artistry in a performance. For instance, one participant asked her pedagogy students to listen or watch three different performances of the same piece and do a comparative performance critique of each. Students were then asked to provide constructive suggestions such as "What would be the next step in terms of artistry for the performer to achieve?" "What practice strategy might the teacher offer in terms of technique?" Another teaching idea is that teachers could ask students to be adjudicators in the class and write down their comments on several performances from CDs as in a competition; students can learn critiquing skills while forming their concrete ideas about artistry.

A participant brought up another effective way of teaching students artistry: asking students to create a story line or use an image, which gives an individual voice for each student. Some participants also mentioned that teachers could use YouTube or available websites as a tool to learn repertoire that is in a dance style. The result was usually successful.

### Conclusion

Living in the 21st century, teachers are naturally pushed to explore more possibilities of using technology in their classes, experimenting with how helpful YouTube or other available websites could be for students. However, the thorough compilation of piano methods and literature in the market is still necessary. It is intensive work but it has always proved to be useful for future teachers. Moreover, the compilation should continue to be updated. The piano pedagogy curriculum aims at giving students a basic understanding of teaching methods and the opportunities to learn how to teach. However, the knowledge of repertoire and creative teaching with artistry is also considered important. After all, a teacher's objective is to prepare future well-rounded pedagogues. Through this group discussion, we learned from teachers who all endeavored to be creative and thorough in their pedagogy courses. While exchanging our ideas, we were also inspired from each other.

*Janice Chenju Chiang is the staff accompanist at Northern Arizona University and is active as a clinician, adjudicator and on piano faculty at NAU Community Music and Dance Academy. Chiang holds a DMA degree from the University of Arizona.*

# Pedagogy Thoughts
## Discussion Group 2

**Reported by Bryan Powell**

The exchange of ideas between colleagues is always a highlight of the GP3 conference, and this year was no exception. The breakout groups on Saturday afternoon provided a wonderful opportunity for participants to capitalize on the knowledge and experience of their fellow pedagogues. Questions addressed this year were as follows:

1. How do you use your own performance skills in teaching?
2. What performance oriented projects/assignments do you include in your pedagogy courses?
3. What pedagogy projects/assignments do you use that require pedagogy students to apply improvisation and applied theory?
4. How do you teach artistry in your pedagogy class?

The teachers in the group in which I participated were eager to discuss these topics, and their varied backgrounds and experience resulted in lively and information discussion. As a result, numerous ideas were suggested for the first three questions, leaving no time to address the fourth. Below is a summary of the session.

Regarding the question of how we use our own performance skills in teaching, the most salient answer was as a means of modeling for our students. This modeling could be used to highlight a variety of musical concepts such as phrasing, dynamics, balance, rhythm and the like. Multiple interpretations of a piece might also be modeled to underscore the myriad possibilities available to a performer. Juxtaposing good and less than ideal performances was suggested as a technique that can aid in developing a student's critical listening.

As a teacher, preparing repertoire for performance allows us to better empathize with our students who have upcoming juries, auditions and recitals. Our own performance preparation enables us to speak from recent experience as we guide students through the process of learning and memorizing music, and helps us prepare them mentally and psychologically for performance.

Our performances ultimately serve as a source of inspiration, not only for our students, but also for ourselves. Students are inspired as they hear their teachers perform and are encouraged to continue their diligent studies. Performing in ensembles with our students was suggested as an excellent motivational experience. As teachers, the intimate musical knowledge gained through performance allows us the opportunity to fall in love with repertoire all over again. This is especially true of intermediate repertoire, which is too often heard in mediocre student performances.

While several in our discussion group indicated they encountered no performance-related projects as pedagogy students, all agreed it is a vital part of the pedagogy curriculum today. Performance related projects in

pedagogy courses result in students' increased familiarity with varied teaching literature and the opportunity for them to highlight musical detail in these teaching pieces.

The most common performance-based project discussed during the session involved students selecting teaching pieces, leveling them and performing them for the class. It was also suggested that students create handouts for their classmates that address the technical and musical difficulties of their pieces as well as the type of student they would be appropriate for. These handouts become a useful resource for students to reference in the future. Variations of this project, such as selecting pieces from method books, selecting pieces written after 1950 and making recordings of the pieces, were also mentioned. Other performance-related activities suggested for pedagogy students include having students sight-read through as much literature as possible, prepare young students for performance and practice talking and cueing while playing.

The final question discussed in our group dealt with assignments that require students to incorporate improvisation. One of the main topics of our discussion on improvisation was the importance of leading pedagogy students to a place of proficiency and confidence in their own improvisational skills so

*Bryan Powell is on the adjunct faculty at the University of Oklahoma, where he is a candidate for a PhD degree. He holds an MM degree from the University of Colorado, where he studied with Robert Spillman.*

they can be effective teachers in this area. One of the easiest ways to begin this process is to share your personal approach to improvisation with your pedagogy class. Another tip for addressing the concept of improvisation is to remind your students that improvisation should be fun. Improvisers don't worry about mistakes…there are no mistakes! It was agreed that improvisation should begin early in piano instruction while students are often more adventurous and less self-critical and that it not be relegated to the end of the lesson, to be addressed only if time permits.

In the first stages of improvisation instruction, simple guidelines and boundaries should be set by the instructor. An excellent assignment that provides a simple framework is to have pedagogy students improvise an accompaniment for an elementary teaching piece. Similar assignments could be given in which the student deconstructs a piece from the standard teaching repertoire, such as easier works by Kabalevsky and Bartók, and is then asked to reconstruct it through improvisation. For example, the improviser plays the left hand as written and is asked to improvise the melody with the right hand. Variations on this are numerous and could include keeping a rhythmic or melodic motive while altering other musical elements. Today, improvisation exercises are included in many piano methods and group piano texts and entire books are being published that specifically address the development of improvisation skills.

In conclusion, it is obvious that performance skills are an invaluable pedagogical tool that can be used in numerous ways by an experienced teacher. Therefore, it is essential we continue to foster the development of our students' performance skills and direct them to appropriate and creative ways to implement them with their students.

# Pedagogy Thoughts
## Discussion Group 3
### Reported by Candace Hawkins

This discussion group focused on the delicate relationship between pedagogy and performance faculty. In this session, group members discussed the challenges facing our pedagogical community and what pedagogues must do to compete in academia today.

### Question 1: How do you use your own performance skills in teaching?

This question drew complicated answers from the discussion group. Since few group members were currently teaching piano pedagogy courses, focus was briefly directed to group piano. They observed that many different performance aspects are not conducive to the group piano setting. Group piano, as an introductory course to a secondary instrument, must be careful about the level of performance that is addressed.

Similarly, the teaching of some aspects of performance in the pedagogy classroom, especially technique, is sometimes questioned since different schools of thought exist among pianists. One group member suggested the idea of bringing in resources such as the Taubman Institute videos. She argued that even if some may disagree with the source, the information is cited, taking the teacher's opinion out of the equation. As we had learned earlier that day in the cognitive coaching session, learning is more effective when students learn through their own experience, rather than by merely trusting the teacher's opinion.

Another idea included applying music theory to the introduction and understanding of pieces, using all combined skills as a means to improve performance. This led to a general discussion about the relationship between, and attitudes of performance and pedagogy faculty in different schools. In many schools a rift exists between pedagogy and performance faculty. Some speculated that this divide may be caused by a lack of respect for pedagogy teachers, simply because they do not perform as often as applied faculty. In the pedagogy classroom, teachers must carefully tread the line between teaching performance skills and teaching the student to teach performance skills. Otherwise, the teacher runs the risk of contradicting the student's applied teacher, especially in the subject of technique.

The focus then shifted to the different performance requirements for pedagogy and performance majors. All members of the discussion agreed that both parties should have equal performance standards but recognized that many schools fail to require the same level of performance quality from all piano students. Pedagogy majors may have less demanding requirements to allow time for planning and preparation for their teaching. It was mentioned that some programs, like the doctor of musical arts degree in music and human learning at the University of Texas at Austin, do apply more emphasis on research but still maintain a strong connection to the applied faculty. The group also discussed, however, the fact that research hours technically detract from the hours that could be spent in the practice rooms. If a student devotes significant time and energy toward research, he or she will not be spending that time practicing, and logically, the student's performance level has the potential to decrease. This, therefore, begins the widening of the gap between pedagogues and performers.

### Question 2: What performance oriented projects/assignments do you include in your pedagogy courses?

From our discussion group, one teacher asks her students to learn teaching pieces from a collection. After studying the idiosyncrasies of that particular composer or style, the student must then write their own teaching piece that personifies those particular characteristics. The piece must fit the style, as well as the grading level, that is appropriate for the collection. Another teacher found Chopin etudes as a collaborative effort to be effective. Each student pedagogically examines and performs one of the Chopin etudes, resulting in the eventual study and performance of the entire collection.

Through the performance of educational literature, the pedagogy student learns how to carefully interpret the repertoire and improves his or her ability to detect errors in student performances of that piece. Members of the group cautioned that, in their experience, pedagogy students often do not take these performances seriously. Sometimes the students will neglect to practice the pieces in the same way they would practice their own solo repertoire, simply because they assume the teaching repertoire is easy.

When contemplating a solution to this dilemma, a group member suggested that the pedagogy students be required to create recordings of their teaching repertoire performances. This ensures the student performs the piece, recognizes the difficult sections and works through these sections before the performance for the class. Another group member suggested that students assess their peers' performances, allowing the performer some feedback while encouraging discernment from the listener. These, after all, constitute the activities of everyday lessons. Pedagogy students also may fail to realize

that teaching pieces can be difficult, and that these difficulties are exactly what they will need to know as teachers. Identifying potential problem areas and possible solutions may determine the success of the student and that of the teacher.

Continuing this general idea, a group member posed this question: "Are pedagogy students less inclined to perform?" After some thought, the group agreed that for the past 15 years, this has not necessarily been the case. Pedagogy programs today are much more established than they have been in the past, and due to this, performers are beginning to see the value of the study of pedagogy. Still, in some cases applied piano faculty does not typically think of pedagogy faculty as performers of equal quality. This often depends on the culture of the school, as some group members have been involved with schools where faculty members teach in both the applied and pedagogy/group piano areas. One group member described her struggle with and eventual success in changing the culture at a school that did not regard the pedagogy teacher as a performer.

Performers and pedagogues today must have "value added" to their title. Many schools, particularly smaller colleges, want candidates who are competent in more than one area simply because small schools do not have the means to hire specialists. Performers must be excellent teachers, and pedagogues must play very well.

Group members discussed the stigma associated with pedagogy teachers and their infrequent performances, while acknowledging that there are pedagogy faculty members who do perform. Essentially, applied teachers respect pedagogy faculty who can play. Many teachers, however, do not perform as much as others because if they apply their focus to too many things, trying to "do it all," the quality of all areas decreases. Still the group recognized that in our music community today, you have to perform and teach a great deal. The competition among pianists is quite severe, and there are many people who are well-trained and very talented. We have no choice but to be excellent pedagogues as well as artistic performers.

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*Candace Hawkins* teaches group and applied piano at Oklahoma City University and Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College and maintains a successful home studio in Norman, Oklahoma. She holds a master of music degree in from the University of Oklahoma.

# Pedagogy Thoughts

## Discussion Group 4

**Reported by Lim Angela Tchoi**

On Pedagogy Saturday, breakout groups of about 20 people discussed pedagogy at the college/university level. The four questions addressed in the 30-minute session were:

1. How do you use your own performance skills in teaching?
2. What performance oriented projects/assignments do you include in your pedagogy courses?
3. What pedagogy projects/assignments do you use that require pedagogy students to apply improvisation and applied theory?
4. How do you teach artistry in your pedagogy class?

**Performance Skills In Teaching:**

Many of the participants emphasized the need for students to watch the master teacher performing. By attending such recitals, the students witness and hear the teacher doing what they are teaching. So much of what we teach our piano students is derived from our own learning, as most pianists develop performance skills under a master-apprentice relationship.

**Performance-Oriented Projects/Assignments:**

Performing recitals featuring easy intermediate pieces were recommended, so that stu-

dents can hear higher levels of artistry, even for simple pieces. An excellent example of such recitals was held just before this Breakout Group session, during the "Lunch Hour Performances." Offered for the first time at this year's GP3, the performers presented pedagogically interesting or significant pieces, of any level and in any style, 2 minutes maximum. A brief description of the piece and its pedagogical value were printed on the program, which familiarized the audience with teaching repertoire that other teachers thought may be indispensable.

**Applying Improvisation And Theory To Pedagogy:**

All piano teachers agreed on the importance of applying music theory in keyboard functional skills. However, improvisation was a feared territory, one that many teachers had to struggle to learn themselves, before attempting to teach this mandatory element. An example of pedagogical material that helps students become creative was *Blue is the Sea: Music, Dance and Visual Arts*, by Sofia Lopez-Ibor. In this 242-page book geared toward preschool through middle-school children, music teacher Lopez-Ibor addresses the concept of arts integration using a basic approach for the music and dance classroom. The book features 25 themes with music, poetry, dance and visual arts activities, which develop intuition, observing skills, sensorial

experiences and inner-growth. One of the activities mentioned was for a student to match an expression of a partner, with what he creates on his instrument. The key is to start simple: just start playing on black keys. Another stimulating thought came about—if such improvisation were written down, it would be a composition!

**Artistry In The Pedagogy Class:**

Our knowledge on artistry is mostly based on observing master teachers and performers. Students can attend master classes to see a great teacher derive artistic expression from students. If a small school offers only a one-semester pedagogy course, the class time may be limited to cover basic pedagogical material such as method books and other fundamental approaches.

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*Lim Angela Tchoi is a doctorate of musical arts student in piano performance and pedagogy at Arizona State University, in the studio of Robert Hamilton. She is a Special Talent Award recipient from the ASU School of Music.*
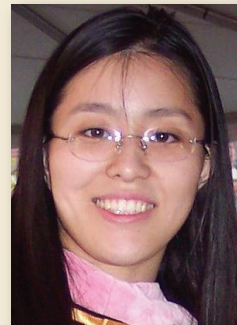
# GP3 Forum Presenters

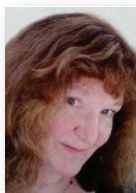**Linda Berger** is professor of music at St. Olaf College.

**Andrea McAlister**, NCTM, is assistant professor of piano pedagogy at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music.

**Phyllis Chiles** teaches music at Mariposa Elementary School in Brea, California.

**Judie Meulink** is the music director at the Warsaw Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Warsaw, Indiana.

**Michelle Conda** is professor of piano at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music.

**Ka Man Ng** teaches college and adult class piano at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

**Courtney Crappell**, NCTM, serves as assistant professor of piano pedagogy at the University of Texas San Antonio.

**Diane Helfers Petrella** is assistant professor of piano and piano pedagogy at the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music.

**George F. Litterst** is a nationally known music educator, clinician, author, performer and music software developer.

**Stephen Pierce** is assistant professor of music at the University of Northern Colorado.

**Zachary Lopes** is completing a DMA degree at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music.

**Catherine Schmidt** is professor of music education at Winona State University and program director for music education.

**Kathryn Koscho Sherman**, NCTM, is assistant professor of piano pedagogy at the Crane School of Music SUNY Potsdam.

# MTNA

## MUSIC TEACHERS NATIONAL ASSOICATION

National Headquarters
441 Vine St., Ste. 3100
Cincinnati, OH 45202-3004
Phone: (513) 421-1420 or
(888) 512-5278 • Fax: (513) 421-2503
mtnanet@mtna.org • www.mtna.org

Gary L. Ingle, Executive
Director & CEO
ext. 226
gingle@mtna.org

Marge Bengel
Senior Deputy Executive Director
ext. 229
mbengel@mtna.org

Brian Shepard
Chief Operating Officer
Deputy Executive Director
for Resource Development
ext. 241
bshepard@mtna.org

Melissa Curtice
Member Development Associate
ext. 237
mcurtice@mtna.org

Elaine Donaldson
Director of Membership Processing
ext. 230
edonaldson@mtna.org

Rachel Kramer, NCTM
Member Services Associate
ext. 242
rkramer@mtna.org

Marcie Gerrietts Lindsey
Director of Publishing
ext. 234
mlindsey@mtna.org

Teasha Fowler O'Connell
Communications Associate
ext. 231
toconnell@mtna.org

Brian Pieper
Graphic Designer
bpieper@mtna.org

Tonya Schauer
Meetings Associate
ext. 245
tschauer@mtna.org

Chad Schwalbach
Marketing and Public Relations Associate
ext. 232
cschwalbach@mtna.org

Peggy Stites
Bookkeeper
ext. 228
pstites@mtna.org

Linda Stump, NCTM
Director of Competitions
lindastump@mtna.org

Jennifer Thomason
Executive Assistant
ext. 235
jthomason@mtna.org

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Box 70661
ETSU Music Department
Johnson City, TN 37614
(423) 439-4405
caton@etsu.edu

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President-elect
1611 West Koch St., Unit 21
Bozeman, MT 59715
(406) 582-8759
kjcinmt@aol.com

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Vice President
3125 Mt. Holyoke Rd.
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(614) 459-9615
UABecky@gmail.com

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Belton, TX 76513
(254) 526-1866
Celinda.hallbauer@ctcd.edu

Ann Gipson, NCTM
Immediate Past President
11500 Northview Dr.
Aledo, TX 76008
(817) 361-0661
a.gipson@tcu.edu

Gary L. Ingle
Executive Director & CEO
MTNA National Headquarters
441 Vine St., Ste. 3100
Cincinnati, OH 45202-3004
(888)512-5278
gingle@mtna.org

**Directors**
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2200 Groesbeck Ave.
Lansing, MI 48912-3449
(517) 485-1363
ascheri@msu.edu
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414 Kidwiler Rd.
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425
(304) 876-5370
sbeard@shepherd.edu
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David French, NCTM
604 Lilac
Rexburg, ID 83440
(208) 390-0439
id_maestro@yahoo.com
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American Fork, UT 84003
(801) 756-3112
cherylnorman.nctm@gmail.com
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2721 Tropicana Ave.
Norman, OK 73071
(405) 447-1370
mksallee@cox.net
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457 N. Fountain
Wichita, KS 67208
(316) 651-0177
timothy.shook@sckans.edu
West Central Division

Martha L. Thomas, NCTM
155 Knob Lick Dr.
Athens, GA 30605
(706) 546-0563
mlthomas@uga.edu
Southern Division

### PROGRAM CHAIRS
**Certification**
Kenneth J. Christensen, NCTM
1611 West Koch St., Unit 21
Bozeman, MT 59715
(406) 582-8759
kjcinmt@aol.co

**Composer Commissioning**
Ann Rivers Witherspoon
9210 Larston
Houston, TX 77055-6418
(713) 464-7110
annwspoon@comcast.net

**Foundation Fund**
Joan Reist, NCTM
801 Driftwood Dr.
Lincoln, NE 68510
(402) 488-0718
jreist1@unl.edu

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(719) 633-4820
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(724) 325-4273
juniorsmtna@gmail.com

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figaro1226@gmail.com

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(414) 351-3098
j.norden@sbcglobal.net

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