MTNA
MUSIC TEACHERS NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

Group Piano Teaching Specialist Program

MTNA Group Teaching Specialist Program

Overview

The MTNA Teaching Specialist Program provides music teachers an opportunity to obtain a designation as a teaching specialist in the area of Group Piano. The Specialist designation demonstrates to the public, employers and peers that a teacher has devoted special attention to a particular teaching approach and has demonstrated specific understanding of the teaching approach to obtain the designation. Upon completion of requirements, applicants are granted the designation *MTNA Group Piano Teaching Specialist.* Once the designation has been achieved, no renewal is required to maintain the designation.

The MTNA Specialist designation is granted without bias, discrimination, or favoritism between MTNA members and/or non-members or any other arbitrary differentiation. The program is objectively administered in a uniform manner to ensure fairness, accuracy, validity and integrity.

Instructions For Submission Of The Group Piano Teaching Specialist Projects

- Once your application has been received and processed, you will receive an e-mail containing a link to a webpage that will allow you to upload all materials.
- Projects #1, #2 and #4 *must* be submitted as one document. Files may be Word (.doc or .docx), or .pdf. File name should be your name (i.e. JaneDoe.doc).
- Videos will be submitted according to the directions below, as well as under Project #3.
- Collaboration with colleagues is encouraged; however, all the materials prepared and submitted as a part of your Teacher Specialist submission must be yours and yours alone. If a submission is identical to that of another candidate, both candidates may be subject to disqualification from the Teacher Specialist process.

Submission of Videos
- Digital video files *must* be in one of the following formats: .mp4, .flv, .wmv and also will be uploaded. Please follow the directions detailed in Project #3 when preparing files.
- Due to size of the video files, uploading can take several minutes depending upon your particular computer settings, Internet connection and the like. Please be patient during this process.

Evaluation Process

Evaluation and review of the applicant's projects or documentation will be conducted by experts in the field who have achieved the MTNA Group Piano Teaching Specialist designation in their specific area.

Three evaluators will review each applicant's materials and reach consensus regarding the outcome of the application. The evaluators will refer to the *MTNA Group Piano Specialist* Program Evaluator Checklist when evaluating materials and use a 4 point Likert Scale (4=strongly agree, 3=agree, 2=disagree, 1=strongly disagree) to assess each element.

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**Summary of Projects
for the
MTNA Group Piano Teaching Specialist Program**

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1. **Teaching Philosophy.** Discuss your teaching philosophy of group piano teaching.

2. **Lesson Planning.** Develop two lesson plans for two group lessons that represent contrasting teaching settings.

3. **Demonstration of Teaching.** Submit two teaching videos, each 10 minutes in length, that correspond with the lesson plans from item #2.

4. **Understanding the Group Setting.** For each of the following categories, 1) Planning, 2) Classroom Management and 3) Motivation, describe solutions you have found to be most effective or solutions you might suggest. Specific scenarios are included below in Section 4 of the Projects.

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**Projects for the
MTNA Group Piano Teaching Specialist Program**

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1. **Teaching Philosophy.** Discuss your teaching philosophy of group piano teaching and include the following topics in your discussion:
   - advantages and disadvantages of group piano instruction
   - criteria for grouping students
   - applications of learning theory as it relates to the group you are teaching
   - examples of group dynamics in your teaching setting
   - considerations for selecting and planning curricula in a group setting

   Focus on group teaching of children and/or adults depending on your teaching experience. (500 word maximum)

2. **Lesson Planning.** Develop two lesson plans for two group lessons that represent contrasting teaching settings.
   <u>Format:</u> For each lesson plan, write a detailed narrative (complete sentences) describing your lesson goals and your expectations for student involvement. Conclude each plan with bullet points that summarize the lesson.

   <u>Content:</u> Include objectives and a presentation of concepts and materials that encourages musical growth and development. The following list may serve as a guide:
   - A list of materials and teaching aids you will use with each lesson plan
   - Suggested teaching strategies for each concept/activity that illustrate:
     - A variety of learning styles
     - Appropriate activities to facilitate group problem solving and cooperative learning
     - Appropriate teaching aids and/or use of keyboard laboratory
   - A practice assignment for daily practice

Selection of Classes: The following are suggested as contrasting teaching settings from which to choose two contrasting ages/levels.

Classes for Children
- o   An elementary class for children after three or four class sessions
- o   An elementary class for children after 4 months of class sessions
- o   An elementary class for children after 12 months of class sessions
- o   An elementary class for children after 18 months of class sessions
- o   Any intermediate level class for pre-college students

Classes for Adults
- o   Any section of class piano for the non-keyboard music major (may choose up to three different levels, for example Level 1, 2, 3, or 4)
- o   Any section of class piano for the non-music major (may choose up to two different levels)
- o   Any section of class piano for the adult/hobby student (may choose up to two different levels)

3. **Teaching Demonstration.** Submit two teaching videos, each 10 minutes in length, that correspond with the lesson plans from item #2. In addition, select one of the teaching videos and submit a self-evaluation with the video.
   - It is recommended that you record the class and complete the self-evaluation several times before you video record the class for this project. In order to include both teacher and student participation on the video, a camera operator should be utilized. After recording the entire class, select a 10-minute segment that demonstrates your best group teaching.
   - If you do not own a video recording device in good working order, we recommend that you contact colleagues or the families of your students to borrow one for this project.
   - Digital video files must be one of the following file formats: .mp4, .flv, .wmv. *Only these formats are acceptable*.
   - All students or their parent/guardian must sign the Authorization and Release form to submit with this project.

4. **Understanding the Group Setting.** Select two scenarios from each of the following categories and describe solutions you have found to be most effective or solutions you might suggest.
   Planning:
   a. A flu epidemic has hit your town and only one-third of the students come to class. How do you handle the situation? Do you proceed as planned? Do you alter your lesson plans? If so, how do you alter the plan?
   b. The headphones of the keyboard laboratory have developed an unbearable static and prevent you from doing any group/pair/or individual work on headsets. How do you alter a plan in which you had planned to work on small group ensembles and have students quiz each other in pairs in preparation for the test?
   c. Learning rates vary among students. How do you accommodate slower learners in a class while not losing the focus and attention of the quicker learners?
   d. While a MIDI accompaniment is an effective teaching tool, you realize that one student is learning all pieces by ear as you play the MIDI accompaniment rather than reading intervals and notes. How do you incorporate the benefits of the MIDI accompaniment but encourage the student to learn to read music?
   e. You begin incorporating some improvisation activities into your curriculum. Within the first few weeks, you realize that one student's anxiety over it is extreme to the point of tears. What can you do in planning your next class to help this student see it in a more positive light?

f. As you consider assigning students to specific groups, what criteria do you use to form appropriate groups?

Classroom Management:
a. Some students are quiet and would rather not speak up in class. They avoid eye contact and let the more vocal students speak and answer questions. How do you ensure that all students are involved and participating in class?
b. One student is particularly vocal and disruptive in class. How do you keep this student from dominating the class environment?
c. When analyzing a piece of music, what teaching techniques would you use to employ cooperative learning among the class?
d. Students play while you are talking, but it is not always the same students. How do you control this?
e. To complete an in-class assignment, you divide the class into small groups. While most of the groups are working in a productive manner, you notice one student not participating or interacting. How can you change the group dynamics to encourage this student's participation in the activity?
f. When participating in games and "away from the keyboard" activities in class, one student has attention issues. He/she walks around the room, picks up items, and doesn't follow directions. What classroom management principles would be appropriate to help the student focus?

Motivation:
a. As a motivational tool, you give students the opportunity to add stickers to a chart as they demonstrate various skills. One child receives no parental support or encouragement during the week and consistently comes to class unprepared. After six weeks of classes, this child still has no stickers by his name. How do you handle the situation?
b. One student comes to class regularly having worked ahead in the method book. Moving the student to another class is not an option. How do you keep the student motivated as you try to maintain a consistent pace of new concepts within the class?
c. One student is very critical of the other students' performances in class. How do you create a positive atmosphere while still giving this student an opportunity to voice his ideas?
d. Aside from pop quizzes or assigned performances for a grade, how do you motivate your college music major classes to spend time in the practice room? Are you frustrated when they use the class room as the practice room?"
e. One student seems to enjoy the games and "away from the keyboard" activities in class, but always complains about the music being introduced. What are some ways to increase this child's interest in studying and performing the repertoire?
f. You notice that one student misses class on a fairly frequent basis. When the student is present, he/she doesn't seem engaged in class activities. You begin to doubt whether the student will continue with the class now that so much work has been missed. What would you do to renew the student's interest?

Group Piano Teaching: Self-Evaluation Form

Choose one of the two Group teaching videos you are submitting and complete this self-evaluation to the best of your abilities. Sometimes we learn the most from watching ourselves!

Your Name_____ Class Name/Level_____

Date of Class_____ Average Age of Students in Class_____

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1. In your opinion, what was the most successful part of the video excerpt? Why?

2. In your opinion, what was the least successful part of the video excerpt? Why?

3. Name one thing you would change if you could "re-do" this lesson or class. How would you do it differently?

4. Did the students leave the class understanding a new concept or skill? If yes, what was that skill and what did the students demonstrate in the lesson that made you know they "got it?"

5. Did the students leave the class knowing what to practice and how to practice? Support your response in a few short sentences.

6. Estimate how many minutes of the ten-minute excerpt the students were engaged in music making (for example, playing the piano, singing, clapping, tapping and so forth)_____

7. Estimate how many minutes you spent talking and giving directions_____

8. Describe your thoughts on the balance that should occur between teacher talk and student participation. Do you feel this teaching excerpt is an adequate reflection of your response? Why or why not?

9. Even though there are only (approximately) 10 minutes shown in this excerpt, rate (on a scale of 1–10 with "1" being exactly and "10" being not at all) how well you followed your lesson plan for the *entire* length of the class_____. If you deviated from your original plan, describe in a few short sentences why you felt this was the best option.

10. Briefly comment on each item included in the lesson plan that was executed during the class— even if it was not shown in the excerpt. (Use the back of this page and/or an additional page if necessary).

11. Please feel free to write any additional comments you would like to share about the submitted video.

Group Piano Teaching Specialist Program
Evaluator Checklist

Teachers who complete the four projects for the Group Piano Teaching Specialist Program will be evaluated with these criteria:

1. They articulated their understanding of group teaching by addressing the following items in their written *Teaching Philosophy*:
   - advantages and disadvantages of group piano instruction
   - criteria for grouping students
   - applications of learning theory as it relates to the group you are teaching
   - examples of group dynamics in your teaching setting
   - considerations for selecting and planning curricula in a group setting

2. They submitted lesson plans that reflected their understanding of the following:
   - Ability to define appropriate objectives for the age and level of students in the group
   - Ability to organize concepts and activities
   - Knowledge of appropriate readiness for the age and level of students in the group
   - Selection of appropriate materials for the age and level of students in the group
   - Create a balance between a review of pieces/concepts and new pieces/concepts for each lesson plan
   - Include appropriate activities to facilitate group problem solving and cooperative learning
   - Include a variety of activities and teaching aids to accommodate visual learners, aural learners, and kinesthetic learners
   - Include activities to allow for different levels of skill development in the group
   - Plan effective uses of the keyboard laboratory

3. They demonstrated their understanding of the following in their two teaching videos:
   - Serves as an effective facilitator of group problem solving and cooperative learning
   - Engages student attention of the entire group throughout the lesson
   - Motivates the group
   - Uses a variety of activities and teaching aids to accommodate different learning styles, learning rates, and playing levels within the group
   - Presents information in a clear, efficient, understandable manner
   - Avoids too much "teacher talk"
   - Exhibits enthusiasm and speaks confidently
   - Monitors body language and adjusts the pace of the class to sustain interest
   - Uses language that honestly assesses student progress without being patronizing, belittling or demeaning
   - Creates a positive atmosphere
   - Uses the keyboard laboratory in an effective manner

4. They provided effective and creative solutions to the scenarios they chose in these areas:
   - Planning
   - Classroom Management
   - Motivation

   Scenarios can be found Section 4 of the Group Specialist Projects.