



MUSIC TEACHERS NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

**Recreational Music Making  
Specialist Program**

# MTNA 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 Recreational Music Making (RMM). 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 RMM 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 RMM 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 RMM Specialist designation.

Three evaluators will review each applicant's materials and reach consensus regarding the outcome of the application. The evaluators will refer to the *MTNA RMM 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.

## **Summary of Projects for the MTNA RMM Specialist Program**

- 1. Teaching Philosophy.**  
Compare your RMM teaching philosophy to your traditional teaching philosophy.
- 2. Lesson Planning.**  
Develop two lesson plans for RMM teaching that represent two different levels.
- 3. Demonstration of Teaching.**  
Submit two teaching videos, each 10 minutes in length, that correspond with the lesson plans from item #2.
- 4. Understanding RMM Teaching.**  
Select two scenarios from each of these categories and describe solutions you have found to be most effective or solutions you might suggest:
  1. Classroom Management
  2. Attitude/Morale
  3. Other Challenges

## **Projects for the MTNA RMM Specialist Program**

- 1. Teaching Philosophy.** Compare your RMM teaching philosophy to your traditional teaching philosophy. Discuss how they differ in these areas: curriculum, repertoire, student assessment, performance expectations, the teacher's expectations of students, and the teacher's role and attitude. (500 word maximum)
- 2. Lesson Planning.** Develop two lesson plans for RMM students at different levels:
  - Level 1: a beginning class
  - Level 2: an elementary class
  - Level 3: an intermediate class

Write detailed narrative (complete sentences) describing your goals and your expectations for student involvement. Include the following:

- Teaching strategies for each concept/activity
- A description of alternative ways to teach concepts if the class doesn't grasp your initial presentation
- A list of materials and teaching aids you will use with each lesson plan
- A practice assignment for daily practice
- Conclude each plan with bullet points that summarize the lesson.

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

Level 1: a beginning class

Level 2: an elementary class

Level 3: an intermediate class

- It is recommended that you record the class several times before you video record the class for this project. Use a camera operator in order to include both teacher and student participation on the video.
- If you do not own a video recording device in good working order, we recommend that you contact colleagues or 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 must sign the Authorization and Release form to submit with this project.

**Repertoire Guidelines:**

The specialist program does not recommend specific teaching materials for use in the videos; therefore, the adult methods listed below are suggested only as a guide for determining beginning, elementary and intermediate repertoire.

Review these methods for examples of repertoire for beginning or elementary classes:

Alfred: *Adult All-In-One Course*—Level 1

Faber: *Adult Piano Adventures* (All-In-One Lesson Book 1)

Hal Leonard: *Adult Piano Method*—Book 1

Kjos: *Bastien Piano for Adults*—Book 1

Review these methods for examples of repertoire for intermediate classes:

Alfred: *Adult All-In-One Course*—Level 2

Faber: *Adult Piano Adventures* (All-In-One Lesson Book 2)

Hal Leonard: *Adult Piano Method*—Book 2

Kjos: *Bastien Piano for Adults*—Book 2

4. **Understanding RMM Teaching.** Select two scenarios from each of the following categories and describe solutions you have found to be most effective or solutions you might suggest.

**Classroom Management:**

- a. Although the class is described as a beginning class, adults with past childhood piano lessons are enrolled and are progressing more quickly than the beginners.
- b. Adults who don't practice between classes want you to slow the pace of the class or take class time to question what they don't understand.
- c. Some adults want to bring in music from their past piano lessons and play for the class even though it's not the music the class is studying.
- d. Although the majority of the class is 50–70 years old, a teenager wants to join the class. Describe the circumstances when this is workable and when it isn't.

- e. How do you guarantee that every student is engaged on every activity when the level of playing varies significantly among class members?
- f. More knowledgeable adults dominate the class by asking questions that go beyond the lesson plan and the level of knowledge of the other class members.

**Attitude/Morale:**

- a. Even though the class votes for the book or books they will use for each enrollment period, one or more adults tend to be unhappy about the level, the styles and so forth.
- b. The majority of class members have bonded and are very supportive of each other, but one class member tends to be overly critical and exhibits more negative than positive behaviors. You have learned from e-mail or casual conversation outside of class, that the majority of the class is feeling the negativity of this person and would like the teacher to resolve the situation.
- c. Although you have urged class members not to compare their individual progress to their classmates, some are exhibiting signs of discouragement and are making those comparisons either in or out of class.
- d. At least one adult is progressing far more rapidly than the rest of the class and appears to be bored. What options do you provide for this student?
- e. Although the RMM classes are promoted as fun and non-stressful, you observe that they have become increasingly less fun and more stressful. How do you reverse this direction?
- f. Even if you are still enthusiastic about RMM teaching, you find you are becoming a bit jaded and are experiencing some burn out. What steps do you take to reverse this direction?

**Other Challenges:**

- a. Some adults (who are practicing outside of class) play everything too fast, write in the names of the notes, pay no attention to hand position, and seem content with their improvement or the lack thereof. What do you do in this situation?
- b. Even when relaxation activities are included at the beginning of a class session, several class members continue to exhibit stress when they play. What remedies can you suggest?
- c. When your students first enrolled, the majority made it clear that they did not want to play in recitals. Some expressed that they associate recitals with memories of traumatic experiences. What alternative playing opportunities do you provide and how do you know when they are successful?
- d. One of your classes is progressing very slowly and you begin to think it may be a lost cause. What solutions might impact the outcome of this class?
- e. Because the class asks unusual or difficult questions, you find yourself doing most of the talking while the class passively listens. What steps can you take to correct this situation?
- f. What advice do you have for those who are interested in RMM teaching but don't live near a teacher who could mentor them?

## RMM Teaching: Self-Evaluation Form

Choose one of the two RMM 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, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_
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. Although 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.
11. Briefly comment on how this RMM class differs from a traditional group class. Discuss both differences and similarities.
12. Please feel free to write any additional comments you would like to share about the submitted video.

## **MTNA RMM Specialist Program Evaluator Checklist**

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

1. They articulated distinct differences between their RMM and traditional teaching philosophies in their written *Teaching Philosophy*.
2. They submitted lesson plans that reflected their understanding of the following:
  - focusing on mastering concepts rather than repertoire
  - demonstrating a balance between a review of pieces/concepts and new pieces/concepts for each lesson plan
  - using varying learning styles to accommodate visual learners, aural learners, and kinesthetic learners
  - modifying curriculum (concepts and activities) that reflected student goals rather than teacher goals
  - allowing for different levels of skill development in the group
  - including theoretical concepts that aid learning without becoming a theory class
  - avoiding the trap of TMI (too much information)
  - developing alternative strategies in the event part of the lesson plan doesn't work
3. They demonstrated their understanding of the following in their two teaching videos:
  - creating a non-stressful learning environment
  - following the written lesson plan but willing to be flexible as needed
  - keeping the entire group engaged throughout the lesson
  - monitoring body language and demonstrating a willingness to adjust the pace of the class if necessary
  - using language that honestly assesses student progress without being patronizing, belittling or demeaning
  - avoiding too much "teacher talk"
  - promoting class discussion about the challenges and/or rewards of a particular activity, piece of repertoire, etc.
  - involving the class on their individual assignments for the next class
  - remembering that working hard and having fun are not mutually exclusive
4. They provided effective and creative solutions to the scenarios they chose in these areas:
  - Classroom Management
  - Attitude/Morale
  - Other Challenges