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**Micro Peer Teaching Demonstrations in University Group Curricula:
A Practical Component to Explore**

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Abstract

What do instructors of the university functional keyboard skills course want their students to achieve from learning the piano? Does the course effectively serve its primary purpose in nonpiano music major students' musical learning and their future careers as music educators?

The primary purpose of the functional keyboard skills course in the university music curricula is to help nonpiano music major students understand in the areas of music theory, analysis, and aural skills through playing the piano. In addition, the course is to foster them in becoming successful and creative music professionals equipped with comprehensive musicianship through a variety of musical concepts via multifaceted curricular activities on a piano. However, studies indicate that the overall curricular design of the course continues to be criticized due to its lack of practical content and effective instructional approach. Many researchers express concerns on the performance-driven learning environment due to the majority of class time and assignments being focused on learning piano repertoire and exercises. The students' learning experience in the keyboard lab should not be limited to learning "how to play," because intellectual reasoning and stimulation must follow as they learn to play the instrument.

The poster explores the incorporation of micro peer teaching demonstration as an integral part of functional keyboard course curricular activities. The goal of this presentation is to help both instructors and students understand the practical and creative integration of functional keyboard skills in real-life teaching settings. It presents instructional materials that students can

learn how to design lesson plans systematically using piano as a creative teaching tool. The aim of this presentation is to help instructors of the university functional keyboard skills course that are seeking practical assistance in regard to its content and curricular activities.

Q: How can a university group piano instructor inspire and foster nonpiano music major students to integrate functional keyboard skills in real-life educational settings?

A: First of all, instructors must understand that students of a group piano course for nonpiano music majors are not necessarily required to attain advanced keyboard techniques. The primary role of the instrument for music educators is to serve as a musical medium that aids or expands musical learning and teaching in creative ways. Instructors can start helping students understand that musical elements such as playing melodies, accompanying simple technical exercises, or providing harmonies can serve the higher end of teaching in creative and efficient ways. Teaching the benefits and practical application of functional keyboard skills in a diverse music education setting enables students to envision connections to their areas of learning and teaching. For example, demonstrating various applications integrating technical exercises in ways students can utilize in their own future teaching situations will entice students to expand their perceptions of functional keyboard skills.

Q. What are some of the important factors students must keep in mind when planning micro teaching demonstrations?

A: Students must acknowledge the benefits of using the keyboard instrument in musical learning. In addition, it is important for them to focus on how to incorporate the instrument as an effective teaching aid, as their ‘playing’ is to assist learning, not to distract anyone. Since each discipline and instructional setting (i.e., individual, ensemble, or large group) require specific ways of learning, it is crucial to understand how to formulate lesson objectives and create activities that the instrument takes a critical role to enhance student learning.

Q. What are some ways music teachers can utilize a piano as a teaching tool when their keyboard skills are limited to playing simple melodic lines and chords slowly?

A: The most common way of playing the piano in a music lesson is when providing harmonic interests (e.g., accompaniment, improvisation, and ‘comping’ in jazz), melodic lines, or short musical excerpts. Because of the visual representation of the instrument, the keyboard instrument is very beneficial, especially in teaching music theory (e.g., scales, modes, harmonies, key signatures, etc.). In addition,

teachers can utilize the instrument when adding ‘sound effects’ to enhance the creative aspect of musical learning.

Teachers who feel incompetent at their keyboard skills may find this task daunting; however, it can be surprisingly simple, yet effective as long as aesthetic essence of music (tone color, style, choice of harmony, pedaling, and phrasing) are featured more than the number of notes in the ‘playing’.

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Suggested Reading

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(Unlisted) link to the excerpt of student micro peer teaching demonstration:

<https://youtu.be/XYks4txgmGk>