**Proceedings from the**

**2008 National Group Piano/**

**Piano Pedagogy Forum**

Reprinted from *Piano Pedagogy Forum*, [The Frances Clark Center](http://www.keyboardpedagogy.org)

**Table of Contents**

**Reports from the National Group Piano/Piano Pedagogy Forum National Conference, August 1–2, 2008, University of Oklahoma.**

[Panel Presentation: A Dialogue between Music Education and Group Piano](#Dialogue) by Courtney Crappell

[Using SMART Classroom Technology in Group Piano Teaching](#SMART) by Michael Dean

[Online Pedagogy: Breaking The Barriers of Time and Distance](#Barriers) by Alexis Ignatiou

[Familiarizing Pedagogy Students with the Teaching Literature](#Literature) by Sallye Jeffcoat

[Coaching for Performance: Strategies for Helping Pianists Get Out What They Have in Them](#Coaching) by Joanne Kampiziones

[Learning to Learn, Teaching to Teach: A Living Room Discussion](#Living) by Chung-Ha Kim

[Learning to Learn, Teaching to Teach: Breakout Sessions](#Teach) by Chung-Ha Kim

[From the Top: What Students Think About Their Group Piano Experience](#Top) by Oscar Macchioni

[Where Do We Go From Here? Striking Accord Among Class Piano, Theory, and Musicianship Curricula](#Accord) by Simone Gorete Machado

[Technology Based, Online Curriculum for Group Piano](#Online) by Hannah Mayo

[Staying Fresh: A Pedagogical Cyberspace Cruise to YouTube, Piano Flicks, and the Internet](#Cruise) by Teresa Sumpter

[Brainstorming the Group Piano Experience](#Brainstorming) by Thomas Swenson

[Wrap-Up Session](#Wrap) by Adam Clark

**Panel Presentation: *A Dialogue between Music Education and Group Piano***

**Reporter: Courtney Crappell**

Pamela Pike began the dialogue by modifying the title of the presentation. She stated that preliminary meetings with Mike Raiber indicated that this was only “a beginning dialogue between music education and group piano teachers.” The ensuing discussion highlighted the potential benefit for group piano teachers in an exchange of information with music educators concerning the skills teachers in primary and secondary schools use daily in the classroom and how group piano classes can help prepare students for future careers.

Pike began by reevaluating the goals of group piano for the non-keyboard music major. The classes reinforce theoretical concepts visually at the keyboard, but the main goal is to focus on real world skills that the students will need in their careers. Pike questioned the current curriculum and its ability to adequately prepare students. She related a story of an employer commenting to a music education teacher, “You’re not going to send me another student who can’t play the piano, are you?”

Pike next outlined the five elements typically included in the curriculum of group piano classes:

1. Technique

2. Sight Reading

3. Harmonization/Transposition

4. Improvisation

5. Solo/Ensemble Repertoire

She compared these skills with the skills often used by music education teachers as outlined in a dissertation by Linda Christensen titled *A Survey of the Importance of Functional Piano Skills as Reported by Band, Choral, Orchestra, and General Music Teachers* (2000).

* Harmonize melodies using chord symbols
* Harmonize melodies (no symbols)
* Improvise accompaniments
* Transpose simple melodies
* Transpose instrumental parts
* Sight read vocal or instrumental scores
* Play songs by ear using simple accompaniments
* Accompany (soloist or group)

Pike highlighted that the skill sets are not perfectly matched and that only three of the five elements, sight-reading, harmonization/transposition, and improvisation, directly affect the abilities outlined in Christenson’s study. She concludes that students would benefit from a problem-based curriculum in which they learn how to work through useful skills.

Mike Raiber described possible fields that music education majors choose. These include band directors, orchestra directors, choir directors, and elementary music teachers. Within each of these choices, a teacher may choose to teach only certain grades. Also, while one teacher may just direct band, another may also be part of a staff. The piano skills these teachers require vary and are based on where and what they teach. Group piano teachers should begin speaking with educators in the classroom, not only education faculty at universities, to discover the most useful skills for teachers in a specific area and discipline.

Raiber next outlined the different skills that teachers regularly use in the classroom and then Pike compiled the piano skills common to all educators. Each skill set is listed below.

Band Director Piano Skills:

* Transpose instrumental parts
* Harmonize melodies from chord symbols
* Sight read open and closed scores
* Skills to input data to notation software
* Basic accompanying skills
* Jazz comp skills

Orchestral Director Piano Skills:

* Same as band directors plus
* Sight reading alto/tenor clef
* Accompany the group
* Improvise simple accompaniments

Choir Director Piano Skills:

* Harmonize using chord symbols
* Sight read open score
* Accompany groups (while standing at keyboard and conducting)
* Play vocalizations in all keys
* Use music notation software

Elementary Educator Piano Skills:

* Same as choral plus
* Be able to use the keyboard appropriately with the materials that will be used in the classroom

Common Piano Skills:

* Harmonizing melody with chord symbols
* Sight reading
* Band: open/closed score
* Orchestra: alto/tenor clefs
* Choral: open score
* Basic accompanying
* Technology

Pike then discussed how collaboration with music education colleagues would help in compiling specific examples to incorporate in the group piano curriculum. Instead of creating individual sections for each type of educator, create components, or modules, that could “plug in” depending on the student’s area of music study. If they use these skills as assignments in another class that is specific to their discipline, it will appear meaningful and they will practice more.

Raiber mentioned that the compartmentalization of curriculum erects a barrier between educators and their piano skills. He recommended that assignments in one class should be revisited in another. For instance, if a student is working to arrange a score, much of the score reduction can happen in group piano. The skill then has a direct and immediate application, and this experience will increase the perception of value of the group piano class. Raiber compares separating these skills to the compartmentalization that occurs in primary schooling. A student attends Math for an hour, then English for an hour. This segregation leads to the popular question in our classes: “Will you be grading on spelling and grammar?”

After examining the skills above, Raiber and Pike summarize how group piano teachers can adjust. First, teachers should discover the regional differences in repertoire for music educators. The next step is to identify musical examples that students will be using in their education classes by speaking with colleagues in the department. Finally, teachers should encourage students to explore how they will use the keyboard in their own teaching.

Raiber and Pike return to the idea of “plugging in” curricular components based on a student’s area of music study. Outlining a possible group piano curriculum, they pull from the common skill set listed above and include an adaptable component that would vary according to the student’s area. The skills covered include:

* Sight reading
* Harmonization w/ chord symbols
* Basic accompaniments/piano reductions
* Technology training
* Adaptable component

The adaptable component should include an element from the lists below:

Band Director Component:

* Transposition
* Sight reading (open/closed score)
* Jazz comp

Orchestral Director Component:

* Transposition
* Reading tenor/alto clefs
* Improvise simple accompaniments
* Play piano reductions

Choral Director Component:

* Sight read open scores
* Accompany group while standing at keyboard and conducting
* Vocalizations in all keys

Elementary Music Educator:

* Same as choral
* Be able to play accompaniments and use keyboard for appropriate music methods

In conclusion, the panelists reiterated that the dialogue has only just begun. This panel highlighted that collaboration between group piano teachers and educators is crucial in order to adequately prepare students for the challenges they will face.

**Courtney Crappell** teaches piano and piano pedagogy and coordinates group piano at the University of Texas at San Antonio. He previously taught class piano and piano pedagogy at Oklahoma City University. His research in piano literature, piano pedagogy, and ethnomusicology has been featured at national and regional conferences. Currently a DMA candidate in Piano Performance and Pedagogy at the University of Oklahoma, he earned his MM in Piano Performance and Pedagogy from OU and his BM in Piano Performance at Louisiana State University.

***Using SMART Classroom Technology in Group Piano Teaching***

**Reporter: Michael Dean**

Utilizing the University of Oklahoma’s two piano labs, Courtney Crappell, Jyoti Hench, and Rebekah Jordan-Miller demonstrated ways in which group piano teachers can use Smart Board technology in the classroom. The presenters explained the equipment needed to successfully operate this technology, and outlined many of the Smart Board features while offering ways to use these tools in group piano classes.

**What do I need?**

Each piano lab at the University of Oklahoma is equipped with a Mac connected to the Smart Board by a USB cable. USB cables also connect the computer to a Wolfvision document camera and to a projector. The technology also works well with a PC and with other document camera brands. The necessary software to run the Smart Board and the document camera is provided with this hardware. It is important to purchase a projector with sufficient lumens in order to read the screen in a fully lit classroom. Teachers were encouraged to test a portable projector in their individual rooms to determine the number of lumens necessary for the space.

**How can I use it?**

Perhaps the easiest way to use this technology is through use of the document camera. The teacher can place a score on the document camera to project the music onto the screen. Previewing the piece in the classroom becomes uncomplicated when using the pens to circle or mark broken chords, patterns, formal sections and other features of the music. This saves the instructor from having to mark an actual score or from cleaning up the pages used in overhead projectors. Anything that is written can be erased as easily as on a white board, so the teacher need not worry about making mistakes.

Smart Board software is quite advanced and offers nearly limitless possibilities for the classroom. One component of the software is Notebook, which Crappell described as being the Smart Board’s version of PowerPoint. Anything written on the board can be saved as a slide before moving to a new page. Teachers may also type using the keyboard function if the legibility of their board writing is in question, or they may type directly from the computer keyboard. It is very easy to move from one slide to another and to locate previously created pages and Notebook files. Crappell, Hench, and Jordan-Miller created a Notebook file that demonstrated how they use this technology in their own group piano classes. They focused on three main areas: Planning, Previewing and Classroom Interaction.

**Planning**

Using the Notebook feature, five-week plans and lesson assignments are projected for the class. Since these slides are prepared in advance and saved, they may be displayed easily whenever it becomes necessary without the instructor taking time to rewrite the information.

The University of Oklahoma, with copyright permission, has scanned every page of *Alfred’s* *Group Piano for Adults* and saved these pages as PDF files for use with the Smart Boards in the piano labs. The presenters placed the pages needed for the five-week plan into a separate notebook, organizing them for efficient accessibility. An instructor can capture and copy any portion of a page to the notebook, as well as attach MIDI files to each piece. Preparing such a Notebook in advance saves set-up time, as the instructor is ready to teach as soon as the file is opened. This is especially convenient when teaching and classroom schedules are full.

Though the Notebook presented was a five-week plan organized according to the type of activity (repertoire, transposition, harmonization, etc.), the presenters stressed flexibility. A Notebook might be created for each day or week and can be organized in any number of ways. Each graduate assistant at the University of Oklahoma has an individual folder on the desktop for class plans and Notebook files. Planning often occurs on another computer with files transferred through use of a flash drive.

**Previewing**

Using the Smart Board to preview sight-reading and repertoire examples is especially effective. While using the Notebook application, an instructor may use the colored pens to mark intervals or other features of the score in the same manner as demonstrated with the document camera. Additionally, one might choose to use the Highlighter or Spotlight tools to further guide students on the page.

The Highlighter tool can emphasize a specific set of directions in a larger portion of text. When using two distinct colors, it can show the distribution between the hands in a score-reading example. The Spotlight tool accentuates a certain area of the board while darkening or dimming the rest of the page. The shape, size, and level of transparency are adjustable, directing the student’s focus to the portion of the score being studied.

**Classroom Interaction**

There are many ways of using the Smart Board interactively in piano classes. Displaying an improvisation accompaniment and playing the MIDI file in advance of the activity gives students extra focus and confidence when it is time for them to perform.

The presenters observed that students enjoy writing on the Smart Board. Teachers may ask students to come to the board to write consequent phrases to antecedents presented. There is a template gallery in Notebook that includes staves that are very useful for this activity. When projecting harmonization examples, students might write the bass line or chord inversions on the board.

An especially entertaining activity presented was a game of Group Piano Jeopardy. The Jeopardy template is available online as a PowerPoint with various hyperlinks and may be attached to a Notebook page. Clicking on the desired portion of the Jeopardy grid changes the display to the question, answer, or activity corresponding to that category. Categories may be altered to fit a given class. For this demonstration the categories had amusing titles that included “Hectic Harmonization,” “Aggravating Arpeggios,” and “You Want Me to do What???”

**Other Considerations**

One of the issues of any technology is that the instructor must be trained to use it in an effective manner. At the University of Oklahoma, the first pedagogy course includes technology projects designed to train graduate students on how to use the Smart Board and its software. Emphasis is on good teaching first, with graduate assistants encouraged to use the technology as they are ready. The instructors frequently record videos of their teaching to evaluate if they are teaching well and using the technology effectively.

Crappell mentioned other hardware alternatives beyond that presented, such as using a wireless keyboard for extra convenience in a teaching space. A recent alternative to the board is to have a plasma or LCD display with an overlay that allows it to become a touch-sensitive writing device.

Dr. Barbara Fast stated the importance of collaborating with a technology expert in designing a setup that works best for each individual situation. It is important to note the most expensive option is not always necessary. The costs can vary greatly depending on each classroom’s needs.

**Conclusion**

Though SMART technology may seem foreign and intimidating to many teachers, it is quickly becoming a standard form of presentation in many schools. Students often experience this and similar technologies in middle school and earlier. Once one learns how to use it, a Smart Board can significantly decrease planning time as well as increase the effectiveness of teaching.

**Website Addresses**

SMART Technologies

30-day free trial of Smart Board software

Jeopardy PowerPoint template

**Michael Dean** is Assistant Professor of Music at Oklahoma Baptist University, where he teaches piano pedagogy, applied piano and group piano classes. He also maintains an active schedule as workshop clinician, adjudicator, solo performer, collaborative artist, and faculty at summer music camps throughout the United States and Canada. Mr. Dean previously taught at the Wheaton College Conservatory. He holds degrees from Minnesota State University Moorhead and the University of Oklahoma.

**Online Pedagogy: *Breaking The Barriers of Time and Distance***

**Reporter: Alexis Ignatiou**

Dr. Valerie Cisler, NCTM, joined the faculty of the University of Nebraska, Kearney in 1994 and serves as Chair for the Department of Music & Performing Arts. The abstract from her presentation provides an effective overview of this session: “In response to the growing demand for well-developed distance education opportunities, this session explores strategies for teaching graduate and undergraduate online courses in piano pedagogy. Practical considerations related to course design and structure, asynchronous communications, and online issues and protocols will be discussed. Demonstrations are drawn from online courses developed by the presenter since 2005.”

Dr. Cisler began her presentation by highlighting the evolution of performance and teaching. Performance options expanded over time from strictly live events to recorded ones. Further advances in technology made broadcasts over radio, TV and the Internet possible. Reflecting these were parallel changes in teaching methods, where print media and technology impacted original face-to-face methods.

One of the most notable influences of technology upon teaching is the establishment of online classrooms. Dr. Cisler discussed the advantages and challenges of setting these up, and noted that the role of the instructor, student, and institution need to be re-addressed in order to accommodate such changes. Her main points are highlighted below.

**Instructor Challenges**

* Time is the biggest factor
* Compensation
* Resistance from the administration
* Teaching style

**Technological Challenges**

* Institutional Infrastructure
* Support and Staff
* Course management and software availability
* Technological needs of the student

**Effectiveness Challenges**

* Communication
* Course rigor
* Student expectations
* Assessment

**Advantages: Anytime and Anywhere**

* Expands outreach by allowing the student to work, study, and access information from any computer. Such flexibility will benefit those students with very busy schedules or family obligations.
* Costs: no classroom will eliminate the need for transportation or lodging, which will ultimately help expand student pool.
* Student centered: focuses on student learning and addressing their needs.
* The instructor becomes a facilitator.

**Instructor’s Primary Considerations**

* What are the prerequisites?
* What will I teach and how will I teach?
* Who will I enroll?
* What is the institutional technological infrastructure?
* How can I incorporate technology?
* Is it feasible to teach pedagogy online?

Dr. Cisler emphasized that planning is crucial when getting started. Structuring the content of the virtual classroom based on assumptions will be catastrophic. Therefore, the instructor must check, prepare, and process feedback quickly and accurately. There are many steps to this process:

* Pre-communication with students
* Determine student’s computer/software requirements
* Student learning objectives---learning activities
* Pre-record lectures, performance/teaching demonstrations.
* Explore digital resources such as the Library Web
* Research Copyright laws (\*see link at end)

**Instructor’s Training**

Essential to the success of the instructor is specialized training and the implementation of such information. Therefore, Dr. Cisler recommended the following resources:

* Workshops
* Online tutorials and online education resources
* The essential book *The Power of E Learning* by Dr. Shirley Waterhouse

**Course Design**

* Determine a time frame (consider learning curves)
* Logical sequence (unit modules)
* Learning activities (set reasonable goals)
* Communication (synchronous/asynchronous)
* Delivery (lecture, readings, demos, projects)

**Teaching Piano Technique**

The four modules:

* Discussion board
* Readings reference
* Projects
* Demonstrations

**The Wimba Classroom (URL no longer active)**

The Wimba Classroom is a virtual classroom that integrates live E-board communication capabilities, live class polls, online office hours, incorporates tests and quizzes, displays your desktop to students, and is compatible with *Blackboard* (online grading, display, and communication tool). In this sense, the future of online pedagogy teaching is always “live” and “archived.”

**Concluding Remarks**

This most enjoyable presentation by Dr. Valerie Cisler provided a wealth of information for aspiring teachers who wish to offer an alternative to the physical classroom for today’s students. Teaching pedagogy online comes with many challenges but with rewards as well, for both teacher and student. The academic institution is also challenged to provide and to streamline such technology, making such courses accessible. The 21st century instructor must be able to understand, adapt, construct, and ultimately implement such technologies.

**\*Web link**

Know Your Copy Rights: http://www.knowyourcopyrights.org/resourcesfac/kycrbrochure.shtml

**Alexis Ignatiou** is currently working on the DMA in Piano Performance at the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, studying with Elizabeth Pridonoff and Michelle Conda. He is a teaching assistant in Secondary Piano. He completed his MM at UNCG where he held the T.A post under the supervision of Dr. Paul Stewart. Upon graduation, he received the MTNA StAR Award. Between 2004–2007, Alexis and his wife Connie (DMA oboe) worked in the Republic of Cyprus teaching music in private schools and colleges. In 2006, Alexis and Connie created *CypriaCane*, a company that will produce and distribute fine cane for double reed instruments.

***Familiarizing Pedagogy Students with the Teaching Literature***

**Reporter: Sallye Jeffcoat**

In the lecture *Familiarizing Pedagogy Students with the Teaching Literature*, Dr. Lesley Sisterhen McAllister offered a three-prong approach for university piano pedagogy courses. Dr. McAllister is an Assistant Professor of Piano and Director of Piano Pedagogy at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. The goal of her pedagogy courses is to acquaint students with piano teaching literature as well as repertoire leveling. At Baylor University, undergraduate piano pedagogy majors are required to take three semesters of piano pedagogy. Dr. McAllister divides the semesters by repertoire levels as follows: elementary (levels 1–3), intermediate (levels 4–6), and late intermediate/early advanced (levels 7–10). She uses Dr. Jane Magrath’s leveling system and focuses on standard master composers since pedagogical music and composers are always changing. Students are expected to learn and know representative composers, genres, and collections, along with representative pieces at each level.

Students learn these through three stages: acquisition, discovery, and implementation. The first stage, acquisition, is hearing and seeing representative pieces in a wide variety of literature. Be careful in this stage, as it is the easiest to get stuck in. Acquisition can include performing a piece or listening to recordings while looking at the score. Make sure that students are listening to polished performances that evoke the “wow” factor. Students should make notes and discuss specific difficulties of pieces and practice suggestions. This is an important stage in learning to level repertoire. Sometimes arguments do arise at this stage; however, this provokes discussion and, even more so, learning.

Discovery, the second stage, includes playing through the music to experience technical issues and difficulties firsthand. This experimental stage shows that merely looking at a piece of music does not necessarily level a piece. Discovery can be done in class if a piano lab is available. This stage is great for sight-reading practice as well as selecting and leveling pieces.

The final stage, implementation, involves the students themselves giving polished performances of the literature. Students offer critical feedback of each other’s performances for the class. This stage requires them to consider musicality and interpretation of repertoire. Unmusical performances often occur when students do not hear polished performances in the first stage of acquisition, or become too dependent on their private teachers for instruction and demonstration.

Students demonstrate their knowledge in her course in several ways. First, they provide insightful commentary regarding performances. In doing so, students gain practice in critical evaluation that can be transferred to their own teaching. This activity promotes musicality as well. Second, students level unknown pieces appropriately. Finally, they identify known pieces from recordings and scores. Certain collections and pieces must be memorized. On exams students must be able to talk about their pedagogical approach and discuss individual pieces learned.

The three-prong approach includes weekly score readings, recorded performances of an assigned work, and final exams. In weekly score readings, the students are given music on Monday to perform for class by Wednesday. This allows students to become familiar with many collections, especially the important ones. Every student in the class learns and performs a piece from a standard teaching collection and provides brief oral commentary. Students also fill out Repertoire Evaluation Forms that include the following categories: Title, Composer, Technical Features and Requirements, Musical Concepts and Required Skills, and Why Might You Teach This Piece. Dr. McAllister chooses to start with easier pieces and collections and move to the more difficult repertoire. She also tries to pick mostly well-known pieces and at least one unknown piece from the various collections.

The second part of the three-prong approach is recorded performances of an assigned work. Dr. McAllister first has two or three students record the same piece. The class then listens to the recorded performances. Discussion and notes can include comparison of musicality and stylistic interpretation as well as decisions on which was the most convincing performance.

The final component of the three-prong approach is the final exam. This exam includes leveling of an unknown piece, listening identification, and score identification. Students include Opus numbers, composers, and complete titles for all listening and score identification answers.

This approach for a piano pedagogy course offers several advantages. Students acquire notes for approximately thirty pieces, and applied knowledge by playing rather than merely hearing and memorizing them. They also learn in a variety of contexts for better retention, and gain significant experience learning to level pieces independently.

**Sallye Jeffcoat** is currently a student at the University of Alabama pursuing a Doctorate of Musical Arts in piano performance while studying with the 2008 MTNA Teacher of the Year, Amanda Penick. She holds a Master of Music degree in piano performance with an emphasis in piano pedagogy from the University of Oklahoma where she studied with Dr. Jane Magrath, Dr. Ed Gates, and Dr. Barbara Fast. At the University of Oklahoma, Ms. Jeffcoat taught class piano and applied piano to non-keyboard music majors as well as to non-music majors. She studied with Constance Knox Carroll while a student at Louisiana State University for a Bachelor of Music in piano performance. Ms. Jeffcoat has been active in summer programs including Brevard Music Festival and Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp in Michigan. She has been a faculty member at the Tennessee Valley Music Festival and Huntingdon College Junior Piano Camp. She has an extensive collaborative resume and regularly performs with chamber music programs and orchestras.

***Coaching for Performance: Strategies for Helping Pianists Get Out What They Have in Them***

**Reporter: Joanne Kampiziones**

Bill Moore, a performance psychology consultant, served as keynote speaker for the 2008 Group Piano and Piano Pedagogy Forum in Norman, Oklahoma. His presentation, *Coaching for Performance: Strategies for Helping Pianists Get Out What They Have in Them* addressed issues surrounding the psychological aspects of performance as well as helping musicians play with greater confidence and trust in their preparation. He is also currently teaching a course in performance psychology for musicians in the School of Music at the University of Oklahoma.

“Piano culture is similar to golf culture,” was one of Bill Moore’s first statements as he energetically spoke to a packed audience of piano teachers at the 2008 GP3 conference. Garnering everyone’s attention, Moore explained that golf is, in fact, a highly technical sequence of patterns where correctness is premium and mistakes can never be taken back. As a performance psychologist, Bill Moore spends 99% of his time with performers in practice, not teaching them how to acquire skills of their specific discipline, but rather how to acquire skills of performing. Moore offered three broad topics in his strategic explanation for helping pianists get out what they have in them: 1) Embracing the Performance Elephant, 2) Bobbing for Apples and Oranges, and 3) Keeping the Performance Alive.

**EMBRACING THE PERFORMANCE ELEPHANT**

The human performance involves several mechanical, physiological and strategic elements that play a significant role in the outcome of a performance. It is never strictly a mental practice alone. The challenge for a coach or teacher, however, is to break down all of the elements, determine where psychology fits into the picture, and develop parts of an ideal performance state.

Bill Moore presented a Performance Psychology Model, a pyramid constructed of three levels that build upon each other. Psychological tools, psychological abilities, and psychological skills lead to the top of the pyramid, which is defined as the Ideal Performance State (IPS) or trust. Also illustrated in the Performance Psychology Model are the disciplines essential for sustaining high performance. They are personal commitment, a positive mental attitude, self-management, and self-leadership. There is a link on the 2008 GP3 home page at www.mtna.org that provides a *Coaching for Performance* handout with Bill Moore’s performance psychology model, as well as a self-assessment questionnaire further detailing aspects of this pyramid.

**Level One: Psychological Tools**

In order to achieve the Ideal Performance State, individuals must begin from the bottom of the pyramid using three psychological tools (independent will, self-awareness, and imagination) to form the foundation before psychological abilities and skills (the next two levels) can be used to further the outcome of the ideal performance state. The first psychological tool, independent will, is the ability to choose how to approach things in life and how to respond or change certain elements. Self-awareness, the second psychological tool, is the ability to step aside and examine patterns of thinking and responding. The last psychological tool is imagination. The primary factor determining how successful a performer becomes depends on how well his/her imagination is utilized.

**Level Two: Psychological Abilities**

Moore’s Performance Psychology Model contained eight psychological abilities evaluated on a level of one to ten. They are self-coaching, visualization (ability to create positive performance images), goal setting, attention control, differential relaxation (detecting and releasing muscle tension on command), centering (ability to access a centered state), energy management (ability to adapt energy state to demands of the situation), and lastly, preparation routines (ability to execute an effective preparation routine). An individual’s capacity to implement these psychological abilities positively will better enhance the ideal performance state.

**Level Three: Psychological Skills—the Three C’s**

Ascending on the performance psychology model to the third level is what Moore refers to as “the three Cs,” or the developmental parts of an ideal performance state: confidence, concentration, and composure. Confidence distinguishes good performers from great ones. It is an expectation of performing at a desired level; a matter of free will that all performers can choose to execute by believing in their own selves. Concentration deals with learning how to properly direct focus and observe the relevant indications for proper skill execution. Composure is the management of emotional energy. A positive emotion may successfully drive a performance just as a negative emotion (anger or fear) may disrupt one. The result of a person’s composure will always have an effect on their performance.

**Level Four: Ideal Performance State—Trust**

The top of Moore’s pyramid leads to the ultimate performance goal, which is trust, also labeled as the ideal performance state (IPS). This means the pianist relies on what has been learned through each level (psychological tools, skills, and abilities) and trusts the positive execution of each tool, skill, and ability. According to Moore, letting go of conscious control over correctness and allowing natural, well-trained processes to execute skill is the key element in trusting, especially when mistakes count. It is a courageous act to trust what you train. By being courageous and trusting what has been practiced, the individual is able to direct his/her will to overcome fear, self-doubt, over-analysis of mistakes, and performance anxiety-all cognitive factors that hinder motor skills during a performance. Moore points out that pianists do not have to trust 100% of the time, however. They can let go of conscious control in a performance 80% of the time, for example, and depend on the multiple performance repetitions (practice skills) to carry them through 80% of the performance. The last 20% (performance skills) can be used to balance the repetitions. These four levels of the performance psychology pyramid are the foundation for reaching the ideal performance state, trust. This is only one of the three aspects, however, that Moore covers in coaching for performance.

**BOBBING FOR APPLES AND ORANGES: Practice Skills vs. Performance Skills**

Moore depicts a difference between psychological practice and performance skills. He compares the two skills as apples and oranges, due to their extreme differences.

**Practice Skills (Skill Acquisition)**

Practicing (skill acquisition) is fundamental movement patterns taught, monitored and evaluated during multiple sessions. The practice skills that should be “put in” the individual are completely different from the skills needed to perform or “put out.” Moore states that the practice skills to be filtered by the individual include self-instruction, self-monitoring correctness, and analyzing cause and effect (what caused the mistake). Practice skills are necessary to refine physical dexterity and should be reinforced at every practice session, but they are also the exact issue that can hinder one’s best performance. The goal with practice skills or practicing is to maintain a clear and present focus and trust what has been trained. In order to do the latter, however, performance skills must also be rehearsed.

**Performance Skills (Performance Acquisition)**

Three main factors Moore points out in the area of performance skills involve courage, trust and acceptance. Courage is directing one’s will to overcome fear and self-doubt without fear there is no courage. Trust, as mentioned before, is letting go of conscious control of mistakes, and acceptance is the act of perceiving without judgment of good or bad. There is no trust (learned skill) without acceptance (decision). Moore states that acceptance, as it relates to performance, seems to be the hardest skill for perfectionists to learn.

**Practicing Performance Skills**

A quality practice session includes skill acquisition for the majority of the session and performance acquisition for a small amount of the session. Both elements must be present to accomplish the performance skill. Another way of observing this concept is blocked vs. variable practice formats. Blocked practice includes multiple repetitions of the same passage. It is possible to convince an individual that he/she has worked hard playing 100 repetitions of a passage in forty-five minutes, but if the 100 repetitions were all wrong, the point of blocked practice becomes defeated, the mind goes numb, and the concept of practicing performance skills is eliminated. Playing the same passage correctly fifteen times instead would be more beneficial after the skill acquisition has been attained. A variable practice session may prove to be more favorable for performance skill acquisition. In other words, when the notes of a passage have been learned and played repeatedly, switch to a variable block of practicing, playing the passage one way and changing the format, as might be done when practicing in rhythms, for example. This way the mind is “put on the spot” each time a variant of the passage is practiced, much like being “put on the spot” in a performance setting.

**Teaching Quality Practice**

The *process* of practicing is essential when teaching students how to practice with quality (variable format) and not only repetition (blocked). It is additionally crucial for students to understand why they are asked to practice in variable formats-what the point is of each varied exercise. When implementing the 80-20 rule (80% blocked practice, 20% variable practice), eventually have students reverse the percentage and type of practice. As they get closer to being performance ready, have them practice with 80% variable format and 20% blocked. This way, students will begin to eliminate cognitive interferences prior to the actual performance.

**KEEPING THE PERFORMANCE ALIVE**

Creating a positive focus is paramount for all pianists. Usually, the more important the performance, the more individuals feel they have to do something differently, but this is truly unnecessary. They should believe what they have is good enough. Moore’s handout contains several constructive performance psychology activities reinforcing a positive psyche. These include:

1. **Best and Worst Performances** Try to remember vividly all aspects that contributed to a positive or negative experience, and what psychological aspects come to mind. Reflect upon the differences between the two.

2. **Performance Psychology Intake Form (PPI)** A self-assessment of many of the psychological skills addressed in this article.

3. **Performance Strengths and Struggles** Once the PPI is completed, review the strongest and weakest areas of the psychological skills.

4. **Keep a High-Performance Journal Design** a separate notebook as a high-performance journal, making practice and performance entries using the format described by Moore. It is recommended to follow the format for at least ten days and two performances.

5. **Write a Personal Performance Philosophy** Take time to reflect on individual personal philosophy of musical performance. What is valued through musical development and performance? Why strive for excellence, and how are goals to be achieved?

6. **Describe a Great Attitude** Think of the last year and question if there has been a “great attitude” in the process of musical development and performance. If the answer is yes, describe what it means to have this. If no, describe what is lacking in attitude and what is needed to become great.

7. **Utilize Visualization Scripts** Describe the perfect performance from start to finish. Use descriptive terms to portray it and become engrossed with this concept. If it is not made readily available to the individual’s memory, it will not be achieved. Oftentimes, due to human nature, moments of failure seem to be vividly accessible, especially in performances. A structured, concerted effort has to be made to change the moments of failure that naturally come to mind. Make up a script of playing well and visualize it repeatedly. Moore states, it may not happen this way, but it is definitely better than focusing on what could go wrong.

**Trust: the Ultimate Performance Goal**

Throughout the entire presentation, the key factor that Bill Moore continuously reinforced was trust. The ultimate performance goal should not be to play perfectly, but rather to “trust” what the individual has acquired through practice and performance skill acquisition. Although this may be challenging, it is an attainable goal. The outcome of a performance cannot be controlled, but the thoughts that cross one’s mind during a performance can be.

Once a pianist has grasped the psychological tools, abilities, skills and trust needed for the ideal performance state, then he/she can actively work on performance skills, which are entirely separate from practice skills. The two concepts coincide significantly and must be included in every session of a pianist’s daily practice routine in order to maximize ideal results during a performance. Pianists should fully embrace the positive and negative experiences, reflecting upon the good and learning from the bad. This will allow pianists to develop as musicians, keep every performance alive, and as Moore suggests, get out what they have in them.

**Joanne Kampiziones** currently serves as Assistant Professor of Music in Piano at Coker College in Hartsville, SC. She holds a D.M.A. in Keyboard Performance and Pedagogy from the University of Miami and received a M.M. in Piano Pedagogy, B.M. in Music Education, and a B.A. in International Studies from the University of South Carolina. During her residency at the University of Miami, Kampiziones served on the faculty of the University’s Piano Preparatory Program and taught applied and group piano as well as music technology courses. She has given recitals, master classes, and presented workshops on various topics including performance teaching strategies of twentieth-century Greek piano literature throughout the country, most recently at College Music Society regional conferences at San Francisco State University, Westminster Choir College, the University of Miami, and the 2008 national conference in Atlanta, Georgia. She is presently on the board of directors for the South Carolina State Music Teachers Association as the Senior Piano Competitions director and has served on the jury of numerous piano competitions and festivals.

***Learning to Learn, Teaching to Teach: A Living Room Discussion***

**Reporter: Chung-Ha Kim**

Learning and teaching are two areas that preoccupy all piano pedagogues. This forum explored both areas from a variety of viewpoints: pianist, teacher, piano pedagogue, student, and performance coach. Discussants included Dr. Samuel Holland (Southern Methodist University), Dr. Edward Gates (University of Oklahoma), Dr. Claire Wachter (University of Oregon), Rebekah Jordan-Miller (University of Oklahoma), Dr. Bill Moore (performance psychology consultant, University of Oklahoma) and Dr. Lisa Zdechlik (University of Arizona), who served as the moderator. The very casual, informal setting effectively created the effect of a discussion taking place in a living room, as suggested by the session title. What follows is a transcript of this discussion.

Dr. Lisa Zdechlik opened the discussion by posing three questions:

**How do you learn best? 2. How did you discover this? 3. What/Who helped you refine your learning process?**

Jordan-Miller: I find that I learn best through positive questioning. Instead of asking myself “Why can’t I get this right?” or “Why is my technique not better?” I would ask questions like “What do I love about this work?”

Gates: I think for me it is the practicing that helps me to learn. Practicing is actually the act of teaching yourself. Once I started to teach, it was experience that helped me to figure out what worked for a student and what didn’t. This requires that you reach a certain age when you can be reflective enough, though, so you can’t really use this when you are young.

Wachter: Neurophysiological studies have shown that most of us use a combination/mix of visual, aural, and kinesthetic learning styles, so when we teach, it is important to know a student’s learning style.

Holland: To go back to the idea of practice being the act of teaching yourself, I think a piano teacher needs to teach students how to practice as much as piano pedagogues need to teach students how to teach.

**Zdechlik: How can piano teachers in the studio help students to discover and strengthen their own learning process?**

Holland: I think a lot of this has to do with what a student experiences in the presence of the teacher. A teacher can say the same thing over and over again, but if it doesn’t happen during the lesson, it won’t happen in the practice-room. So it is important to create an environment that will support the experience.

Gates: When students come unprepared, let them practice; you discover a lot by watching/listening to their practice! I had a funny experience when I was a student of John Perry: the lesson was over, and he told me to stay and practice for a while. He went off to mow the lawn, and all of a sudden he stuck his head through the window and said: “I told you not to do that!!”

Moore: One characteristic of a great “practicer” is that the process of learning and development fascinates them. Fascination is the mother of discipline. I do believe that practicing is teaching yourself. And until we can understand what causes someone to be great at practice, we won’t be able to teach it. Great practicers are very different from great performers.

Holland: What’s the point of great practice unless it yields a great performance?

Moore: Well, you can say that a great performance would be the ultimate goal, but there are very different mental skills required for practice and performance. Practice requires the assimilation of information; performance the action of getting this information out.

Gates: Going back to the idea of fascination being the mother of discipline: one way to kindle this fascination would be to give students challenges and give them hints on how to meet them.

**Zdechlik: What can we as piano teachers do to kindle this fascination? And is there a way to bring together applied piano and piano pedagogy to create fascination?**

Holland: We cannot create fascination, but we can certainly create an environment that will nurture it. Love of music is contagious.

Gates: We should always serve as a model for students. I also think that students should observe more master teachers and follow their observations with a discussion afterwards. I think there is room for richer interaction following a masterclass.

Holland: I agree that we can do more observations, but there are some caveats: in order to gain from observation, one has to know what and how to observe. I’ve seen young, inexperienced teachers observe great teaching, but take all the wrong things away, because they didn’t understand why a decision was made. So the “exit chat” after a masterclass becomes absolutely critical.

Gates: I think we can benefit from observing teaching outside of our areas, so pianists could, for example, observe a cello teacher.

Holland: Yes! I learned a lot about teaching piano by watching a baseball coach. Great teaching is great teaching, regardless of the field.

Wachter: True. Going back to the question of how to honor the piano pedagogy side in applied piano: sometimes students come to lessons and ask about problem students. I think it’s important to discuss the issues, but we should then try to tie it into their lessons.

Jordan-Miller: For me, the studio-classes were almost like group lessons that helped me in my teaching. And reading observation reports by Dr. Gates also helped me a lot, since I had never watched myself teach.

Gates: I’m for group lessons! But a teacher should emphasize, “I’m teaching you this way, because…” and explain to the audience why a certain method is being applied.

Wachter: There is a Leschetizky-anecdote when a student received some fingerings from Leschetizky for a certain piece. Later on, another student took that same piece to a lesson, together with the fingering Leschetizky had given to the other student. Well, Leschetizky exclaimed that the fingering was all wrong, and when the student explained that he had given this fingering to another student, Leschetizky replied that that fingering was for that particular student, not for him.

**Zdechlik: How can the process of learning to learn become an effective tool for learning to teach?**

Holland: We must remember that we are constantly in the process of learning. I think the shortest commencement address ever given was by Kurt Vonnegut who said “Do something that terrifies you every day.”

**Zdechlik: We already mentioned some tools, such as observation, but are there other tools that could help our students to develop the skills of learning and teaching?**

Jordan-Miller: I think modeling can be a very effective tool. Also, videotaping performances, followed by an analysis.

Gates: I agree that videotaping is a great tool. I actually let students write comments first. When students think they did well, I ask them to identify ten areas in which they can grow. Start with “You do this very well” instead of “You should to this.”

Wachter: Even though there are some that think that intimidation works, I don’t think it’s necessary. Just from my personal experience, I had a teacher who explained something to me, but it took a demonstration by him for me to understand what he wanted.

Gates: Some students are closed to a learning experience. You need to win them over.

Wachter: With students who are resistant, you need to establish authority. You do know more and you do have more experience.

Holland: The match-up between teacher and student is important. Some students thrive in an atmosphere of a free, open environment; others prefer clear authority. Most students fall somewhere in the middle. The ideal teacher has a range.

**Zdechlik: I’m thinking of my teacher Eloise Ristad who made it clear in her group lessons that you are the one responsible for your learning. That was a terrifying experience for me.**

Moore: One of the major differences between sport and music that strikes me is the lack of performance repetition in music, which is tied to performance anxiety. Athletes perform every week; musicians twice a semester. The performance element is the difference between teaching and coaching. Going back to the idea of fascination; it’s really the student’s job to be fascinated. But too often, once students enter colleges and start to get graded, this fascination gets diminished. Teachers need to remove barriers to fascination by focusing on performing rather than grading.

Wachter: That is very true. I know a Broadway singer who has performed a song 1,000 times. I thought to myself a thousand times! I just performed a concerto twice, and I could already tell that I felt a lot more comfortable the second time.

Moore: Well, even with a lot of performance repetitions, athletes are never comfortable. I don’t think it’s about becoming comfortable, but more about learning to manage fear and discomfort. Musicians only perform three times a year - they should really perform a minimum of 20 times.

Holland: I think a distinction that often gets lost is that teaching can consist of the acquisition of fundamental skills or be closer to the idea of coaching where you refine a skill set that is already in place.

Gates: The basic principles of teaching and coaching would be similar.

Moore: Yes, you can still coach beginners.

Holland: At the same time, you cannot skip to coaching without having laid the foundations through teaching first.

To conclude, all participants in this discussion agreed that successful teaching is based on mastery of the learning process, and that the fields of piano pedagogy and piano performance are closely intertwined. In fact, the two fields share many tools that facilitate improvement: observation of self and others, the element of fascination, analysis and repetition, and performance practice. Dr. Bill Moore also contributed the perspective of professional athletes by comparing and contrasting athletes and musicians in their training and performing-processes.

**Chung-Ha Kim** teaches applied piano, piano pedagogy, class piano, and piano ensemble at Western Illinois University. She remains active as a pianist, and most recently performed at Western Illinois University, Radford University in Virginia, and Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Kim is an active member of MTNA and ISMTA (Illinois State Music Teachers Association), and currently serves as a state competition coordinator for the MTNA and ISMTA High School Competitions.

**Breakout Sessions: *Learning to Learn, Teaching to Teach***

**Reporter: Chung-Ha Kim**

GP3 participants followed up on the morning “living room” discussion by sharing their own thoughts and ideas on the subject in smaller breakout sessions. The element of fascination resonated with all participants. Often overlooked or forgotten, it is important for teachers to re-kindle fascination in their students. One discussion member shared the idea of asking young students to write a couple of sentences about the pieces they were playing. The art of asking the right questions was also cited as a way to spark a student’s fascination. However, teachers themselves sometimes loose fascination with the teaching/learning process. As models for their students, it is crucial that teachers maintain fascination themselves. This can be achieved by taking on new challenges, such as teaching a disabled student, a new course, etc.

Although pacing was not mentioned in the morning discussion *Learning to Learn, Teaching to Teach*, teachers felt its importance, especially for beginning teachers, cannot be stressed enough, and is crucial for successful lessons. Pedagogy students need to learn how much time to spend on a certain activity, and to recognize the signs for when it’s time to move on.

Videotaping your performances and/or your teaching was cited as an invaluable tool. These recordings should be followed by careful discussions and comments. Students often feel very self-conscious about watching themselves, and sometimes react negatively to comments. Teachers need to be aware of this and act with sensitivity.

Teachers also discussed performance anxiety further in these breakout sessions. Members agreed that providing more performance opportunities for students would help, as would keeping pieces for longer periods of time. One member suggested asking students to keep a certain number of so-called “Triple A” pieces in their repertoire: pieces that could be performed anytime, anywhere, for anyone. Another idea was to alter the typical approach to a studio-class in which everyone performs a piece. Instead, students could be asked to present a problem to the class that would then get solved in a group effort. This would remove the performance element from the studio class, and lower students’ anxiety levels. Practice for piano students should allow them to explore a passage from many different perspectives. Instead of mindless repetitions, students need to be encouraged to use imagination and creativity in their practice. When students repeatedly return with the same mistakes, teachers need to consider whether they have taught them how to practice properly.

To conclude, it became evident during the breakout sessions that the morning “living room” discussion resonated very strongly with all participants and sparked new ideas. Participants left feeling energized and excited about the topics discussed.

**Chung-Ha Kim** teaches applied piano, piano pedagogy, class piano, and piano ensemble at Western Illinois University. She remains active as a pianist, and most recently performed at Western Illinois University, Radford University in Virginia, and Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Kim is an active member of MTNA and ISMTA (Illinois State Music Teachers Association), and currently serves as a state competition coordinator for the MTNA and ISMTA High School Competitions.

***From the Top: What Students Think About Their Group Piano Experience***

**Reporter: Oscar Macchioni**

In a time when some university administrators and colleagues are questioning the validity of including group piano in the undergraduate curriculum, we must re-examine our discipline. What we do as group piano teachers is extremely important for our students because we have the opportunity to influence the entire music student body throughout our classes. Instead of the “arm chair” approach to music, we offer a practical, hands-on performing approach, a gestalt of concepts students learn in other subjects. It is our responsibility to teach students keyboard skills that will be useful in their field, allowing them to understand and experience the world of music.

The motto for the 2008 GP3 Forum was “Staying Focused, Staying Fresh.” Friday was dedicated to Group Piano Teaching at the College/University level under the topic, “A Fresh Look at the Goals, Standards, Outcomes and Status of Group Piano.” The first panel session was titled *From The Top: What Students Think About Their Group Piano Experience*. We were given the opportunity to evaluate, from the students’ perspective, what we are or are not doing right and what and how we can improve the curriculum of group piano. Using video interviews, this panel assessed what the secondary piano students thought and felt during their tenure in group piano classes. Three panelists from different institutions presented their students’ opinions about group piano and their findings were quite similar.

Erin Bennett, currently pursuing a D.M.A at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (CCM), interviewed five former secondary piano students, all of whom received a grade of “A” in their final semester and completed their requirements within the past two years. Erin questioned students in four broad areas and was quite surprised at some of the answers, especially the positive comments.

1. *What are we doing right?* On the subject of scales and technique, students at the CCM liked what they were doing and expressed the importance of technique to build confidence. In repertoire and sight-reading they wanted more. On memorization, although not required, one student who chose to do so, said that it gave her confidence to memorize pieces on her own instrument. Regarding connection to theory, students felt they needed more in this area, especially intervallic relationships reinforced by harmonization, transposition and score reading. Other areas they were pleased with were performing in front of the class, performing pop tunes, patriotic songs and music education songs.

2. *In what areas do they desire more comfort?* They would like to be able to navigate the keyboard more freely with less looking down at their hands. They also felt the need to play more complex repertoire, have the ability to approach a new piece on their own; play piano accompaniments pertaining to their own instruments or voice (most instrumentalist saw it unnecessary to have a stronger background in choral- style playing), and to be able to transpose at sight.

3. *Ways we can improve*. Although students were satisfied with the curriculum they thought quantity was emphasized over quality. They feel concepts should be better related to their overall musical education through a curriculum that includes more pedagogical accompaniments and repertoire for their instruments (i.e. Suzuki, band methods, art songs). Since most students take theory and piano concurrently, they need a better connection between both disciplines and more reinforcement than what we actually think. We need to provide better pedagogical instruction to multi-staff reading and allow more time to learn materials.

4. *Student ideas to add to the curriculum.* Students expressed a desire for more focus on jazz, composition, and improvisation. *Harmonization at the Piano* by Frackenpohl was cited as a good beginning resource for these activities. Graduate assistants felt they needed better direction in the teaching of these skills.

Erin’s observations and responses to the interviews were the following:

1. No major changes are needed in the content. Overall, students liked the curriculum and saw it as an important part of their education. They saw an improvement in their playing but wish they were better now.

2. There is a need for fine-tuning to better reach the goals: quality over quantity.

3. Repertoire should be more related to students’ instruments or voice type.

4. We need to emphasize more how they can use the piano throughout their lives.

5. We should talk to our colleagues in the theory department.

6. Work to achieve more consistency among graduate assistants.

The second panelist was Hanna Mayo, who is currently working towards a master’s degree in piano performance at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette (ULL). This institution has approximately one hundred and twenty students who take three semesters of piano class. Hanna asked the students five broad questions and was also surprised at their positive comments.

1. *Did you learn to play the piano in this class?* Students responded positively to this question and cited the following abilities as important elements of this: coordination of hands together playing, breaking down of music for study; using appropriate fingerings and good practicing techniques, blocking of chords, and reading from lead sheets.

2. *What is your comfort level at the piano?* Students expressed comfort with their ability to read chords but not an actual piece of music. They stated they were uncomfortable playing for “legitimate” people.

3. *What do you wish you were more comfortable doing?* Students cited the following: playing in more keys; reading two clefs simultaneously; composing and improvising; playing with less tension; and being able to recognize and properly voice chords.

4. *What skills did you learn?* What are you able to do right? Students were satisfied that they could play accompaniments to their own instruments’ repertoire, compose, understand music theory, think intervalically, sight-read more efficiently, and participate in ensemble performances.

5. *Are these skills valuable?* Hanna got a big and positive YES! Students think that these skills turn students into musicians.

As a summary, Hanna pointed out the need for a unified curriculum between theory and class piano and the importance of degree specific skills and assignments to accommodate our varied pool of students.

The last panelist was Dr. Kenneth Williams, director of graduate programs in piano pedagogy and coordinator of the class piano program at Ohio State University (OSU). A doctoral student conducted the interviews for his segment.

At OSU, students elaborated on how class piano helped them with their theory classes and how important it was to learn to play from multi-staves. Demonstration from the teachers was very valuable. Activities they enjoyed the most were practical activities and playing in duets and in groups. They felt confident “thinking on the spot” and playing easy chord progressions in different keys. They did not feel confident in sight-reading. As expressed by the other panelists, students at OSU felt they needed to learn more practical skills relevant to their degrees.

In conclusion, this panel presented the students’ opinions about class piano, addressing in particular the areas of content, practicality and comfort. To the teacher’s surprise, no major changes were requested but they all agreed that our curriculum should include more assignments and skills related to the students’ specific area of study, instrument or education. In addition, we should work more to unify the theory and class piano curriculum. These diverse panelists interviewed students who successfully passed class piano, most with “As.” Perhaps in the future it would be wise to interview students who passed with a lower grade such a “C” or who fail class piano, and listen to their experiences and ideas for improvement within the curriculum.

**Oscar Macchioni** is an Assistant Professor of Piano and Piano Pedagogy at the University of Texas at El Paso. A graduate from National University of Tucumán in Argentina, he received a scholarship from the Polish Government to complete the Artist Diploma at the Krakow Academy of Music. He received his Master of Music from Louisiana State University and his Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Piano Performance from the University of Arizona. Oscar Macchioni has performed extensively in his native Argentina, Italy, Poland, Mexico, and in the USA. In March of 2005 he presented a solo recital at the esteemed Myra Hess Memorial Concerts at the Chicago Cultural Center. Dr. Macchioni has served as a lecturer and adjudicator for the World Piano Pedagogy Conference, the MTNA Southwest Division, the Arizona Music Teachers Association and El Paso Music Teachers Association. In the summer of 2006, he was hired by the International Piano Performance Examinations Committee of Taiwan to conduct piano examinations for about 1,200 students nationwide. In 2006 he finished the installation of a $250,000 stateof-the-art piano lab at UTEP. He also enjoys research activities and presents lecture recitals at national and international conferences.

***Where do we go from here? Striking Accord Among Class Piano, Theory, and Musicianship Curricula***

**Reporter: Simone Gorete Machado**

Mrs. Barnett, currently a Ph.D. student at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, brought to this session her perspective as a music theorist who believes in the integration between theory and piano skills while developing musicianship. She acknowledged that even though theory and musicianship curricula are similar, many times they are not working together.

For the common challenges of coordination and practicing at the piano, Mrs. Barnett suggested teachers listen to each student’s individual needs and have them talk through the process, set personal goals and combine mind, fingers and ear. She also highly recommended singing with your students, especially movable do. Mrs. Barnett classified the necessary piano skills for college-level theory and musicianship courses as basic, core and more advanced. The basic piano skills include “confirming the key” and harmonic progression/figured bass, which can also be used as a warm-up. The focus should be in the chord function, played in “keyboard style,” and the student should always be capable of transposing.

Transposition, melody harmonization and “sing and play” were cited as core functional skills. According to the presenter, in order to transpose, one should be able to do the following:

* Analyze (written and aloud)
* Sing (all the voices individually)
* Play as written
* Transpose (bass line, add soprano)
* And above all: Think in the key!

For harmonization she suggested using tunes you could sing. She chose, for the presentation, a sample melody from Roig-Francolí, Harmony in Concert. The student should combine the analysis of the structure of the phrase with its scale degrees, pitches of repose and goal points, and identify which cadences would work best. She classified chord functions as follows:

* Structural: I, V, vii dim.
* Cadential/Predominant: IV, ii
* Prolongation: IV, vi, iii

Her third and favorite of the core skills was “sing and play.” She suggested it helps to do this when confirming the key, either by playing one hand at a time or while blocking the chords. This should be done slowly and without singing, however, when the student has trouble coordinating the hands together. On the handout, she presented two extreme examples to be used as “sing and play,” taken from Berkowitz’s *A new approach to sight singing*, 4th Ed. The first example, with the melody in bass clef, had a simpler accompaniment with blocked chords at the piano. The next example featured an alto-clef melody and a more active piano accompaniment.

Mrs. Barnett considered the final skills, sight-reading and open-score reading, to be more advanced and this is where she included improvisation. Some of the ideas she shared for improvisation included adding parts to the melody while having to play always from the beginning as a “growing melody,” or trying to identify the scale degrees of the melody. She recommended chorales and hymns for harmonic reading and chamber music activities for rhythmic reading experience. Regarding open-score reading, she suggested classical symphonies and string quartets as good examples to use with students; especially Haydn string quartets that tend to have standard chord progressions. The texture of 20th century works by composers such as Stravinsky and band scores would also work well.

At the end, she mentioned helpful websites and software:

* Big Ears www.ossmann.com/bigears/
* MacGAMUT
* G Major Music Theory www.gmajormusictheory.org
* MusicTheory.net
* International Music Score Library Project www.IMSLP.org

And also recommended the following resources:

* Berkowitz: *A new approach to Sight Singing*
* Butterworth: *400 Aural Training Exercises from the Masters*
* Ottman: *Music for Sight Singing*
* Theory texts: Roig-Francolí, Laitz, Koska & Payne, Marvin & Clendinning,
* Aldwell & Schacter, Gauldin
* Bach chorales (reduced or open score)
* Texts: Theory, Solfege, Sight Singing, Class Piano Methods and Anthologies

**Simone Gorete Machado** has won many prestigious Brazilian competitions, the first one being at the age of fifteen. Among others, she won the Jovens Solistas competition in Sao Paulo in 1991, resulting in a performance with the Sao Paulo State Symphony Orchestra. In 2003, at the Green Valley Concert Association piano competition, she was awarded the Second Prize and was also selected by the public to receive the Audience Prize. Ms. Machado holds a DMA in Piano Performance from the University of Arizona, where she studied under Dr. Paula Fan and taught piano classes under the supervision of Dr. Lisa Zdechlik. She received her MM in Piano Performance and a Graduate Professional Diploma from the University of Hartford in Connecticut. She currently serves on the faculty at the University of Sao Paulo in Brazil.

***Technology Based, Online Curriculum for Group Piano***

**Reporter: Hannah Mayo**

In this session Dr. Susanna Garcia and Dr. Chan Kiat Lim introduced a new online curriculum developed by them at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. *E-novative Piano* is a method aimed at promoting artistry and musicality through comfort and ease at the piano. This curriculum encourages holistic learning by integrating the aural, visual, kinesthetic, and intellectual aspects of learning. Concepts are presented in a variety of contexts and skills are acquired through repetition and reinforcement. An array of teaching materials is used to accomplish the holistic learning goal. Issues such as technique and sight-reading are presented in short video clips. The online method also uses MIDI and MP3 audio files, animated instructional slideshows, customized software drills, repertoire, assignments, technical drills, informational documents, and web links to information like composers and musical terms that may appear on repertoire documents. This curriculum is aimed at the students of the millennial generation as it incorporates an intense use of online materials.

The *E-novative Piano* curriculum is meant only to replace or supplement a textbook, not to replace the teacher. Group piano instructors are still necessary for providing reinforcement of specific processes and instructions, providing immediate feedback on the technique of each student, and, of course, providing praise for a job well done. The curriculum contains such a variety of materials that an instructor also has new responsibilities to help students learn how to navigate the system and use the materials. To better understand what and how these materials work, the presenters demonstrated many of the items shown below from the first “block.” (A “block” is a specific test area. Therefore “block one” is the list of items and materials included on the first test.)

**Learning and Teaching Goals**

* Posture at the Piano
* Keyboard Topography
* Interval Basics
* Staff Basics

**MATERIALS**

**Videos**

* *Hand Shape* promotes a natural and relaxed hand shape.
* *Keyboard Topography* describes the visual use of the black key groups.
* *Posture at the Piano* helps students find a comfortable distance from the piano and emphasizes correct posture.
* *Tone Production* reviews the physical reasons for which warm tones and harsh tones are produced.

**Getting Started: Finger Number Drills and Repertoire**

* Black Key Repertoire This folder contains black key pieces in a variety of styles that are taught by finger numbers and are all in one position. They also contain MIDI accompaniments for students to play along with.
* Black Key and White Key Finger Number Drills These drills indicate the starting position and are much like the black key finger number repertoire.
* Two Pentatonic Tunes: *Auld Lang Syne* and *Swing Low Sweet Chariot* These two tunes use three staffs and contain a hand cross. Instructions on the hand crossing and accompaniment come with these pieces.

**Getting Started: Repertoire**

* *Ghost Dance* This piece is a traditionally notated white key piece that primarily uses the “A-C-E” groups.
* *Steps of the Lantern Boy* This piece is a traditionally notated black key piece that contains hand crosses.

**Getting Started: Tunes for Aural Playback**

* This folder contains instructions for playing songs by ear. There is also a folder with MIDI files of black key tunes: *Amazing Grace, Motherless Child*, and *Oh! Susannah*.

**Getting Started: Improvisation**

* This folder has three improvisation activities. For the first activity, students are asked to improvise a phrase to the antecedent phrase played on the MIDI file. The student is asked to match the rhythm of the antecedent phrase, end on tonic, and use black keys. The next activity pairs two students and one provides the antecedent and the other student provides the consequent. Then they switch. The last activity is a Blues Improvisation in which the rhythm options are given and the students arrange the rhythms in a black sixteen-bar worksheet.

**Getting Started: Interval Reading Drills**

* This folder contains two documents with reduced staff interval reading drills. Also included is a slideshow that drills the student on logical fingering choices for intervals from seconds to fifths. And tactile interval drills that instruct students to play various intervals in succession.

**Staff Basics**

* This is a slideshow that explains the relationship of the music staff to the keyboard. The slideshow also shows the A-C-E groups, clef landmarks, and the relationship of the alto clef to the grand staff. Also included are visual explanations of intervals from seconds to octaves.

**Flash Cards**

* This unit contains three sets of flash cards. Note Flash cards contain notes ranging from three ledger lines below the staff and three ledger lines above the staff. The A-CE group flash cards reinforce the A-C-E groups learned from the staff basics slideshow. The alto clef flash cards drill notes on the alto clef. The notes drilled do not extend past an octave from Middle C.

At the conclusion of the session, Drs. Garcia and Lim passed around a sign-up sheet for those in the audience wishing to give the curriculum a trial run. Readers with an interest in this project may contact them directly via email.

Dr. Susanna Garcia: spg6611@louisiana.edu

Dr. Chan Kiat Lim: chankiatlim@louisiana.edu

**Hannah Mayo** is currently working towards a Master’s Degree in Piano Performance from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. She also holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Piano Pedagogy from UL Lafayette.

***Staying Fresh: A Pedagogical Cyberspace Cruise to YouTube, Piano Flicks and the Internet***

**Reporter: Teresa Sumpter**

In this presentation Dr. Carol Gingerich, Professor of Piano and Piano Pedagogy at the University of West Georgia, shared her experiences getting acquainted with Cyberspace as well as the Internet projects she utilizes with students in her piano pedagogy classes. Dr. Gingerich first became interested in YouTube when she was preparing a PowerPoint presentation for a lecture-recital and needed an excerpt from a Jane Austen movie that she subsequently found on YouTube. As she became more fascinated with this online resource she began speaking to students and colleagues about it and realized what an important resource it is for her students in their daily lives. YouTube, she discovered, was normally the first place her students would look to find a recording and it was an excellent source for archival performances of great artists such as Vladimir Horowitz. When she asked her students if they wished to work with YouTube during class assignments the answer was a resounding yes.

Many people are suspicious of YouTube and dread using it. Dr. Gingerich stated these attitudes are well founded. Before beginning her class projects, Dr. Gingerich consulted with the Director of Technology at her university who agreed to help her and assured her that the process would not be difficult. In reality it took three months of preparation and the overcoming of many obstacles before the projects were ready to present to her class.

**Cyberspace Projects and Pedagogical Objectives**

Dr. Gingerich’s Internet projects allowed her and her students to learn about YouTube and the Internet together. She utilized three class assignments: YouTube Analysis, Piano Movie Report, and Internet Article Critique. There were three pedagogical objectives for these projects:

1. \*Develop students’ critical thinking skills

2. Give students an opportunity to learn something new and gain access to a fresh source of information while learning a new skill herself

3. Motivate and inspire students

\*Dr. Gingerich utilized the four steps in the Critical Thinking Process created by Dr. Stephen Brookfield of Columbia University with her students to help them understand the importance of questioning what they read on the Internet. These four steps are as follows:

1. Identify assumptions

2. Check accuracy and validity

3. Take alternative perspectives

4. Take informed actions

**YouTube Analysis**

For this assignment each student gave a 10-minute presentation that showed, analyzed, evaluated and reported on two pedagogical clips related to class topics that were found on YouTube. The first clip needed to be a bad one that demonstrated a poor performance, while the second illustrated an excellent performance. Dr. Gingerich shared with the audience three of the student projects submitted for this class.

The first student, Laura, compared a professional recording of Horowitz performing Chopin’s *Ballade No. 1 in G Minor* Opus 23 with an amateur’s recording of Chopin’s *Waltz in A minor*. In her presentation Laura noted the inconsistencies in tempo, rubato, and pedaling in the amateur performance.

The second student, Brittany, decided to listen to two unknown performers as she wanted to aurally discern which performer was the professional and which was the amateur. She listened to Wilhelm Kempff performing the first movement of Beethoven’s *Moonlight Sonata*. She reported on the classical style characteristics of the performance such as elegant touch, singing tone, and excellent balance.

The third student, Yaeju, focused on Romantic style interpretation and discussed the importance of accuracy versus convincing interpretation. She listened to an inexperienced performer playing Rachmaninoff’s *Prelude in C-sharp Minor*. This performer, who was still working on accuracy, was unable to convey flexibility because he was too focused on playing the correct notes. She then listened to another performance of Rachmaninoff’s music and found that there were a few wrong notes but the music was in the correct style.

**Piano Movie Report**

In this assignment students were asked to give a visual and verbal synopsis, description, and evaluation of a movie about a composer, pedagogue, or performer’s life. Students’ choices had to be approved by Dr. Gingrich. Students were allowed to use clips from YouTube, a DVD, a downloaded movie from a website, or create their own CD of highlights. She made a point of emphasizing to her students the need for them to drill their technology to be certain it worked, because technological proficiency would affect their grade. This project was to be 10–15 minutes in length.

The first student, Laura, chose a pedagogical clip from the movie Shine. She was surprised that the students in the movie did not perform by memory. This allowed Dr. Gingerich to explain that the movie is set in Australia where the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music curriculum is generally used, which does not require memorization.

The second student, Brittany, chose the movie *The Pianist*. In this movie one hears the same piece, Chopin’s *Nocturne in C-sharp Minor*, Op. 27 three times, which allowed the student to compare three different renditions.

**Internet Article Critique**

The third assignment was to review an article from an Internet journal regarding a topic discussed in class. Dr. Gingerich used this assignment to educate her students about quality online information. Students were asked to give an aural report of 10 minutes in length that included:

1. Description of contents

2. Critique of: a) Scholarly value of research sources b) Author’s credentials c) Author’s writing style d) Journal quality (peer reviewed, single editor, etc.)

This assignment provided her undergraduate students with their first opportunity to critique an online article. She expected a more in-depth discussion from her graduate students, who were also taking a research methodology course.

**Further Research**

The Internet can be a useful tool in teaching musical style, a learning objective in most pedagogy courses. Gingerich offered the following suggestions for additional assignments:

* Revisit sites and articles and create more specific analytic questions related to topics discussed in class.
* Assign the website, article, or movie and create specific questions pertaining to class topics.
* Have students create a set of standard questions they could use for life-long learning in evaluation of all media information. These questions would include a critique of the author’s credentials as well as the quality of the journal in which the article was found.

**Conclusion**

Cyberspace can provide an excellent source of motivation for both teachers and students. Dr. Gingerich cautioned the audience to save the YouTube performances they find because there is a great deal of turnover on what is available on the internet and a clip found one day may be gone the next. She also cautioned that YouTube could be easily overused. In addition, YouTube clips are often hard to hear and not all the examples are good.

**Teresa Sumpter** is currently an Assistant Professor of Music at Mars Hill College in Mars Hill, North Carolina where she teaches Applied Piano, Group Piano, and Theory. She has earned a PhD in Music Education with an emphasis in Piano Pedagogy and a Master of Music degree in Piano Performance and Pedagogy from the University of Oklahoma in addition to a Master of Business Administration from West Virginia University, and a Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance from Ball State University.

**Discussion Groups: *Brainstorming the Group Piano Experience***

**Reporter: Thomas Swenson**

The goals and objectives in teaching group piano in a college or university setting can be unique to each institution. While some group keyboard requirements can be completed in a single year, others extend to six or more semesters. Some classes meet only once each week, while others may meet up to three times. Given these extremes, a number of skills continue to guide our instructional objectives such as harmonization, improvisation, repertoire, sight-reading, score-reading, technique, accompanying, and working with lead sheets and popular styles. These components we associate as functional keyboard skills. Composers, pedagogues, teachers, and piano pedagogy students met in small groups on the first day of GP3 2008 to define each of the skills mentioned above. Additionally, the groups were charged with evaluating the importance of each skill, share competencies for first and second year courses, and discuss additional ideas. This article summarizes the notes and reports from each of the sixteen meetings. The demarcation of these skills should not indicate that overlaps do not occur or that there are not additional skills taught in many curricula.

These small group meetings served mainly as a springboard for further inquiry. The Music Teachers National Association has initiated a web-based discussion board (URL no longer active) on these topics for which you are invited to read and share your own thoughts.

**Accompanying**

The skill of accompanying involves the ability to actively collaborate with another musician (or group). For the beginning keyboard student accompanying may involve providing simple harmonic support through the use of block chords. More advanced levels include accurately following notated scores and the development of additional harmonization and improvisatory skills. As accompanying skills improve, students acquire the ability to lead, to follow, and contribute to truly expressive performances. Accompanying is a standard skill on most proficiency exams.

Some of the objectives of the first year include being able to play vocal warm-ups and maintain a steady tempo using various accompaniment styles (left-hand or two-handed). First year students should also have the ability to create two-handed accompaniments from lead-sheets (assuming a subservient role), and be comfortable using primary chords to accompany traditional songs. Second year programs utilize more complicated left-hand patterns, such as a jump bass (stride), and composing/improvising introductory material. Students in their second year are usually challenged with more complex notated accompaniments and requested to demonstrate greater musicality.

Ideas shared in the discussions included the importance of preparing students to lead “sing-alongs.” Students can be encouraged to maintain eye contact with the singers, and speak and give directions while maintaining background patterns (“comping”). Also, some teachers assist their students in simplifying and “faking” accompaniments.

Many participants did not feel that a two-year program sufficiently prepares students to a functional level. As such, a recommendation was made that a third year, especially for vocalists, would help rectify this deficiency.

**Harmonization**

Harmonization was defined as the ability to “realize” music when provided with a melodic structure. Harmonization encourages a number of component skills: the ability to audiate, anticipate harmonic changes, evaluate effective performances through listening, and develop coordination skills. As students harmonize they integrate aural, theoretical, and technical abilities. Participants mentioned that harmonization enhances basic musicianship and supports skills such as arranging, accompanying, songwriting, composition, and improvisation. Knowing and understanding harmonic progressions assists students in hearing textures and the architecture of a piece. This, in turn, may provide insight into shaping and expression. Additionally, an understanding of the harmonic structure of a piece may aid in memorization, encouraging students to logically encode music patterns. Supporting applications were discussed with regards to elementary and choral music educators, church musicians, those in the business of music, and instrumentalists.

First-year students are often exposed to three types of harmonization: chord symbols, Roman numerals, and melodies lacking any type of harmonic notation. Students commonly demonstrate harmonization using diatonic chords (in all major and minor keys), playing harmonized sequences, and performing simple traditional melodies with various styles of harmonic support. Finding a balance between assigning pieces with a large number of chords and the number of transposition keys was frequently mentioned. Second year programs usually include secondary dominants, more use of seventh chords, and modulations. While many keys signatures continue to be explored in the second year, assignments are sometimes tailored according to the primary instrument of each student.

**Improvisation**

Improvisation takes many forms and guises. The participants identified improvisation as anything done at the keyboard without a manuscript; therefore, not tied to reading. This definition clearly delineates it from the skills of harmonization (where the student is provided with a melody) and lead-sheet realization (where the student is provided with a melody along with chord symbols). The fact that improvisation is often not included on proficiency exams should not imply that it is not a valuable skill.

Improvisation activities offer students invaluable opportunities for creative exploration at the keyboard. As an “icebreaker” or introduction of new concepts, improvisation can be especially effective. Alternating between reading and non-reading activities was a noted teaching strategy used by one participant. Specific concepts mentioned for which improvisation was useful in classes included: modal experimentation, pentatonic scales, drilling articulations, phrase organization, and working on concepts such as form, dynamics, and harmonic progressions. Improvisation allows students to demonstrate the ability to organize musical thought and create musical responses to others. This skill may even enhance musicianship and appreciation for notated music.

In the first year, improvisation may be geared towards inspiring creativity and exploration. Second-year classes tend to use improvisation to acquire, reinforce, and demonstrate skills.

While much of the improvisation used in piano classes is grounded in traditional tonal patterns, further development can encourage extremely creative compositions. Several participants mentioned setting parameters for improvising. Further clarification on these parameters would be useful as this discussion continues.

**Repertoire**

The topic of repertoire in the group piano curriculum contained a great disparity of ideas. Beginning with a definition that included only standard classical literature, many participants additionally incorporate accompaniments, chamber/ensemble music, patriotic tunes, and popular literature. The latter group referred to any music written on two staves that was “meaningful” and featured structure, phrasing, and other compositional elements. It seems clear that defining this skill as clearly as possible would be important as discussions of the objectives of group piano for music majors continue.

Like the other components, repertoire was considered a fundamental element in group piano curricula as it integrated many of the other skills commonly taught in these classes. In addition, students are challenged to be musical and stylistic in these pieces. These elements are of utmost importance to music education majors, as they will later be shaping future generations of musicians. For other music degree candidates, the application of music theory to the keyboard, through actual piano literature, was considered essential.

Questions regarding repertoire included the leveling of pieces, the number of pieces to study and master/polish, the end result in learning these pieces (jury, informal recital, class performance, or a grade), the use of solo versus ensemble music, and whether memorization was required. All participants agreed that a culmination performance of some sort is recommended at the end of a term, semester, or academic year although debate ensued on memorization requirements.

The definition for repertoire tended to expand as the curriculum progressed. Rhythm, meter, and phrasing were usually emphasized in one-year programs. Two-year programs tended to also include ensemble music and accompaniments, with additional attention to musicality, stylistic considerations, and connections to other music courses.

**Score-Reading**

Score-reading was defined as the ability to play exercises or excerpts with two or more parts (generally for voices or instruments, other than a keyboard instrument). The groups recommended that two-part choral score excerpts be introduced sometime around the third semester. By the fourth semester score-reading of four parts was standard. The participants in these discussions commonly introduced instrumental score reading in the alto and tenor clefs during the third semester. Additional transposition (instruments that do not read at concert pitch) often occurred in the fourth semester. Sight-reading of two parts was common among the instructors during the fourth semester.

The skill of score-reading seems to assist in students’ ability to analyze harmonies and harmonic progressions. Reading skills, especially by interval, are reinforced in this activity. Score reading is especially important for students preparing for the Praxis Exam, given to most music education majors.

**Technique**

The topic of technique as a separate “skill” summoned up some lively conversation. Three interesting categories or perspectives on technique emerged: 1) exercises designed to build strength (and, I assume, coordination and thought patterns), 2) “formulas” to be used with current and future repertoire, and 3) developing awareness of the physical anatomy which can assist or hinder the ability to use the keyboard. Scales, arpeggios, and other technical requirements are often grouped together under the term technique in group or private lessons. The potential misconception of grouping scales, arpeggios, and other technical requirements could be that students begin thinking that these are technique, rather than opportunities to build or practice technique.

Obviously, developing a healthy technical foundation was a desire of all participants, although the reports did not define how to develop this in a group situation.

The topic of scales elicited much conversation regarding teaching strategies and requirements. While playing scales hands together rarely occurs in repertoire, some participants voiced that doing this is not only motivational for many students but may promote good coordination and exercise the brain. Other instructors did not see the need to have non-piano-majors spend the time and effort on this activity.

**Sight-Reading**

This skill was defined as the ability to either quickly, or immediately, perform a reasonable rendition of a new piece. Sight-reading requires not only the basic identification of pitches, rhythms, patterns, shapes, tonalities and meters, but also the ability to recognize melodic and harmonic tendencies. As a skill it should be developed so that students are given very little or no preparation time before playing. One reporter, Kevin Richmond, succinctly wrote: “The goal of sight reading is to train the ear to hear what the eyes see and to be able to communicate that confidently with the hands.” Sight-reading is a skill that teaches one how to cope and survive in performance situations with little time for preparation. More experience seems to impart greater skill.

Some discussion ensued on the balance between the quantity of sight-reading materials and evaluations, and the actual quality of the performances. Consistency and a systematic leveling seem to develop this skill. Drilling isolated components idiomatic to sight-reading, as well as composition assignments (distributed to the entire class), are effective ways to increase the quantity of materials.

One teacher shared the idea of preparing two-measure examples and putting them in a bowl for students to pick up as they enter the classroom. These examples may be related to current concepts or something forthcoming. Students do not feel overwhelmed when these examples are so short. This idea is similar to displaying patterns (“flashes”) to the class, which has been used effectively by many instructors. Patterns might begin with only three-notes but grow in length and complexity as the class advances.

First year students should be able to sight-read simple melodies using a lead sheet and adding harmonies, recognize blocked and broken chords, recognize scalar figures and sequences within one octave, notice repetition, and accurately perform dotted rhythms in keys up to two accidentals. Second year courses can be tailored to the particular degree plans of the individual students.

**Lead Sheets and Pop Styles**

This skill was defined as the ability to accompany, in different styles, a notated melody that includes chord symbols such as those found in a fake book. This skill is in contrast to those used in harmonizing a melody, where chord symbols may not be provided. Pop music was generally considered to be easily accessible to those without formal music training, and familiar to a large segment of the population through aural and rote approaches. A variety of styles fall in this category, such as rock, blues, older standards, jazz, film music, video game music, and contemporary church music songs, among others.

The importance of playing popular styles of music from fake books in the group piano curriculum stems from the integration of a number of important skills beyond piano technique and coordination. Music theory, harmonization, aural discrimination, and rhythmic abilities are all being used and developed in playing these types of pieces. Musicians with strong skills in this area are able to utilize them in music education fields and are marketable in a number of other careers. Some careers for which possessing this ability are of benefit include jazz band directors, accompanists, choral directors, church musicians, elementary music educators, vocalists/singers, music therapists, and those who want to play for musical theater. Ironically, it was noted that many piano majors often lack this skill due to the fact that they are exempted from functional piano classes.

In a one-year program discussion participants recommended students should be able to play a simple melody accompanied with primary and secondary diatonic chords. They suggested further development of this skill take place in second-year courses through playing from actual fake books. Providing students with opportunities to play in groups or combos allows them to rotate between being the soloist or the accompanying ensemble (“comping” or “vamping”). Instructors differed on the length of time a student should have to study/practice before being evaluated: anywhere from one minute to one week.

Some additional ideas offered by participants included the study of chord voicing, which may add to the students’ appreciation of this skill. Yet it was also mentioned that many instructors have a difficult time getting beyond right-hand melody and left-hand chords given the time constraints in their present curriculums. One innovative idea invited students to bring a recording of a popular piece to class. The students would then collectively listen to the piece, determine the chord progression, and explore suitable keyboard accompaniment styles appropriate to their skill level.

**Summary**

The small group discussions at the 2008 National Group Piano and Piano Pedagogy Forum encouraged instructors of class piano to define important skills, and share ideas regarding curricula and teaching strategies. The various reports point to the idea that keyboard classes might be seen as a “hub” where music theory, style, and musicianship are integrated. Students are requested to mesh together concepts from a variety of classes and bring these ideas to life through the keyboard. We, ourselves, are a diverse group of committed teachers hoping to influence a variety of students pursuing unique careers in music. As committed educators we are passionate about music, the piano, and learning. In these classes we provide students with a foundation for a multiplicity of careers in music. In providing a solid introduction to the keyboard, we guide our students to use the piano as a tool to create, recreate, understand, and teach music.

**Thomas Swenson** is Assistant Professor of Music and Director of the Community Music School at Salem College. He completed his Ph.D. in Music Education with emphasis in Piano Pedagogy at the University of Oklahoma. He has also studied at Minnesota State University (Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance), the State University of New York at Stony Brook, Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (Master of Music in Piano Performance). He has taught piano, piano pedagogy, and music theory at the North Carolina School of the Arts, the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, North Carolina A&T State University, and the University of Oklahoma. Thomas has performed, adjudicated, and presented throughout the country including the MTNA National Conference, the Symposium of World Music, the National MENC Convention, and many state and local associations. He has presented topics relating to practicing, the role of parents and caregivers in music lessons, and adult piano students (his dissertation topic). Thomas is currently a vice president for the North Carolina Music Teachers Association.

***Wrap-up Session***

**Reporter: Adam Clark**

Dr. Moore is a performance psychology specialist whose work with professional, Olympic, collegiate, and elite junior athletes helps individuals and teams perform at optimal levels under competitive stress. His presentation brought together a number of issues addressed throughout the forum and offered a variety of ideas and calls for continued education and growth in the field of piano pedagogy. Some areas discussed included teaching technique and improvisation, bridging the gap between pedagogy and performance, and various aspects of performance psychology.

**Technique and Improvisation**

Dr. Moore opened by recalling two breakout sessions he had attended: one dealing with technique and the other with improvisation. With regard to technique, he encouraged teachers to clearly define the physical movements of piano technique and how these movements relate to a particular result. In sports the relationship between movement and a desired result is very clear, but in piano the connection is often vague and overlooked.

With regard to improvisation, he suggested that it be introduced to students right away. Pianists are often perfection-driven in personality, and improvisation is an excellent way to break down this barrier. It allows the teacher to emphasize, early on, that mistakes are okay.

**Pedagogy, Performance, and Practice**

Dr. Moore went on to recognize that an apparent divide has emerged between those who are pedagogy specialists and those who might be considered artist/teachers. Although the conversation was somewhat general, posing more questions than answers, he did emphasize that these groups should not exist in two separate camps and that both must find a way to come together and establish some sort of a middle-ground.

He also emphasized that it is important for all teachers to keep playing. A fundamental motivation for choosing a piano-centered life is a deep love for playing and a deep love for music. This joy can be rediscovered through a commitment to regular practice and performance. Not only will this help nurture and perhaps rekindle a love for the instrument, but it will inevitably help in teaching a variety of skills to students as well.

Recognizing the time constraints on most teachers, he suggested practicing in forty-five-minute blocks. Setting time limits on a practice session will actually refine practice technique and increase work efficiency. A larger, say four-hour block of practice time, might often be unfocused and unproductive. Taking a ten-minute break is a sufficient amount of time for separating forty-five-minute practice blocks.

**Performance Psychology/Literature Review**

A large portion of Dr. Moore’s presentation focused on books related to learning and performance psychology. The following titles were mentioned:

* *The Inner Game of Tennis* by Tim Gallwey
* *Psycho-Cybernetics* by Maxwell Maltz (the original paperback edition, not the 2000 edition)
* *Punished by Rewards* by Alfie Kohn

The majority of his discussion centered on Tim Gallwey’s *The Inner Game of Tennis*, emphasizing, in particular, Gallwey’s depiction of a Self One and Self Two. Self One refers to conscious awareness (the “thinker”) while Self Two is a “parallel processing system” that functions below the conscious level. One example used to illustrate the interaction between these two was the process of getting out of a car. While it is a seemingly simple act, it can in fact be broken down into a complex series of intricate steps. This sort of complexity, however, is not handled in a conscious and cognitive way (Self One), but rather is executed automatically at the subconscious level (Self Two).

As related to piano performance, Self One must learn to trust Self Two. Problems typically arise when Self One wants to control Self Two, a scenario that might be described as “over-analysis.” Self Two must learn to “let go.” This struggle between Self One and Self Two reflects the performer’s need for courage, a key point in Dr. Moore’s presentation earlier in the forum, *Coaching for Performance: Strategies for Helping Pianists Get Out What They Have in Them*.

Another notable discussion in his overview of literature was derived from his own publications and workshops relating to improved golf performance. Activities mentioned included describing a best and worst performance scenario, writing a detailed visualization script of an ideal performance, and keeping a performance journal. He emphasized that a journal is often the most effective tool in helping with performance anxiety.

**Conclusion/Question and Answer Session**

The session concluded with a period of Questions and Answers. Questions and summaries of Dr. Moore’s responses are included below:

**1. Your PGA tour client: What makes him an amazing teacher?** *(Dr. Moore had referred earlier to a client he considered to be both an amazing golfer and an amazing teacher)*

* He has a great sense of the history of the golf swing, and its evolution.
* He has studied the great players.
* He can discuss the modern swing.
* Being around him makes me a better person.
* His character and approach to life are admirable.
* He is fascinated by teaching.

**2. From a physical aspect, do you have any ideas on what we should be doing for our bodies?**

* Considering that golfers are in amazing shape, a worthwhile study would be looking into the holistic aspect of piano playing, such as the role of nutrition, core strength, sleep, etc.
* Along these lines, Dr. Moore noted that the military has done numerous tests regarding the effects of sleep on performance. What they discovered is that the amount of sleep one gets two nights before an important activity or event is more significant in affecting performance than the sleep one gets the night before.

**3. Is there anything we can do to improve group teaching?**

* Be fascinated by it and observe it.
* It would be beneficial to observe the Duke basketball coach. There is a peer leadership component to the team. The coach rarely raises his voice. It is the teammates who primarily do the rebuking, and it is the group itself who eventually leads.
* It is also important to fight the right battles and to do so consistently and early on.

**4. In Daniel Levitin’s book, *This is Your Brain on Music*, he mentions the “10,000-hour rule,” which is basically that it takes that much practice time to become stellar at an instrument. What do you think of this statement?**

* Dr. Moore did not agree with this statement. Believing in multiple intelligences, he stated that some people can lock a feeling or pattern in right away and do not require a set number of repetitions. Talent is an “X” factor. One can nurture it or screw it up.

This session was intriguing and thought-provoking. Many left feeling inspired, energized, and eager to bring a number of thoughts and ideas back to their own studios, classrooms, pianos, and lives. Publication and presentation information for Dr. Moore can be found on his website, (URL no longer active). He may be contacted by email at Bill@MoorePerform.com.

**Adam Clark** teaches applied piano, class piano, and piano pedagogy at Hope College in Holland, Michigan. He holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Piano Performance from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (Cognate area in Piano Pedagogy), while his Bachelors and Masters degrees were completed at the University of California at Santa Barbara and the University of Texas at Austin, respectively. He is an active soloist and chamber musician and has performed to great acclaim throughout the United States, as well as in Belgium and Italy. He has also lectured on diverse topics ranging from technical and musical development to twentieth century pedagogical literature.