

National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy

Pre-Conference Seminar
“Toward a Pedagogy for the New Millennium”

Wednesday, July 18, 2001
Hyatt Regency Oak Brook
Oak Brook, Illinois

Highlights of Discussions by Breakout Groups

(Summaries Prepared by Barbara English Maris)

The Pre-Conference Seminar opened with an address by Samuel S. Holland of Southern Methodist University (Dallas, TX). After his message, which challenged keyboard pedagogy teachers to explore ways of strengthening their profession, seminar participants met in small Breakout Discussion Groups.

During the afternoon, following individualized schedules prepared for each registrant, everyone had the opportunity to meet with all of the resource leaders and to participate in small-group discussions related to six areas of specialization: Administration, Piano Performance, Educational Psychology, Music Education, Music Therapy, and Web-Based Instruction. For the purposes of these NCKP 2001 Proceedings, instead of reporting on thirty-six separate breakout groups, I have summarized some highlights from those half-hour, small-group discussions. My summaries are based on brief written reports received from the Breakout Discussion Leaders. Their names are listed below, following information about the Resource Leaders.

ADMINISTRATION

James Goldsworthy served as Resource Leader for the discussions related to Keyboard Pedagogy and Administration. Currently, Dr. Goldsworthy is an Associate Dean at Westminster Choir College of Rider University (Princeton, NJ). Before moving to New Jersey, he taught at Goshen College (Goshen, IN), Stanford University (Stanford, CA), and University of St. Thomas (Saint Paul, MN).

The Breakout Discussion Leaders were:

Reid Alexander - University of Illinois (Urbana, IL)

Marcia Bosits - Northwestern University (Evanston, IL)

Sylvia Coats - Wichita State University (Wichita, KS)

Jane Magrath - University of Oklahoma (Norman, OK)

Steve Roberson - Butler University (Indianapolis, IN)

Beverley Simms - Indiana State University (Terre Haute, IN)

Addressing the topic as a music administrator who also has had a great deal of experience teaching keyboard pedagogy, Dr. Goldsworthy encouraged pedagogy teachers to learn to use the language of academic administrators. This jargon includes such basic terms as “FTE” (full-time equivalent – a basic strategy for calculating faculty teaching loads), “IU” (instructional unit), and “NASM” (National Association of Schools of Music – one of the major accrediting organizations for music programs in higher education). Pedagogy teachers need to be aware of the load formulas used at their institutions and understand how such formulas are used to calculate teaching assignments.

In interacting with administrators, Dr. Goldsworthy encouraged pedagogy teachers to research their programmatic requests before asking administrators for support. Pedagogy teachers need to consider many possible responses to their requests and then be prepared to compromise or

negotiate with administrators. Rather than proposing a single solution to a problem, it may be more helpful to present several possible answers and then work with the administrator to identify the best of the alternatives. Goldsworthy encouraged pedagogy faculty to look beyond their own program and seek ways in which a pedagogy program or project can be helpful to the broader academic entity or community. At times, it may be important for pedagogy teachers to consider drawing on other faculty and existing courses and allow those resources to substitute for or supplement existing pedagogy classes.

An overriding theme presented by Goldsworthy was that each faculty person is ultimately responsible for herself or himself - in their teaching as in their personal environments. He encouraged pedagogy teachers to take responsibility for their professional lives. On some occasions, we find that we can't do everything to which we aspire. Sometimes we may need to streamline our goals and pace ourselves. The administration is unable to solve all of our problems, and ultimately it is up to us to find workable and effective solutions. At the same time, it is important for each faculty member to demonstrate his or her importance to the institution and to help administrators become aware of the central role a person and program play in the larger institutional picture. Effective communication between pedagogy teachers and music administrators is an essential link in building a successful pedagogy program. Dr. Goldsworthy emphasized the importance of pedagogy leaders learning to communicate effectively with their administrators and colleagues. He suggested that pedagogues need to keep asking themselves, "How can the pedagogy program benefit not only the degree students but also the music unit and the entire university?" Piano pedagogy programs are strengthened when they are perceived as being indispensable to the music department and larger institution.

Some participants expressed concern about several institutions that have redefined faculty positions in recent years after the retirement of a pedagogy specialist. Dr. Goldsworthy acknowledged that music administrators play a significant role when creating search committees for pedagogy positions.

There was general agreement that observation and supervision are crucial aspects of teaching pedagogy, and that teaching loads need to reflect that reality. There was no consensus, however, regarding ways this goal might be achieved. Another unresolved discussion topic related to the unionization of graduate teaching assistants and complications that collective bargaining can have on graduate students teaching in preparatory programs. In dealing with all these difficult issues, Goldsworthy encouraged faculty to “think out of the box,” and seek to develop creative solutions.

ARTIST LIAISON

Douglas Humpherys served as Resource Leader for the discussions related to the question, “How can pedagogy programs interface with the performance area in order to enrich our programs and benefit our students?” Dr. Humpherys holds graduate degrees in piano performance from Juilliard and Eastman, has performed concerts throughout the world, and is currently a Professor of Piano at Eastman School of Music (Rochester, NY).

The Breakout Discussion Leaders were:

Paul Barnes – University of Nebraska (Lincoln, NE)

Andrew Hisey – Oberlin Conservatory (Oberlin, OH)

Phyllis Alpert Lehrer - Westminster Choir College of Rider University
(Princeton, NJ)

Naomi Oliphant - University of Louisville School of Music
(Louisville, KY)

Dennis Sweigart – Lebanon Valley College (Annville, PA)

Carolyn True – Trinity University (San Antonio, TX)

Even though these sessions had been described in the conference program as discussions of issues that affect pedagogy teachers and “artist faculty” - and Dr. Humpherys had been asked to function as “an artistic liaison” - all of the discussion facilitators reported that their group expressed strong dissatisfaction with terms such as “artist teacher” or “artist faculty.” As one participant explained, “We are all teachers and should also be strong pianists or artists. Since we serve as role models for our pedagogy students, they must see us not only teaching, but also performing.” When institutions make a distinction between “artist faculty” and other teachers, there is a risk of creating the perception that the others are “second-class musicians/citizens.”

Many seminar participants felt that the term “artist faculty” should be eliminated from academic vocabulary because it creates barriers between pedagogues and performers and often undermines the level of respect faculty members need to develop for each other’s areas of expertise. One person observed that “in an ideal world, One who teaches, does and One who does, teaches.” It was noted that in order to be a good teacher, one must have a passion for teaching. Those attending this pre-conference seminar deplored the practice, still found occasionally, of an audition committee refusing to accept an applicant into a performance degree but then directing that same student into a pedagogy degree.

There was general consensus that the wall between performance and pedagogy faculty still exists both in reality and in the perceptions of students. Although most teachers at this conference would agree that there should not be a difference in the quality of musicianship of pedagogy and performance students, in reality, this is very hard to maintain. In many cases, students enrolled in pedagogy programs actually are weaker performers than are the performance majors.

Participants in the six discussion groups reflected the diversity of the institutions represented and the wide range of faculty interactions at those schools. A great variety of situations can be found at different institutions:

Performance and pedagogy teachers are virtually undifferentiated. (At some schools, the same individual wears both hats.)

Performance and pedagogy teachers cooperate effectively and keep the students' needs in focus.

Performance and pedagogy teachers communicate ineffectively and maintain very different sets of goals. (Sometimes, each "side" actually is perceived as being opposed to the goals of the other group.)

Just as a talented pianist needs lessons in the art of performing piano music, so does a talented teacher need lessons in the art of teaching piano students. There was concern expressed about the limited amount of observation that is included in many degree programs. Dr. Humphreys suggested the importance of helping our students learn how to observe lessons through the eyes of teachers-to-be rather than only through the eyes of students who may be somewhat passive regarding their own study. Because piano students study their instrument for many years, they actually have the opportunity to observe hours and hours of lessons.

Many of the pedagogy teachers expressed frustration because of the limited number of academic credit hours students can focus on pedagogy. Dr. Humphreys noted, "If we are focused on learning, we focus on our own self first then transfer that forward." Teachers were encouraged to think creatively and non-traditionally in the context of teaching pedagogy. Several people described existing practica experiences (carrying credit or treated as non-credit experiences in conjunction with applied lessons) that directly involved students with each other. Such learning sessions (sometimes entitled piano practicums, repertoire classes, performance previews, or recital seminars) can provide regular opportunities for students to improve their listening skills, articulate ideas, and engage in discussions with teachers and other students. These experiences provide teachers with opportunities to function as active musicians who are aware of the learning process. They enable us to help students become more active in the process of learning and to think more critically about various learning styles as well as the process of teaching.

Many traditional pedagogy courses start by focusing on beginning piano methods for children and adults. Although many participants of these discussions seemed to believe that the beginning levels represent the most important stage of study and thus require our best teachers, it was suggested that sometimes it may be more effective to begin pedagogy instruction by working with somewhat more advanced repertoire. Most performance students do not remember their first lessons, were not typical beginners, and have little or no interest in teaching beginners. When dealing with upper-level intermediate repertoire, students may be more apt to get excited about teaching music. If we can get students hooked on teaching, then we can introduce them to the challenges and rewards that are inherent in teaching beginners of various ages. Participants felt that all performance degrees need to include some pedagogy instruction – most performers will teach at some stage of their professional lives – but we need to meet our college students at their level of readiness and work from the known to the unknown.

In the various discussion groups, several issues were identified and discussed without reaching a single answer or general recommendation.

Are pedagogy degrees an institutional response to a musical world saturated with performance majors? Or do pedagogy degree programs exist independently, as a rigorous discipline? Discussion of this question touched on a concern that pedagogy degrees must not become programs (“receptacles”) for students who are unable to perform at an acceptable level.

Should pedagogy degrees exist at both the undergraduate and graduate levels? Would it be better to develop strong undergraduate degrees in performance and then encourage pedagogy specialization at the master’s level?

Can we encourage cooperation between colleagues by having performance teachers present teaching demonstrations? Can performance teachers routinely incorporate pedagogy teaching in their piano studios? Can pedagogy and performance faculty agree on common goals and

seek to develop an attitude of mutual support between instructors of pedagogy and performance training?

How can we bring music education faculty into our discussions and include them among those teachers who can make important contributions to our keyboard pedagogy programs?

Is a college or university the place to provide career development or academic learning? Can those goals co-exist? What are the implications of our answers?

What special skills will be needed by individuals who direct pedagogy degree programs? In addition to a complete range of skills – including artistry, musicality, and pedagogical expertise – one administrator in the group added “the ability to communicate those skills and the will to coordinate them with the goals of the institution and other faculty.” It was agreed that this represented a rare combination.

What music students will need courses in piano pedagogy and piano literature? Participants expressed the conviction that all piano students will need such courses. There was strong consensus for the goal of seeking a greater integration between performance and pedagogy at all levels.

Should students be allowed to major in accompanying at the undergraduate level? Discussion facilitators reported that most people in their group wanted to have students develop accompanying skills in the context of a generalized rather than specialized undergraduate degree. A greater level of specialization could then take place at a graduate level.

How can we use to our advantage the current national movement for increased proficiency in functional skills (for musicians this would include sight-singing and sight-reading on an instrument). Some discussants suggested including a sight-reading component in performance auditions and examinations. By making sight-reading an integral component of the skills

musicians need to develop over time, we would convey a message that it is not sufficient to simply “perfect” two contrasting memorized pieces.

EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Robert A. Duke served as Resource Leader for the sessions related to Keyboard Pedagogy and Educational Psychology. Dr. Duke teaches music and educational psychology at The University of Texas at Austin, and he is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Frances Clark Center for Keyboard Pedagogy.

The Breakout Discussion Leaders were:

Michele Conda – Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music
(Cincinnati, OH)

L. Scott Donald – The New School for Music Study (Princeton, NJ)

Helen Marlais – Grand Valley State University (Allentown, MI)

Rebecca Shockley – University of Minnesota (Minneapolis, MN)

Jean Stackhouse – New England Conservatory (Boston, MA)

Dr. Duke noted that he had observed two key issues facing today’s music educators in the field of piano pedagogy:

Although there is a wealth of research on learning available from fields outside of music, those resources are largely untapped by music teachers and keyboard pedagogy instructors.

Much of our pedagogy emphasizes teaching more than learning. Tips and tricks presented in

workshops often reflect a shallow understanding of the discipline. In contrast, when we shift the focus from our own teaching to our students' learning, then our thinking changes and, as a result, our teaching improves. Instead of asking "How am I teaching?" it is more useful to explore a different question: "How is my student learning?"

Dr. Duke encouraged seminar participants to read literature in psychology and other fields, even if they decide to skip some of the more complicated technical analyses. Articles in popular publications such as *Science*, *Nature*, and *The New York Times* can provide helpful information about work in other disciplines. Duke distributed a hand-out that listed bibliographic information related to references outside the field of music, and he recommended a recent volume, published by the National Research Council, entitled *How People Learn*.

He suggested that frequently students do not learn because they have not been inspired. He proposed that teachers need to assume responsibility for inspiring their students. With that goal in mind, teachers need to develop a wide range of interests and be able to talk with students about many subjects. Teachers need to model for their students the pursuit of interdisciplinary studies and then connect music to other facets of the world.

Dr. Duke also discussed the importance of cultivating our students' love of music and encouraging them to play a wide variety of musical styles. The enjoyment of music-making is the essence of what we do as musicians, and our students will benefit by learning to play by ear and being able to share a variety of songs that their parents and grandparents know and love.

One discussion group considered the question of what should be included in curricula we design for our future teachers. ("Do we need more courses in learning theories, instructional strategies, learning and behavior, and music methods?") Dr. Duke responded that although such courses are beneficial, the underlying question still needs to be "Why do I do what I do?" With that mantra in mind, teachers will be able to organize courses and solidify goals that will assist students. When we approach each situation as a researcher – with open eyes - and use observational skills, that helps us understand how and why we learn. In turn, that awareness helps

us discover how our students learn.

MUSIC EDUCATION

Roseanne K. Rosenthal served as the Resource Leader for the discussion sessions that considered interactions between Keyboard Pedagogy and Music Education. Dr. Rosenthal is President of Vandercook College of Music (Chicago, IL) and Professor of Music Education.

The Breakout Discussion Leaders were:

Cathy Albergo – William Rainey Harper College (Palatine, IL)

Barbara Fast – University of Oklahoman (Norman, OK)

Connie Arrau Sturm – West Virginia University (Morgantown, WV)

Jan Meyer Thompson – Arizona State University (Tempe, AZ)

Yu-Jane Yang - Weber State University (Ogden, UT)

Dr. Rosenthal Identified ten areas where the fields of music education and keyboard pedagogy intersect and can help each other:

Content Analysis

Child Development

Curriculum Design (Goals and Objectives)

Instructional Planning

Student Assessment (including Knowledge and Skills)

Engaging and Involving the Community

Inclusion (Multicultural Education and Students with Special Needs)

Learning Theory

Professional Development (including Ethics)

Research (Scientific & Systematic Inquiries)

Participants agreed that music education and pedagogy are closely related and that specialists in both areas would find it mutually beneficial to maintain dialogues and encourage interactions between the fields. At some schools, courses in child development and learning theory are taught by music education faculty. Other shared topics might include music advocacy efforts, student teaching experiences and supervision, and special topics such as chamber music and music technology,

The six discussion groups considered a wide range of questions including the following. What level of performance preparation should be required before having students teach? What performance skills do students need to be able to demonstrate? What criteria are appropriate in selecting music students who will teach in preparatory music programs?

MUSIC THERAPY

Frederick Tims represented the professional discipline of Music Therapy. Dr. Tims, Associate Director for Graduate Studies at the Michigan State University School of Music (East Lansing, MI), is a past-President of the National Association for Music Therapy.

The Discussion Leaders for the Breakout Sessions were:

Gail Berenson – Ohio University (Athens, OH)

Linda Christensen – Texas Tech University (Lubbock, TX)

Mary Dobrea-Grindahl – Baldwin-Wallace College (Berea, OH)

Monica Hochstedler – Southern Methodist University (Dallas, TX)

Debra Ronning – Elizabethtown College (Elizabethtown, PA)

Dr. Tims opened each of the breakout sessions by providing a brief overview of music therapy as it now is found in the collegiate curriculum. He stressed his belief that “good pedagogy is good therapy” and that music is a powerful force in the lives of all people. He encouraged teachers to help their students become involved in music “for its own sake” rather than focusing only on public recitals or performance-oriented goals.

He emphasized the urgent need for music therapists to interface with people in other disciplines (keyboard pedagogy, in this case), in order to become even more effective. Pedagogy professors can use their knowledge of functional skills to help prepare music therapists for their profession, just as music therapists can help pedagogy students learn effective teaching and management techniques and gain a better understanding of students who have special needs.

Dr. Tims explained that students who are preparing for a career in Music Therapy and for national certification as a music therapist, are required to do a six-month internship. This experience, which takes place after they complete the course requirements for a bachelor’s degree in music, includes careful supervision by experienced music therapists and calls for a minimum of 1040 hours working in the field. One of the groups discussed this professional model and considered the advantages and disadvantages of establishing a similar requirement for students in the field of Keyboard Pedagogy.

Speaking as a music researcher, Dr. Tims described the extensive study he has conducted of senior citizens taking keyboard classes. The student population of the study included people with Alzheimer’s and other cognitive losses. The research team for this project involved scientists, physicians, keyboard pedagogy experts, aging experts, psychologists, and music therapists. Exceptionally positive effects – social and physical changes, documented by measuring biological and psychological changes - were studied in conjunction with subjects’ (i.e. piano students’)

participation in music making. The varied musical activities in this study included participation in drum circles, singing, and engaging in improvisational exercises.

Dr. Tims encouraged piano teachers to expand their teaching resources and have students use whatever means of making music that they find easy and natural (including voices, non-keyboard instruments, and movement/dance). He also encouraged keyboard pedagogy instructors to draw on colleagues from other disciplines (including psychology and music therapy) to explain learning theories and share strategies for working with students with special needs.

Dr. Tims stressed the importance of piano teachers helping music therapy students develop their functional keyboard skills (especially skills related to improvisation). He suggested that it could be very useful for applied teachers to observe their own students in music therapy practicums and notice what keyboard skills were important in that context. Such experiences have great potential in strengthening links between piano performance, keyboard pedagogy, and music therapy.

WEB-BASED INSTRUCTION

George F. Litterest and Laura Beauchamp served as a team of Resource Leaders for the session related to Web-Based Instruction. Dr. Beauchamp has taught at Capital University (Columbus, OH) and Furman University (Greenville, SC), and she recently moved to North Carolina. George Litterest is the author of articles related to music technology, and he has developed music software with special applications to teaching. He is based in the Boston area and is co-author of the score-following program Home Concert 2000.

The Breakout Discussion Leaders were:

Bruce Berr – Roosevelt University (Chicago, IL)

Steve Clark – Columbus State University (Columbus, GA)

Linda Cockey – Salisbury University (Salisbury, MD)

Martha Hilley – University of Texas at Austin (Austin, TX)

Kenneth Williams – Ohio State University (Columbus, OH)

These sessions began with an overview of current and future possibilities related to using Internet technology in conjunction with teaching piano and theory. Laura Beauchamps, in her Power-Point presentation, illustrated examples of real-time instructional interactions in which teachers and students utilized video and audio technology, MIDI keyboards, and software for videoconferencing. These resources enable a teacher and student to have immediate interaction even without being in the same room at the same time, thus simulating possibilities of traditional lessons in a piano studio.

Dr. Beauchamp also discussed interactions in which student performances would be recorded. Such files could then be transmitted to the teacher by e-mail, evaluated, and returned to the student. Although such interactions would not serve as a complete substitute for traditional instruction, they can be used to complement lessons in circumstances where a live lesson might be impossible (because of distance, schedules, health issues, or other complications).

”Canned piano lessons” already are available on the Internet, focusing on specific repertoire and presenting musical concepts. Such generic segments are not tailored to a specific student but are designed for public viewing. Therefore, they were recommended only as a supplement to traditional lessons or when traditional lessons were not an option for the student. Dr. Beauchamp pointed out that the quality of such instructional programs varies greatly, depending on the expertise of the teacher presenting the lesson and the production of the technical material.

The team of experts discussed issues related to the available speed of transmitting files via the Internet. At the present time (July 2002), the use of video via Internet is still problematic unless both the teacher and student can utilize industrial speed Internet connections. Although transmissions are problematic today, George Litterst predicted that in the near future (within three

to five years), many of today's technical problems will have been resolved and the transmission of audio and video files will be greatly enhanced for most middle-class Americans. In spite of George Litterst's optimistic predictions, some of the teachers involved in the discussions indicated that in their own home areas only very slow modem connections are now available, and they did not expect rapid changes in the technology that would be available in their part of the country. Although we don't really know how quickly technological changes will be adopted throughout the world, what is clear is that effective uses of the technology have been demonstrated. Whether the changes occur within "three to five years" or "ten to twenty years," we can expect that the development of web-based technology will continue to expand the instructional formats available to teachers and students.

Dr. Beauchamp described some of her experiences in teaching private lessons on the Internet in real-time. Although she reported that it was possible to provide meaningful input to the student who heard and saw the teacher via the web, she acknowledged that the quality of the resolution of video images did not convey all the subtle signs of tension that a teacher might recognize when working with a student in a totally live situation,

In contrast to multi-media formats, such as audio and video, MIDI sound files now provide technology that works well either in real-time or non-real-time. The resource leaders described several current uses of the Internet. These include:

Viewing canned lessons

Transmitting MIDI files in order to share student performances and compositions

Creating a studio web-site in order to disseminate studio information, photos, and performances

Presenting class projects for students at all levels (including college pedagogy classes)

Posting musical performances of competition winners (piano and composition) on the sponsor's web-site.

Presenter George Litterst showed the videotape of an exhibit called "Playing with Music" that was held in Boston in 2001 at the Museum of Science. Students recorded performances on a Disklavier and then those performances were immediately posted on the museum's web-site.

According to the written reports from the discussion leaders, the most significant outcome of these sessions was that participants left with a more positive view of possibilities for using web-based instruction in conjunction with teaching piano. The resource leaders used this opportunity to educate their audience further regarding basic web-based instruction vocabulary including the "why" and "how" of using this approach to teaching. They also provided participants with a very helpful handout that included lists of web-sites, recommendations of software programs for video-conferencing, and an extensive annotated bibliography. Today's students already are comfortable using web-based technology. Today's teachers— and teachers of the future (our pedagogy students) — need to learn to be comfortable using this technology. It cannot be ignored.

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