



## **Piano Teacher Profile Projects**

**What Will The Evaluators  
Be Looking For?**

### **Project #1 – Write Your Teaching Philosophy**

This project requires your teaching philosophy (maximum of 600 words). When considering your teaching philosophy, you might reflect on the following (taken from *Developing a Professional Teaching Philosophy*, written by Lucinda Lear, NCTM; adapted by Deborah Wallace, NCTM, 2006):

What is a teaching philosophy?

- A. A philosophy of teaching statement is a written narrative that summarizes:
  1. Your concept of teaching and learning
  2. A description of how you teach
  3. An explanation of why you teach as you do
  
- B. The statement may:
  1. Demonstrate reflection, perspective and purpose
  2. Communicate your goals and expectations (attendance, participation, practice and performance requirements)
  3. Explain your choices and preferences (age/level of students; curriculum and materials including repertoire; orientation and long-range overview)

Your philosophy defines **how** you teach, **why** you teach, **what** you teach, **who** you teach and impacts every determination you make in your professional life. It may include extra-musical life skills you want your lessons to impart to your students.

Additional resources include:

- A. Websites such as:
  - Haugen, Lee. (1998, March). *Writing a Teaching Philosophy Statement*. Retrieved December 20, 2009, from Iowa State University, Center for Teaching Excellence Web site: <http://www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching/philosophy.html>
  - University of Minnesota. (2009, December 10). *Writing your teaching philosophy: A step-by-step process*. Retrieved December 20, 2009, from the University of Minnesota, Center for Teaching and Learning website: <http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/teachlearn/tutorials/philosophy/index.html>
  
- B. Texts:
  - Baker-Jordan, M. (2003) *Practical piano pedagogy: The definitive text for piano teachers and pedagogy students*. Miami, FL: Warner Bros. Publications.
  - Jacobson, J. (2006) *Professional piano teaching: A comprehensive piano pedagogy textbook for teaching elementary level students*. Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Co.
  - Elliot, David. (1995). *Music matters: A new philosophy of music education*. New York: Oxford University Press.
  - Klingenstein, B.G. (2009). *The Independent Piano Teacher's Studio Handbook*. Milwaukee: Hal Leonard Corporation.

- Reimer, Bennett. (2003). *A philosophy of music education: Advancing the vision* (3rd ed). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Suzuki, Shin'ichi. (1983). *Nurtured by love* (2nd ed., W. Suzuki, Trans.). United States: Summy-Birchard Inc.

C. Journals:

- Wallace, Deborah. (2006). Professional certification: What is YOUR teaching philosophy? *American Music Teacher*, 56(2): 52–53; 56(3): 50–51.
- Webster, P., & Johnson, R. (2006). Sound thinking: Are you product-oriented, process-oriented, or both? *Keyboard Companion: Perspectives in Pedagogy*, 17(2): 30-33.

**1A:** In your teaching philosophy, the evaluators will expect you to include a knowledgeable, substantive and thoroughly developed summary of your **educational goals** for your students. Include what you believe are the most important skills and concepts you want your students to learn to help them develop into competent musicians. You may wish to include any life skills and concepts you want your lessons to impart to your students.

**1B:** The evaluators will expect your teaching philosophy to also include a statement about **at least one additional topic** (from the list below) that is knowledgeable, substantive and thoroughly developed.

- Development of a healthy technique
- Development of proficient musical skills
- Development of artistic and expressive performance skills
- \*Different learning modalities – aural learners
- \*Different learning modalities – visual learners
- \*Different learning modalities – kinesthetic learners
- Preferred age(s)/level(s) for introducing a student to formal music lessons and why you prefer these age(s)/level(s). If you choose preferred ages, choose from one of the following:

Pre-school age, OR

Average age beginner, 7–8 year old, OR

Older beginners and Adults

\*For additional information on student learning modalities, we recommend:

- Garcia, Susanna. (2002, January 1). Learning styles and piano teaching. *Piano Pedagogy Forum*, 5(1). [http://www.mtna.org/media/58356/Garcia Article.pdf](http://www.mtna.org/media/58356/Garcia%20Article.pdf)
- Bachus, N., & Torkelson, S. (2008, Spring). How would you teach the same piece of music to students with different learning styles? *Clavier Companion*, 19(2). Retrieved December 21, 2009, from [www.claviercompanion.com](http://www.claviercompanion.com)

## **PROJECT #2 – ANALYZE FOUR TEACHING PIECES**

### Historical and Teaching analysis: Questions A–F

You should answer questions A–F **for each of the four pieces**. Each question (A–F) should be answered with 150 (minimum) to 300 (maximum) words.

- A. Explore each of the four pieces, indicating what you would discuss with a student about the life of the composer, his compositional style, and the characteristics of this era of music. The evaluators will be looking for information the student would find relevant to the piece and that would be comprehensible to the typical intermediate student.
- B. Discuss what elements of theory you would discuss with a student when teaching these pieces. This could include the form, keys, cadence locations and types, modulations, interesting or unusual harmonies, etc. Be sure to specify measure numbers and to which beat of the measure you are referring in your answers. You should not give a chord-by-chord analysis, but rather synthesize and discuss what would help a student at this level understand the impact of the theory on the study and performance of each piece.
- C. Discuss at least **three** specific skills a student must possess to successfully play each piece. These are skills the student should have at least initially experienced prior to studying this piece and should be at least moderately able to use in successfully learning this piece. The evaluators will be checking to make you have covered three specific skills.
- D. Discuss a historically and stylistically appropriate approach to interpreting each piece. Describe how the compositional characteristics of each era affect how each piece is interpreted (for example dynamic levels, articulations, pedaling, rubato, etc.).
- E. Discuss at least **four** potential reading and/or technical difficulties in each piece, and how you would help the student solve these four problems. The evaluators will be checking to see if four specific and valid difficulties are listed and will be evaluating what strategies you would specifically use to help the student solve each problem.
- F. Discuss where you would mark appropriate practice strategies and/or memory sections in this piece. The evaluators will be looking for the specific areas you mark and an explanation of why you marked these particular areas.

### **Suggested Sources For Study:**

(These are available at online or at local bookstores.)

#### **Music History**

- Griffiths, Paul. (2006). *A concise history of western music*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Burkholder, J. P., Grout, D. J., & Palisca, C. V. (2010). *A history of western music*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company.

## **Music Theory**

- Kostka, S., & Payne, D. (2009). *Tonal harmony: With an introduction to twentieth-century music* (6th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Tagliarino, B. (2002). *Music theory: A practical guide for all musicians*. Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard.
- Surmani, A., Manus, M., & Surmani, K. (1998) *Alfred's essentials of music theory: A complete self-study course*. Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Co.
- Jones, G. T. (1994). *HarperCollins College Outline: Music Theory*. New York: Harpercollins.

## **Piano Pedagogy**

- Baker-Jordan, M. (2003) *Practical piano pedagogy: The definitive text for piano teachers and pedagogy students*. Miami, FL: Warner Bros. Publications.
- Blanchard, B. & Acree, C. (2007) *Making music and enriching lives: A guide for all music teachers*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Coats, S. (2006) *Thinking as you play*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Jacobson, J. (2006) *Professional piano teaching: A comprehensive piano pedagogy textbook for teaching elementary level students*. Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Co.
- Uszler, M., Gordon, S., & McBride-Smith (2000) *The well-tempered keyboard teacher*. Belmont, CA: Schirmer Books.

## **Piano Literature**

- Gordon, S (1996) *A history of keyboard literature*. New York: Schirmer Books.
- Magrath, J. (1995) *The pianist's guide to standard teaching and performance literature*. Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Co.

## **Project #3 – Present Your Teaching**

This project asks you to video record three lessons.

- It is recommended that you regularly video record your lessons with this student for at least 4 weeks before you video record the first lesson for this project. This will help you and your student become accustomed to the presence of the recorder and will ensure the camera is placed at the best angle for viewing and hearing the lesson (a separate microphone is recommended). Be sure to place the camera where the viewer can see the student's body and the face of both the student and teacher. The music does not need to be shown in the video.
- Reviewing the recordings will give you excellent feedback on your teaching approach before you submit the video.
- If you do not own a video recording device in good working order, we recommend you contact colleagues or the families of your students to borrow one for this project.
- It might be helpful to have a parent or student assistant help you during the recording process, particularly if you plan to include movement away from the piano in the lesson.

- It is recommended that you refer to these articles on the [MTNA Certification website](#), which address successful video recording in the studio.
- Your student or his or her parent/guardian must sign the [Authorization and Release](#) form to submit with this project.

**1A–C:** Your video recordings will be evaluated using the following guidelines:

**Lesson One: Introductory phase**

- Gave an appropriate introductory presentation of the piece
- Provided clear directions in the lesson and instructions for practice
- Used appropriate supplementary activities (for example theory, sight reading, technique)
- Kept the lesson on task with good teacher/student communication

**Lesson Two: Intermediate phase**

- Used appropriate responses to the student’s stage of learning; assessed and responded to the student’s understanding of the teaching points
- Provided clear directions in the lesson and instructions for practice
- Helped the student incorporate correct stylistic interpretation (for example articulations, pedaling)
- Kept the lesson on task with good teacher/student communication

**Lesson Three: Final phase**

- Helped the student achieve an acceptable level of performance (for example fluency, accuracy and musicality)
- Assessed and responded to student’s understanding of teaching points
- Helped the student incorporate correct stylistic interpretation (for example articulations, pedaling)
- Kept the lesson on-task with good teacher/student communication

**2A:** The evaluators will be checking to make sure you included an outline or synopsis of your lesson and a list of all the materials you used during the three lesson segments you recorded. Your lesson outline should not be a “lesson plan” you carefully followed through the lesson, but rather a synopsis of what you did in the lesson.

**2B:** The evaluators will be grading on thoughtfully written self-evaluations from each lesson, and will be checking to see that each evaluation discussed at least three points from the given list (300 words maximum per evaluation). Questions they may ask themselves could include:

- Did the teacher appear to have watched the recording of the lesson before writing the self-evaluation?
- Did the teacher appear to recognize obvious strengths or weaknesses the evaluator observed on the teaching video?

**2C:** Looking at your goals for this student, the evaluators will be checking:

Repertoire:

- Are these goals appropriate and realistic for this student?
- Do the goals represent a well-rounded approach to repertoire?

Theory:

- Are these goals appropriate and realistic for this student?
- Do these goals complement and reinforce the repertoire?

Technique:

- Are these goals appropriate and realistic for this student?
- Do these goals represent a healthy and musical use of the mechanism, and will this technical work help the student play the repertoire with good technique?

**2D:** The evaluators will look for your documentation of three teaching assessments. These assessments do not have to be limited to the student in the recorded lesson segments.

**3:** When viewing the recording of your playing, the evaluators will be looking at and listening to how you:

- Played with good technique, accuracy, fluency and musicality
- Incorporated correct stylistic interpretation (for example articulations, pedaling)

#### ***Project #4 – Share Information About Your Teaching Environment***

In this project you are asked to describe (150 minimum to 300 maximum words) how you encourage a positive teaching environment in your studio. You will be expected to document at least three resources you use to promote this positive environment and describe how you use each resource you document.

1. The evaluators will be looking for a competent description of how you encourage a positive teaching environment. Possible ideas may include the following:
  - Is your studio neat and organized with attractive décor?
  - Do you post photos of students and their musical achievements for others to see?
  - Are your instruments in good playing condition?
  - Do you use incentive charts to aid in developing good practice habits?
  - Do you use games for reinforcing music theory or music history concepts?
  - Do you use computer software for students to practice theory skills?
  - How else do you encourage and motivate your students?
2. Evaluators will check to see if you have documented at least three of the resources you use to promote this positive teaching environment. You may use photos or video recordings of the resources.

3. The evaluators will also check to see that you gave a sufficient description of how you use the resources you documented in #2. (50 minimum to 100 maximum words for each of the three resources.)

***Project #5 – Discuss Your Studio Business Ethics and Policies***

- 1 A–C:** This project asks you to apply ethical business practices to scenarios dealing with students in the studio or classroom, their family members and your professional colleagues. It is recommended that you consult the [MTNA Code of Ethics](#).

The evaluators of your Teacher Profile Projects will be grading your answers based on the following expectations:

- A. Scenario 1: States a clear, ethical approach to dealing with this student.
  - B. Scenario 2: States a clear, ethical approach to dealing with this colleague.
  - C. Scenario 3: States a clear, ethical approach to dealing with this parent.
- 2A:** The evaluators will be checking to make sure you have included the standard elements of an effective studio/classroom policy, including information on fee structures and payment plans (actual fees do **not** need to be included.)
- 2B:** The evaluators will be looking for a list of standard questions and activities used in an interview with a new student and family members, **and** a separate list of questions and activities for a transfer student and family members.
- 2C:** The evaluators will expect to see standard income and expenses listed in your typed hypothetical annual budget for an average studio/classroom (actual income does **not** need to be listed). If you are a salaried music teacher or a college/university pedagogy student teacher (rather than an independent studio teacher), prepare a prototype budget for the studio/classroom.