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A Basic Guide for Understanding Hearing Loss and Teaching Students with Hearing Loss

by Cherisse Miller, Columbia, South Carolina

The purpose of the study was to provide a basic guide for applied teachers and performers about the process of hearing, types of hearing loss and treatments for hearing loss, and conservation of hearing. The study surveyed instrumentalists, vocalists, and music teachers with significant hearing loss about the use of hearing aids, cochlear implants and assistive listening devices; coping skills and strategies utilized during educational and performing experiences and teaching music; and problems with speech, communicating, and listening to recorded music. The study also provided an educational guide for music teachers and performers working with musicians with significant hearing loss, concerning face-to-face communication and visual cues; pitch perception; difficulty hearing an instrument within a noisy environment; and difficulty hearing thick textures and high pitches. It is hoped that the study will familiarize professional and amateur musicians with the dangerous sound levels of their musical instrument from prolonged exposure of practicing and performing and provide awareness to hearing health professionals and musicians, with both normal hearing and hearing loss, regarding the capabilities of the hearing impaired to perform as professional and amateur musicians.

The inclusion of a questionnaire was collected by an Internet-based survey that was distributed via electronic mail to professional and amateur musicians with significant hearing loss. The inclusion of personal narratives chronicles individual successes and ways of coping among musicians with hearing loss, which will build upon the current literature by providing information about assessment practices, coping strategies, aural rehabilitation, assisted listening devices and the frustrations of speech versus music, among musicians fitted with hearing aids and/or cochlear implants.

The research instrument revealed that the majority of musicians with hearing loss can achieve success in the classroom, private lesson, and in performing solo or ensembles with hearing musicians, through use of technology (hearing aids, cochlear and assistive listening devices). The majority of musicians with hearing loss will continue to develop various coping skills and strategies involving speechreading and visual cues, while also trying to develop open relationships and gaining support of teachers, peers and other performing musicians in adapting to the hearing world.

Introduction

Hearing impairment due to abnormalities in the auditory system is a growing public health concern in the United States. American hearing expert Sergei Kochkin’s 2005 MarkeTrak VII survey estimates 31.5 million Americans have some degree of hearing loss that will reach 40 million by 2025. Furthermore, the projections on the hearing loss population through 2050 indicated that the hearing loss population will increase to almost 53 million. It was determined that there were 1.2 children ages 0-17 in the United States: whose parents admitted that their children had “hearing difficulties,” and that the children did not use amplification. Additionally, using the Better Hearing Institute (BHI) MarkeTrak VII database, it is estimated that there are another 300,000 dependents ages 18 to 21 with unamplified
hearing loss. Thus, we estimate that about 1.5 million dependents ages 0 to 21 have a hearing problem but are currently not users of hearing aids. 

The exact location and nature of the problem in the auditory pathway determines the type and severity of a person’s hearing loss. Research at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) concludes that about 1 out of 2 cases of hearing loss in babies is due to genetic causes. About 1 out of 3 babies with genetic hearing loss have other conditions in addition to the hearing loss, such as Down syndrome or Usher syndrome. 1 out of 4 cases of hearing loss in babies is due to maternal infections during pregnancy, complications after birth, and head trauma and 1 out of 4 babies born with hearing loss, the cause is unknown. High noise levels of short bursts of sounds (i.e. firecrackers, loud rock concerts, etc.) can also cause permanent damage to hearing.

The Normal Ear and Healthy Hearing

Normal hearing requires that all parts of the auditory pathway are working correctly. This pathway is divided into four major regions: outer ear, middle ear, inner ear, and auditory nervous system.

The Anatomy of the Ear

Understanding the structure of the ear and the process of hearing is a complex subject involving the fields of physiology, psychology and acoustics. A normal ear can reject the sounds of a [noisy restaurant], yet single out a [single] voice. It can hear the subtle tone differences between a 300 year-old Stradivari violin and a modern copy. Even more amazing, it does all this in a volume of approximately one cubic inch."

Normal hearing requires that all parts of the auditory pathway are working correctly and involves a complicated process of energy conversion. Sound waves from the world around us enter the ear and are processed and relayed to the brain. This pathway includes the external ear, middle ear, inner ear, auditory nerve, and the connection between the auditory nerve and the brain with each of the three anatomical divisions of the ear having a specific task for detecting and interpreting sound.

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The Outer Ear

The structure of the outer ear consists of the visual part of the ear called the pinna and the auditory canal (ear canal) leading to the eardrum. The funnel-shaped pinna is made primarily of cartilage and soft tissue so that it maintains a particular shape but is also pliable. The pinna assists in localizing high-frequency sounds by funneling the vibrations into the ear canal towards the tympanic membrane (eardrum) that helps in determining the origin and direction of sounds. Marshall Chasin, Director of Auditory Research, Musicians’ Clinics of Canada, elaborates more on the outer ear in his book *Hear the Music*, by describing the primary functions of the outer ear as “the amplification of higher frequency energy (the “pinna effect”) creates a high-frequency boost of sound energy from 2000 Hz . . . [that is] further enhanced by reflecting off the pinna and re-entering the ear. The lower frequency energy is not affected by the presence of the pinna and, therefore, is not reflected back to the ear canal entrance. An exaggeration of this phenomenon would be to cup our hands behind our ears, giving a boost for the higher frequency treble sounds.” This amplified frequency range is important for speech and music perception. “The 3000 Hz resonance is inversely related to the length of the ear canal and corresponds to a quarter wavelength resonance which boosts the sound energy to 15-20 dB.”

Figure 1 shows the path of the sound waves as they pass through the air to the external ear, which collects the sound and passes it to the ear drum.

![Figure 1: Anatomy of the human ear.](image-url)

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The Middle Ear

The middle ear is an air-filled cavity in the mastoid section of the skull behind the eardrum that is connected by the Eustachian tube to the mouth. This connection allows for the equalization of pressure within the air-filled cavities of the ear. The middle ear contains three tiny bones called the ossicles (hammer, anvil, and stirrup). These three bones form a connection from the eardrum to the inner ear. The eardrum is a very durable and tightly stretched membrane that vibrates as the incoming sound waves reach it. A compression forces the eardrum inward and a rarefaction forces the eardrum outward, thus vibrating the eardrum at the same frequency of the sound wave. It is not until the sound reaches the eardrum that the energy of the mechanical wave becomes converted into vibrations of the inner bone structure of the ear. Being connected to the hammer, the movements of the eardrum will set the hammer, anvil, and stirrup into motion at the same frequency of the sound wave. The stirrup is connected to the inner ear; and thus the vibrations of the stirrup are transmitted to the fluid of the inner ear and create a compression wave within the fluid. The ossicles of the middle ear act as levers to amplify the vibrations of the sound wave. Due to a mechanical advantage, the displacements of the stirrup are greater than that of the hammer. Furthermore, since the pressure wave striking the large area of the eardrum is concentrated into the smaller area of the stirrup, the force of the vibrating stirrup is nearly 15 times larger than that of the eardrum. This feature enhances our ability to hear the faintest of sounds. In Figure 2, the arrows show the vibration at tympanic membrane, transmitting vibrations by the lever action of the ossicles. The stapes footplate (the base of the stirrup) fits into the oval window, the beginning point of the inner ear.

![Diagram of ossicles](image)

Figure 2: The ossicles of the middle ear

The Inner Ear

The inner ear contains the sensory organs for hearing and balance: the cochlea, the semicircular canals and the auditory nerve. Its location is close to the center of the skull and it is encased in the hardest

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bones in the body that makes it one of the best protected sensory systems. The cochlea, named after the Greek word for "snail" because of its spiral shape, is where the actual hearing occurs. The inside chamber of the cochlea is filled with fluid. Uncoiled, this narrow passage would stretch to approximately 3 cm. in length. The vibrations from the middle ear maximize the sound energy even more as it passes through the two semicircular fluid chambers, the balance part of the ear.

The cochlea lies on the basilar membrane. The basilar membrane and the organ of Corti are the main sensing mechanisms of the inner ear and are sometimes referred to as the body’s microphone or receptor for hearing. The organ of Corti contains 15,500 hair-like nerve cells, which perform one of the most critical roles in our ability to hear. “The fluid and nerve cells of the semicircular canals provide no role in the task of hearing; they merely serve as accelerometers for detecting accelerated movements and assisting in the task of maintaining balance.” These hair cells differ in length by miniscule amounts, and also have different degrees of resiliency to the fluid that passes over them. The hair cells are divided into two groups; the single row of inner hair cells (about 3500) lie closer to the core of the cochlea and are responsible for hearing higher frequencies, and the three or four rows of outer hair cells (about 12,000) are further away and are responsible for the lower frequencies (Figure 3).

![Figure 3: The Organ of Corti. Magnified. (G. Retzius)](image)

The structure of sound transduction in the inner ear is similar to that of a piano keyboard: low frequency sounds are transduced on one end while the higher frequency sounds are transduced from the other end. Chasin explains this startling irregularity of the inner ear: “Almost all of the inner hair cells take sound up to the brain, and almost all of the outer hair cells receive sound back from the brain. The majority of the hair cells are connected to nerve fibers that return from the brain, and only a small minority takes sound up to the brain. With every sound wave, the cell shortens and elongates as it pushes against the tectoral membrane, selectively amplifying the vibration of the basilar membrane, enabling us to hear very quiet sounds.”

"Each hair cell has a natural sensitivity to a particular frequency of vibration. This

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increased vibrational amplitude stimulates the cell to release an electrical impulse that passes along the auditory nerve towards the brain. In a process not clearly understood, the brain is capable of interpreting the qualities of the sound upon reception of these electric nerve impulses.”

The cochlea’s function is to sort these vibrations by frequency and convert the sound from mechanical energy into electrical nerve impulses to be transmitted to the brain. “Auditory nerve fibers rest below the hair cells and pass these signals on to the brain. So, the bending of the stereocilia is how hair cells sense sounds.” (Stereocilia are about 5 micrometers in length and are mechano-sensing organelles of hair cells responding to fluid motion or fluid pressure changes in mammals for various functions, primarily hearing.) The 2 cm length of the ear canal enables the amplification of sounds with frequencies of approximately 3000 Hz. A pianist with excellent high-frequency hearing would hear pitches in the entire upper range of the keyboard, since the C\(^8\) frequency is 4186 Hz.

The auditory nerve carries impulses from the cochlea to a relay station in the mid-brain, the cochlear nucleus, and on to other brain pathways that end in the auditory cortex of the brain. At the cochlear nucleus, nerve fibers from each ear divide into two pathways. One pathway ascends straight to the auditory cortex on one side (hemisphere) of the brain. The other pathway crosses over and ascends to the auditory cortex on the other side (hemisphere) of the brain. As a result, each hemisphere of the brain receives information from both ears.

The central auditory system deals with the processing of auditory information as it is carried up to the brain. Central auditory processes are the auditory processes responsible for the following behaviors:

- Sound localization and lateralization
- Auditory discrimination (hearing the differences between different sounds)
- Recognizing patterns of sounds
- Time aspects of hearing (temporal aspects of audition): temporal resolution, temporal masking, temporal integration, temporal ordering
- Reduction in auditory performance in the presence of competing acoustic signals
- Reduction in auditory performance in the presence of degraded (less than complete) acoustic signals

The Process of Hearing

The act of hearing involves the interpretation of sounds, or patterns of movement of air molecules, in terms of their frequency (pitch) and intensity (loudness) that are measured in hertz (Hz) and decibels (dB) respectively. The CDC explains the guidelines for hearing speech as a mix of low and

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high frequency sounds. Vowel sounds like “u” have low frequencies (250 to 1,000 Hz) and are usually easier to hear. Consonants like “s,” “h,” and “f” have higher frequencies (1,500 to 6,000 Hz) and are harder to hear. Consonants convey most of the meaning of what we say. Someone who cannot hear high-frequency sounds will have a hard time understanding speech. Sounds at 120 dB or louder may result in temporary or permanent hearing loss. Sounds that are louder than 120 dB can cause immediate pain. Hearing loss occurs in either frequency or intensity, or both.

Understanding the hearing process and how the brain interprets what we hear is complex and we do not fully understand how we process music and speech. However, we do know many things about the differences and similarities between music and speech and we do know that for the majority of people, most of speech is located in the left side of the brain, while music divides many of its functions between both the right side and the left side of the brain. Eric Jenson’s book *Music with the Brain in Mind* describes how “the corpus callosum (where the right and left sides of brain connect) is as much as 15% thicker in musicians versus non-musicians,” attesting to the possibility that the interplay between the two sides may be a busier highway than for non-musicians.

**Understanding Hearing Loss**

Hearing is access to acoustic information. Listening, however, requires attention and intention. Listening is a skill that requires effort, and for a person with a hearing loss that effort must be particularly concentrated. Hearing loss or hearing impairment happens when there is a problem with one or more parts of the ear or both ears. A person with hearing loss or impairment hears only some of the sounds or no sounds at all. Impairment implies something is not functioning or not working as well as it should and is caused by many different factors related to the outer ear, middle ear and inner ear. Impairments in hearing may happen in either frequency, intensity, or both. Hearing loss may be classified as temporary or permanent. Hearing loss severity is based on how well a person hears the frequencies or intensities most often associated with speech and may affect one or both ears. A loss that affects one ear is called a unilateral loss. A loss that affects both ears is called a bilateral loss.

**Types of Hearing Loss**

Hearing loss occurs when damage to the auditory system occurs in either the middle ear or the inner ear. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) classifies hearing loss into three basic types:

- Conductive hearing loss
- Sensorineural hearing loss
- Mixed hearing loss

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Conductive hearing loss occurs when “sound is not conducted efficiently through the outer ear canal to the eardrum and ossicles of the middle ear. Conductive hearing loss usually involves a reduction in sound level, or the ability to hear faint sounds. This type of hearing loss is temporary and can often be medically or surgically corrected.”

Sensorineural hearing loss occurs when there is damage to the inner ear (cochlea) or to the nerve pathways from the inner ear to the brain. Sensorineural hearing loss cannot be medically or surgically corrected and is a permanent loss. Sensorineural hearing loss not only involves a reduction in sound level, or the ability to hear faint sounds, but also affects speech understanding, or the ability to hear sounds clearly. Individuals with sensorineural hearing loss have poor sound discrimination ability.

Sensorineural hearing loss can be caused by disease, birth injury, drugs that are toxic to the auditory system, and genetic syndromes. Sensorineural hearing loss may also occur as a result of noise exposure, viruses, head trauma, aging, and tumors. Chasin reports that the “two most common causes of inner ear hearing loss are noise/music exposure and hearing loss associated with aging.”

Mixed hearing loss is a conductive hearing loss that occurs in combination with a sensorineural hearing loss. When damage occurs in the outer or middle ear and in the inner ear (cochlea) or auditory nerve, the hearing loss is referred to as a mixed hearing loss.

Hearing loss may be sudden or progressive. Progressive hearing loss is a gradual and slow process and people do not always notice that their hearing ability has been reduced. If hearing loss is suspected, a hearing test by an audiologist is recommended. An audiologist will then record the results of the hearing test on an audiogram. The vertical lines on an audiogram represent pitch or frequency and the horizontal lines represent loudness or intensity. Every point on an audiogram represents a different sound. The 125 Hertz (Hz) vertical line on the left side of the audiogram represents a very low pitch sound and each vertical line to the right represents a higher pitch sound (Figure 4). Moving from left to right on the audiogram would be consistent with moving from left to right on a piano keyboard. The most important pitches for speech are 500-3000 Hz. The 0 decibel (dB) line near the top of the audiogram represents an extremely soft sound. Each horizontal line below represents a louder sound that consistently gets louder (Figure 5).

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13 Ibid.
Degrees of Hearing Loss

Determining an individual’s hearing loss depends on the type and degree of the loss, the area(s) of abnormality in the auditory system (middle ear, inner ear, brain, e.g.), noise exposure, and age. Many people who experience hearing loss are not completely deaf, but experience various degrees of hearing loss affecting one ear (unilateral loss) or both ears (bilateral loss). When you notice a difference between loud and quiet sounds, your ears perceive change in sound pressure level. The intensity is measured in decibels with 0 dB being the softest sound that can be heard and is called your threshold. The softest sound you are able to hear at each pitch is recorded on the audiogram. Thresholds of 0-25 dB are considered normal. The United States recognizes four degrees of hearing loss (Figure 6) and describes their severity as:

• **Mild** (at 25-40 dB). A person with a mild hearing loss will have difficulty following conversation if the speaker is more than six feet away or if there is noise in the background.

• **Moderate** (at 40-70 dB). A person with moderate hearing loss would be able to hear if the speaker is speaking loudly and at no more than 3 to 5 feet away. They will also have trouble hearing with background noise and will need to wear a hearing aid to hear conversation.

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16 Ibid.
• **Severe** (at 70-90 dB). A person with a severe hearing loss would be able to hear someone's voice if the speaker shouts and is one foot away. Without a hearing aid the person would not be able to understand speech and only be able to hear some loud sounds (i.e., a siren).

• **Profound** (at 91 dB or more). A person with a profound hearing loss is only able to hear very loud sounds. With hearing aids they would probably be able to hear loud sounds, like perhaps a telephone ringing or a name being called but, it would be difficult to understand speech. With training their ability for understanding some speech may improve.\(^\text{17}\)

![Figure 6: Audiogram showing the different degrees of hearing loss.](image)

Mild losses may not be noticed and moderate losses may not impose a problem for individuals with excellent perceptual abilities and good coping skills.

**Treatments for Hearing Loss**

Hearing loss is not an illness, but a symptom of an underlying disorder. Only conductive hearing loss can be treated to correct the problem and restore hearing. Sensorineural hearing loss involves permanent damage to the cochlea, the hair cells or the nerve, for which there is no effective medical treatment. Although the sensorineural hearing loss is permanent, it is manageable in most cases with hearing aids. Wearing two (binaural) hearing aids helps balance sounds, improves understanding of words in noisy situations, and makes it easier to locate the source of sounds.

Otolaryngologists and audiologists are professionals involved in testing and treating hearing loss. Hearing tests are administered by audiologists using an audiogram, which objectively measures hearing levels and compares them with standards adopted by the American National Standards Institute. Normal hearing levels are 20 dB or better across all frequencies. Speech testing is also performed using standard word lists of bisyllabic words. “The speech reception threshold is the softest sound level at which 50 percent of presented words are understood.”

Today's hearing aids, with their advanced technology and sophisticated circuitry, range in size from tiny ones that almost disappear into the ear canal to larger units that are carried in a pocket or on a belt. A hearing aid is a small electronic, battery-operated device that fits in the ear. The device amplifies and changes sound through a built-in microphone which converts the sound waves to electrical signals. The amplifier increases the signals and sends the sounds to the ear through a speaker. Hearing aids do not restore normal hearing; however, they can help most people with sensorineural hearing loss when properly fitted and adjusted.

The inside mechanisms of hearing aids will vary among the devices. Basically, there are three types of circuitry or electronics that are used: Conventional, Digital/Programmable and New-Generation Digital. The conventional analog hearing aids have manual control knobs to adjust the volume; digital hearing aids are like tiny personal computers that analyze incoming sounds digitally and adjust volume automatically. Others just require a push of a button on a wireless remote control to switch from one listening environment to another, such as from a telephone conversation to a meeting room. Digital hearing aids have computer-programmed technology and can be set to precisely match a patient's hearing loss and response time. Digital hearing aids use a microphone, receiver, battery, and computer chip to provide the most sophisticated hearing aid. The newest technology, New-Generation Digital hearing aids offer 16 bands - treble, bass, and mid-levels - for the most precision in sound quality and clarity. They can be programmed to match an individual’s hearing loss at every pitch.

The cochlear implant is a surgically implanted hearing device and “not an alternative to hearing aids. Rather, lack of benefit from the [highest-powered hearing aid] is the essential criterion and generally equates to hearing losses greater than 100 dB.” The implant consists of an external portion that sits behind the ear and a second portion that is surgically placed under the skin. The external portion is implanted behind the ear in the temporal (skull) bone. The electronic device is designed to bypass damaged parts of the cochlea and to stimulate the auditory nerve. It consists of a small battery-operated speech processor and microphone worn outside the ear that converts sounds into electrical signals. The signals are transmitted to electrodes that were surgically implanted in the cochlea. The electrodes stimulate the nerve in the ear that transmits the sound to the brain. An implant does not restore normal hearing and may sound different from normal hearing. Recipients of implants describe sounds to be of a

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 buzzing or electronic nature; however, it gives a deaf person a useful representation of sounds in the environment and helps him/her to understand speech. Some people are able to enjoy listening to music again. The results of a cochlear implant vary between individuals, and it is hard to tell how useful it will be before it is implanted.

“A cochlear implant is very different from a hearing aid. Hearing aids amplify sounds so they may be detected by damaged ears. Cochlear implants bypass damaged portions of the ear and directly stimulate the auditory nerve. Signals generated by the implant are sent by way of the auditory nerve to the brain, which recognizes the signals as sound. Hearing through a cochlear implant is different from normal hearing and takes time to learn or relearn. However, it allows many people to recognize warning signals, understand other sounds in the environment, and enjoy a conversation in person or by telephone.”

“Cochlear implants can be particularly valuable for deaf children if they are implanted before the age of two,” when the foundations for language skills are laid. “A longitudinal study comparing speech perception in cochlear implanted children with matched controls who used conventional hearing aids showed significantly better performance in the implanted group.” One study found that children who received implants, followed by a year of hearing training and speech therapy, were more likely to be fully mainstreamed in school and require fewer support services at school than similarly deaf children without implants.

Another device used in combination with hearing aids is Assistive Listening Devices (ALD), which makes certain sounds louder by bringing the sound directly to the ear. There are different types of devices for different situations, such as one-on-one conversations, restaurants, group meetings, classroom settings or auditoriums. Commonly used listening devices include telephone amplifiers, personal listening systems (such personal FM systems or electromagnetic loop systems), and hearing aids that connect directly to a television, stereo, radio, or microphone. Alerting devices use louder sounds, lights, or vibrations to alert individuals to specific sounds such as a doorbell or ringing telephone. Closed-captioned television makes television easier to watch by showing the words at the bottom of the screen to read. Text telephone (TTY) or telecommunication device for the deaf (TDD) allow typed messages to be received back and forth on a monitor without talking or listening.

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Problems of Hearing Loss

Other problems of hearing loss in addition to impairment in hearing frequencies and intensities include speech discrimination, recruitment and tinnitus. Understanding speech becomes difficult due to poor discrimination of sounds. To the hearing impaired, sounds are muffled. Individuals with hearing loss have difficulty in discriminating quiet speech sounds such as “s”, “sh”, “F”, “t”, and “k”. Background noise interferes with not only their ability to understand others but also interferes with their ability to hear their own speaking voice, so they may speak too loud or not loud enough.

The problem with hearing loss and with poor auditory environments, such as noisy classrooms, workplaces, public buildings, etc. is that intact sound never reaches the brain. Noise is everything that conflicts with the auditory signal of choice and may include other talkers, heating or air conditioning systems, computers running, and wind, among others. The quieter the room and the more favorable the speech-to-noise ratio, the clearer the auditory signal will be for the brain. The further the listener is from the desired sound source and the noisier the environment, the poorer the speech-to-noise ratio and the more distorted the signal will be for the brain. Therefore, hearing loss not only involves reduction in sound level and the ability to hear faint sounds, but also affects speech understanding and the ability to hear clearly. Advancements in hearing aid technology have helped tremendously in restoring our ability to communicate more effectively, yet technology will never replace normal hearing.

Teaching Students with Hearing Loss

Psychology of Hearing Loss in Children

Hearing loss is challenging at any age, but it poses unique issues for the young child. It is a combination of psychological, biological, and social factors that make a child more at risk than the general population. Some of the more commonly noted secondary aspects of hearing loss include communication and behavioral problems, self-esteem and image problems, and depression and introversion. Mary Kaland and Kate Salvatore in their article “The Psychology of Hearing Loss” explain how “undiagnosed or misdiagnosed hearing loss can result in problems as the child may know something is not quite right but is not getting the proper professional attention. When a hearing loss—even a mild one—is correctly diagnosed, the child knows the truth about what is wrong, as opposed to thinking she is ‘crazy’ or ‘stupid.’ Though less common today, children may be misdiagnosed as attention or emotionally disordered, which can lead to many secondary self-esteem issues.”

Communication issues are universal among people with hearing loss. “When a child has difficulty interacting in a spontaneous way, other issues can develop into more serious problems. These include

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learning difficulties, social isolation, and depression.” Normal interactions require tremendous attention for the child with hearing loss. Listening becomes a multi-sensory task, involving a much greater level of visual and general attention than it does for those with normal hearing. While the child may communicate effectively, it requires a great deal of energy to do so. One of the most typical symptoms with hearing loss is fatigue, which can intensify depression.

Kaland and Salvatore describe how “behavioral problems in children such as hyperactivity or aggression can be the outward expression of internal difficulties, such as depression, anxiety, and learning disorders saying how important it is to set limits, speak simply and clearly, avoid overly stimulating or distracting environments and involve parents more than usual.” If possible, it is also helpful to schedule lessons at optimum times of the day when the child is at their best.

Introversion is a personality trait often associated with hearing loss. “Children with hearing loss are more inner-focused as a result of reduced stimulation from the outside world. They may withdraw from peer interactions due to being shy, quiet and sensitive, the extra effort demanded in communicating, or simply due to the alienating feeling of ‘being different.’” Self-expression is greatly compounded by hearing loss and children with hearing loss are not always able to articulate their needs and feelings.

Communicating In the Studio

Hearing aids and/or cochlear implants do not restore normal hearing. Students who use hearing aids may not be able to hear all of the sounds of speech even when it is quiet and the speaker is close by. The student will almost always miss some of what is said in the classroom if there is ANY background noise. Hearing aids or cochlear implants allow most students to perceive speech occurring within a distance 3-6 feet. Any speech from farther away than 6 feet will likely be ‘heard’ but not all of the parts of speech will be perceived, like putting a puzzle together with missing pieces.

The ability to hear and understand is reduced in a noisy studio and affects learning. Studio acoustics affect speech understanding, behavior, attention and concentration. The problem with hearing loss and poor auditory environments is that intact sound never reaches the brain. Noise is everything that conflicts with the auditory signal of choice and may include computers running, fan from the heating and air conditioning systems, television from another room, dogs barking, talking either in the same room or another room in the home studio. In the commercial studio, there is the disadvantage of noise between the walls from another studio if there is inadequate sound proofing. In the case of teaching in a music store, the hearing impaired student would also be severely distracted from a piano being tuned. Any of these noises will affect a hearing impaired student trying to understand speech or concentrate playing the piano. The quieter the room and the more favorable the speech-to-noise ratio, the clearer the

24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
auditory signal will be for the brain. The further the listener is from the desired sound source and the noisier the environment, the poorer the speech-to-noise ratio and the more distorted the signal will be for the brain. Hearing loss not only involves reduction in sound level and the ability to hear faint sounds, but also affects speech understanding and the ability to hear clearly. Advancement in hearing technology have helped tremendously in restoring ability to communicate more effectively, however, technology will never replace normal hearing.

Anyone who has not had experience with hearing loss may not know exactly how a child’s hearing is affected, or what makes hearing easier. If the teacher is new to hearing loss, they may not know that a higher-pitched voice is often more difficult to hear, or that a beard makes it more difficult to read lips. Gaining knowledge about the fundamentals of hearing loss will help in understanding the challenges students with hearing loss face in the learning environment and then address these issues with techniques such as lowering vocal tones, enunciating, and facing the student when speaking.

In addition to learning what a student can or cannot hear, it is important to understand what they are experiencing. It can be beneficial to ask the hearing-impaired student what is working for them in the lesson.

**Communication Tips and Strategies**

- Get attention – It is crucial to tap the student on the shoulder, say their name or give a physical gesture when speaking to a student with hearing loss. This will give the student an opportunity to “tune in” better to the conversation. If adjudicating a student with hearing loss, they may not hear if you are sitting behind them or at a distance.

- Face the person or teach on the side of good ear – Avoid speaking with your back turned or from across the studio. Facing a student with hearing loss as much as possible will help facilitate lip-reading skills. Avoid covering your mouth while speaking.

- Provide context and repetition – It is helpful students with hearing loss announce what’s about to happen and recap what has just taken place. Sudden topic changes often cause the listener to lose the gist of the idea or subject.

- Loudness of speech – Louder, low-pitched vowels overpower softer, high-pitched consonants. Speech sounds are muffled or distorted and hearing impaired students will lose consonants and misinterpret what is being said, causing misinterpretation. Also the rate of speech or rapid speech will cause poor discrimination and speech that is too slow students will lose the contents of the message.
• Enunciate your words – Students will rely on lip reading skills, but do not over exaggerate, because that interferes with lip reading. Only 30% of sounds are clearly recognizable.

• Provide clues – Providing additional clues make it easier to piece together information that is difficult to understand. It is difficult to lip-read B-C-D-E-G of the music alphabet, therefore asking “Can you find D, as in Dog?” or learn the hand signs of the first seven letters of the American Sign Language or using little wooden blocks with the letters A-B-C-D-E-F-G are some examples.

• Rephrase – Give the student time to absorb what you have said and rephrase it if necessary. If the student does not understand the message the first time, rather than repeating the message, rephrase it using different words, keeping it shorter. Only repeat key points. Most of the time only one or two words are needed in grasping the entire message. Remember sentences and phrases are easier to lip-read than single words. It is fatiguing to listen to everything repeated over and over again.

• Use appropriate gestures – Using your hand, body and facial gestures are very effective communication devices. Moving your head for yes or no and shrugged shoulders for uncertainty, and pointing to an object. Your student may ‘hear’ but not understand, so any kind of visual will help the student to put together the missing pieces they are trying to understand and may be missing from the conversation. This takes extra effort to do on the part of the student, trying to figure what is missing is quite fatiguing.

• Eliminate or minimize competing background noise if possible – As a teacher it is easy to begin talking while the piano is being played. However, the student is not going to hear you clearly, if at all unless you avoid speaking while the piano is being played. You will need to wait until they stop playing and look at you before you begin to talk. Hearing loss prevents filtering out interfering sounds to understand speech clearly.

It may be helpful to you to ask for confirmation, especially if what you just said was important. The hearing impaired rely on a great deal of context. Sometimes they may not understand, but do not want to interrupt, hoping that you will clarify what was missed. Your student with hearing loss may need to hear something five times to ‘get it’ when peers may only need a 1-2 times.

Assistive technologies can improve success in the lesson for students with hearing loss by increasing access to sound and eliminating background noise. The most common of these is FM technology. The personal FM system consists of a transmitter microphone used by the speaker or teacher and a receiver used by the student. The receiver transmits sound directly to a student’s listening device. This solution is highly effective, when it’s used correctly.
Conclusion

The research instrument revealed that the majority of professional and amateur musicians with hearing loss were instrumentalists who continue to enjoy music and play a variety of instruments. The majority surveyed have progressive, severe to profound sensorineural hearing loss and wear binaural digital hearing aids. The survey results suggest that the degrees of hearing loss are complex and unique among each individual with hearing loss. The survey results suggest that the majority of the musicians were hearing impaired during high school and college, since the majority began losing their hearing as children under the age of twelve.

The survey results revealed the majority of instrumentalists acknowledged difficulties with pitch perception, staying in tune and intonation, while others have no difficulty in playing alone. The survey results suggest that in spite of difficulties and frustrations endured by the musicians, they continue to be persistent in learning new music, creating music they can hear, developing new strategies for practicing and using technology to enhance the sound quality when making music.

The majority of musicians surveyed rely primarily on hearing aids or cochlear implants in speech communication, playing an instrument, performing, and listening to music. Although a variety of assistive listening devices were used in the addition to hearing aids and cochlear implants, the survey results suggest that assistive listening devices were used on an individual basis.

The survey results suggest the possibility for the majority of hearing impaired musicians to be successful in the classroom, in private lessons, and in performing solo or collaboratively with hearing musicians. These results suggest that through the use of technology (hearing aids, cochlear implants, assistive listening devices), musicians with hearing loss will continue developing various coping skills and strategies involving speechreading and visual cues, while also developing open relationships and gaining support of teachers, peers and other performing musicians in adapting to the hearing world.

Complete results from the survey and personal narratives in Musicians with Hearing Loss: A Basic Guide for Teachers and Performers by Cherisse Miller may be accessed from UMI Dissertation Publishing or online at www.proquest.com.

Resources


**Internet Resources:**


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Enneagram Expression and Learning Styles: An Introduction

by Stephen Pierce, University of Southern California, Los Angeles

There are multiple personality-typing systems, as well as a considerable amount of literature focused on learning theory as it relates to effective teaching. I have found value in, and enjoyed investigating such systems as The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, The Kiersey Temperament Sorter, Keith Golay’s Learning Patterns and Temperament Styles, Howard Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences, and VARK: A Guide to Learning Styles. I was introduced to the Enneagram by one of my former adult students several years ago who utilizes it in her work in spiritual direction. Using the Enneagram to understand the differences between personality types was immediately fascinating to me, and resonated with me in a unique way. Since that time, the Enneagram has become an effective tool in my piano teaching studio and classroom. Not only have I found it to be a valuable tool for categorizing students by their personality type, it has also helped me to better understand my own preferred teaching style, as well as my students’ different learning styles. Moreover, the Enneagram has assisted me in my interpersonal interactions with colleagues, peers, and even family members.

The origins of the Enneagram are not entirely clear, but the ancient Greeks likely passed this system of classifying persons by their personality type on to us and it has been used as such in the west since the turn of the twentieth century. The symbol for the Enneagram is a diagram depicting nine points (i.e. “ennea” is Greek for “nine”), and these points represent nine basic but fundamentally distinct personality types. Each Enneagram type is marked by a core motivation, or basic desire, and this influences how each person might feel, think, behave, and express themselves. No one type is better or more ideal than another. Janet Levine describes the legitimacy of every type as follows, “[all Enneagram types] are equally valid – but each encompasses a distinctive way of perceiving the world.”

For music teachers, understanding the Enneagram can be beneficial, as it can help us adapt our teaching approach to each individual student according to how they might react, interact, behave, and learn. With experience and practice, teachers can accurately classify their students and engage or present material in a way that best suits the most effective learning style of each of their students. Rob Fitzel argues that

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studying the Enneagram can help teachers “better understand how and why our students understand the world differently from us.”

It is my opinion that our Enneagram type is influenced by both our circumstances as well as certain inborn personality traits. It is also important for me to clarify that I believe that our Enneagram type is merely our “default” setting; we are all individuals after all, and myriad variations of personality and learning preferences are possible between two persons who may be of the same Enneagram type. Rather than trying to label individuals, I see the Enneagram as a starting point for trying to understand what might motivate, or stimulate learning in my students. I also believe that there are characteristics and facets of every Enneagram type that are a part of all of us.

The Nine Types

I will now provide a brief overview of all nine Enneagram types:

The Type One Personality: The “Perfectionist” or “Reformer”

The basic desire of the Type One is “to be good, virtuous, in balance [and] to have integrity.” Ones are typically preoccupied with order, and aim to execute all that they do perfectly, correctly, or in what they perceive to be the morally acceptable way. They tend to be dependable, honorable, hardworking, principled, and detail-orientated, but can also be unyielding, overly rigid, unspontaneous, judgmental, and even argumentative. They often focus on errors and what needs to be corrected in themselves and others. These students are recognizable as inherently disciplined, and very serious about their studies. They may enjoy taking copious notes during lessons, and might mark their scores with an enormous amount of detail. They might also be quick to point out their own mistakes during lessons because they are highly self-critical.

Several years ago, I had a student, who I perceived to be a One, in one of my pedagogy classes. This student was exceedingly hardworking and diligent, and was quick to correct even the most trivial of errors. She would often ask about how to teach a concept in the ‘best’ or ‘most effective’ way, or request the ‘correct’ fingering, or pedaling etc. for a specific passage. While her intention was to seek out the right way of doing things, her black-and-white view of teaching and learning, or what Levine terms as the “right/wrong mindset” was challenging for me, as I am not a One. The concept of many viable, even ‘correct’ possibilities depending on any number of variables, was also exceedingly difficult for this student to accept.

Similarly, Type One music students might struggle to play with spontaneity, imagination, and sometimes even physical freedom in performance. They might endeavor to execute pieces in a very

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13 Fitzel, “The Nine Types of Students”
14 Ibid.
specific way every time, seeing this as the ‘correct’ way of interpreting a piece for example, and some may deal with tension in their playing as a result of wanting to try to control everything at their instrument. Giving a One permission to experiment, to consider multiple possibilities, and working with them to let go physically when they perform, may be very freeing and fulfilling for some, and daunting for others. On the other hand, Ones often perform with exquisite attention to detail.

In general, Type One students do best when they are able learn to forgive themselves (and others) for making mistakes. They flourish in an orderly environment in which they see the teacher as highly accomplished and competent. Ones also value a teacher who is thoroughly prepared, organized, consistent, and fair. ¹⁵ Fitzel names the Type One student, “The Serious Hard Worker.” ¹⁶

The Type Two Personality: The “Helper” or “Giver”

The fundamental motivation of the Type Two is “to feel loved,”¹⁷ as well as admired and appreciated for what they do for others around them. ¹⁸ They can be empathetic ¹⁹ and tend to focus on the needs of others rather than on themselves. They try to win the approval and affection of others through acts of kindness and generosity. ²⁰ Twos can be well intentioned but can also be overly “people-pleasing, flattering...insincere” ²¹ and even manipulative, by choosing to only help some people over others. Type Two students are marked by their warmth and affability, but might be prone to trying to please the teacher in order to gain the teacher’s approval. Furthermore, Type Two students who are overly adaptable may constantly modify their behavior depending on the preferences of the specific teacher. ²²

I know a possible Type Two who works as an excellent collaborative pianist. As such, she shuns the spotlight, preferring to help the singers and instrumentalists with whom she collaborates, to shine. She is easy to work with and does her best to put others at ease. She is also generous with both her time, and a kind word, and can effectively adapt her working style to suit her musical partners. Similarly, Type Two students might enjoy group or collaborative activities in the music studio, as they tend to value a genuine connection with others (especially their teacher) ²³ over personal achievements, accolades or taking center stage. Type Two students can revere or idolize a beloved teacher or mentor with whom they feel a personal connection, and may seek to emulate a specific individual or special mentor. As such, they can become outstanding mentors themselves to other students. ²⁴

For the Type Two student to fully engage and learn effectively, they need to be emotionally invested during lessons and practice. ²⁵ They may do best in a lesson environment in which the teacher is not only

¹⁵ Ibid.
¹⁶ Ibid.
¹⁸ Fitzel, “The Nine Types of Students”
¹⁹ Levine, The Enneagram Intelligences, p. 46.
²¹ Riso & Hudson, Discovering Your Personality Type, p. 97.
²² Ibid.
²³ Ibid.
²⁴ Ibid.
²⁵ Ibid.
intellectually engaged, but also invested in the success and happiness of the student both as a musician and as a person. They might also prefer a teacher who is encouraging and nurturing, rather than one who is overly critical and exacting. At their worst, Twos are needy and desperate for the approval of their teacher, but at their finest, they are some of the most gratifying students to teach, as they genuinely appreciate the work of their teachers. Fitzel labels the Type Two student, “The People Pleasing Mentor.”

The Type Three Personality: The “Performer” or “Achiever”

The principal desire of the Type Three is to be perceived by others as successful and “to feel worthwhile, accepted, and desirable.” Threes are goal-orientated and tend to focus their considerable energy on completing tasks. They are also highly motivated by results and accolades. They are typically very hardworking, and efficient at their work, sometimes sacrificing attention to detail in favor of completing a task as quickly as possible. They are naturally charming but may prioritize their work over personal relationships “as a way of avoiding intimacy.” Some might appear well groomed, or modify their appearance with the intention of making a favorable impression on others. They are also often outgoing and exude self-confidence, and may be boastful and enjoy telling others about the work they are doing, and their successes.

I have worked with several individuals who I would classify as Threes. These include both students and colleagues. I perform professionally with a Three and he absolutely lives for the stage, and thrives under pressure. He is also highly ambitious, always impeccably dressed, and possesses an infectious “can-do” attitude. I also currently teach a Three student. While he is a joy to work with, and learns music very quickly, one of his greatest challenges is to complete the necessary detailed practice in order to play with absolute accuracy, refinement, and technical surety.

In my experience, Type Three students are typically some of the highest achieving students. They may be motivated by the idea of a competition or contest and may want to be admired by their peers, parents, and teachers. They may also be very reliable performers, as they enjoy being on stage and showing off their abilities. They might prefer activities that will show them off to their best advantage, but may also enjoy a challenge. These are often fun students to teach, as they are highly self-motivated,

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26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
29 Riso & Hudson, *Discovering Your Personality Type*, p. 107.
31 Fitzel, “The Nine Types of Students”
32 Riso & Hudson, *Discovering Your Personality Type*, p. 107.
35 Fitzel, “The Nine Types of Students”
36 Ibid.
and take action immediately by learning their repertoire quickly, and enjoy checking off assignments on the to-do list as soon as possible.

Threes thrive in an environment that prizes healthy competition, and with a teacher who makes their expectations clear. While they might enjoy a reasonable challenge, many may find a very detailed teacher, overly nitpicky, and one who likes to discuss and consider many interpretative options, for example, tedious and pedantic. Threes enjoy doing things, and taking action rather than talking about what needs to be done. Some may also have a strong kinesthetic preference when learning. Fitzel calls the Type Three student, “The Star of the Class.”

*The Type Four Personality: The “Romantic” or “Individualist”*

The underlying desire of the Type Four is “to find themselves and their significance, to create an identity out of their inner experience.” Fitzel describes the core motivation of the Type Four student as striving “to find a special and unique identity” by utilizing a strategy of “withdraw[ing] from convention and get[ting] people to notice how [they are] different.” Fours can be remarkably creative and will often pour themselves into their work and art when invested. They find meaning and fulfillment in being unique and in their distinctive self-expression. However, they can also be temperamental, overly emotional, self-absorbed and hypersensitive to criticism. Some are prone to depression.

Last year, I taught a possible Type Four student in one of my classes. This was a very creative and gifted student who would often complete outstanding work in the class, but he could also be moody, a little self-absorbed, and unengaged at times. For example, he would sometimes prepare his playing assignments exquisitely, while at others, he would not prepare at all as he was not interested in the specific repertoire. It was also very important for this student to consistently have his say in classes, and to share his opinion with his classmates. This student also disliked being compared to his peers, and would sometimes disclose rather personal details about his life and circumstances, both of which are not uncommon to the Type Four personality.

Type Four music students enjoy opportunities in which they can demonstrate their creativity and self-expression at their instrument. These are the students who might enjoy composing a cadenza for the Mozart concerto they are playing, or who might spend hours improvising at the piano. They might want to play unique and unusual repertoire, and endeavor to search for deeper meaning in the music that they are playing. The Type Four is arguably the most artistically inclined type on the Enneagram. As such, a number of music students might be of this type and many of the great composers may arguably have been Type Fours.

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37 Ibid.
38 Ibid.
39 Ibid.
41 Fitzel, “The Nine Types of Students”
42 Ibid.
43 Riso & Hudson, *Discovering Your Personality Type*, p. 116.
44 Fitzel, “The Nine Types of Students”
45 Ibid.
The Type Four student blossoms in an environment in which their teacher recognizes and fosters the Four’s creativity and individuality. Like the Type Two, they seek to make an emotional connection with their teacher, but they also desire to connect deeply with their art. Fours can be obstinate at accepting a different interpretative point of view, for example, and difficult to motivate. They might also only decide to start practicing when “the mood strikes”[^46] them to do so, and can therefore be frustrating to teach at times. Fitzel identifies the Type Four Student as, “The Misunderstood Creative.”[^47]

*The Type Five Personality: The “Investigator” or “Observer”*

The core motivation of the Type Five is “to be capable and competent”[^48] and they believe that “knowledge is power.”[^49] Fives are possibly the most introverted and introspective of the Enneagram types.[^50] They tend to “withdraw from the world to study it.”[^51] They can be very reserved, private, inelegant around people, and say very little. They can also make others feel as though they are intruding on the Five’s privacy.[^52] While Fives are typically outwardly quiet, the mind of a Five is far from quiet and ever active. Fives also typically prefer to spend time on their own as they process everything in their minds, and may prefer to observe rather than participate in group activities.[^53]

There are arguably many scholars and academics that are Fives. This is because Fives enjoy rational analysis, and researching and investigating topics that are of special interest to them. Fives are usually enormously curious, often about a very specialized, even niche field, or topic of interest.[^54] As such, they may prefer to study or focus on a specific topic in great depth rather than trying to acquire a broader scope of knowledge, or a more extensive skillset.[^55] As already mentioned, Fives are typically reserved, but they come alive when they are able to discuss their specific areas of interest (of which they have extensive knowledge), and may bore others with details and minutiae.

Teaching Type Five students can be challenging, as they may not always want to say very much, and may be guarded about sharing their thoughts and ideas until the teacher has gained their trust. They can seem emotionally detached,[^56] and teachers may find that “impressionistic, improvisational teaching” may not work effectively with these students.[^57] I have a friend and colleague who is probably a Five,

[^46]: Ibid.
[^47]: Ibid.
[^51]: Fitzel, “The Nine Types of Students”
[^53]: Fitzel, “The Nine Types of Students”
[^55]: Fitzel, “The Nine Types of Students”
and I remember him saying the following to me after one of his violin lessons in graduate school, “I am not interested in my teacher’s fanciful metaphors, and subjective descriptions about the piece. I want to know whether a passage should be faster or slower, softer or louder, played with a wider or narrower vibrato etc.” For this Type Five student, the metaphor used by his violin teacher did not feel instructive or useful to him as it was not fact based, or pragmatic.

Fives do best with a teacher who does not pressure them to act immediately, but gives them time to think before acting. They “also like to work things out for themselves, by themselves.” When invested in specific repertoire or skills at their instrument, they will often develop mastery over these materials. They are often highly intellectual and brilliant, with an amazing capacity to focus and concentrate, but might struggle to be expressive, or spontaneous in performance. Since they often learn effectively through observation, they may enjoy and welcome teacher demonstrations in the studio. They might also enjoy researching topics related to their instrumental studies as they learn effectively through reading and studying. Fitzel describes as the Type Five Student as, “The Intellectual Outsider.”

*The Type Six Personality: The “Questioner” or “Loyal Skeptic”*

The intrinsic need of the Type Six is “to find security and support.” Sixes tend to focus on danger, inconsistencies, and what could go wrong. They are sometimes referred to as the “Devil’s Advocate” of the Enneagram. The Type Six will question and test authority but can be exceedingly loyal to those they feel can be trusted. They are also the most dutiful type, and can be “imaginative, funny… [a] supportive team player,” gregarious and cooperative. Sixes are also often “reliable, hard-working…persevering [but] cautious.” At their worst, they can be defensive, reactive, paranoid, suspicious, and seemingly paralyzed by worry, fear, or doubt.

I am a Type Six on the Enneagram and my mottos in life are to always “be prepared” and “trust but check”! In my mind, I can never be too prepared for teaching a class or lesson, delivering a pedagogical presentation, giving a performance, or even for a meeting. As a student, I was diligent and hardworking, and I did my best to be well prepared at all times, but I have always found it challenging to relax, and let go entirely. I work with a Type Three professionally, and it has been very beneficial for me. I tend to

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58 Fitzel, “The Nine Types of Students”
60 Fitzel, “The Nine Types of Students”
61 Ibid.
62 Ibid.
63 Ibid.
66 Ibid.
67 Ibid., p. 170.
69 Fitzel, “The Nine Types of Students”
70 Riso & Hudson, *Discovering Your Personality Type*, p. 135.
focus on everything that could go wrong in a performance, and aim to be consistent and precise in my playing. My Three partner challenges me to be more spontaneous and expressive, and to take risks on stage. He also teases me about over-practicing and over-preparing for performances and other events. I also tend to stay within my comfort zone, preferring to teach and play repertoire that I know well, for example. I find that I learn best when asking questions of others and myself, and I find that asking my students questions during lessons is an effective way of having them engage with the material at hand.

The Type Six Student can be a joy and a frustration to teach. At times they might be receptive, hardworking, and responsible, but because they are ambivalent to authority, they can also be unreliable, indecisive, and doubting. In addition, their level of commitment with regard to music study might be influenced by the amount of trust they have in their teacher. Type Six students are typically superb troubleshooters and problem solvers. For this reason, they are often excellent at practicing effectively, and correcting mistakes. Unfortunately, because they are also innately anxious and untrusting of their abilities, many may struggle with performance anxiety.

Sixes are able to “learn best when they can trust the teacher and the information.” Some Sixes might yearn for constant affirmation and approval from their teachers but are at their finest when they are able to achieve confidence in themselves and their abilities. Some might even endeavor to give of their best in order to gain the approval of a beloved teacher. These students may feel guilt and shame if they do not perform well, for example, as they believe that they are a disappointment and have let their teacher down. Sixes typically have a preference for consistency and routine, and might therefore favor a highly structured and regular lesson environment. They enjoy asking questions and value a teacher who not only answers their questions, but appreciates them. Fitzel labels the Type Six Student, “The Questioning Friend.”

The Type Seven Personality: The “Adventurer” or “Enthusiast”

The basic desire of the Type Seven is “to be happy, satisfied [and] to find fulfillment.” Sevens are motivated by new and exciting experiences, and are possibly the most positive and fun-loving type on the Enneagram. They are typically “spontaneous… optimistic… adventurous,” and outgoing but can also be “scattered, distracted, restless,” and unwilling to commit to relationships, or activities. Learning seems to come easily to some Sevens, and many brilliant and prodigious musicians are likely of this type.

I have several friends and colleagues who are probably Type Sevens. One friend is a joy to be around as she has so much zest for life, and her enthusiasm is infectious to everyone around her. I also teach

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72 Fitzel, “The Nine Types of Students”
73 Ibid.
74 Goldberg, The 9 Ways of Working, p. 194.
75 Fitzel, “The Nine Types of Students”
76 Ibid.
78 Riso & Hudson, Discovering Your Personality Type, p. 145.
79 Ibid.
alongside an absolutely brilliant Seven. This colleague has many and varied interests. He has moved house numerous times over the past few decades and seems to enjoy the adventure of a new home, or a new project. A few years ago, I performed together with a different, very gifted Seven. This was a highly rewarding experience as this person is an extraordinary and well-known musician. It was also challenging for me however, as this person was an exceedingly free and spontaneous artist in performance. As a Six, I felt completely outside of my comfort zone working with someone who never played a phrase the same way twice. This Seven also did not decide on the exact repertoire to be performed until the day of the recital, and did not commit to a definite order for the program. Instead, she simply informed me which piece we would be playing next, on the spot. Needless to say, it was a mentally demanding experience for a Type Six who likes to feel prepared and aware of exactly what lies ahead, but I learned a lot about myself and about Type Sevens from the experience.

Similarly, Type Seven students might be recognizable by their enthusiasm for learning, and the ease with which they seem to do so. They may lack organization and be easily distracted, but are often a delight to teach as they learn quickly, are excellent multi-taskers, and able to “jump into the middle of things without needing the big picture.” Unlike the Six, they tend to dislike routine and repetition, preferring variety. Like the Type Three, the Seven might gloss over some of the details in a piece of repertoire, for example, preferring to engage with something new and stimulating, rather than keep working for absolute mastery and refinement.

The Type Seven student typically enjoys a dynamic and interactive learning environment. These students tend to disfavor the more traditional hierarchical system of the teacher as an authority figure, and will sometimes regard the teacher as their equal. Seven students might enjoy playing a wide variety of repertoire, or working on interdisciplinary projects, for example. They might also require encouragement to complete tasks, follow through on assignments, or commit to a project. Fitzel describes the Type Seven Student as, “The Cheerleader.”

The Type Eight Personality: The “Asserter” or “Protector”

The principal desire of the Type Eight is “to protect themselves, [and] to determine their own course in life.” Eights like to take charge and be in control of the world around them. They tend to be “strong, assertive, resourceful, independent… action-orientated,” and direct. At their worst they can be overly assertive bullies, confrontational, defiant, and even vindictive. Type Eight students are easy to

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80 Fitzel, “The Nine Types of Students”
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid.
84 Ibid, p. 221.
85 Fitzel, “The Nine Types of Students”
87 Riso & Hudson, Discovering Your Personality Type, p. 155.
88 Ibid.
recognize as they will frequently argue and debate their teachers, and “state [their] opinion[s] as fact.”

These can be some of the most challenging students to teach.

I currently teach a likely Type Eight student in one of my classes. This student is one of the most engaged, energized, and committed students in any of my classes. She is also highly self-assured, and savors every opportunity to take the lead in class. She enjoys being challenged by course assignments, and thrives on debating ideas during classes. In addition, she is a highly active and vocal member of one of our student organizations. I also have a colleague who is possibly an Eight. He is an exceedingly industrious and productive individual who doesn’t mind ruffling a few feathers in order to get things done. He is a visionary and will make bold and provocative statements that sometimes cause others to feel uncomfortable.

Like the Type Three, Type Eight students prefer “hands-on experience” and learn best by doing. They like to push back, as they wish to “test [the] fairness of the teacher.” They will often challenge the rules as well as what they learn, and may even try to provoke their teacher in order to elicit a reaction or response. Like the Type Five, they prefer to work independently, and are most engaged when they feel challenged.

When left unchallenged, or when they feel bored, they might start to “look for trouble.”

Type Eight students tend to work best when taking direction from a confident, even authoritarian teacher. Eights need a strong teacher who is able to make a convincing argument and who is unafraid to stand up to them. Since they are typically direct and sometimes blunt in their interactions with others, Type Eight students may prefer working with a teacher who addresses them similarly and does not sugarcoat criticisms. They do not enjoy being coddled, as they need space to work on their own. When interested and engaged, these students can be effective ringleaders, and help to direct activities within the studio, for example. They can also be immensely difficult students to teach, as they seem to have an opinion about everything, and are rarely shy about sharing their thoughts, or putting others on the spot. Fitzel calls the Type Eight Student, “The Challenger.”

The Type Nine Personality: The “Peace Seeker” or “Mediator”

The basic desire of the Type Nine is “to maintain their inner stability and peace of mind.” Nines tend to be some of the most easygoing, and broadminded people, as they are able to empathize with differing points of view. Fitzel states that the Type Nine seeks “to be at peace” with themselves and with the world around them, but that they might deny their own desires, and silence their own opinions in order to try to accommodate others. At their best, Nines are “relaxed…agreeable and comforting” but they

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89 Fitzel, “The Nine Types of Students”
91 Fitzel, “The Nine Types of Students”
92 Ibid.
93 Ibid.
94 Ibid.
95 Ibid.
97 Fitzel, “The Nine Types of Students”
98 Riso & Hudson, Discovering Your Personality Type, p. 164.
frequently have trouble with procrastination, can sometimes seem spacey or inattentive, and can be overly accommodating, apathetic, or stubborn.

One of my dearest colleagues is almost certainly a Type Nine. This colleague is immensely agreeable, calm, easygoing, and well liked by students and faculty alike. Like many Nines, she enjoys physical exercise, and loves to be in and surrounded by nature. She also enjoys routine, and her practice sessions typically start the same way everyday. One of my former piano teachers is also likely a Type Nine. It was a good fit for me, as I never felt overly pressured or unkindly criticized by this teacher. He was also very open-minded when it came to matters of interpretation, as he was happy to consider various points of view, and rarely, if ever, enforced his opinion on his students. As a colleague, my sense was that he was a superb mediator, and masterful at deflating conflict and helping others to get along.

Similarly, Type Nine students can be enjoyable to teach, as they are typically warm and unaffected. Like the Type Six, they may favor a structured and predictable lesson environment as they have a preference for consistency and routine. Some Nine students can be frustrating to work with at times, as they might seem lazy and unmotivated. They dislike feeling physically or emotionally uncomfortable and might therefore resist playing repertoire, for example, with which they do not feel at ease. For instance, I once had a Type Nine student who was quite content to only learn and work on pieces in a slow tempo, such as some of the easiest of Chopin’s Nocturnes, and slow movements from various Classical sonatas etc. When I assigned a piece in a fast tempo, the student was resistant to the idea, and did not begin learning the piece right away. Nines can also struggle to prioritize their work, and can find high-energy environments exhausting. This is why they might sometimes zone out and stop paying attention. They thoroughly enjoy collaborating with others, and delight in group activities.

Nines tend to prefer a low-stress lesson environment in which they feel comfortable. They might also work best with a teacher who is nurturing and accommodating. They tend to learn most effectively through immersion or “osmosis” and “do less well in a high-pressure, competitive, fast-moving, [and] highly evaluative format.” Fitzel describes the Type Nine Student as, “The Accommodating Companion.”

Concluding Remarks

In this article, I have offered only a brief introduction to the nine Enneagram personality types, and the learning styles and preferences of each type. There are many more facets of the Enneagram that warrant significantly more explanation and exploration than is possible in an article of this length. My hope is that readers will now have a basic understanding of the Enneagram and that if they are interested, they

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100 Ibid.
101 Fitzel, “The Nine Types of Students”
102 Ibid.
103 Ibid.
104 Ibid.
106 Fitzel, “The Nine Types of Students”
can begin to explore it in more depth, and perhaps consider using it as a teaching tool with their own students. I have found this system of classifying students to be useful, and an effective means of helping me to tailor my teaching approach to meet the needs and learning preferences of my students. With experience, I have learned to correctly type my students much of the time. I have also successfully utilized online quizzes and tests, as well as printed materials to accurately type my students. I would encourage everyone with an interest in the Enneagram, to explore these resources.


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http://www.fitzel.ca/enneagram/education/index.html


South African pianist, Stephen Pierce enjoys a multi-faceted career as a performer, teacher, and scholar. At the USC Thornton School of Music he teaches applied piano, pedagogy, and literature, and coordinates the group piano program. He has also taught on faculty at the University of Northern Colorado, Oberlin Conservatory, and the Colorado International Piano Academy. Dr. Pierce was second prizewinner of the National Piano Competition in South Africa and has been awarded numerous honors including the Principal and Vice Chancellor’s Medal for Academic Achievement at the University of Pretoria, and the D. J. Rhoode Overseas Scholarship for Piano Pedagogy at the University of South Africa. He has played as a soloist with orchestras in South Africa and Cincinnati, and frequently performs as a collaborative pianist. In 2014, he performed at both the National Flute Association Convention, and the College Music Society National Conference. Dr. Pierce has published articles and reviews in journals such as The American Music Teacher, The South African Music Teacher, and Clavier Companion and he currently serves on the editorial committee for the MTNA e-Journal. He has presented at conferences such as the MTNA National Conference, and the National Group Piano and Piano Pedagogy Forum (GP3), and adjudicated competitions and festivals in the US and South Africa. He holds a DMA in piano performance from the University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music.
A Survey of Hymn-Playing Requirements in Selected American Christian College and University Piano Departments

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Introduction: The Need and Purpose for Study

“The Bible college movement arose in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.”¹ The purpose of these early American Christian institutions of higher learning was to train students to minister in a full-time capacity as missionaries and church workers. The variety of style and structure in sacred music among churches required “worship leadership training” for church music leaders.² American Christian institutions offered music and church music degrees to prepare worship leaders, but the variety in music curricula was and continues to be as diverse as the musical styles in current churches. Although there have been common curricular elements established by Christian accreditation institutions for Bible and theology courses, general education courses, and professional studies, there is a variety of standardization in the placement of hymn playing within piano programs. Most contemporary American Christian institutions offering music degrees require much of the same curricular criteria as public universities; in addition, these institutions also offer degrees or course work in sacred music, church music, and hymnody. As part of these curricular requirements, music students majoring in piano are often required to learn hymn-playing along with their applied repertoire to be performed on juries and public recitals, but an application of this training and a survey of methods utilized broadly had not been examined prior to this study.

The purpose of the study was to provide a current view of hymn-playing course offerings and requirements in the piano areas of American Christian institutions. It was hoped that the study would provide a platform for standardization of hymn playing within those departments.

The Research Survey

In 2009, an Internet-based survey was developed for distribution and analysis. Several studies (i.e., dissertations and theses) were reviewed and used as models in developing the survey for this study.⁴

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¹ William C. Ringenberg, *The Christian College: A History of Protestant Higher Education in America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian University Press, 1984), 157. Ringenberg refers to “Bible College” to describe the higher education institutions that developed from the pre-1940 Bible training schools and Bible institutes. He distinguishes the term “Bible College” from the Christian liberal arts institutions by designating that their purpose was and is primarily to train Christian service workers rather than offer a variety of liberal arts degrees. As the Bible colleges have progressed into the Twentieth Century, however, many of them offer curricula that compare and compete with the larger Christian liberal art institutions.

² American Christian institutions of higher learning, which includes Bible Colleges, Christian Liberal Art Colleges, and Christian Universities, will be referred to as “American Christian institutions” for the remainder of the article.


⁴ Donald O. Reddick, Jr., “An Investigation of the Music Education Curriculum at Member Institutions of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities” (Ph. D. diss., University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, 2006); Rebecca Van Den Berg Grausam, “A Survey of Piano Pedagogy Curricula in Selected United States Music Conservatories and Performance-Oriented Music Units” (Ph. D. diss., University of South Carolina, Columbia, 2005); Eric Mark Laughlin, “Survey of Improvisation in Group Piano Curricula in Colleges and...
The research instrument consisted of three main sections:

- Section A: Institutional Information (19 questions)
- Section B: Institutional Hymn-Playing Curricula (57 questions)
- Section C: The Instructor (32 questions)

The initial population of the survey comprised 150 American Christian institutions. Participants were selected from the rosters of one or more of the following accreditation organizations: The Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE), Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS), and The Association of Theological Schools (ATS). Participants in the study were limited to institutions that include a music program, a piano department (i.e., division or area), and a perceived hymn-playing requirement. The principal piano professor at each selected institution was requested to participate in the survey.

**Summary of Data**

Forty-two responses were submitted online for a 29.33% response rate.

**Section A: Institutional Information**

Section A consisted of nineteen questions designed to elicit basic institutional information regarding classification, accreditation, degree offerings, and population of piano faculty. Results of the data collected in Section A were as follows:

The data revealed that the majority of the respondents (63.6%) classified their institution of music as a Department of Music. Other classifications were that of Independent College (15.9%), Arts and Science Department (9.1%), Conservatory (4.5%), Division of Music and Worship Arts (4.5%), and Arts and Humanities Department (2.3%). Although many of the institutions were accredited with a Christian-based organization, most (65.1%) were also accredited with other organizations as well (i.e. NASM, SACS, WASC, etc.).

Most of the institutions surveyed (72.7%) offered four-year degrees, while some (22.7%) offered both two-year and four-year degrees. A strong majority of the respondents (97.7%) described their institution as having a piano department; of which most (72.7%) offered a Bachelor of Arts degree in piano. Degrees offered in the piano area included a Bachelor of Music Education (40.9%), a Bachelor of Music (34.1%), a Bachelor of Science (22.7%), and an Associate of Arts (4.5%). Other degrees (11.4%) listed in the comment field were a Contemporary Degree in Christian Music, a Bachelor of Music in Church Music, a Bachelor of Musical Arts, a Bachelor of Ministry and Arts, a Bachelor in Contemporary Worship Leadership, a Bachelor of Music and Worship, a Bachelor of Music Ministry, and a Bachelor and an Associate in Religious Education.
In the area of piano performance, responding institutions offered the following degrees: Bachelor of Arts (54.5%), Bachelor of Music (34.1%), Bachelor of Science (11.4%), and Bachelor of Music Education (4.5%). In the area of church music, institutions surveyed offered the following degrees: Bachelor of Arts (40.5%), Bachelor of Music (23.8%), Bachelor of Science (14.3%), and Associate of Arts (4.8%). Other degrees (9.1%) listed in the comment field were Bachelor of Music in Church Music, a Bachelor of Musical Arts (Worship Arts), a Music Ministry minor, a Worship Bachelor of Music Ministry, a Bachelor of Theology and Music and an Associate in Church Music. The majority of the institutions surveyed in this study (86.4%) did not offer graduate-level degrees in the piano area. Graduate degrees offered are as follows: Master of Music in Music Education (9.1%), Master of Music in Church Music/Worship/Ministry (9.1%), Master of Music in Piano Performance (6.8%), and Master of Music in Piano Pedagogy (4.5%).

In reporting on current full-time piano faculty members, surveyed institutions varied greatly in number: none (16.3%); one (44.2%); two (23.3%); three (9.3%); four (4.7%); and five or more (2.3%). Results were similar when reporting current adjuncts or part-time piano faculty members: none (15.9%); two (27.3%); three (18.2%); four (6.8%); and five or more (2.3%).

Section B: Institutional Hymn-Playing Curricula

Section B, divided into three subsections, consisted of eleven, twenty-six, and twenty (fifty-seven total) questions designed to determine institutional hymn-playing curricula requirements along with their procedures concerning course offerings, content, and assessment. Results of the data collected in Section B were as follows:

Twenty-three out of forty-three institutions (53.5%) did not require hymn playing as part of their undergraduate piano degrees, while twenty institutions (46.5%) did. Only one institution (2.3%) required hymn playing in their graduate piano degrees, while ten institutions (23.3%) did not and thirty-two institutions (74.4%) did not have graduate piano degrees.

The majority of the institutions surveyed (51.2%), which offer hymn playing, did so as part of applied piano studies. Sixteen institutions (39.0%) offered hymn playing as part of a group piano curriculum, four institutions (9.8%) offered hymn playing as an independent study, four institutions (9.8%) offered hymn playing in an unstructured format, three institutions (4.9%) offered hymn playing in a hymnology course and three institutions (7.3%) did not offer hymn playing. Other offerings included sight-reading curriculum, types of group classes, applied organ and accompanying courses.

Fifteen (45.5%) of the responding institutions offered hymn playing once every semester, term or quarter, followed by an irregular rotation (12.1%), yearly, every-other year (6.1% each), and once every other semester, term or quarter (3.0%). Other institutions offered hymn playing on personal request, for sight reading labs and piano proficiency exams.

Many of the responding institutions did not require hymn playing in applied piano lessons (52.4%), of piano majors with an emphasis in church music (38.1%), in group piano classes (56.1%), or in other music courses (65.9%). Of the institutions that required hymn playing in applied piano lessons for all piano majors, six (14.3%) required zero to one semester, three
(7.1%) required one to two semesters and one each (2.4%) required two to three and four to five semesters. Of the institutions that required hymn playing of church music majors, five (11.9%) required zero to one semester, three (7.1%) required two to three semesters, two each (4.8%) required one to two, three to four, and five or more semesters.

Of the institutions that required hymn playing in group piano classes, four (9.8%) required one to two semesters, three each (7.3%) required zero to one and two to three semesters, two (4.9%) required three to four semesters, and one institution (2.4%) required four to five semesters. Of the institutions that required hymn playing in other music course offerings, three (7.3%) required zero to one semester, two (4.9%) required one to two semesters and one each (2.4%) required three to four and five or more semesters.

There was a variety of classifications among the surveyed institutions in types of hymn-playing curricula currently used. In classifying their hymn-playing curricula, improvisational-based curriculum had the highest percentage (37.5%), followed by text-based (35.0%) and transcription-based (27.5%). Five institutions (26.3%) did not require materials (i.e., text); four institutions (21.1%) used an instructor-created course packet, one institution used A Guide to Hymn Playing by McDaniel and Ream, and several teach hymn playing directly from a hymnal.

The majority of institutions (62.2%) not using a hymn-playing text have taught hymn-playing skills through strict reading of a chorale-based hymnal, followed by improvisation (48.6%), hymn transcriptions (37.8%) and handouts and lead sheets. Ten institutions (27.0%) have used a hymn-playing text in private applied piano lessons, followed by group piano classes (10.8%) and church music classes (2.7%). The primary skills emphasized when using texts were melodic reading with harmonization, improvisation and filler (23.1%), strict chorale-based reading (10.3%) and strict reading with some harmonization of chords (2.6%). Nine of the institutions using texts (26.1%) answered that hymn arrangements were emphasized the least. Half of the institutions surveyed (50.0%) have taught hymn playing through melodic reading with harmonization, improvisation and filler. This was followed by strict chorale-based reading (28.9%), strict reading with some harmonization of chords (13.2%), and hymn arrangements (2.6%).

A large majority of the responding institutions (92.1%) had not required hymn playing as part of undergraduate or graduate placement auditions, only two institutions (5.3%) have done so. Twenty-eight (73.7%) of the institutions surveyed have not required hymn playing as part of a performance or ministry medium for undergraduate degrees and thirty-seven (97.3%) have not required it of graduate degrees. Of the institutions (21.1%) requiring a performance or ministry medium for undergraduate degrees, eight (33.3%) have allowed students to choose where to serve on a voluntary basis, two (8.3%) have required assigned positions and performance of hymns at the institution and one (4.2%) has required hymn-playing performances away from the institution.

While twenty institutions (52.6%) have not measured hymn-playing skills, seventeen (44.7%) did have an examination procedure. Of these institutions, hymn-playing skills have been measured of both undergraduate (76.3%) and graduate (13.2%) students in group piano classes (47.4%), private applied piano lessons (42.1%), hymnology classes (2.6%), and sight-reading labs (2.6%). Examination of hymn-playing skills has occurred on midterm and final classroom examinations (22.2%), on jury examinations (19.4%), on a final exiting exam (13.9%), on a sophomore barrier exam (8.3%) and on piano proficiency and competency exams (13.9%).

The majority of undergraduate (67.7%) and graduate (42.9%) piano majors’ hymn-playing skills, at responding institutions, had been measured through the reading of a chorale-based hymn. Other types of measurement have been the harmonizing of chords with a hymn melody (41.9%), transposition in all keys (32.3%), harmonization, improvisation and filler using a chorale-scored hymn (29.0%), hymn arrangements (12.9%) and harmonizing chords with a chorale-scored hymn (6.5%).

Responsibility for teaching hymn-playing skills varied in the responding institutions: (29.7%) one piano professor, (27.0%) some of the piano faculty, (24.3%) all of the piano faculty teach hymn-playing skills in at least one music course, (10.8%) the organ professor teaches hymn playing. Most of the institutions (67.6%) reported no correlation between hymn playing and other music classes, but twelve institutions (32.4%) have correlated between curricula.

Section C: The Instructor

Section C, divided into two subsections, consisted of twenty-three and nine (thirty-two total) questions designed to determine the education background and hymn-playing experience of the piano instructor subjects. Results of the data collected in Section C were as follows:

The highest academic degree the majority of piano professors (52.6%) have earned is a doctoral degree. Fifteen (39.5%) have earned a Masters, and one (2.6%) has earned a Bachelor’s. Of degrees earned, most bachelor, master, and doctorate degrees (52.6%) were in Piano Performance, followed by Music Education (36.8%), Church Music (18.4%) and Piano Pedagogy (13.5%).

While twenty (52.6%) of the piano professors completed at least one degree at an American Christian institution, eighteen (47.4%) of the piano professors did not. Of the twenty who have attended a Christian institution, most (65.8%) of the subjects did not study hymn playing as a degree requirement. Of the ones who did (34.2%), the majority (60.0%) did not use a hymn-playing text, four (26.7%) used an instructor-created course packet and A Handbook for the Church Pianist (Auld), A Guide to Hymn Playing (McDaniel and Ream) and Evangelistic Piano Playing (Schuler) were singly used.

7 In one of those institutions, none of the piano faculty teaches hymn-playing skills and in another, organ and piano faculty teach hymn-playing skills.
Fifteen (40.5%) of the piano professors surveyed received hymn-playing instruction as an independent study, while thirteen (35.1%) received instruction in an unstructured format, six (16.2%) as part of applied piano lessons, and two (5.4%) as part of a group piano curriculum. Others were self-taught, along with hymn-playing instruction in organ lessons and church ministry courses. The majority (56.8%) of piano professors, who received hymn-playing instruction, were taught hymn playing through melodic and harmonic reading along with filler (i.e., octaves, arpeggios, scales, and rolled chords), closely followed by hymn arrangements (51.4%), melodic reading with harmonization of chords and some improvisation (43.2%), strict chorale-based reading (40.5%), and strict melodic reading with harmonization of chords (29.7%).

The majority of the piano professors (63.2%) had pre-college hymn-playing training. They were mostly self-taught (53.3%), but also learned hymn-playing skills by playing in a church ministry setting (46.7%) and in private piano instruction (30.0%). Most of the subjects considered their hymn-playing ability to be very strong as a classically-trained pianist (60.5%) and as a church pianist (73.7%). Ten piano professors (25%) considered their hymn-playing ability as strong. Seventeen to nineteen (46%) rated their ability to teach hymn-playing skills at an elementary, intermediate and advanced level to be very strong, while ten to fourteen (30%) rated their ability as strong, four to five (12%) rated their ability as good, and one to three (5%) rated their ability as fair and/or weak.

Thirty-four of the piano professors (89.5%) have taught hymn playing at the college and/or university level; only four (10.5%) have not. Twenty-five (67.5%) of the subjects were currently teaching hymn playing in applied piano lessons and/or group piano classes and sixteen (43.2%) have taught hymn playing in those areas. Only one professor has not taught hymn playing even though it has been offered at their institution. Several piano professors have taught hymn playing on a voluntary basis and two professors have offered hymn playing in organ lessons. Twenty-three (60.5%) of the piano professors surveyed in the study had over fifteen years of experience in teaching hymns, while fifteen (39.5%) had under fifteen years of experience. Fifty percent of the participants had over twenty-one years of hymn-playing teaching experience.

A large majority (78.9%) of the subjects believed that hymn playing serves the church as a medium for worship and fourteen (36.8%) believed that it is important to the piano profession. Five piano professors (13.2%) considered hymn playing outdated in today’s church environment. There were a range of other comments in the opinion of hymn playing as part of piano curriculum. Some considered hymn playing beneficial for learning rudimentary harmonization and score-reading skills. Others considered it less significant for teaching skills. A few believe that hymn playing is a neglected skill that should be integrated into the piano curriculum, but are having difficulty because of the abundance of required credit hours.

Most (81.6%) of the responding piano professors were primarily teaching applied piano, followed by music theory and aural skills (44.7%), group piano (42.1%), piano literature
(34.2%), accompanying (26.3%), music history (26.3%), church music and music technology (both 18.4%), and conducting (15.8%). Some of these piano professors were also teaching worship, hymnology, music education, piano pedagogy, orchestra, organ, and music appreciation-type classes.

**Conclusion**

The research instrument revealed that the majority of responding American Christian institutions, which are accredited with Christian-based and public accrediting organizations, offered four-year Bachelor degrees in the area of piano performance, followed by church music. A high percentage of the respondents classified their music institutions as Departments of Music hiring zero to two (0-2) full-time piano faculty and zero to three (0-3) adjunct and/or part-time piano faculty.

The majority of the responding institutions had not used a text for hymn-playing curricula, but had allowed piano instructors the liberty to teach hymn-playing skills through the strict reading of a hymnal, improvisation, and the use of hymn arrangements. The institutions using hymn-playing texts have done so mainly in private applied piano lessons and group piano classes where the two most emphasized skills were the following: (1) melodic reading with harmonization, improvisation and filler (i.e., arpeggios, scales) and (2) strict chorale-based reading.

The survey results suggested that the majority of the institutions studied had not required hymn-playing skills on entrance auditions or in a performance or ministry medium. Fifty percent of the institutions have measured the hymn-playing skills of undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in group piano classes and applied piano on midterm, final, jury, exiting, and sophomore barrier examinations. The majority of students had been measured by reading a chorale-based hymn, closely followed by hymn playing using harmonization and improvisation. A high percentage of the selected institutions have had at least one piano professor who teaches hymn-playing skills although most have not correlated these skills with other music classes.

The majority of responding piano professors teaching in American Christian institutions had earned at least a Master’s level degree and had attended at least one Christian institution during their post-secondary study. Although many attended institutions that did not have hymn-playing requirements as part of a degree, most of the piano professors had pre-college hymn-playing training. A strong majority of responding teachers considered their hymn-playing skills and hymn-playing teaching abilities to be strong to very strong.

The survey results indicated that nearly all of the responding piano professors have taught and were currently teaching hymn-playing skills, at the time of this study, at their institution in applied piano lessons and/or group piano classes. Most of the piano professors had over fifteen years of experience teaching hymn playing and expressed a positive opinion of hymn playing as part of the piano curriculum at their institution.

Although many American Christian institutions offer hymn-playing training in various music courses on a requested basis, few have specific hymn-playing curricula requirements for their piano majors. Because of the lack of hymn-playing requirements, few of the institutions studied indicated implementing a specific method in teaching hymn-playing skills. This demonstrated a deficiency in the standardization of hymn-playing curricula.
The insufficiency in the standardization of hymn-playing curricula exists for multiple reasons: (1) there is no accrediting organization that standardizes hymn-playing curricula; (2) most hymn-playing methods and texts are outdated and unappealing to contemporary piano students; (3) hymn-playing is considered by most Christian institutions as important, but extra-curricular, a skill learned independently and/or inferior to classical training; and (4) hymn-playing skills are not measured consistently. Many other reasons could also be cited.

Sandra Turner made the following observation:11

The playing of hymns is in fact a requirement for non-keyboard majors graduating from music departments of many church-related schools. The basis for this requirement stems from the highly familiar and accessible nature of the piano—coupled with a traditional belief among church musicians that the ability to play hymns is a fundamental skill which any musician should possess.

It was apparent, from the study, that the majority of piano professors in American Christian institutions not only considered their own hymn-playing teaching abilities to be strong, but also deemed the inclusion of hymn playing in the piano curriculum as both important to the piano profession and in serving the church as a medium for worship.

According to William C. Ringenberg, the establishment of the Bible College (circa 1875-1915) initiated an opposition to the secularization of education in American Protestantism.12 The shared mission was to train students to minister in churches and missions. By 1948, the Accrediting Association of Bible Institutes and Bible Colleges (AABIBC, i.e., ABHE) had accredited twelve Christian institutions.13 During the following fifty years, American Christian institutions adapted more standardized curricula which enabled students the ability to transfer to other private and public institutions. Myron David Williams in his 1989 dissertation research found that the common general curricular elements in surveyed Christian institutions were as follows:14

- Composition and Grammar
- Literature
- Speech
- Western Civilization
- Music and Art
- Philosophy

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13 Ibid., 169.
14 Myron David Williams, “Common Curricular Elements in Member Institutions in the American Association of Bible Colleges: An Exploratory Study” (PhD diss., Michigan State University, 1989), abstract.
As American Christian institutions expanded their course offerings and curricula to meet accreditation standards, some of the ministry training that prevailed in earlier years as a focal point became extra-curricular, irrelevant and sometimes obsolete. In most contemporary American Christian institutions Bible and theology curricula remain an integral part of most music degree programs, while piano curricula implements traditional repertory and functional skills. If American Christian institutions of higher learning believe that hymn-playing skills are important to the piano profession (i.e., profitable for teaching rudimentary skills) and a medium for worship in ministry, the piano curricula should be expanded to include a standardized method of teaching hymn playing.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

As a result of the study, the following recommendations were offered as a means of standardization in hymn-playing curricula:

- Faculty members in the piano departments of Christian institutions were encouraged to incorporate hymn playing into the applied piano and the group piano curricula;
- to broaden their knowledge of elementary, intermediate, and advanced hymn-playing teaching techniques by incorporating sound pedagogical methods found in established hymn-playing texts;
- to require hymn playing as part of a church ministry curriculum for all piano majors; and,
- to establish standardized examination procedures and measure hymn-playing skills at all levels.

Publishers and creators of hymn-playing texts were encouraged to compile new hymn-playing methods that address the various hymn-playing skill levels, incorporating cohesive formatting, correlation of basic piano skills and measurement standards in a contemporary design. Publishers were also encouraged to formulate pedagogically-sound hymn-playing supplementary materials to accompany current group piano texts.

Accreditation organizations of Christian institution music departments were encouraged to establish standardization in hymn-playing curricula by providing general written hymn-playing requirements for undergraduate and graduate piano majors, by incorporating hymn-playing training seminars and workshops, and by supporting innovative scholarship in hymn training of college and university piano students.

Further research regarding the prevalence of hymn playing in contemporary churches and the qualification of specific hymn-playing skills attained by the average church accompanist is necessary to determine if the hymn-playing curricula offered and/or required in American Christian institutions is adequately preparing pianists for church music ministry.
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