

The College Student as an Effective Private Teacher:

Strategies for Creating a Culture of Excellence in the Applied Studio

Jeffrey Loeffert, Oklahoma State University
Andrew Weak, Apollo Junior High – Richardson, Texas

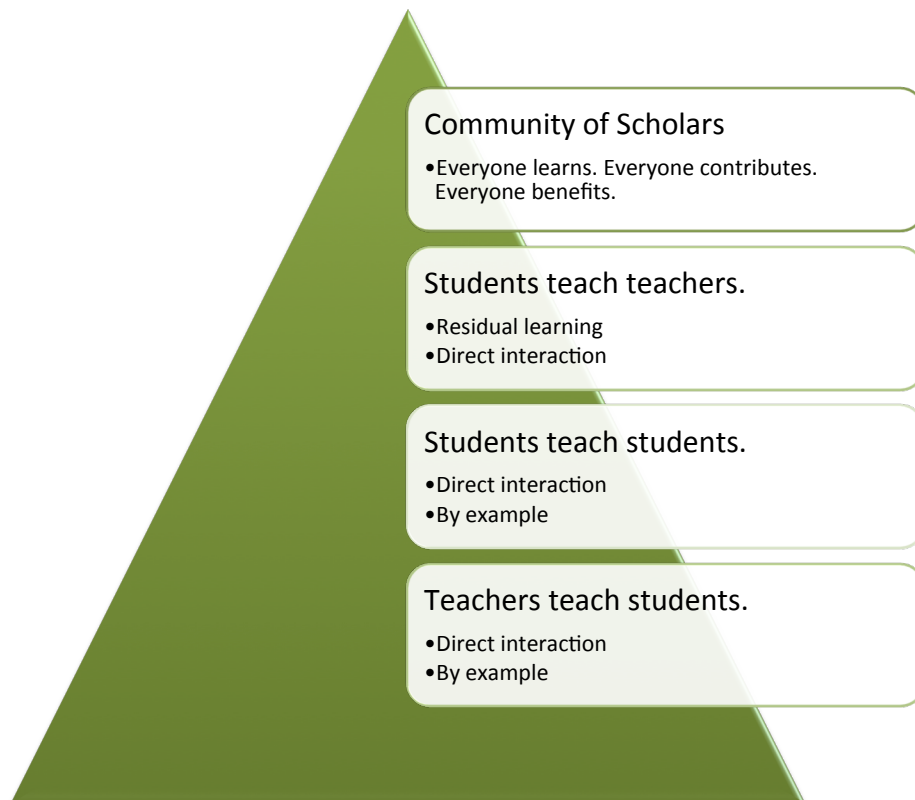
The 2016 Midwest Clinic
Saturday, December 16, 2016 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.
Meeting Room W186

- **Students Talk to Students Better than Teachers Talk to Students**
- **Teaching Experiences as a Student**
- **Teaching Strategies in the Studio and Classroom**
- **Additional Teaching Strategies**

I. Students Talk to Students Better than Teachers Talk to Students.

A. Students relate more closely to other students.

1. Teachers work to facilitate positive working environments.
 - a) Promoting a culture of excellence
 - (1) Students help to model quality work.
 - Students teach by example.
 - Students teach directly.
 - (2) Students help to uphold a performance standard.
 - Less experienced students emulate the work habits of more experienced students.
 - Students help to define a culture in attitude, work ethic, and musicianship.
 - b) Promoting a culture of creativity
 - (1) Student collaboration
 - Students work together to realize common goals.
 - Studies become more autodidactic.
 - Students work under the framework of synergy.



II. Teaching Experiences as a Student

A. The inherent learning experiences in teaching

1. Gain ownership of the information

a) People do not work like calculators.

(1) Approaching and delivering information to best suit the needs of students

- The same information does not mean the same thing to different students.
- Students respond to criticism and praise in different ways.
- Teachers must be elastic to elicit the best out of each student.

(2) Process reflection: tonal modeling, fundamental approach

- Demonstrate tonal modeling to address short-term objectives.
- Demonstrate (and explain) tonal modeling to address long-term and advanced objectives.
- Embed fundamentals into other objectives to maintain the interest of your students.
- Demonstrate and insist on consistency in the fundamental routine.
- This is also a way for the students to teach themselves when they are not in an instructional environment.

b) Greater sense of urgency to improve and provide accurate information to students

(1) Opportunity to recognize our own deficiencies

- Younger students often encounter the same issues with which more advanced students struggle.
- Advanced students can benefit by addressing these issues with younger students.

(2) Greater ownership of technical and musical concepts

- Though the information may remain the same, teachers must often be flexible to address the same concepts to different students.
- Approaching the same information in a different way allows for greater command of that information.

B. Professional Benefits to Teaching

- a) Developing a C.V.
 - (1) Increased potential for networking
 - Teaching while a student provides an opportunity for interaction with other professionals and young professionals.
 - (2) Increased potential for greater visibility
 - Teaching allows for the possibility of developing a reputation prior to entering the job market.
 - (3) Opportunity to make a significant impact for others
 - Students have the opportunity to significantly alter the lives of younger students through mentorship.
 - (4) Blurred line between students and professionals
 - The line between professional and college student is often obscured.
 - College students have the same responsibility to their students as professionals.
 - College students have the necessary tools to impact lives in the same way as professionals.

III. Teaching Strategies in the Private Studio

1. Students must learn to teach themselves.
 - a) Students must be taught to make their own informed decisions.
 - Often, students are capable of making informed decisions for themselves and should be encouraged to do so.
 - Students must learn to think independently and not depend on a teacher for critical decision-making – students must be self-reliant learners.
 - b) Learning is increasingly the result of mentorship.
 - Applied study becomes more of an exchange of ideas.
 - Students ultimately learn to inspire ideas in their teachers.
 - Teachers plant seeds that inspire students to take ownership of their education beyond baseline curricular objectives.

2. Instilling a culture of expectations and accountability

a) Chamber music as a vehicle for musical excellence

(1) Fostering creative interpreters

- Chamber music can help to create musicians who think deeply about music.
- Students have an opportunity to overtly develop musical affect through contrast.
- Chamber groups have an opportunity to independently discuss important structural components of music and how to deal with these ideas in performance.

(2) Chamber music as a microcosm for large ensembles

- Chamber music emphasizes the significance of non-verbal communication and eye contact within ensembles.
- Concepts regarding phrasing and musical hierarchy can be easily understood and reinforced.
- Chamber music provides an opportunity to solidify musical objectives and elevate ensemble skills and critical decision-making.

(3) A culture of excellence and accountability transfers from chamber music to private lessons and large ensembles.

- Students are empowered to make critical decisions.
- A desire for improvement and musical progress comes from within the large ensemble.
- Chamber Music drives students to play at a higher level and encourages them to be greater than the sum of their parts.

(4) Developing music programs through chamber music

- Student chamber ensembles can help to advocate for music programs and private studios.
- Chamber ensembles can provide a greater degree of visibility for music programs and private studios.
- Working through chamber ensembles can help students take greater ownership of their music education.

3. Creating a studio environment

a) Studio performances and activities

- Studio events can help to develop camaraderie within the studio.

- Studio performance can help embed tonal concepts and performance standards.
- b) Working for improvement at the top of the studio first as a model
- Competitions
 - Emphasize the process of preparation rather than the results.
 - Competitions can help students learn to listen more critically.
 - The studio model engenders healthy, friendly competition amongst peers.

IV. Additional Teaching Strategies

A. Increasing Performance Opportunities Beyond Competitions

1. This provides tangible goals for the students throughout the semester.
2. This provides opportunities for outcome assessments.
3. Instructors listen differently in performances than in lessons.

B. Recording Lessons and Lesson Reports

1. Recording lessons allows students to better internalize the concepts covered in lessons.
2. Students can evaluate their progress and lesson preparation and can summarize this in a written lesson report.
3. Students have an opportunity to accurately gauge their long-term progress through a weekly record of events.
4. Can help the students learn to think critically

C. Creative, Enrichment, and Research Projects

1. Research projects allow students an opportunity to take ownership of their own education.
2. Creative projects can help students keep their studies fresh and inspiring.

D. Semantics Matter! – And Other Important Subtleties

1. Working vs. practicing
2. All-state etudes vs. all-region etudes
3. *We* are struggling with the material vs. *you* are struggling with the material (lessons and certain one-on-one situations)
4. Clarity in classroom achievement (class average, number of students to achieve perfect scores)
5. Daily grades or other consistent student assessments
6. Fostering growth mindsets—don't praise empty effort, praise achievement (set goals at varied levels)
7. Be excited about what you are teaching (and don't be afraid to show it!)

Jeffrey Loeffert
Associate Professor of Saxophone
Oklahoma State University
Email: jeff.loeffert@okstate.edu
Website: www.jeffloeffert.com

Andrew Weak
Head Band Director
Apollo Junior High
Richardson, Texas
Email: Andrew.weak@risd.org

Loeffert and Weak would like to express our utmost gratitude to Frank Troyka for his invaluable mentorship and guidance in our professional careers.