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The piccolo is an auxiliary member of the flute family. A diversity of opinion exists among college flute teachers as to the importance and method of piccolo study as part of a flute curriculum. This author conducted a study to outline some current pedagogical trends among college flute teachers. This document presents information gathered via electronic survey from college flute instructors at schools accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music. The survey questions pertained to background information of respondents, studio size, studio requirements, instruments and pedagogical material, and pedagogy. Sixty-five teachers responded to the survey, and the results are published in this document.

TEACHING THE PICCOLO: A SURVEY OF
SELECTED COLLEGE FLUTE TEACHERS

by

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APPROVAL PAGE

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CHAPTER I

PURPOSE

Flutists have a wide diversity of opinion regarding the performing and teaching of the piccolo. At the college level, more students may wish to pursue piccolo study along with flute lessons. Some may even aspire for an orchestral career playing both flute and piccolo, or playing and teaching both at the college level. Still others may play it minimally or avoid it altogether. These differing viewpoints on the piccolo prompted this author's interest in further exploring the topic. This document presents information regarding piccolo study at the college level.

The pedagogical challenges of piccolo are difficult to address without the guidance of an experienced teacher. Due to the lack of formal piccolo instruction, many flutists have their first piccolo experience in high school concert band or marching band, where the student is left to his or her own devices. William Kincaid, a former flutist with the Philadelphia Orchestra, (1921-1960) said many decades ago, "There are no piccolo methods as such, and no one

really gives piccolo lessons.”¹ Mary Stolper, a current Chicago Symphony Orchestra member and piccolo player says of piccolo teaching, “As a university instructor, I see many students getting their first real experiences playing piccolo while they are in college, often resulting in trial by fire.”² In her Flute Talk article, piccolo player Cynthia Ellis writes, “Every teacher needs to know how to handle a panic-struck student when he asks for help learning to play the piccolo, but most teachers who have little experience playing the instrument don’t know where to begin.”³ It is important that all flutists have some piccolo experience and instruction. With experience will come more self-confidence, and an increased number of performance opportunities.

Although solo piccolo literature dates back to Antonio Vivaldi, the piccolo’s primary role has been as an auxiliary or orchestral instrument. As such, piccolo was often studied or performed on an “as needed” basis. Today, teaching the piccolo is still not a universally routine practice. Some flutists find that the transition from playing flute to playing piccolo is uncomfortable.

¹ John C. Krell, *Kincaidiana* (Santa Clarita: The National Flute Association, Inc, 1960), 99.

²Mary Stolper, *Practice Tips for the Piccolo*, *The Flutist’s Handbook: A Pedagogy Anthology* (Santa Clarita: The National Flute Association, Inc., 1998), 154.

³ Ellis, Cynthia, “Let’s Talk Picc: Early Piccolo Lessons,” *Flute Talk* (September 2000): 32.

Common complaints include issues of intonation, blend, and dynamics. In many cases, flutists who have little piccolo experience are intimidated by an inability to produce a clear tone on the piccolo. This author asked Trevor Wye, internationally renowned piccolo player and teacher, why he believes this sentiment is present. His reply was as follows:

Perhaps they are afraid because of the exposed solos which players are often called upon to play, plus the fact that its upper notes are difficult to hear and more suited to bats than to flutists. Also, it's quite difficult to get a piccolo which plays quietly and with a good tone. Personally, I enjoy playing the "shrieking twig" now, but most people still seem to think of it as an instrument which should only be played by consenting adults in private.⁴

In order to gather information to explore this topic, an electronic survey was distributed to all flute teachers at schools accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM). The survey questions pertained to piccolo study and covered instrument selection, embouchure formation, teaching materials, pedagogical approaches, and challenges of playing and teaching the piccolo. This document summarizes the most common piccolo teaching practices among college flute instructors. It is the hope of this author that this document will serve as a valuable resource for flute instructors.

⁴ Wye, Trevor. "Piccolo help." Personal e-mail (5 Aug. 2003).

Status of Related Research

Teachers have access to a wealth of pedagogical reference material for the flute, but most piccolo information is limited to published articles. Of the flute sources which mention piccolo, often the piccolo is addressed not as a separate instrument, but as an auxiliary member of the flute family. This is not completely surprising, as the literature for flute as a solo, chamber, and orchestral instrument is immeasurable, and the body of music for the piccolo is much smaller.

The Trevor Wye Practice Book for Piccolo, probably the most widely acclaimed source of its kind, begins with the statement, “The piccolo is an extension of the top register of the flute. The lower and middle registers of the piccolo should be thought of as the middle and upper registers of the flute respectively.”⁵ The majority of the book consists of orchestral excerpts as a means of piccolo practice. Although an excellent resource, it does not provide a new piccolo student with the fundamentals of piccolo playing. Also available is the two volume Piccolo Method by Danielle Eden⁶ and Clement Barone’s Learning

⁵ Trevor Wye and Patricia Morris, Practice Book for Piccolo (London: Novello Publishing Limited, 1988), 5.

⁶ Danielle Eden, Piccolo! Piccolo!, 2 vols. (Surrey: Just Flutes, 1996).

the Piccolo.⁷ Each of these publications suggests piccolo warm-up exercises, and includes musical examples to follow the warm-ups. These books loosely describe the piccolo embouchure as it relates to the flute, but the descriptions are vague and would be difficult to reproduce without the assistance of a good teacher.

In addition to the aforementioned books in print, a small number of piccolo related articles have been published and continue to be published on a regular basis. The monthly publication *Flute Talk* includes a regular feature entitled “Let’s Talk Picc.” Each month the article is authored by a well known piccolo specialist. These specialists are sought out for their expertise as successful teachers and performers. Some of these individuals include Walfrid Kujala, formerly of the Chicago Symphony, William Hebert, formerly of the Cleveland Orchestra, and Jan Gippo of the St. Louis Symphony. Their pedagogical suggestions have been published in the form of articles, books, and biographies. In 1996, Florida State doctoral student Joseph Roseman wrote a dissertation on one piccolo master, William Hebert, and his teachings. The document includes a brief biography of Hebert, and is followed by Hebert’s professional advice on basic elements of piccolo playing and preparing for

⁷ Clement Barone, *Learning the Piccolo: A Treatise on the Subtleties and Problems of Playing the Piccolo in Relation to the Flute* (New York: Musicprint, 1975).

orchestral auditions.⁸ Despite all of the above sources, it would be difficult for a flutist to find pedagogical resources for beginning piccolo study, as the currently available material is intended for a more advanced player.

Methodology

In order to gather information about the current piccolo practices of college flute teachers, an electronic survey was developed. The survey was designed by this author with assistance from UNCG faculty and members of the Listserv group called FLUTE.⁹ The survey was then electronically mailed to flute teachers at colleges and universities in the United States. The subjects were teachers employed by the NASM accredited schools which offer a minimum of a Bachelor of Music in Flute Performance.

A list of college flute teachers was obtained through the College Music Society. To locate electronic mail addresses, the names were cross-referenced with the National Flute Association (NFA) directory. Those flute teachers not listed in the NFA directory were located online at the websites of their universities of employment. In a few cases, e-mails addresses were not listed. In these situations, the online survey was sent to the division chair and was

⁸Joseph Jacob Roseman, "William Hebert: Fundamentals of Playing and Teaching Piccolo" (D.M. diss., Florida State University, 1996).

⁹ Larry Krantz, FLUTE [listserv online]; available from www.larrykrantz.com/fluteweb/fluteweb.htm

accompanied by a request from this author that the survey be forwarded to the flute instructor(s). Accompanying the e-mail survey was an explanation of the survey process. The teachers were informed that all of their results would be returned to this author anonymously and that their participation was entirely voluntary.

In total, 185 teachers were sent the electronic survey. Following the initial distribution of the survey, twenty-three addresses were returned as “undeliverable.” In some cases, the returns were due to typographical errors. In others, the e-mail addresses were obsolete, the instructors at particular universities had been replaced by new instructors, or the electronic mailboxes were full or under a virus protection block. After corrections had been made, this author made two more attempts to send the survey to the list of flute instructors. After the third attempt, ten addresses were still returned as “undeliverable.” Therefore, it is assumed by this author that of the original 185 teachers, 175 successfully received the survey. After 30 days, a second e-mail was sent as a reminder to complete the survey by the given deadline. At the end of the collection period, 68 responses were received. Two instructors personally replied to inform this author that they were not comfortable completing the survey, as they did not feel that their knowledge of piccolo was thorough enough

to deem them “qualified” to participate. One instructor said she could not complete the survey due to time constraint. Two instructors experienced technical difficulties, and chose to mail the survey via U.S. Mail. In total, 65 completed surveys were received.

The survey included pedagogical questions about embouchure formation, tone production, intonation, instrument brands and materials, and suggestions for an appropriate course of study. The questions were divided into three categories: preparation, instruments and pedagogical materials, and fundamentals of playing.

Pilot Study

Prior to distribution of the survey, a pilot survey was tested, using the online listserv called “FLUTE.” A copy of the pilot survey appears in the appendix. This author posted an e-mail to the service, whose members consist of amateur flutists, professional flutists, and flute teachers. The purpose of the list is to post queries and comments about flute related subjects. This author posted the piccolo survey along with a request that any U.S. college flute teachers complete the survey and assist in making suggestions as to content. Sixteen replies were received. Most of the respondents expressed interest in the idea of examining the subject of piccolo pedagogy. Some teachers said although they

found the topic interesting, they did not feel that all flute teachers would have enough time to participate in the survey. One teacher said the topic allowed for too many unknowns and variables. After the responses were considered, small changes were made to the survey. The questions were numbered and put into separate categories. Questions that had little or no relevance to the objective were omitted. The questions were somewhat simplified in order to minimize the time needed to complete the survey.

The survey is divided into three subject areas: background information of respondents, instruments and pedagogical materials, and pedagogy. The quantitative data is shown through descriptive text and tables, and the open-ended comment areas are written out in chapters four, five, and six. The comments are published according to subject area and appear in the order in which they were received.

CHAPTER II

THE SURVEY

Part One, Background Information of Respondents

This section of the survey incorporated questions associated with each teacher's own pedagogical background, and the place of teaching piccolo as part of a plan of college study. Question 4 in this section was formulated to help determine (according to teachers) when a flute student is ready to begin piccolo. Since no standard method or time frame for teaching piccolo is currently in place, this author felt that it would be valuable to cite the common practices among U.S. college flute teachers. The survey questions included in this section are as follows:

1. Was piccolo a required part of any of your own degree work?
 - 1a. If not, how did you learn?
2. On average, how many college flute students do you teach?
3. Is piccolo study a required part of your flute curriculum?
 - 3a. Why or why not?
4. Are there specific traits that you look for to determine when your students are ready for piccolo?

Part Two, Instruments and Pedagogical Materials

The questions in this section pertain to instrument material, instrument brand, and pedagogical materials. The questions are as follows:

1. Do you prefer piccolo students to play on an instrument made of a particular material? (Choices: no preference, wood, plastic/resin, metal.)
2. Do you prefer a particular brand of piccolo?
 - 2a. If so, please specify brand(s).
3. For piccolo instruction, do you incorporate specific solo repertoire, orchestral excerpts, method books, and/or other course of study?
 - 3a. If yes, please specify.

Part Three, Pedagogy

The questions in this section pertain to basic embouchure formation, and the initial instructions for beginning piccolo. For this portion of the survey, participants were asked questions about embouchure formation, how it does/does not transfer from the flute, and how to give initial instructions. The questions in this section were the following:

1. Do you advise students to use different embouchures for flute and piccolo?
 - 1a. Please amplify, if necessary.

2. Imagine that you have a flute student who is playing piccolo for the first time. What would be your initial instruction(s)?
3. Do you believe that piccolo playing interferes with achieving a good flute sound?
 - 3a. Please comment if necessary.
4. For the items listed below, please rank from 1 to 5 in order of the greatest piccolo playing challenges, 1 being the most difficult. (Participants chose from a pull down menu, but had the option of listing all items as a "1"). Choices: intonation, tone, upper register, dynamics, all of the above.
 - 4a. Please comment briefly on how you address the above challenges.
5. Please comment on anything further regarding piccolo study/instruction, including personal experiences, your philosophy of teaching piccolo, etc.

CHAPTER III
STATISTICAL RESULTS

Part One, Background Information of Respondents

1. Was piccolo a required part of any of your own degree work?

Yes = 21.5% No = 78.5%

1a. If not, how did you learn?

Self-taught = 86% Sought Outside Expertise = 14%

Of the teachers who said they were self taught on piccolo, 56.8% said they learned as part of a high school or college ensemble setting, while 15.9% learned for a professional obligation. Additional comments are shown in chapter four.

2. On average, how many college flute students do you teach?

The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Studio size.

Number of students per studio	Number of teachers who state this as average studio size	Percentage
Less than 5	5	7.7%
6-9	15	23.1%
10-14	21	32.3%
15-19	17	26.2%
20 or more	7	10.7%

3. Is piccolo study a required part of your flute curriculum?

Yes = 41% No = 59%

3a. Why or why not?

All responses to this question are shown in chapter four in the order in which they were received.

4. Are there specific traits that you look for to determine when your students are ready for piccolo?

Yes = 77% No = 23%

Teachers could list as many traits as they felt were applicable, and their answers are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Specific traits of flute players which determine readiness for piccolo.

Trait to determine readiness	Number of Respondents
Flexible, developed embouchure	17
Good musicianship/good ear	15
Well developed flute fundamentals	12
Interest, courage, willingness	10
Already have experience	3

Part Two, Instruments and Pedagogical Materials

1. Do you prefer piccolo students to play on an instrument made of a particular material?

Teachers were given four choices: no preference, wood, metal, or plastic/resin. The results may be seen in Table 3, shown below.

Table 3. Instrument Material.

Material	Teachers with preference	Percentage
No Preference	10	15.6%
Metal	0	0%
Wood	53	81.25%
Plastic/resin	1	1.6%
No Answer	1	1.6%

2. Do you prefer a particular brand of piccolo?

Yes = 60% No = 40%

2a. If so, please specify brand(s).

Teachers were allowed to list as many brands as desired. The preferences for brands are shown in Table 4. Some teachers included additional comments for question 2a, which are included in chapter five.

Table 4. Instrument brands.

Brand	# of Teachers	% of Respondents
No preference	26	40%
Burkart-Phelan	19	29.2%
Powell	16	24.6%
Hammig	13	20%
Keefe	10	15.3%
Yamaha	10	15.3%
Brannen	7	10.7%
Seaman	6	9.2%
Braun	3	4.7%
Gemeinhardt	2	3%

3. For piccolo instruction, do you incorporate specific solo repertoire, orchestral excerpts, method books, and/or other course of study?

Yes = 73.8%

No = 21.5%

No answer = 4.6%

3a. If yes, please specify.

This question allowed teachers to specify methods and teaching materials used, including repertoire, method books, and orchestral excerpts. Their additional comments are presented in chapter five.

For those who answered “Yes”, their specified methods are shown below in Table 5. Teachers could list as many sources as desired.

Table 5. Pedagogical materials.

Method	#of respondents	% of all “yes” respondents
Wye/Morris Practice Book ¹⁰	21	43.7%
Vivaldi Concertos ¹¹	14	29.1%
orchestral excerpts	12	25%
Taffanel and Gaubert #1 ¹²	9	18.8%
Jack Wellbaum ¹³	9	18.8%
Moyse De La Sonorité ¹⁴	4	8.3%
Clement Barone ¹⁵	4	8.3%
general tone studies	4	8.3%

¹⁰ Trevor Wye and Patricia Morris, *Practice Book for Piccolo* (London: Novello Publishing Limited, 1988).

¹¹ Antonio Vivaldi, *Concertos for Piccolo, String Orchestra, and Continuo*.

¹² Paul Taffanel and Phillipe Gaubert, *17 Grands Exercices Journaliers de Mécanisme* (Paris: Alphonse Leduc, 1958.)

¹³ Jack Wellbaum, *Orchestral Excerpts for the Piccolo* (Bryn Mawr: Theodore Presser Company, 1999.)

¹⁴ Marcel Moyse, *De La Sonorité; Art et Technique* (Paris: Alphonse Leduc, 1934.)

¹⁵ Clement Barone, *Learning the Piccolo: A Treatise on the Subtleties and Problems of Playing the Piccolo in Relation to the Flute* (New York: Musicprint, 1975).

Part Three, Pedagogy

1. Do you advise students to use different embouchures for flute and piccolo?

For the first question, the participants could choose from four possible answers:

- a) Yes, they are different.
- b) No, the embouchures are the same.
- c) They are similar, but with subtle differences.
- d) I let students discover the most effective embouchure for themselves.

The results for this answer can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6. Relation between flute and piccolo embouchure.

Embouchure	#of Respondents	% of Respondents
a) different	6	9.2%
b) same	5	7.7%
c) similar	47	72.3%
d) student on own	7	10.8%

1a. Please amplify, if necessary.

These comments are presented in chapter six.

2. Imagine that you have a flute student who is playing piccolo for the first time. What would be your initial instruction(s)?

All of the given responses are shown in chapter six.

3. Do you believe that piccolo playing interferes with achieving a good flute sound?

Yes = 23%

No = 75.4%

No answer = 1.5%

3a. Please comment if necessary.

Fourteen “yes” respondents and twenty-eight “no” respondents chose to include comments, which are shown in chapter six.

4. For the items listed below, please rank from 1 to 5 in order of the greatest piccolo playing challenges, 1 being the most difficult. (Participants chose from a pull down menu, but had the option of listing all items as a “1”).

- a) tone
- b) intonation
- c) dynamics
- d) upper register
- e) other

Teachers could fill in their own item for “other” and then were given an opportunity to explain how each of the challenges could be addressed during study. The results are shown in table 7.

Table 7. Challenges of piccolo playing.

Most difficult challenge	Respondents	Percentage
intonation	35	54%
tone	10	15.3%
upper register	9	13.8%
dynamics	5	7.7%
all are equal	6	9.2%

4a. Please comment briefly on how you would address the above challenges.

Comments are shown in chapter seven.

5. Please comment on anything further regarding piccolo study/instruction, including personal experiences, your philosophy of teaching piccolo, etc.

The comments, in their entirety, are shown in chapter seven.

CHAPTER IV

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS¹⁶, PART ONEPart One, Question 1a.**How did you learn to play the piccolo?**

“I learned in high school band, sort of like being thrown in the water when swimming!”

“Just did it.”

“I was the piccolo player in a professional orchestra for the first ten years of my playing career.”

“As a young student, I played piccolo in a Sousa type band for fun; playing piccolo was a requirement for my professional orchestral position, and this demand encouraged refinement of the skills I had.”

“Per force in gig situations or as required in ensemble participation.”

“A few lessons with my high school teacher, listening and practicing myself.”

¹⁶ All survey answers are anonymous and cannot be attributed to specific respondents. All comments are organized by question number and are shown in the order in which they were received. Typographical errors in the responses have been corrected. To maintain consistency, the word “piccolo” has been written out each time it appears.

“I learned when I was assigned piccolo parts in my college orchestra. I had a plastic piccolo with a silver headjoint, so it was easier for me to learn on my own. As a graduate student, I was required to perform one piccolo piece on my MM recital.”

“On my own, and then took private lessons in preparation for auditions.”

“In college, just for a concert.”

“In piccolo class.”

“Begged John Krell, and taught myself on the job.”

“I took private lessons after college.”

“Just by doing it.”

“I began as a member of a service band and continued through doubling in orchestras and some gigs. I also took ten to twelve lessons over the years. I practiced it regularly for three months one summer to prepare for an audition.”

“I taught myself; on the job training. I played piccolo in college wind ensemble.”

“I have a natural affinity for it.”

“When I was in eighth grade, my band director sent me home with the school piccolo and told me to practice.”

“Trial and error, and later a few lessons with a real piccolo player (former student of Kujala).”

“Youth orchestra and during my studies, even if it wasn’t required.”

“Played it in ensembles since 7th grade.”

“In ensembles and through self-practice.”

“On the job in orchestra.”

“Pretty much self-taught as the need to perform on piccolo arose (high school band, pit orchestra work, some undergraduate recital pieces.)”

“I brought it to my teacher, also played it in orchestra and on jobs.”

“On my own and when I had piccolo parts to prepare for orchestra.”

“I was attracted to the instrument in high school. I liked to play the instrument in marching band, because the flute did not project. I was the primary piccolo player in my undergraduate institution’s wind ensemble, a group that was led by a very fine and demanding conductor. This helped me to refine many issues on the instrument. Then, I attended an optional piccolo class at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music with Mr. Jack Wellbaum. This class, though not required, was an invaluable class for the further advancement of my piccolo education. Many of the pedagogical studies and repertoire that we

covered in this class is what I try to impress upon my students if they so desire to study the instrument.”

“In high school, but mostly after I graduated from college and started taking auditions.”

“On my own, by trial and error, because of having gigs where it was required.”

“I played in marching band and symphonic band, then orchestra.”

“Experience, observation, networking, manuals/books, etc.”

“It was not required, but I took it upon myself to study the piccolo and its repertoire.”

“In high school band.”

“Through playing in orchestra, at summer music camp, and in orchestra at conservatory.”

“7th grade marching band.”

“By playing it all the time through high school and college.”

“On my own, plus nine years with Clement Barone (Detroit Symphony.)”

“Self-taught and took a few piccolo lessons and went to masterclasses in the summer.”

“On the job training.”

“Learned on my own as part of band work in junior high and high school. While in college, I played the Vivaldi Concerto in C during freshman year for jury. Also, I was fortunate to get professional playing jobs both in concert band and in local symphony orchestras of very high standard. I just had to play up to their level or be humiliated and/or lose the job.”

“Took private lessons and taught myself.”

“Played a semester of piccolo in university concert band, at my own request. After college, sought piccolo instruction. Primarily on the job experience.”

“Needed to play in high school band. I never had official lessons.”

“I am self-taught on piccolo. My first experience playing piccolo was in high school marching band. Piccolo was never addressed during any of my lessons from middle school up through my DMA (60's to mid 70's). If you elected to play it or had to play it for some reason, you just did it. It just was not considered a standard part of lessons, and in many places, it still isn't. I had very few situations where I had to play piccolo until I started taking orchestra auditions and working professionally, so I generally avoided it as much as possible because my confidence, interest, and success was in playing the flute.”

“I learned the piccolo before the flute, one that my dad owned, before he bought me a flute at age 9.”

“Assigned to play it in college ensembles.”

“I learned on my own with sound principles learned from playing the flute. I started to play in high school and then in college as required by ensembles. I bought my first piccolo after college graduation.”

Part One, Question 3a.

Why or why not (is piccolo study a required part of your flute curriculum?)

Those teachers who do require piccolo study of their students provided the following comments:

“Their employability as orchestral players is greatly enhanced if they play the piccolo well. At my school, they rotate the ensemble parts so that everyone must play the piccolo. Therefore, everyone must be able to do it.”

“I want them to be comfortable with the instrument, and the university ensembles need good piccolo players.”

“Part of ensemble requirement.”

“I believe it is important to understand how to speak fluently in all of the flute voices.”

“They have a [required] basic piccolo proficiency.”

“Almost all orchestra positions/auditions require some piccolo skills.”

“Piccolo repertoire is important, especially orchestral literature.”

“I believe all flutists should know how to play piccolo.”

“It is an essential part of an orchestral career.”

“Necessary skill for a performing career.”

“It is important to employ proper mechanics on piccolo as well as on flute.

Playing the piccolo well can increase one’s chances for employment as well as provide additional artistic opportunities.”

“I want them to have at least some experience playing piccolo before graduating and going into the ‘real world’.”

“Piccolo study is required for performance majors and strongly encouraged for the others. A piccolo audition is required each semester for consideration into our top performing ensembles.”

“Piccolo is often necessary for auditions for orchestral positions and an ever-expanding body of chamber and solo literature is being written for piccolo.”

“It is a necessary skill for all orchestral flutists.”

“They will need it for gigs.”

“It helps strengthen embouchure on the flute and I consistently have students who find they excel at piccolo more than flute.”

“Crucial to a degree and practicality of a career in playing or teaching.”

“Everyone has to play it!”

“It is an essential component in a thorough, well-rounded study of the flute and its repertoire. Piccolo experience is also critical for preparation for nearly every kind of professional flute job.”

“The piccolo is a necessary tool and skill for all flute players. I generally formally introduce it in the junior year or senior year if a student isn’t ready or doesn’t have a good instrument earlier.”

“To prepare for the profession.”

“I consider the piccolo to be an important instrument unto itself, as well as a valuable tool to improve one’s flute playing and musicianship.”

“Each flute major, performance major or otherwise, needs to be comfortable on the piccolo, since it is quite possible that he/she will be asked to play it professionally. Also, Music Education students need to be able to help the piccolo players in their band.”

Part One, Question 3a, continued.

Why or why not (is piccolo study a required part of your flute curriculum?)

Those teachers who do not require piccolo study of their students provided the following comments:

“It’s not a major component, because most of my students are Music Education or non-majors, and piccolo is generally a bit more than most are able to get to.”

“It is only required for the advanced students. Most students need remedial work on basic body position, breathing, and tone production, so there is not time for that.”

“It takes all my time to teach flute.”

“I tailor it to the desires/needs of the student, if they want piccolo or not.”

“I am open to teaching it – if they ask for help I am happy to give it. I have folks who specialize in piccolo and that’s fine with me. But I don’t enforce it, as many of my students are in need of much help on the flute.”

“I don’t require it since many of my students do not own good piccolos and also I believe with adequate preparation on the flute they can transition to piccolo successfully later as needed. However, if a student has a difficult part on piccolo, I will help them with that part in their lessons.”

“I look at each student’s particular needs.”

“Time – I do it with some of them according to interest.”

“I am a temporary instructor and have not established a curriculum here yet. If I stayed, I would require piccolo study of juniors, seniors, and graduate students. Those wanting to perform on piccolo on recitals or needing help on orchestral/wind ensemble parts bring these works to their lessons.”

“Not every flutist is interested in the piccolo.”

“Some cannot afford a good one. Some will never need to know the major excerpts and there isn’t that much repertoire for it. I teach it on an as needed basis. If a student needs help with their band or orchestra part, we work on it. We also do some solo literature, but it is not required.”

“Not enough time even for flute literature. If a student is really interested in piccolo and asks to work on that literature in lessons, I will absolutely teach them piccolo.”

“The students are not interested in flute as a career.”

“I will work with students when they show as interest or request help. Parts come along in their ensembles and I help them with those which leads to other ideas.”

“No good reason . . . primarily the time issue. There barely seems enough time to get through all the material for the flute curriculum.”

“Small program with limited opportunities for tormenting others while learning to play well. Also, I only encourage the stronger players to play piccolo.”

“Strongly encouraged, but is not considered a major instrument, but auxiliary, like bass clarinet, etc. However, all students are required to play piccolo in marching band.”

“Many students don’t own piccolos, and there is a lack of good, playable piccolos available through the school.”

“Not every student has a desire or a knack for piccolo, and there just isn’t enough time in their curriculum to do both. Also, some of my students come in with deficiencies that must be addressed first. Those who desire piccolo study have the option of taking some of their lesson time to develop it or of enrolling in another section of study.”

“Not yet! I just start to make EVERYBODY play at least for a semester. I think it is good for several reasons: To learn to better play the flute, to learn to be flexible and change with ease. You can only find out if you like it if you try it out! And we still need many good piccolo players in the professional world.”

“It’s an option for those who were interested.”

“Though not an actual requirement for the curriculum, the majority of students have lessons on piccolo when they are preparing to perform literature for the instrument (whether solo or ensemble.) Your survey prompts me to consider that I should, indeed, make some piccolo work a requirement during flute study.”

“The university at which I teach has way too many requirements, classes, etc. for me to require piccolo as an actual class to sign up for. What I do is just hold an extra class for those wishing to study piccolo and orchestral excerpts, and divide the study of these two disciplines. The students receive no credit for the class. Most performance majors come to the class. As long as there is interest, I will teach the class.”

“Curriculum set by others.”

“There’s more flute literature that needs to be taught.”

“Time constraints in terms of REQUIRED study. Certain students, however, do receive piccolo lessons.”

“I prefer to make sure that my flute students are well-grounded in flute first. Once they have good habits established and have learned a good deal of the repertoire for flute, we begin to explore piccolo and other related areas.”

“The basics are best learned on the flute and can transfer pretty easily to the piccolo.”

“Not all students are performance majors (they are Music Education, Music Therapy, Music Business, Technology, etc.), and the set of exams they must pass on flute is very demanding. There is very little time. We are discussing reinstating a requirement that Performance majors must also play an exam that includes piccolo and/or alto flute.”

“It probably should be, but I leave it to individual interest – as with historical flutes, extended techniques and the gamut of things that a student ‘should’ know. There is only so much time in an undergraduate program. If a student is solidly prepared on flute, the switch to piccolo presents few problems. Also, while I don’t require piccolo, the marching band does – for better or worse.”

“If the students are performance majors, I recommend them to take a secondary instrument (piccolo) with me.”

“Most do not own piccolos. I do work with those who wish to include piccolo in their lessons.”

“Most of my students are not music majors. I do require that my majors spend some time studying piccolo, but for others I don’t see it as essential.”

“Some decide to perform piccolo solos and all of them have to play piccolo in marching band and alternate during wind ensemble.”

“It has not been a requirement; however, I do think all students should have some piccolo work in lessons. Occasionally, if my load allows for it or if I have a graduate assistant, secondary piccolo lessons outside of flute lessons can be offered, which is ideal. At the least, however, I think it should be part of the studio curriculum.”

“No, but I’m starting to incorporate at least 2-3 lessons this semester. Not enough piccolos to go around for all to be able to practice.”

“No credit is given toward level advancement at the jury given twice a year if the student decides to perform on piccolo. The levels required for graduation are awarded on flute performance.”

CHAPTER V

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS, PART TWO

Part Two, Question 2a.

If yes, (do you prefer a particular brand of piccolo?), please specify brand(s).

A table of preferred brands appears on page 16. Additional comments were as follows:

“[A brand] which has Straubinger pads, so that the low register is really strong and the instrument is dependable, one in which the high B is easy to play.”

“A cylindrical bore for beginners.”

“For professionals, Keefe; for students, Zentner.”

“My school owns a Burkart/Phelan and that is a great price for universities and a fine instrument for the students to play in groups.”

“Depends on the students’ budgets. For the student line and step-up range I prefer Gemeinhardt. For serious piccolo players, Powell.”

“There are many fine instruments available. While I prefer wood, I am not opposed to students playing high quality metal piccolos such as Haynes, Powell, or Braun.”

“Burkart/Phelan is my favorite; some students prefer Hammig. I play on a Haynes.”

“I recommend a wide range of well made instruments, usually with certain characteristics in common, like good professional flutes.”

“I recommend the Roy Seaman Boston Legacy, Hammig, and Burkart/Phelan in the intermediate price range.”

“Yamaha if there are budget constraints. Keefe, Hammig, Burkart, and Haynes if there are no money issues.”

“I quite like the Yamahas, as they are in an accessible price range for students, and one of my students has a Mönnig to die for. I really like the Powell piccolo for professional use.”

“I have a preference in relation to individual or the literature they expect to be playing.”

“I cannot make them play on always what I want, but sometimes what they own . . . this is a problem.”

“My favorite combination is a Burkart body with a handmade headjoint by Eldred Spell. I also like Powells but find the scale (pitch) to be a bit more accurate on the Burkart.”

“I highly recommend Yamaha piccolos but there are many fine piccolos.”

“I am personally fond of old piccolos and usually play a ring-key Bonneville or a William Richards.”

“I usually advise to try the Yamaha YPC62 or YPC82, though if they have more money available I recommend using Zentner, Seaman, or Hammig. If wanting a more professional instrument, Burkart, Keefe, Hammig, or Braun are my choices. I’ve recently had great luck with some very inexpensive (\$185) hard rubber/resin piccolos with silver and gold plated metal heads made in China by Jinyin Company. Very in tune and responsive.”

“Headjoint by Eldred Spell.”

“Should try them out and choose which one works better for each student.”

“I like the Hammig or Zentner piccolos for the \$. For the professionally-minded, I think what suits them best is the biggest factor, but beyond what was already mentioned I like the Brannen, Haynes, and Powell piccolos.”

“There are so many good brands now!”

Part Three, Question 3a.

If yes, please specify (specific solo repertoire, orchestral excerpts, method books, and/or other course of study.)

A table of the preferred pedagogical material may be found on page 17. Other comments were as follows:

“I start with these pieces: Handel sonatas (g minor, F Major) and the Telemann F Major sonata. The arrangement of A. Pryor’s ‘Whistler and his Dog’ and Dubois’ ‘La Piccolette.’ Then I go to pieces in the ‘Jewell Collection’ published by C. Fisher. Gordon Jacob’s ‘Pied Piper’ would also be in this grouping. I also have them work on Taffanel-Gaubert #1. If they were serious piccolo students, which is fairly rare, I’d go on to excerpts from the Trevor Wye book and more advanced contemporary literature.”

“The Presser Orchestral series has an excellent piccolo excerpt book. I also use De La Sonorité and Taffanel-Gaubert.”

“We start with Vivaldi concerti, and playing in flute ensembles of 4-6 players that utilize the full flute family.”

“Playing scales with me on flute (student on piccolo) for listening (blending and pitch.)

“Baroque sonatas.”

“I like to use Baroque pieces by Bach, Quantz, and Telemann.”

“As always, it depends on the student’s level of playing what materials are used.”

“Training can be done on any repertoire that is within the range, so I use flute repertoire for study – Telemann Fantasies, Baroque solos, etudes.”

“Especially excerpts and pieces written for the piccolo – otherwise scales and sound exercises like on the flute – pieces like Mozart or Bach and etudes.”

“David Loeb’s compositions played as etudes (they are fabulous!)”

“Yes and no. I am always on the lookout for high quality compositions and make strong use of the more popular selections from all style periods. The standard excerpts are definitely addressed. I do not have a dedicated set of piccolo method books.”

“Etudes of all kinds, Anderson, Drouet, Kohler, etc. Orchestral excerpt books by Jack Wellbaum. Solos from the Baroque/Classical eras to start. NFA piccolo repertoire/competition lists.”

“There are flute things that I think are very good for piccolo; Telemann solo fantasies, Quantz D Major concerto, and I especially like the Muczynski solo preludes on piccolo. We do the Taffanel-Gaubert five-tone scales every day throughout the range.”

“I use a great deal of the flute literature that I have found works very well for piccolo. “

“I use all the regular technical exercises for flute, like Reichert, Moyse, Taffanel-Gaubert, the Vade Mecum by Kujala, Anderson etudes, as well as piccolo orchestral excerpts. Also some Baroque pieces like Telemann Fantasias and Marin Marais’ Folies d’Espagne work well on piccolo.”

“I use standard flute materials that the student is already working on (i.e. Anderson etudes, Taffanel and Gaubert, tone studies, etc.) as well as piccolo books, such as the Trevor Wye and Patricia Morris Practice Book, Jack Wellbaum’s orchestral book, and Patricia Morris’ Piccolo Study Book (which primarily includes flute etudes chosen specifically to address piccolo problems).”

“Depending on students, but I use Taffanel and Gaubert, Reicha, and piccolo books.”

“Trevor Wye, Wellbaum book, review of simpler etudes from Cavally’s ‘Melodious and Progressive Studies’ and Moyse’s De La Sonorité.”

“For some students more contemporary repertoire (such as the Martin Amlin Sonata, Liebermann concerto). I use Wye/Morris Piccolo Practice Book for excerpts and other excerpt material. I also have students play various flute etudes on piccolo.”

“These decisions depend on degree program and ability, but generally speaking, I think each student [should] utilize the Wye/Morris practice book and a few solos. For the more serious, Wellbaum’s piccolo excerpt book is essential. Ideally, I think each undergraduate student should be able to play the first movement of the Vivaldi C Major Concerto for Piccolo (F VI, no. 4) and several of the standard orchestral excerpts. The amount of literature and excerpts should be greatly expanded at the graduate level, especially for those preparing to take orchestra auditions.”

“They all learn the Vivaldi Concerto for Piccolo, op. 79, for auditions. All order the Steve Tanzer: Piccolo Fingering Guide as well.”

“I recommend the Wye book for excerpts. I use the flute studies of Berbiguer often. Anderson works beautifully.”

“I use solos and orchestral excerpts. There is now such a large amount of quality solo repertoire, that we are in an ideal situation to choose attractive material that’s appropriate to a student’s ability level. I don’t use method books for piccolo.”

CHAPTER VI

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS, PART THREE

Part Three, Question 1a.

Please amplify, if necessary, on question 1 (Do you advise students to use different embouchures for flute and piccolo?).

“Placing the piccolo slightly higher on the lip seems to help the most.”

“Smaller for piccolo, but not with tension.”

“The embouchure depends on the student and the instrument (wave head, etc.)”

“They tend to go on to piccolo on their own, as need requires it (especially HS students) but I advise them that they’ll need a slightly smaller embouchure and perhaps may need to place the piccolo higher on the lower lip.”

“I try to encourage as natural an embouchure as possible, avoiding excessive tension, esp. at corners of mouth.”

“The piccolo is a small flute.”

“The flute and piccolo embouchures are similar, and yes, I let students discover the most effective embouchure. I think this is important for both the flute and piccolo.”

“Similarly flexible but more firm upper lip in upper reg. of piccolo.”

“Piccolo is higher on the lip than flute, and the embouchure is farther forward.”

“It is a smaller embouchure opening but I try to get them to relax as much as possible, particularly in the low and middle registers.”

“Similar embouchure hole, placed higher on the lower lip.”

“Since there is much greater back pressure on piccolo, the embouchure looks different, but I still use the same concept as flute: relaxed.”

“I teach them to approach the piccolo like flute so they will not get tight or small.”

“I teach that the embouchure should move forward when playing the flute in the 3rd register, and that’s where the embouchure should start with the piccolo.”

“I find that most students do better if they place the piccolo higher on their chin than for flute, and of course the embouchure has more firmness in some registers. The biggest issue we deal with is the difference in resistance. I

compare it to blowing on an oboe, and those who have taken woodwind pedagogy have had that experience.”

“[In my humble opinion] a good flute embouchure will be adaptable for any type/size of flute. I personally perform on Boehm flutes of all sizes, Irish, Baroque, and several types of ethnic flutes. The embouchure adapts just fine to all with minimal adjustment.”

“Loose, forward embouchure, less air quantity than flute, but faster air speed than flute.”

“Each student is an individual, and thus embouchure per se is less an issue than the quality of sound and general approach to playing and musical style. Common issues are tension levels, regulating air speed and volume and very often oral cavity space (or jaw width.)”

“A cornerstone of my teaching philosophy is “Listen first – Feel second” which ties in with Gallwey’s ‘Inner Game’/natural learning approach. I think it is imperative to develop a strong concept of tone and then allow the body to follow the ear and the creative imagination.”

“The embouchure is the same, only slightly smaller aperture with slightly less air.”

“Piccolo needs a more refined embouchure with more exact placement of the air, slightly higher on the lip, more support of the air column.”

“I mention setting the embouchure hole a little higher on the lip, supporting more and using a slightly firmer lip.”

“More relaxed opening for piccolo.”

“I do have them discover the most effective embouchure for themselves, as everyone is individual. Basically we talk about position on the lip and the angle of the hole to the lip, both different from flute.”

“Everyone is so different, and the piccolos are so different. An embouchure many times is based on the quality of the instrument.”

“Piccolo: there must be more pressure on sides of lips to form a very firm aperture. But, support must be low (lengthen lungs and lower pelvis, and jaw and throat must be very open, ditto, upper palate. Playing piccolo can help students open up inner ‘cavities’.”

“Smaller aperture is the main difference.”

“Very similar to flute, but smaller.”

“Slightly higher on the chin.”

“I believe the basic concept of flute and piccolo embouchures are the same, but require more than subtle changes between the two. The similarities

include the concepts of relaxed corners, a soft bottom lip to provide a 'cushion' for the air, and a flexible top lip to direct the air and control the aperture size. The piccolo aperture must be significantly smaller than the flute aperture and requires even greater control and flexibility, as even the slightest change in the embouchure can produce significant effect in the sound, pitch, etc."

"Piccolo is an extension of a flute."

"The aperture must be smaller but still as relaxed as possible. The lip plate should be a bit higher up on the lip rather than low on the chin as with the flute."

"Piccolo embouchure is smaller, not formed by musculature, but by blowing air, saying 'puh' – pressure of air opens aperture."

"Same basic embouchure, same emphasis on relaxation and removing tension, but piccolo embouchure is smaller, slightly firmer."

"I compare it to the top register of the flute."

"I think transitioning to piccolo usually works best with a properly developed flute embouchure in place. Often the novice piccolo player will develop the habit of over-tightening the lips which results in tonal, intonational, and fatigue issues. While there are certain 'ideals' for embouchure control

resulting in the best sound for both flute or piccolo – subtle, individual differences need to be taken into account.”

“To me they are the same, but the piccolo is an extension of the flute embouchure. Since everything is more concentrated for the piccolo (embouchure hole, bore, etc.) the air stream and aperture must also reflect this. I generally subscribe to the loose top lip (at center) philosophy for both instruments, but use more jaw motion for piccolo.”

“Usually the flute embouchure works fine.”

“Possible higher placement on lower lip – smaller aperture.”

“I find that many students overblow in an attempt to get the flute ‘turbo tone’ going on the piccolo. Also, overuse of vibrato is a common practice, unfortunately.”

“If one has a really good flute embouchure, the transfer is usually very successful.”

Part Three, Question 2.

Imagine that you have a flute student who is playing piccolo for the first time. What would be your initial instruction(s)?

“Long tones with a tuner, especially working on control of soft dynamics in the high register. I think that’s the key to finding your best piccolo embouchure.”

“Tone studies, tongue placement exercises, octave slurs, and other interval studies: 7th chord patterns with tuner on a fixed pitch.”

“Keep the embouchure very relaxed.”

“I have them work on pieces in limited range, plus exercises in a limited range. I advise them to put the piccolo slightly higher on the lip. I ask them to ‘hear’/imagine the note before they play it. I suggest that they wear ear plugs when practicing in a small room or on high notes. I tell them not to practice in the high register TOO much. And I tell them to start and end their rehearsal time on the flute.”

“Play a middle D and slur up and down.”

“See what works, then go from there.”

“I start by teaching them to play whistle tones on the piccolo to give them an idea of how the instrument responds differently from a flute.”

“Think of the instrument as simply an extension of your C flute’s 3rd register to find your tone concept. Factor in the instrument’s size and minimize your physical work and pitch placement accordingly.”

“Practice flute first in the 3rd octave, then start in lower register on piccolo, use a tuner, go easy at first and support like crazy. I recommend the Trevor Wye Piccolo practice book.”

“Placement of the instrument (higher) more oval shape for low register embouchure, circular for high register embouchure.

“Higher on lip, smaller aperture, good breath support-play slow things, treat like a little flute.”

“Low register tone studies. Low register Taffanel/Gaubert. Slow tempos with both of the above and gradually move up into the middle and upper octaves. Avoid excessive tension in corners of mouth and cheeks. Use center of lips – experiment with an off center embouchure if necessary (I hear a number of top piccolo players do this – haven’t seen it first hand.)”

“Learn to think of the piccolo as a separate instrument, with its own fingerings, intonation tendencies, and relative strengths and weaknesses of sound.”

“Do tone warm-ups and tuner work.”

“I would assign them to play around with it before bringing it to a lesson.”

“I’d ask them to prepare something simple on piccolo. I’d gear my instructions in relation to what they’re able to do.”

“To use a similar embouchure, angle of air stream, and support as if playing in the upper register of the flute.”

“Be aware that it is conical bore so the pitch tendencies will be different.”

“Tone exercises to determine the proper placement of the piccolo on the lower lip; it’s higher than for the flute.”

“Do lots of long tones and work on the sound and relaxation of the embouchure. Use air in cheeks for highest register.”

“Start on lower notes slowly and use the air to get a good sound.”

“Use lots of air.”

“To think on a smaller scale for the embouchure.”

“Placement of headjoint, smaller embouchure hole, lots of low register tone work to search for a dark woody tone with harmonic content, like an oboe.”

“I would first see what the student did naturally to achieve a sound and that would provide instruction based on what issues did (or did not) present themselves.”

“ ‘You have two dynamic levels to start with, loud and louder.’ You must have a very fast air speed to get the top range and ‘loud’ is crude, but effective to start.”

“Support. Make a small lip opening, but one that is not tense. Place the instrument a bit higher on the chin than a flute. DO NOT BLOW TOO HARD. Find the most resonant sound and never blow beyond it. Practice the piccolo for short periods of time at first and approach the high register gradually with no straining.”

“Keep teeth apart, keep it low on lip.”

“I would have them play a simple piece and see how naturally they take to the change in embouchure hole. I would listen for tone in the various registers and general intonation. Typically I have found that embouchure is where they have to make the biggest adjustments.”

“Use a slightly smaller aperture and really fast air.”

“The flute is under the lower lip, the piccolo in the middle. I prefer a really relaxed way to play and open throat, but of course, the hole in the lips is smaller, and I turn my headjoint more in than on my flute.”

“Place a bit higher on your chin than on the flute.”

“Practice flute at least twice as much as you practice piccolo. Listen to your body – if you are tired on piccolo, stop, regardless of how long you are playing or intend to play. For the first month of piccolo, play no longer than 10 minute increments. Take it slow and do not play higher than you have to before you are ready. Take an approach like singers do – maturation over many years.”

“Long tone exercises focusing on a good, clear, in-tune tone with special emphasis on the middle register notes.”

“Let the student begin as they wish, and spend some time observing the individual student before making any comment at all.”

“Listen for clear, be gentler with volume of air, keep jaw hinges and shoulders loose, float the high notes.”

“Drop jaw, lips forward as in flute. Work with tuner and go up chromatically to discover pitch tendencies on every note on your particular instrument – write this down.”

“Easy does it! In my own experience I learned less is more. Piccolo just bites you back if you try to muscle it. You just blow your lip and can't play either flute or piccolo.”

“Practice within a limited range at first. . . from low D to high F or G. Do lots of long tones and other flexibility exercises using the tuner. Practice familiar flute pieces like etudes and solos from the Baroque/Classical eras.”

“Don’t cover too much of the hole, don’t pinch. Get comfortable!”

“To place the piccolo higher on the lip than for flute, and angle the hole toward the lip rather than away from it.”

“Aim for a smaller aperture but not tight lips.”

“To play the piccolo with a flute sound. To play, at first, with same embouchure as flute.”

“Depends on what they produce initially.”

“The easy Anderson etudes and long tones, the Moyse studies.”

“Place the piccolo a bit higher on the lip than the flute. Bring the right arm/hand forward some, so the angle of the piccolo is about 30 degrees to the plane of your shoulders. Use a more focused air stream and smaller embouchure hole.”

“Don’t tighten embouchure very much; support the air column well.”

“Practice with a tuner!!! Long tones with tuner, always, always! Keep support ‘low’ and back of mouth and throat open. Find alternative fingerings on Internet, and practice those, too.”

“Work the low octave first – then gradually move into the 2nd and finally 3rd octaves. Use harmonics to visualize the lip movement.”

“Play it like a tiny flute.”

“Play a high F on flute. Notice air speed and pressure. Then play middle F on piccolo. Same note=same air.”

Use lots of good fast air (speed and quantity depends on register), play with very small aperture (I use the analogy of a pin head or a broom straw to the student to have a sense of ‘small’) and be willing to move your lips (be flexible) to attain the most focused, most in-tune sound possible.”

“To make a sound on the headjoint only.”

“Start in low octave. Work from B down to low D with relaxation. Adjust headjoint cork and headjoint to find where the piccolo places all three octaves well in tune without much adjusting of embouchure, checking pitch with tuner. Experiment to find where this particular piccolo needs to be pulled out in order to play the high B-flat, B, and C without forcing.”

“Raise piccolo on lip higher than flute. Let lips relax shut. Say ‘puh’ or ‘poo’ – pushing air out from opening.”

“Place the piccolo a little higher on the lips. Keep embouchure hole small.”

“Make sure your embouchure stays relaxed. Let the air do the work.

Treat it as a small flute.”

“Play the top octave of the flute to feel what you need to do on the piccolo, always practice harmonics on both the piccolo and the flute.”

“I would just have them try to produce a good, basic sound, and take it from there. They will need to become accustomed to the feel of the instrument (especially if it has no lip plate) and to the smaller tone hole. They will need to become sensitive early on to the angle of the air stream, speed of the air, and size of the aperture for optimal results. I’d watch for ‘over-wrenching’ of the embouchure and inadequate support.”

“At first – high on lip, bring jaw forward, pull top lip away from teeth, push the floor down with feet, and just try to ring (not overblow).”

“Same as for flute, discussing the angle of air, saying word ‘eu’ corners of mouth down, embouchure elliptical.”

“Higher placement on lip – smaller aperture, then start in low register and do slow triads into middle – gradually working into upper register – only to about high F at first to avoid any over-adjusting for the high register.”

“Think ‘kleine flöte’ and try not to overwhelm the instrument. Try to blend.”

“Careful experimentation placing the embouchure plate on the lower lip, not to cover too much.”

Part Three, Question 3a.

Do you believe that piccolo playing interferes with achieving a good flute sound?

The “yes” respondents wrote the following comments:

“I think it CAN, but it does not have to. They need to start and finish practice sessions on the flute, sandwiched in with piccolo practice. And they need to continue to practice the low range of the flute or problems can develop.”

“At times, yes. If the student is having trouble achieving an open, relaxed sound on flute, piccolo is not for them.”

“If you play a lot of piccolo and your high register is good, then the low register of the flute is difficult.”

“If a student only plays piccolo all the time, it can affect their flute sound.”

“Yes, at first, until adjustments are made. It can improve a flute tone if the flute aperture is too large.”

“It depends entirely on the individual student. For some students, especially those trying to loosen up excessively tight embouchures, yes, it is very likely an interference. For others, it is not. For an advanced student or

professional it should not be an interference. I find that my flute sound improves when I play piccolo regularly.”

“At first, yes. However, as one gains experience, that effect is lessened.”

“Piccolo playing interferes with flute tone if you do not practice consistently or if you strain your embouchure through ‘incorrect’ piccolo playing.”

“Sometimes the lips can be tired for a day or two after playing piccolo, which can affect flute sound.”

“The blowing angles are different for the two instruments. More across for piccolo, more down into the instrument for flute. Since I believe you need to be looser on the piccolo, it’s harder to get a focused sound on the flute when you switch quickly.”

“I feel the student must have a fully-developed flute sound before trying the flute, otherwise they tend to have too tight an embouchure.”

“Not if you practice piccolo regularly, and work on making frequent transitions from flute to piccolo and back.”

“Yes – SOMETIMES – depends on person – inexperienced players tend to ‘squeeze’ too much which can make their flute sound suffer.”

“It can interfere if practiced without balance. Many piccolo players learn parts on flute and transfer over their technique.”

Part Three, Question 3a, continued.

Do you believe that piccolo playing interferes with achieving a good flute sound?

The “no” respondents wrote the following comments:

“I have had a few students who swear that switching from piccolo to flute messes up their sound, but I have never experienced that and don’t really hear a difference in their playing, either.”

“Not if all the basics are well established on both instruments.”

“Only when doing a lot of extreme high/loud playing should the piccolo interfere with flute sound, once the student has adapted to switching between the two.”

“If it is done properly – not with a tight embouchure.”

“Not if there is not extreme tightness in the embouchure.”

“It actually improves it, especially in the high register.”

“It will definitely interfere with flute if the player uses a tight embouchure on flute or piccolo. If the player uses a loose/relaxed/air in the cheeks embouchure, there is no interference.”

“It helps.”

“It can be very easy to change and in certain cases really help to get better on the flute.”

“Not if the student has a flexible and non-tight embouchure.”

“In my experience, this depends on the proportion of piccolo playing to flute playing. I know professional piccolo players who have ‘piccolo embouchure’ on the flute because they play primarily piccolo, and in this case, piccolo playing clearly affects flute sound. My observation over time has been that up to an equal amount of time spent on both instruments is not detrimental to either.”

“As long as a strong concept of tone quality for each instrument exists, the body should naturally make the necessary subtle adjustments.”

“If you do it right, it helps your flute playing.”

“Absolutely not. For some, that is just in the mind.”

“I think it helps refine listening skills and awareness of embouchure positions.”

“No, but one must practice long tones on each instrument in order to stay ‘loose’ enough for flute, and ‘strong’ enough in lips for piccolo.”

“Those who say that have too much inflexibility and too much fear of life.”

“I think it enhances our understanding of flute sound.”

“It certainly can. But piccolo can be played in a relaxed manner that does not interfere.”

“I believe that it absolutely helps to refine the flute sound by requiring greater flexibility and even more solid breath control.”

“A qualified no. Excessive piccolo playing can sometimes create tension. Suggest students alternate in practice.”

“But care must be taken to change to flute embouchure and larger amounts of air for flute.”

“It could if not taught correctly.”

“It can if it increases tension, but that is counter productive.”

“Playing piccolo shouldn’t negatively impact flute playing. Ideally, one should be able to transition back and forth easily. On the other hand, if the piccolo embouchure is too tight and forced, it could likely affect one’s flute tone.”

“Not if you understand how to use the muscles in your face – and especially not being overly tight with the lips.”

“Though a tight embouchured player may not be able to loosen up the embouchure on the flute, if they are playing piccolo as well.”

“Serious, regular practice on the piccolo I believe improves the flute sound.”

Part Three, Question 5.

Please comment on anything further regarding piccolo study/instruction, including personal experiences, your philosophy of teaching piccolo, etc.

“Tone . . . tone . . . tone . . . upper lip flexibility . . . aiming air effectively from underneath the upper lip.”

“I think [the piccolo] is an important part of a flute player’s life and shouldn’t be ignored. My first orchestral work was not as principal flute, believe me – the first call one gets is generally for piccolo. Piccolo can be fun if the player is confident, and that comes from working on it – like anything else.”

“I find that the more outgoing kids are less afraid of the piccolo and enjoy it. I encourage them to follow up on this as their attitude will help them and playing more than one instrument is an asset.”

“I find weaknesses in flute playing appear in piccolo playing, so I approach piccolo through the flute to avoid frustration and pain that the piccolo

can sometimes inflict. I'm not a piccolo player myself, though I might feel differently if I had the kind of piccolo I like."

"Asking students to play piccolo in large ensembles and flute choir is a good way to enhance interest. Then asking them to learn solo pieces usually hooks them. I wish I had played more piccolo earlier in my career. I find the John Krell handout (Kincaidiana) very helpful. It can be difficult to find the time to practice both instruments enough. Alto flute is also helpful to pursue. A flutist needs to know how to play all these instruments these days. A good piccolo player is still a rare commodity. If someone is interested, I encourage them to pursue it. I try to get everyone to play piccolo somewhere along the line."

"Ideally the piccolo should sound like an extension of the flute. It's the coloratura soprano of the orchestra, so I encourage students to be as expressive as possible, as appropriate to the piece. Also, I urge students to broaden their dynamic range – always a challenge on piccolo."

"People who don't play piccolo are cutting themselves out of half the available orchestral work. That really affects their employability."

"Being a good piccolo player made me a more marketable musician. All flutists need to feel comfortable playing this great instrument."

“In an ensemble setting, if anyone is out of tune, it is YOU, regardless of reality. YOU sound wrong. There’s a balancing act that you must learn of who to match and when.”

“Playing the piccolo professionally has opened many doors to me. The fact that I play the piccolo at a high level, I feel, is due to the fact that I had excellent instruction on the flute well before I started the piccolo.”

“Playing piccolo aids in the understanding of air speed and control on flute.”

“Having a good instrument is crucial to success on piccolo. That is true for any instrument, but particularly for piccolo. My first experience was in high school on a very bad school instrument. I didn’t play it again until graduate school when my teacher required it. Now I hold the piccolo position in a professional orchestra.”

“The piccolo world is still working to convince conductors and composers that the piccolo is a melodious instrument, worthy of literature that reflects that, rather than just always being comical, childlike, or the bird of the story. I love piccolo - particularly orchestral piccolo – and I encourage my students to learn it. I have never had any trouble changing back and forth from flute to piccolo on a regular basis, so the argument that piccolo playing may leave the flute

embouchure tight and pinched for a while is invalid. That only happens if the piccoloist is playing incorrectly. I often program piccolo works on my faculty recitals, and many of my students program piccolo works on their required student recitals.”

“In the orchestra, piccolo is always a solo instrument – it needs or develops special aspects of a personality. You are able to drive a whole orchestra. It is a lot of fun to play with and match other instruments. I like that the piccolo gets more and more an independent instrument and there are really good pieces composed for this instrument.”

“I think all flute players should be able to play the piccolo; treating it as ‘too different’ or ‘difficult’ makes people paranoid. I am always shocked when an advanced player says ‘I don’t play the piccolo’ or ‘I can’t play the piccolo.’ My teaching philosophy in general is ‘a flute is a flute’ and while they all have a few quirks and nuances, it should not be a big deal to go between them competently.”

“Number one thing – the instrument/headjoint are vitally important to success.”

“I like a piccolo sound that’s round and woody. Finding a great instrument is essential.”

“I prefer a wood piccolo but for my younger students I recommend resin or resin with a metal head. These are more practical for outdoor playing and are not as strident as metal.”

“As with the flute, I think an interest in the piccolo at a young age is key. Students who wish to study the instrument are usually the better flute players which is good. I would wish for every piccolo player to have had some kind of formal study such as the class that Mr. Wellbaum teaches. I, although not currently offering it for credit, believe that I am following his legacy and hope to send some excellent piccolo players out into the world.”

“Some people have a natural affinity for the piccolo, but with intelligent practice anyone can improve.”

“Do not treat it as a little flute; if approached as different instrument it will be actually easier to play.”

“Pitch seems the most important aspect of piccolo playing. The tone quality sometimes is not heard from a distance but the pitch sure is heard. Seems like piccolo is always flat in the upper register or the flutes are always sharp.”

“Regarding your early questions, the fact that piccolo study isn’t required doesn’t mean it doesn’t happen; the answers you get to these questions may not reflect amount of level of piccolo study.”

“The piccolo is an instrument that is frequently used with the trumpet and E-flat clarinet. Its ability to ride high on the sound (not intonation) is imperative to one’s ability to control the high register and also the articulation. This instrument is also used as a regulator of the rhythm . . . a piccolo is taught mostly as an appendage of the flute, which it is not. The muscles in the face and stomach need to be developed and understood. When a student understands that the differences of these two instruments are what need to be practiced not the similarities. [sic] One thing though . . . when the piccolo part is particularly in the high register, I always learn the technique on the flute before I transfer it to the piccolo. I also when practicing use one if not two earplugs.”

“I really enjoy playing piccolo, and it should be especially rewarding for people with small hands. All flutists should have flexibility to go from flute to piccolo to alto to bass, and should practice the transitions. This adds to control and knowledge of embouchure.”

“All flute teachers (regardless of the age or level) should incorporate piccolo into their teaching regimen.”

“Some piccolos just won’t play top notes and it’s important to have one that plays easily in all registers as well as one that is not too difficult to play softly. Hard to find!”

“I love the piccolo, and I believe it should be an essential part of every flutist’s training!”

“I think practising piccolo is very dangerous for our ear, if you are not careful. Teachers should address how to and why not to practise too long.”

“It is important to emphasize use of ear protection in piccolo practice, rehearsal, and performance. And in lessons! Piccolo is very intense at close range for the teacher, too!”

“Piccolo has never been hard for me. I don’t approach it as another instrument. It is really like switching from Soprano to Alto, to Tenor Saxophone. Just a ‘double’ that you need to learn to do quickly, naturally, and without hesitation or anxiety. Just enjoy the piccolo and let it ‘sing’ with the image/goal/concept/color you hear in your mind . . . that’s what all performance is, really.”

“I can remember when I ‘got it’ regarding playing piccolo. The embouchure is different and air support critical. Hearing the upper octave intonation correctly takes time and work – we are not used to hearing those notes.”

“I try to emphasize to flute students how becoming a good piccolo player increases their opportunities.”

“I think the fear and trepidation of playing the piccolo is often the result of no previous experience. At least at the college level, there should be the opportunity to play it and to study it, if even minimally. It will only increase opportunities for performance in school and beyond.”

“I personally insist that my performance majors make peace with the piccolo. I often find it corrects problems with flute tone production/support/general concept of sound. I have substantial performance experience on the piccolo and have many great musical opportunities and experiences because I was able to consider the piccolo an opportunity to make music (a chance to develop a strength), rather than a punishment (an enemy.)”

“I stress that piccolo playing is fun – a chance to shine, etc. instead of dwelling on the difficulties. From my own experience, I find that to be very true.”

“Be sure to show alternate fingerings for upper notes and for altering pitch.”

“The piccolo players in the National Symphony and the Baltimore Symphony are two of my favorites. Why? Because they are what I refer to as ‘discreet’ piccolo players. They make the first flutist sound great, and the first

trumpet, as well. They never draw attention to themselves when they very well could. They also never miss. They know how to be a color choice.”

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study is to present information about the current structure of undergraduate flute and piccolo curricula at colleges and universities in the United States. A secondary objective of this study is to help clarify some of the misconceptions about the piccolo. The survey questions were formulated to determine the general pedagogical and philosophical approach to the instrument. The survey provided opportunity for additional commentary, and resulted in a wide range of responses and opinions. The resulting document provides a summary of these practices for students and teachers.

Part One, Background Information of Respondents

Of the sixty-five teachers who completed the survey, fourteen of them (21.5%) said that piccolo study was required as part of their own musical background, while fifty-one teachers (78.4%) said that it was not. Of the fifty-one teachers for whom piccolo study was not required, forty-four of them said that they were self-taught on piccolo, and nine of them sought outside expertise. Of the forty-four teachers who were self-taught, twenty-five of them (56.8%) said that they learned as part of a high school or college ensemble requirement, while

seven of them (15.9%) learned out of professional obligation. All of the sixty-five teachers play some piccolo; none mentioned that they avoid the instrument altogether. Originally, there were two respondents who asked not to complete the survey, as they did not feel that they had enough piccolo background. These two responses were not included in the total number (65.)

The results of this survey suggest that teachers who studied the piccolo are more likely to require it of their own students. Of the sixty-five subjects who completed this survey, 21.5% of them were required to complete some piccolo study as a required part of their own musical background. The majority of these teachers for whom piccolo study was required (64%) currently require it of their own students. The overwhelming majority of these teachers were passionate about the importance of piccolo study in the college flute curriculum, stating it as an absolute necessity to develop into a well-rounded flute player. Of the twenty-seven teachers who require piccolo study of their students, most of them referred to piccolo as an “essential” and “necessary” part of preparing for “the profession.” Two of the twenty-seven teachers enforce piccolo study because their universities strongly encouraged all flute students to play piccolo as part of a school ensemble.

Of those teachers for whom piccolo study was not required, 35% percent of them require it of their current students, while 65% do not. Of the thirty-eight total teachers who do not require piccolo of their current students, most of them mentioned time (both for teacher and student) as being a restricting factor. These teachers expressed that it “takes all of my time to teach flute,” or that “piccolo is generally more than most are able to get to,” and “there is only so much time in an undergraduate program.” Four teachers mentioned that good piccolos are not available for student use, and three of the thirty-eight teachers require piccolo study of their Music Performance majors, but not of their Music Education majors.

No correlation between flute studio size and piccolo requirement seems to exist. The teachers’ studio size, whether small or large, had no bearing on whether a particular teacher required piccolo study for his or her students.

The final question in Part One was formulated to help determine (according to teachers) when a flute student is ready to begin piccolo. Since no standard method or time frame for teaching piccolo is in place, this author believed it would be beneficial to cite common practices among U.S. college flute teachers. The remarks from those who do look for traits (77% of total teachers) showed a great deal of similarity in content. Fifteen teachers (30%) felt that solid

musicianship was a prerequisite, and twelve teachers (24%) said that well-developed flute fundamentals were crucial prior to piccolo study. However, ten teachers (20%) remarked that any student who showed interest and willingness was ready to begin piccolo study. Fifteen teachers (23% of all surveyed) did not look for any particular signs of interest. One teacher wrote, "No one is ever ready for piccolo." The outcome of this question does not suggest a particular trend toward the best time to begin piccolo study at the college level.

Part Two, Instruments and Pedagogical Materials

The first question in this section pertained to instrument material(s). Teachers were asked if they preferred students play on an instrument made of any material. The overwhelming preference (81.25%) was for wooden instruments. 15.6 % of teachers did not indicate a preference, and only one teacher preferred plastic/resin. Zero teachers indicated a preference for metal piccolos.

As for brands, the majority of teachers (60%) did not have a preferred brand. Many teachers mentioned that the primary concern was to find an instrument which was dependable and in good working condition. Those teachers who indicated a preference to specific brands favored the Burkart-Phelan, followed closely by Verne Q. Powell, and Hammig. Several teachers

indicated that Yamaha makes a solid student piccolo, and for a reasonable price.

A table outlining the results may be seen on page 16.

Following the instrument selection, teachers were asked about teaching materials. Question three allowed teachers to specify methods and teaching materials used, including repertoire, method books, and orchestral excerpts. Of the sixty-five respondents, forty-eight of them (73.8%) said that they did use specific teaching material, while 14 of them (21.5%) do not. Three teachers (4.6%) did not answer this question. Teachers were then asked to indicate specific method(s). Teachers could choose as many sources as they wished. Of those forty-eight who listed a specific method(s), the majority of them named the Trevor Wye/Patricia Morris Practice Book for Piccolo as the best. Fourteen teachers incorporate the Vivaldi concertos, and twelve teachers use various orchestral excerpts. As may be seen in the comment section in chapter five, many teachers simply found flute exercises and etudes that would transfer easily over to piccolo: items such as etudes, the Taffanel and Gaubert 17 Big Daily Exercises, and the Marcel Moyse de la Sonorité.

Part Three, Pedagogy

Part three contained many open-ended questions. These questions were of the comment variety, allowing the teachers to express more freely their beliefs

on piccolo teaching. Question one was the only multiple choice question, after which teachers were asked to comment. The question was “Do you advise students to use different embouchures for flute and piccolo?” The four answer choices were a) yes, they are different; b) no, the embouchures are the same; c) the embouchures are similar; and d) I let students discover the most effective embouchure for themselves. A majority of teachers (72.3%) said the embouchures were similar. Supporting comments suggest that the transfer would happen more easily if the piccolo is thought of as an “extension of the flute” and if piccolo practice is evenly balanced with flute practice.

Although most teachers believed the embouchures to be similar, the differences of opinion regarding the similarities were extreme. Of the forty-seven respondents who suggest that the embouchures are similar, fourteen said that the piccolo embouchure is smaller and firmer; one suggested that the aperture is larger. Eleven suggested that the piccolo must rest slightly higher on the lip than for flute, while two said that the piccolo should rest lower on the lip. Two teachers added that the embouchures will vary greatly from student to student, and from instrument to instrument.

Of the five respondents (7.7%) who answered “b”, two of them suggested that piccolo is merely an extension of the flute, and should be approached as such.

Twelve of the forty-seven respondents who answered “c” pinpointed the main trait of piccolo embouchure as being smaller than the flute. Ten teachers stated that the piccolo rests higher on the lip than for flute. Each of the following characteristics of piccolo embouchure (as it relates to flute) was listed by between one and four teachers: more relaxed opening, less air quantity, faster air speed, firm upper lip, flexible top lip, and embouchure more forward. Three teachers commented that piccolo is an extension of the flute. One teacher suggested that the piccolo should rest lower on the lip than for flute.

Only one respondent (out of seven) who answered “d” chose to include a comment: “I think it is imperative to develop a strong concept of tone and then allow for the body to follow the ear and the creative imagination.”

Overall, teachers’ responses varied between “the piccolo should be placed higher on the lower lip,” and “the piccolo should be placed lower on the lip.” One teacher advocated a “loose top lip,” three teachers said “the top lip should remain firm,” while another said the firmest part of the embouchure should be the corners of the mouth. Yet another teacher stated that the “embouchure is

formed inside the lips,” and not with “tension from the corners.” These wide contrasts of opinion are the first of many that appear in this study.

The format of this embouchure question may have created some ambiguity. It was perhaps unclear as to the exact definitions of “same” versus “similar” versus “subtle differences.” As a result, some teachers listed certain aspects of piccolo playing as a difference, while others chose them as being similarities. For example, “the piccolo rests higher on the lip than for flute,” was cited as a difference by two teachers, while ten of them listed it as a similarity. Perhaps this question could have been formulated more carefully, allowing for less open-endedness and more direction toward specific traits.

Question 2 was designed as an open-ended question in which teachers could freely express their ideas about a first piccolo lesson. Again, a wide variety of responses were offered. Perhaps the phrasing of the question could have been better formulated to stress the importance of initial instruction. The author’s intention was to capture the essence of the very first piccolo lesson, with specifics as to how to produce the first sounds. The outcome(s) contained some of this information, but primarily included advice for future piccolo practice and study.

In question 3 of Part Three, teachers were asked if they felt that piccolo playing interfered with achieving a good flute sound. For this question, fifteen

teachers (23%) answered “yes” and forty-nine teachers (75.4%) said “no.” One teacher (1.5%) did not respond. The majority of those who answered “yes” were also careful to point out that the dangers of going between flute and piccolo can be remedied by practicing piccolo in moderation. The majority of the teachers who answered “no” stated in their comments that the piccolo can be fatiguing if not practiced properly and/or in moderation, but said also that playing the piccolo can enhance one’s flute playing and overall musicianship. The main concern was to be aware of the possibility of tightness in the embouchure.

Question 4 in Part Three gave teachers the opportunity to rank the challenges associated with piccolo playing. Intonation was by far the most listed challenge, ranked as number one by 54% of the respondents. Tone was the second highest challenge (selected by 15.3%), followed by upper register playing (13.8%), and finally, dynamics. Six teachers (9.2%) said that all elements of piccolo playing are equally challenging. Still others suggested that challenges will vary from student to student, and that it is impossible to pinpoint just one element as being the most difficult.

Question 5 in Part Three allowed teachers to include any thoughts and ideas that may not have been appropriate for other sections of the survey. The

presentation of such an open-ended question allowed for a wide range of answers, all of which are included in chapter six.

Conclusions

For this survey, it was requested that teachers provide answers and comments regarding piccolo study and instruction, instrument materials and brands, teaching materials, and fundamentals of playing and teaching, including personal experiences and any philosophies of teaching. The comments show an overall enjoyment and passion for teaching, and in most cases, respondents expressed a fondness for playing and teaching the piccolo.

Many general conclusions may be drawn from this study:

- 1) About one quarter of the respondents reported that knowledge and understanding of the piccolo, even if not part of the required college curriculum, is essential for any flutist who desires to have a professional performing career. Another quarter of the respondents said they would include piccolo study if the required curriculum allowed for more time.
- 2) Teachers who participated in this study were more likely to require piccolo study of their music majors, and less likely to require it of their music minors.
- 3) Flute instructors indicated a variety of approaches to teaching beginning piccolo. This study showed wide variations between teachers' approaches to piccolo embouchure formation.

- 4) 72.3% of respondents reported that piccolo should be approached similarly to the flute, but with a few subtle differences. The most commonly mentioned differences included placement of the piccolo slightly higher on the lower lip, a smaller aperture, and faster air speed.
- 5) Five teachers suggested that in order to minimize frustration(s) of playing and teaching the piccolo, students and teachers should make an effort to obtain quality instruments in good playing condition.
- 6) Due to the few existing pedagogical sources for piccolo, many flute teachers indicated that they will modify flute methods to fit their needs. The majority of teachers who listed specific repertoire included flute etudes and repertoire as a preferred method of study.
- 7) According to the respondents, intonation is by far the most overwhelming challenge of playing the piccolo. The most common suggestion for assistance in this area was to work slowly and carefully with a tuner.
- 8) Respondents expressed that patience, willingness to learn, and courage are some non-musical qualities that will assist students in their piccolo studies.

Suggestions for Further Research

It would be beneficial and interesting to further examine the initial survey questions in greater detail. Perhaps other surveys could be administered, each of which focused on one pedagogical area. It would also be illuminating to include international flute teachers as well as those from the United States.

During the pilot study, a beneficial suggestion was made to select five to ten piccolo professionals (teachers and/or performers) and interview them. This would allow for a more in-depth view of the subject of piccolo pedagogy.

It is also the hope of this author to encourage piccolo study through the writing of a beginning piccolo method.

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APPENDIX
PILOT SURVEY

Below is the original pilot survey, prior to modifications.¹⁷

Please list your degrees and the institutions from which they were received.¹⁸

Was piccolo a required part of your own degree work? If not, how did you learn?

How many flute students do you teach?¹⁹

Is piccolo study required of your flute students? Why or why not?

How do you determine when a student is ready for piccolo?²⁰

Do you prefer your students to play on an instrument made of a specific material?

Do you prefer a particular brand of piccolo? If so, please specify.

For piccolo instruction, do you incorporate specific solo repertoire, orchestral excerpts, method books, and/or other course of study?

Do you advise students to use different embouchures for flute and piccolo?

Do you believe that piccolo playing interferes with achieving a good flute sound?

¹⁷ Questions were later numbered and separated by category.

¹⁸ This question was discarded, as it had no relevance to the objective of the study.

¹⁹ The wording of this question was modified in order to be more specific.

²⁰ The wording of this question was modified to encourage the identification of specific traits among student(s).

Imagine that you have a flute student playing piccolo for the first time. Describe the first piccolo lesson.²¹

What do you feel is the biggest challenge of piccolo playing?²²

Please comment on anything further regarding piccolo study/instruction, including personal experiences, you philosophy of teaching piccolo, etc.

²¹ This question was modified to ask more specifically for a single instruction, rather than require the description of an entire lesson.

²² Due to a large number of possible answers, a multiple choice format was used instead. Also, a question was added in order to allow respondents to address specific challenge(s).