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Over a period of twenty-four months, between March 2020 and March 2022, societal changes and shifts in academic instruction fundamentally altered the ways in which applied instrument lessons were effectively taught. These changes forced teachers to adapt their curriculum in order to meet the needs of their students. Additionally, the COVID-19 global pandemic further burdened teachers and students alike as the academic world struggled to adjust to a new normal for longer than most teachers, students, parents, and administrators anticipated. Using my research, I will examine how applied lessons are conventionally taught, some of the recent challenges teachers faced during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as potential ramifications from the social unrest that coincided with the pandemic, and deduce what methods and resources worked well for teachers and how these resources can continue to be applied in their curriculum. I will examine and compare methods and resources utilized over a period of twenty-four months and present a resource that details what methods led to positive learning outcomes, as well as what conventional methods produced negative learning outcomes. I will also provide an aggregate of new resources introduced and popularized over a period of twenty-four months that produced positive learning outcomes so that horn instructors have more options to be effective.

UNCONVENTIONAL LESSONS LEARNED: A SURVEY  
OF APPLIED HORN INSTRUCTORS

by

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Approved by

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Dr. Abigail Pack  
Committee Chair

## DEDICATION

To my grandmother, Louise Renwall, who always made sure her darling boy was healthy and strong and good. And to all those who believed in me, even when I didn't believe in myself.

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation, written by Elliott Thomas Stanger, has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Over the course of twenty-four months, between March 2020 and March 2022, a life-changing global pandemic, as well as societal and economic unrest, had a profound effect on the world. These events undoubtedly affected academic institutions, as the conventional norms for academic instruction and education were tested, altered, destroyed, and rebuilt to meet new guidelines for health, safety, equity, diversity, and inclusion. The resources and support needed to meet these new guidelines were not distributed evenly amongst teachers, or schools, or departments, and some received no resources or support at all.

During this same time period, female and woman-identifying students, students of color, and students of the LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Queer, etc.) community publicly voiced concerns that collegiate ensembles were not playing music by composers that represented them. Furthermore, these groups asserted that much of the curriculum being taught at their colleges and universities was rooted in Western European and male ideologies and perspectives. Many specific events that coincided with the pandemic exacerbated these concerns and prompted school administration to enact changes to curriculum.

Students enrolled in music schools and conservatories at higher education institutions across the United States were not exempt from this catastrophic breakdown in education and instruction. For two full academic years, many students and teachers were deprived of the unique experience that comes with being in a program where growth is primarily fostered by in-person instruction, large and small-scale collaborative effort, and hearing live acoustic sound. In addition, many teachers were required to make changes to their curriculum in order to meet new equity, diversity, and inclusion guidelines, whereas some schools and teachers did not feel the need, nor were required, to make any adjustments. The ways in which applied music lessons

were conducted during this time were extremely unconventional in terms of scheduling, setting, presentation, and curriculum, and, according to the research provided in this document, did not provide the best positive learning outcomes.

Professional musicians that run private horn studios outside of academia were also affected by these challenges, as many of them were concerned with the ramifications of spreading a deadly virus, losing student interest in music and therefore missing the income they provide, and losing performance opportunities due to concert cancellations. Horn teachers also faced a new challenge: discussing social and economic issues with students as controversial events became more prominent and unavoidable in news media.

The purpose of this document is to better equip horn teachers to handle a variety of new academic and social challenges when teaching private lessons to horn students and how to adapt their curriculum accordingly. In addition, I have chosen to focus on curriculum and instruction specific to horn pedagogy, performance practice, and repertoire taught in private horn studios and in higher education. This document will explore how conventional applied horn lesson courses were set up prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and what alterations have been made since then.

As classes begin to return to in-person learning in the Fall of 2022 and regain a semblance of normalcy, there are undoubtedly other ways in which applied horn lessons have permanently changed. This document will highlight and describe some of the ways in which academic instruction has evolved from this twenty-four month period. These changes, coupled with the added importance of providing an environment that is equitable and inclusive, are due in part to societal unrest that occurred over a period of twenty-four months. While implementing these changes into a music educational environment are necessary in order to provide unbiased



instruction, doing so comes with unique challenges that instructors may not currently be equipped to meet.

In the survey I published in March of 2022, I asked professional horn players and teachers about their experiences in teaching over the last twenty-four months. Specifically, I wanted firsthand accounts detailing the positive and negative learning outcomes horn teachers observed, along with the methods that were successful and unsuccessful in meeting these unique challenges related to the pandemic, the health and safety of students moving forward, and also equity, diversity, and inclusion. This document will provide an examination of the data I have collected. This document is a collection of data and testimonials that stretch beyond my personal experience, but may not reflect the experience of all applied horn instructors who faced similar challenges.

Nearly twenty-four months of quarantine, isolation, uncertainty, and the massive public outcry for social justice that coincided with the pandemic gave teachers a push to accelerate the process of adjusting curriculum to address the inequities that had plagued academia for decades prior. This document will chronicle the difficulties teachers and students endured by not being able to play, learn, or teach music in a conventional setting, and some of the changes applied horn instructors made to curriculum in order to meet new equity, diversity, and inclusion guidelines.

This document will also recognize difficult and challenging issues and events that were brought up or took place between 2020 and 2022. It will not attempt to clarify, resolve, or argue the merits of these issues and events; it will bring to light how and why they became necessary to address in higher education.

Finally, this document will provide readers with a collection of observations and resources survey participants used to bring about positive learning outcomes in a variety of non-conventional situations and may be used if academic instruction pivots to unconventional means and methods again. While some applied lesson teachers, school administrators, and students look forward to returning to normal, this document suggests that this two-year experience is an opportunity to embrace change and growth in academia with more latitude.

## CHAPTER II: STANDARD PRACTICES IN APPLIED HORN LESSONS

Applied horn lessons in higher education and private studios are taught in a variety of ways, but can share common traits as far as scheduling, setting, curriculum, and evaluations. Below are brief summaries of ways in which applied lessons are conventionally organized and taught.

### **Scheduling**

Most applied horn lessons are scheduled weekly, usually depending on the student and the program in which the student is enrolled. For instance, students who are minoring in music at a college or university may be enrolled for lessons every other week with their applied teacher, or for a shorter increment of time per week. Music majors generally meet with their applied teacher for one-hour lesson per week. In private studios, a one-hour lesson per week is generally standard, but with greater flexibility. In addition, more or fewer lessons can be scheduled based on availability and necessity.

### **Setting & Delivery**

Applied horn lessons at the college or university level take place in a teacher or professor's office, often in very close proximity, and behind closed doors. This allows the teacher to closely listen to and monitor students' performance practices and mannerisms and clearly and effectively make immediate adjustments when needed. Lessons can also, on occasion, be held in large ensemble practice rooms or larger performance venues during recital preparation when these rooms are available. Private horn studio lessons usually take place at the teacher's home or the student's home, where there can be a mix of distractions and other impediments that may not promote the most positive learning outcomes. These settings can also

foster growth and a greater bond between the teacher and student, as well as family members, by being in a familiar environment.

### **Presentation & Style**

Each horn instructor has their own unique teaching style and ways to present curriculum in their private studios. Students generally seek out teachers with whom they find a connection and build a personal and professional working relationship over the course of several years. During this time, students who wish to teach begin to develop and shape their own teaching styles by observing their instructors. Teachers can also adjust and grow their established methods depending on the individual needs of their students. Depending on the relationship that students have with their applied lesson teacher, it may be common for students to talk about issues not pertaining to music at all with their applied lesson teachers. Among other things, topics may include mental health, social activism, race, and gender identity. Navigating said issues with students may be challenging for some teachers and some teachers may find it difficult or outright refuse to discuss these topics with students if they are brought up.

### **Curriculum**

The curriculum taught in applied horn lessons is quite similar in terms of genres and fundamentals, however the content within will vary depending on the skill level and maturity of each student. Applied lesson teachers may also have specific expectations that are laid out in their syllabus or rubrics at the start of each new semester. Applied lesson teachers often require students to be proficient in scales, fundamentals, and étude work, while simultaneously working on larger horn solos and orchestral excerpts. All or most of this curriculum is typically taught and reviewed in succession at each lesson rather than just one fundamental or piece at a time. Applied lessons may only consist of repertoire assigned by the teacher, or possibly by a school's

administration in order to ensure students meet various learning outcomes. Students may also bring in music they are playing in their large ensembles or chamber groups at school.

### **Evaluations and Assessments**

Applied horn instructors evaluate and assess students based on several factors. Those who teach at a college or university may have less flexibility to evaluate their students progress compared to those who teach in a private studio. For instance, collegiate teachers may have to follow strict academic policies in order to meet student learning outcomes (SLO's). This can be in the form of final letter grades, individual assessments for each lesson or each performance, and weighted grading based on the repertoire studied. Depending on the institution, these learning outcomes may or may not be strictly enforced by teachers or administrators. Private studio teachers have much more freedom in how they evaluate and assess students. Examples of this include handwritten notes, repertoire lists, or frequent contact with the student's parents or guardians, in order to ensure progress is being made outside of lessons.

## CHAPTER III: ISSUES AND EVENTS AFFECTING MUSIC SCHOOLS, TEACHERS, AND STUDENTS, 2020–2022

This chapter will highlight specific issues and events that directly and/or indirectly affected academia, and chronicle the ways in which music schools were required to adjust. While it is difficult to pinpoint the genesis of some of these topics, this document will only cover the occurrences that took place in 2020–2022 and how they affected academic instruction in music schools during this time period.

### **The COVID-19 Pandemic**

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic.<sup>1</sup> By March 25, all public school buildings in the United States had closed with the hopes of re-opening before the end of the academic year. This included over 1,100 colleges and universities, which affected at least 14 million students.<sup>2</sup> By April 17, more than half of those schools chose to remain closed through the end of the semester.<sup>3</sup> This trend of uncertainty continued through the summer of 2020, and decisions on how to resume classes for the Fall 2020 semester were inconsistent across academia. Teachers and students alike did not adjust to the new methods of delivering and receiving education equally. The pandemic prompted an unprecedented shift to some form of internet-based remote learning for the vast majority of students and many teachers were unprepared for the level of work that came with transferring their entire curriculum to an

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<sup>1</sup> Decker, Stacy, Holly Peele, and Maya Riser-Kositsky. "The Coronavirus Spring: The Historic Closing Of U.S. Schools." Education Week. Education Week, February 8, 2021. <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/the-coronavirus-spring-the-historic-closing-of-u-s-schools-a-timeline/2020/07>.

<sup>2</sup> Hess, Abigail J. "How Coronavirus Dramatically Changed College for over 14 Million Students." CNBC. CNBC, March 26, 2020. <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/03/26/how-coronavirus-changed-college-for-over-14-million-students.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

online platform.<sup>4</sup> University students faced difficulties as well, ranging from issues accessing their online curriculum to having to find new living arrangements due to colleges and universities vacating dormitories and on-campus housing.<sup>5</sup>

Students that were enrolled in music schools across the country experienced additional stressors and diminutions including the loss of one-on-one in-person instruction with applied instrument teachers, loss of ensemble rehearsals and rehearsal spaces, and heavy restrictions on performances. Students also dealt with technical difficulties using online platforms for virtual classes such as audio and video lag and sporadic disconnections from the virtual classroom.

When colleges and universities began to reopen for in-person learning, several changes, mandates, and restrictions were put in place in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 as much as possible. While the implementation of these things were not mandated or enforced equally across all colleges and universities in America, these were the most common actions taken between 2020 and 2022.<sup>6</sup> For instance, restrictions were placed on practice rooms and ensemble spaces, limiting the amount of time a student could spend in them. Restrictions were also placed upon the maximum capacity of classrooms and rehearsal spaces. Protocols regarding social distancing, mask wearing, and disinfection were also enacted.

The COVID-19 pandemic also affected the mental health and financial stability of students and teachers alike. According to a survey done at Hanover University, music major

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<sup>4</sup> Survey Tracker: Monitoring How K-12 Educators Are Responding To Coronavirus.” Education Week. EdWeek Research Center, June 7, 2021. <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/survey-tracker-monitoring-how-k-12-educators-are-responding-to-coronavirus/2020/04>.

<sup>5</sup> Hess, Abigail J. How Coronavirus Dramatically Changed College for over 14 Million Students.” CNBC. CNBC, March 26, 2020. <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/03/26/how-coronavirus-changed-college-for-over-14-million-students.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Rosset, Magdalena, Eva Baumann, and Eckart Altenmüller. Studying Music during the Coronavirus Pandemic: Conditions of Studying and Health-Related Challenges.” *Frontiers*. Frontiers, January 1, 1AD. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.651393/full>.

students reported “more stressful thoughts and feelings” during the pandemic compared to students surveyed in 2019.<sup>7</sup> Students and teachers also reported financial distress due to concert cancellations and their inability to perform outside of school commitments.<sup>8</sup>

### **Inequities in Academia**

Between 2020 and 2022, several underrepresented groups representing a variety of races, genders, and sexual identities publicly voiced concerns that the curriculum taught at music schools was not representative of the student body, and that much of the music being performed by collegiate ensembles was written by white, male-identifying composers. In addition, teachers at these institutions also felt that there was not enough diversity or representation in their sometimes decades-old curriculum.<sup>9</sup> These issues were further exacerbated by events and movements that highlighted what many believed to be targeted oppression of several minority groups in America.

As the United States becomes more diverse, the push for more music from non-Western European cultures grows more significant.<sup>10</sup> Across the country, school administrations adopted equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) guidelines and statements in order to ensure that teachers were identifying, analyzing, and remediating structural inequities in the curriculum as well as the

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<sup>7</sup> Rosset, Magdalena, Eva Baumann, and Eckart Altenmüller. “Studying Music during the Coronavirus Pandemic: Conditions of Studying and Health-Related Challenges.” *Frontiers*. Frontiers, January 1, 1AD. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.651393/full>.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> McCusker, Abby. “Ui School of Music Addresses Lack of Diversity in Classical Music, Steps to Improve.” *The Daily Iowan*, February 22, 2021. <https://dailyiowan.com/2021/02/22/university-of-iowa-school-of-music-addresses-lack-of-diversity-in-classical-music-steps-to-improve/>.

<sup>10</sup> Yoo, Hysesoo, and Sangmi Kang. “Development of a Checklist to Evaluate Music Education Websites for World Music Inclusion.” *Contributions to Music Education* 45 (2020): 187–204.



culture in schools of music.<sup>11</sup> EDI committees were also established that sought to commit university resources in order to “[foster]...creative communit[ies] that [honor] each individual’s history, identity, and unique contributions to...institutions, culture, and society.”<sup>12</sup>

Somewhat coincidentally, the COVID-19 global pandemic and reconciling inequities in academia occurred at roughly the same time. While teachers and students struggled through the lengthy adjustment period of internet-based learning and remained frustrated at the lack of diversity and inclusion, some teachers saw an opportunity to make adjustments to their curriculum that would satisfy the need to move to an online platform while addressing students’ persistent requests for diverse and inclusive representation.

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<sup>11</sup> Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee.” College of Visual and Performing Arts. University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Accessed February 25, 2022. [https://vpa.uncg.edu/home/cvpa\\_edi/](https://vpa.uncg.edu/home/cvpa_edi/).

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH SURVEY

I published a research survey to several large horn-related Facebook groups and directly sent the survey to over 150 applied horn instructors at universities across the United States on March 28, 2022 via email. The survey was conducted through Google Forms. The survey was designed to obtain data regarding horn teachers' experiences teaching applied horn lessons over a period of twenty-four months (March 2020 - March 2022), and any unique learning outcomes they saw from their students. The questions revolved around the areas previously mentioned in Chapter 2 (Scheduling, Setting & Delivery, Presentation & Style, Curriculum, and Assessments & Evaluations). Below is a list of all the questions from the survey, accompanied by a brief description and type of prompts used. Before starting the survey, participants were asked to read and agree to an Online Consent Form. All survey questions and supplementary material was approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. The study number for this survey is IRB-FY22-312.

### **Question 1: What is the highest level of student you teach?**

This question was asked to determine the age range of the students that the participants taught. Participants were given choices of "High School and below," "College Undergraduate," and "College Graduate (MM or DMA)" students.

### **Question 2: How frequently and how long do you schedule applied horn lessons with your students? Example: One hour-long lesson every other week.**

This question was asked to determine the length and frequency of the applied horn lessons. Participants were prompted to provide a detailed response via a text box.

**Question 3: Briefly describe how you grade or assess your applied lesson students over the course of their tenure with you. If you are a university teacher or similar, you can put "letter grades."**

This question was asked to determine the type of evaluations and assessments applied by instructors used during lessons. Participants were prompted to provide a detailed response via a text box.

**Question 4: Were you required to shift your applied lesson teaching to "online-only" at any point during the last twenty-four months?**

This question was asked to determine if applied lesson teachers were required to shift to a virtual setting to teach lessons over the last twenty-four months. Participants were given "Yes" and "No" options to choose from.

**Question 5: Did you make any changes to your teaching related to COVID-19 in the last twenty-four months? This could include: changing processes related to health concerns, setting up zoom meetings, equipment purchases, etc.**

This question was asked to determine if applied lesson instructors were required to change or adapt any of their teaching methods due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants were given "Yes," "No," and "Don't Know" options to choose from.

**Question 6: If you answered "Yes" to the question above, please list any unique challenges you faced and/or changes you made.**

This question was asked to determine what kinds of challenges teachers faced while adapting their curriculum to an online-only platform. Participants were prompted to provide a detailed response via a text box.

**Question 7: Did you make any changes to your teaching related to students' mental health, anxiety, lack of focus, or overall demeanor? This could include: adding recreational/outdoor activities, non-conventional assignments, adjusting deadlines, etc.**

This question was asked to determine whether or not teachers adapted their curriculum specifically related to changes in students' mental health. Participants were given "Yes," "No," and "Don't Know" options to choose from.

**Question 8: If you answered "Yes" to the question above, please list any unique challenges you faced and/or changes you made.**

This question was asked to determine what kinds of challenges teachers faced while adapting their curriculum to meet the needs of students in relation to their mental health. Participants were prompted to provide a detailed response via a text box.

**Question 9: Did you make any changes to your teaching as a result of administrative directives? This could include: changes to your curriculum, delivery methods, your personal concept of teaching, etc.**

This question was asked to determine whether or not teachers adapted their curriculum specifically related to administrative directives. Participants were given "Yes," "No," and "Don't Know" options to choose from.

**Question 10: If you answered "Yes" to the question above, please list any unique challenges you faced and/or changes you made.**

This question was asked to determine what kinds of challenges teachers faced while adapting their curriculum to meet administrative directives. Participants were prompted to provide a detailed response via a text box.

**Question 11: Did you write or update any course documents for the purpose of adaptability or accessibility in the last twenty-four months? This could include: EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) statements, syllabus, honor code, etc.**

This question was asked to determine whether or not teachers adapted their curriculum specifically related to include terminology related to meeting new or changing equity, diversity, and/or inclusion standards. Participants were given "Yes," "No," and "Don't Know" options to choose from.

**Question 12: Did you adapt or diversify your course content in the last twenty-four months? This could include: changes in curriculum, addition of underrepresented composers, greater global diversity, non-Western European content, etc.**

This question was asked to determine whether or not teachers adapted their curriculum specifically related to include curriculum related to meeting new or changing equity, diversity, and/or inclusion standards. Participants were given Yes, and No options to choose from.

**Question 13: If you answered "Yes" to either of the last two questions above, please list any changes you made.**

This question was asked to determine what kinds of changes teachers made to their curriculum in regards to meet new or changing equity, diversity, and/or inclusion standards. Participants were prompted to provide a detailed response via a text box.

**Question 14: Did you observe any unique positive learning outcomes at any point during the last twenty-four months?**

Participants were given "Yes," "No," and "Don't Know" options to choose from.

**Question 15: Did you observe any unique negative learning outcomes at any point during the last twenty-four months?**

Participants were given "Yes," "No," and "Don't Know" options to choose from.

**Question 16: Reflecting on your answers from this survey, please describe any unique learning outcomes and the methods you used to teach applied lessons during the last twenty-four months. What adapted methods did you use that you will continue to use? What methods did you try that you will abandon moving forward? Were there added costs or time commitments? Please be as detailed as possible.**

This question was asked for participants to describe any unique challenges they faced or learning outcomes they observed while teaching over the last twenty-four months. Participants were also asked to list any teaching methods they used that saw positive learning outcomes so that these resources could be shared with others. Participants were prompted to provide a detailed response via a text box.

## CHAPTER V: PRESENTATION OF DATA FROM RESEARCH SURVEY, PART 1

My research survey was answered by twenty participants in total. All participants are horn players that teach applied lessons to at least one student at the collegiate level. Their specific occupations ranged from private music teacher to tenured university professor. This chapter will present a summary of the data acquired for each question, along with quotes from select participants. Direct quotes from participants will use the designation HT for Horn Teacher, and a number representing the survey participant (1–20). This chapter will cover responses for questions 1–15.

### **Question 1: What is the highest level of student you teach?**

70% of participants indicated that they teach college undergraduate and graduate students. 30% of participants indicated that they only teach undergraduate students at the highest level.

### **Question 2: How frequently and how long do you schedule applied horn lessons with your students? Example: One hour-long lesson every other week**

Participants indicated that their applied lessons range from thirty-minute to sixty-minute appointments on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. Several participants who teach at the university level also indicated that their students attend roughly thirty weekly lessons over two semesters every school year.

### **Question 3: Briefly describe how you grade or assess your applied lesson students over the course of their tenure with you. If you are a university teacher or similar, you can put "letter grades."**

Participants indicated that their assessments of students relied on a simple letter grade system. Some participants noted that their final letter grade was based on several factors

including student self-led assessments, jury performances, recital attendance, lesson preparedness, and written assignments. One participant, a freelance private lesson instructor (HT 19) said that they do not have a structured assessment rubric. They responded, “students are all there because they want to be and we work through skills and repertoire at whatever pace suits their learning capabilities. Some students move faster than others but we move from topic to topic without benchmarks to hit along the way.”<sup>13</sup>

**Question 4: Were you required to shift your applied lesson teaching to "online-only" at any point during the last twenty-four months?**

90% of participants answered affirmatively. 10% of participants indicated they were not required to shift their applied lesson teaching to an online format.

**Question 5: Did you make any changes to your teaching related to COVID-19 in the last twenty-four months? This could include: changing processes related to health concerns, setting up zoom meetings, equipment purchases, etc.**

100% of participants answered affirmatively.

**Question 6: If you answered "Yes" to the question above, please list any unique challenges you faced and/or changes you made.**

Participants indicated that they moved all or some of their applied lesson meetings to an internet-based platform such as Zoom, Blackboard Collaborate, or Skype. Participants noted several challenges such as not being able to adequately see embouchure or hand placement, the inability to play alongside students in real time, an excessive amount of time spent pulling up digital music copies, and most common, the lack of sound quality due to the limited capabilities of students’ computers or other video conferencing devices such as mobile phones.

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<sup>13</sup> Survey Participant HT 19



Some participants noted that several items needed to be purchased for their classroom or home office to either make online learning easier to navigate, or to meet new health and safety guidelines while teaching in person. These items included bell covers, playing masks, external microphones, webcams, lighting, green screens, recording and editing software, sanitizing solvents and wipes, plexiglass barriers, and air purifiers.

Most participants also experienced some sort of difficulty while learning to use new technology during applied horn lessons. One university professor (HT 18) noted, “[The] quality of sound was largely dependent on equipment quality on the other end, so that presented challenges in accurately assessing student progress. Demonstration was also an issue, as I couldn’t be sure of what they were getting on the other end.”<sup>14</sup> Another university professor (HT 4) commented that online learning “has a long way to go before [it] is a viable option, especially with not giving the “original sound” option for some devices ...[I] had to teach in a small house and at times in my own bedroom due to [my] wife also teaching on [the] same university music faculty.”<sup>15</sup>

Teachers with families and children who were forced to teach from home also commented on their unique struggles having to balance work and taking care of their families who were also at home. A university professor (HT 13) commented, “A huge challenge as a mom of younger public school age children...was maintaining a full music schedule (loud horn playing, teaching, etc) while [my children] also had online learning at home.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Survey Participant HT 18

<sup>15</sup> Survey Participant HT 4

<sup>16</sup> Survey Participant HT 13

Participants also raised concerns that falling ill while working would cause financial burdens and further limit the amount of time for ensemble rehearsal. A university professor (HT 11) remarked, “I cannot risk even getting a cold because it could jeopardize all of my freelance income. I have taught at irregular hours to secure a large space for me and my students for both lessons and chamber coachings, and have used Zoom when needed.”<sup>17</sup>

**Question 7: Did you make any changes to your teaching related to students' mental health, anxiety, lack of focus, or overall demeanor? This could include: adding recreational/outdoor activities, non-conventional assignments, adjusting deadlines, etc.**

70% of participants answered affirmatively. 10% of participants did not know whether or not they made any changes. 20% of participants indicated they did not make any changes to their teaching related to students’ mental health, anxiety, lack of focus, or overall demeanor.

**Question 8: If you answered "Yes" to the question above, please list any unique challenges you faced and/or changes you made.**

Participants indicated that several adjustments needed to be made to their curriculum related to students’ mental health, especially mental health concerns that coincided with the pandemic. Not all participants noted changes across all twenty-four months, however several specific changes were common. For instance, participants noted that some assignments and lessons had to be made optional, and “[the] expectations of student productivity, and time involved, was adjusted appropriately due to the physical and cultural expectations relative to availability and opportunity within the pandemic environment.”<sup>18</sup> In regards to mental health, participants noted that applied lessons became more conversational rather than musical. HT 4

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<sup>17</sup> Survey Participant HT 11

<sup>18</sup> Survey Participant HT 18

remarked, “Lessons became half venting sessions about other classes and many families required students to start working if they were going to be in the home. This took away from a significant amount of previously available practice time.”<sup>19</sup>

Due to the health and safety guidelines put in place at most universities across the country, many horn teachers opted to hold in-person classes and rehearsals outside, which allowed for much-desired face-to-face instruction, and these meetings were a positive impact on students’ mental health. HT 17 mentioned that they added “Outdoor activities, more recording and sharing for students, [and] much more time to discuss student feelings and perceptions during the worst of the pandemic.”<sup>20</sup>

In addition to adjusting expectations to learning outcomes, some participants made adjustments to their attendance policies. HT 11 remarked, “Before COVID I required twenty-four hours notice for any absence, excused or not. Post-COVID I am much more flexible—I offer more makeup times because I know my students are struggling with mental health, even more so after the past two years. I require they communicate with me, but if they contact me a few hours before I still offer them some form of makeup lesson time.”<sup>21</sup> HT 14 remarked that the lack of in-person instruction caused “...not only an anxiety at feeling like improvement was difficult, but a depressive state that things were not normal. The lack of physical interaction with adjustments to the students' playing or the intangible presence of the student and teacher in the same room was

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<sup>19</sup> Survey Participant HT 4

<sup>20</sup> Survey Participant HT 17

<sup>21</sup> Survey Participant HT 11

detrimental to the ability for the student to feel inspired and excited about what they were doing without the prospect of making music live with another person.”<sup>22</sup>

**Question 9: Did you make any changes to your teaching as a result of administrative directives? This could include: changes to your curriculum, delivery methods, your personal concept of teaching, etc.**

60% of participants answered affirmatively. 40% of participants indicated they did not make changes to their teaching as a result of administrative directives.

**Question 10: If you answered "Yes" to the question above, please list any unique challenges you faced and/or changes you made.**

Several participants who answered affirmatively noted that they were required to move their lessons to an online format such as Zoom, and to abide by several new health and safety protocols, such as mask-wearing, plexiglass barriers, bell covers, and holding class in open-air environments while teaching in-person. Several participants were required to adopt a “hybrid” approach to teaching lessons, as health and safety guidelines were frequently tightened and loosened during the course of the pandemic.

Teachers were also “strongly encouraged to not fail students and to allow them to make up any work/lessons from any point.”<sup>23</sup> Some participants were also required to abandon paper assignments and instead found it easier to share assignments and music through the use of an online, cloud-based platform. This shift to online instruction and learning also allowed teachers to have a permanent and organized online repository of their curriculum. HT 11 commented, “I have finally uploaded much of my library so that I can just share links with students. I also have

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<sup>22</sup> Survey Participant HT 14

<sup>23</sup> Survey Participant HT 2

changed the format of my course evaluations and exams to online forms or submissions. I also had students who had bad internet at home or lack of access to devices to do remote lessons, so I made video/audio recordings of warmups and rep they are working on so that they could hear my example more clearly. I have continued to use these even after going back in-person most of the time.”<sup>24</sup>

**Question 11: Did you write or update any course documents for the purpose of adaptability or accessibility in the last twenty-four months? This could include: EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) statements, syllabus, honor code, etc.**

50% of participants answered affirmatively. 50% of participants indicated they did not write or update any course documents for the purpose of adaptability or accessibility in the last twenty-four months.

**Question 12: Did you adapt or diversify your course content in the last twenty-four months?**

**This could include: changes in curriculum, addition of underrepresented composers, greater global diversity, non-Western European content, etc.**

50% of participants answered affirmatively. 50% of participants indicated they did not adapt or diversify their course content in the last twenty-four months.

**Question 13: If you answered "Yes" to either of the last two questions above, please list any changes you made.**

Of the ten participants who answered affirmatively, nine of them indicated that they added curriculum and programmed music by underrepresented minority groups within the last twenty-four months. These underrepresented minority groups include BIPOC (Black,

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<sup>24</sup> Survey Participant HT 11.

Indigenous, People of Color), female, and LGBTQ+ individuals. Aside from this commonality, participants also noted that they programmed and taught more music from living composers, as well as invited many more guest artists to their classrooms, virtual or otherwise.

**Question 14: Did you observe any unique positive learning outcomes at any point during the last twenty-four months?**

75% of participants answered affirmatively. 10% of participants did not know whether or not they observed any unique positive learning outcomes. 15% of participants indicated they did not observe any unique positive learning outcomes.

**Question 15: Did you observe any unique negative learning outcomes at any point during the last twenty-four months?**

90% of participants answered affirmatively. 5% of participants did not know whether or not they observed any unique positive learning outcomes. 5% of participants indicated they did not observe any unique negative learning outcomes.

## CHAPTER VI: PRESENTATION OF DATA FROM RESEARCH SURVEY, PART 2

This chapter is a summary of participants' detailed responses from Question 16 of the survey. Participants were asked to describe any unique learning outcomes (positive, negative, or otherwise) they observed while teaching applied horn lessons and the methods they used over a period of twenty-four months due to the COVID-19 global pandemic and/or reconciling inequities in academia. Participants were also encouraged to specify any adapted or adjusted methods that worked well which they will continue to use, as well as methods they tried that were ultimately abandoned.

### **Positive Learning Outcomes and Observations**

Participants noted the benefits of adding more technology to their curriculum and the impact that it had on students. HT 14 remarked, "...students and faculty became much more appreciative of the technology capabilities we have and gained skills they might not have. Students in my studio were tasked with things like learning to record to a high standard, multi-tracking, arranging, and other technological tasks, which expanded their horizons. Faculty were forced to confront technology as a means to accomplish their teaching and many responded enthusiastically and cultivated unique methods to reach students."<sup>25</sup> Participants noted that while most of them looked forward to returning to in-person instruction, they will utilize Zoom and other internet-based resources in specific cases, such as travel or illness.<sup>26</sup> Additionally, one participant noted that their students "...have become more comfortable with equipment used for Zoom lessons and recording. Students have continued to record themselves in practice sessions

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<sup>25</sup> Survey Participant HT 14

<sup>26</sup> Survey Participant HT 8

as a practice technique and to keep me updated on their progress.”<sup>27</sup> More than one participant commented that they plan to implement more recording assignments for students to self-diagnose problems in their playing, increase their marketability, prepare for auditions, and chart growth through their academic careers.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic required teachers and students to quickly adapt, some participants used this shift as an opportunity and a lesson for their students. HT 13 said, “We were forced by the situation to dive into sources and resources instantly and ‘learn as we go.’”<sup>28</sup> Another participant remarked that despite the depressing nature of the pandemic and other issues, teachers needed to exude confidence and support to their students in order to produce positive learning outcomes. “I ultimately find that during the continuing unease...that it is ever more important to show students the support and positive outlook that we all need. Encouragement and sensitivity are paramount, and should always be included in instruction...I feel that going the extra mile with these practices in recent months has allowed my students to feel more comfortable in their artistic space, and as a result more capable of finding progress without an overwhelming sense of anxiety or perfectionism.”<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, events and issues regarding social justice that coincided with the pandemic and occurred within the twenty-four-month period became topics of discussion for some students. HT 15 stated, “I began engaging [in] philosophical conversations with my students about the issues that concern them regarding representation within classical music, and we continue to have such conversations.”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Survey Participant HT 3

<sup>28</sup> Survey Participant HT 13

<sup>29</sup> Survey Participant HT 7

<sup>30</sup> Survey Participant HT 15



## **Negative Learning Outcomes And Observations**

While participants noted the benefits of a more technology-driven curriculum, they also described some of the drawbacks they face while implementing it, which affected students' progress. "Even with external microphones purchased, students still did not improve as much as we would like them to because of the lack of physical adjustments that many times needed to happen, tone quality distortion over the internet, and endurance issues with the lack of significant playing time with others in an ensemble."<sup>31</sup> Additionally, "Time commitments were more than doubled for all areas of teaching, [e]specially through online submissions and separate listening and grading. Engaging students for music, a social activity, was extremely difficult and students did not always stay healthy mentally."<sup>32</sup> Some participants also stated that they will abandon online lessons due to the inability to correct certain errors in students' playing. "Corrections in intonation, posture or hand position are almost impossible online, and the sound can be very inconsistent."<sup>33</sup> Participants also noted a lack of motivation and an increased amount of burnout which "...created a greater need to speak and discuss these things with students."<sup>34</sup>

## **Other Observations**

Participants also noted students' increased caution when it came to personal illnesses and to avoid the spread of germs. HT 5 remarked, "One of the benefits of the pandemic was an increased awareness of personal health and its effects on others—my students are more willing to stay home when sick now when before they would have come to lessons with a cold. I don't offer

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<sup>31</sup> Survey Participant HT 14

<sup>32</sup> Survey Participant HT 4

<sup>33</sup> Survey Participant HT 10

<sup>34</sup> Survey Participant HT 17

regular online lessons at the moment, but students have an option to take an online lesson if they're sick instead of missing a lesson.”<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Survey Participant HT 5

## CHAPTER VII: RESOURCES AND SUGGESTIONS FOR APPLIED HORN TEACHERS

As previously mentioned, applied horn lessons in higher education and private studios are taught in a variety of ways, but can share common traits as far as scheduling, setting, curriculum, and evaluations. According to the data presented and the responses from survey participants, it is clear that changes need to be made in order to meet the needs of students in regards to health, safety, equity, diversity, and inclusion. Below are some resources and suggestions applied horn teachers can use to adapt their curriculum moving forward.

### **Scheduling**

Following the events that occurred between March 2020 and March 2022, most applied horn lessons are still scheduled weekly, usually depending on the student and the program in which the student is enrolled. However, applied lesson teachers may wish to amend or remove attendance policies requiring students to be at their lessons in-person, in case of illness or other issues. Teachers may also wish to offer online lessons as an option for students who, for whatever reason and without making assumptions, may be unable to be physically present in class.<sup>36</sup> In addition, at the beginning of each semester, it may be helpful to have students fill out questionnaires or information cards that would privately indicate possible reasons why they would miss lessons, and help instructors schedule accordingly.<sup>37</sup> According to survey participants' responses, added flexibility in scheduling lessons did not correlate to negative learning outcomes.

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<sup>36</sup> Teaching Methods." Dartmouth Center for the Advancement of Learning. University of Dartmouth, January 6, 2022. <https://dcal.dartmouth.edu/resources/teaching-methods>.

<sup>37</sup> 10 Ideas For A Great First Day Of Class." Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching. Iowa State University, July 20, 2022. <https://www.celt.iastate.edu/instructional-strategies/preparing-to-teach/10-ideas-for-a-great-first-day-of-class/>.

## **Setting & Delivery**

According to the responses from the survey, health and safety protocols put in place due to the pandemic greatly affected the ability to teach lessons in a conventional setting (as described in Chapter 2). While these protocols and restrictions have been loosened in recent months, applied lesson teachers may wish to continue maintaining an online or virtual setting in case they or their students cannot attend class physically. Establishing an inviting virtual classroom, familiarization with the resources and technical limitations and benefits of various applications, and setting clear expectations and instructions for students on how to navigate new classroom settings are ways applied lesson teachers can be effective moving forward. Although the change of setting and delivery method did cause some negative learning outcomes and observations for some survey participants, many indicated that they will continue to maintain some sort of online or virtual presence for their students in the future, should the need to return to virtual learning arise.

## **Presentation & Style**

Horn teachers' teaching styles and ways to present curriculum in their private studios had to be altered in a variety of ways between March 2020 and March 2022. Virtual classrooms added physical distance and led to less personal interactions with students. Issues involving equity, diversity, and inclusion may have contributed to difficult discussions and interactions with students during an already difficult time. According to the answers supplied by the survey participants and further research, creating classroom materials that are more accessible to students of all abilities was an immediate benefit. The University of Dartmouth notes the benefits of creating more accessible course content:

- Accessible materials ensure that individuals with disabilities can access the information contained in your materials.
- These same changes will help all students, regardless of ability, with a variety of learning needs. For example, changes to how you structure text can help students for which English isn't their first language.
- Simplifying the navigation of your course in [online learning management systems] can help students using mobile devices as well as students who are low vision or blind.
- Adding captions helps students with hearing loss as well as students who are new to a content area and key terminology.<sup>38</sup>

### **Curriculum**

Applied horn teachers greatly altered their curriculum following the events between March 2020 and March 2022, according to the responses supplied by the survey participants. Due to the uncertain nature of that time period, and the poor experiences some teachers had giving virtual applied lessons, many teachers opted to remove some performance-based curriculum in favor of more listening and writing assignments. In response to the calls for more inclusive and diverse curriculum, survey participants also programmed more music by female composers, as well as composers of the LGBTQ+ and BIPOC communities. Ithaca College has started a repository on their website “to pull together resources available for identifying and discussing music by marginalized composers.”<sup>39</sup> Applied horn teachers may benefit from

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<sup>38</sup> Teaching Methods.” Dartmouth Center for the Advancement of Learning. University of Dartmouth, January 6, 2022. <https://dcal.dartmouth.edu/resources/teaching-methods>.

<sup>39</sup> Diversifying Your Music Repertoire.” Diversifying Your Music Repertoire . Ithaca College Libraries. Accessed February 25, 2022. <https://libguides.ithaca.edu/c.php?g=1050190&p=7623135>.

creating their own lists with help from their students, as well as commissioning, programming, premiering, and promoting music from marginalized groups.

### **Evaluations and Assessments**

Evaluations and assessments of students largely remain the same today compared to March 2020 and prior. Applied lesson teachers who teach at a college or university are still required to adhere to grading policies set by the school’s administration. As previously mentioned, survey participants noted that removing or loosening certain requirements such as attendance or hard deadlines needed to be done in order to meet the needs of students during the twenty-four month period between March 2020 and March 2022. End-of-term evaluations, such as juries or exams, also needed to be altered due to health and safety guidelines put in place because of the pandemic. Moving forward, applied lesson teachers may wish to require students to send recordings or videos to teachers for evaluation purposes. “Requir[ing students] to record themselves more than they used to...was an excellent practice and learning tool for them [that] we continue to use.”<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Survey Participant HT 2

## CHAPTER VIII: SUGGESTIONS FOR CONTINUED USE

The research and testimonials provided in this document prove that some teachers were more equipped to handle the unconventional nature of academia between March 2020 and March 2022 compared to others. In order for this research to remain relevant and useful, it is recommended that a resource be built by and for horn instructors to share knowledge and experiences in teaching unconventional curriculum in unconventional settings. This resource should be easily accessible for little to no cost. This resource should also provide applied horn instructors with an equitable amount of information and content in order to meet the needs of students should the need for unconventional instruction arise while teaching applied horn lessons. The content that would be provided in this resource would include, but not be limited to:

- Technology and equipment recommendations for creating and maintaining an online/virtual classroom use that would be uniquely beneficial to horn performance, such as microphones, cameras, and other equipment.
- Alternative curriculum that can be completed remotely or in place of conventional curriculum such as recording assignments, self-assessments, writing prompts, listening journals, and other assignments.
- Repertoire recommendations that may meet certain equity, diversity, and inclusion guidelines.

The adoption and promotion of this resource by established horn societies and groups would further ensure that horn teachers globally would have equitable access to peer-reviewed and proven methods and curriculum. This resources should also be frequently updated and edited by applied horn teachers as methods and technology naturally change over the course of time.

The data and testimonials provided to me through this research may also be obvious to veteran teachers with years of experience. However, this research may prove more valuable to undergraduate and graduate students who did not have the opportunity to teach between March 2020 and March 2022 and who may find themselves unaware of the significance and challenges presented to teachers during that two-year span. I also recommend offering this data as a presentation to students so that they may be more aware of unique and unconventional challenges they may face as new teachers.



## CHAPTER VIII: CONCLUSION

Between March 2020 and March 2022, the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with several events that prompted social and economic changes, forced the academic world to adjust and reevaluate the ways in which students were taught, as well as the overall curriculum. Among the changes were introducing new health and safety protocols, as well as guidelines to meet new equity, diversity, and inclusion standards. While some institutions were well-equipped to give students the tools to succeed during this period of uncertainty and confusion, many schools and teachers were unprepared to meet the needs of students.

Since March 2022, the participants of my survey have overwhelmingly noted positive learning outcomes and an increased enthusiasm from students due to the changes in scheduling, setting and delivery, curriculum, and evaluations and assessments they have put in place. Applied lesson teachers have loosened strict attendance and assignment policies. Through the tumultuous twenty-four months of the pandemic, teachers have also been made more aware of students' mental and physical health. Teachers have also added new technology elements, such as virtual classrooms and online learning management platforms, to connect with their students when in-person instruction is not ideal or allowed. Teachers have also added listening and writing assignments, programmed music by composers from marginalized and diverse backgrounds, and tackled important social issues with students. Finally, teachers have also embraced more latitude and flexibility when it comes to evaluations and assessments of students, as the mental and physical health of students has been affected by social and economic issues, including some exacerbated by the pandemic.

The participants of the survey published in March of 2022 overwhelmingly indicated that the ways in which they teach applied horn lessons have forever changed, and this new normal

has yielded positive and negative learning outcomes that will need to be addressed further as society moves past the pandemic and begins to regularly and comprehensively address issues pertaining to equity, diversity, and inclusion in the classroom. Horn teachers, and teachers of all subjects may use this document as a resource to embrace the unconventional and adapt in times of uncertainty in order to ensure their students are equipped for success.

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## APPENDIX A: SOLO RECITALS

- I. Solo Recital: Saturday, April 29, 2017, 7:30 p.m., Organ Hall. *Fantasy for Horn* (Malcolm Arnold); *become/decay* (Tyler Kline); *Trio Nr. 1 für Flöte, Horn und Fagott* (Jacques Wiederkehr); *Dessert no. 1* (Lowell Shaw); *Suite for Two Horns* (Alan Civil); *Chasing the Lights: Selections from “La La Land”* (Justin Hurwitz, arr. Asher Carlson).
- II. Solo Recital: Saturday, April 28, 2018, 7:30 p.m., Organ Hall. *Desserts no.7 & 9* (Lowell Shaw); *Sonata for Horn and Piano* (Paul Hindemith); *Reflections on a Southern Hymn* (Stephen Gryc); *Chorale Prelude: A Mighty Fortress Is Our God* (Johann Sebastian Bach).
- III. Solo Recital: Tuesday, April 9, 2019, 7:30 p.m., Organ Hall. *March of the Resistance* (John Williams arr. Justin Worley); *Berceuse, op. 19* (Jean-Michel Damase); *En Foret* (Eugene Bozza); *Horn Trio in Eb Major, op. 40* (Johannes Brahms).