

MUSICLINK: Nurturing Talent and Recognizing Achievement

JOANNE HAROUTOUNIAN

The young musical artist bows to an appreciative audience, peering into the crowd to locate the persons in her life who made this performance possible. Her supportive family is seated, as always, in the front row, center. She hears "bravo" from the school music teacher who has worked with her in performance groups, often featuring her as soloist in school concerts. Her private music teacher paces in the back of the hall, catching her eye to confirm the success of the program that has been painstakingly polished over the past few months of lessons.

The development of musical talent is a genuine team effort. Parents easily recognize the unique way their child plays with sounds as a toddler and preschooler. They encourage and support musical efforts as their child grows through the different stages of development.¹ School music specialists guide this child's broad musical education, seeking ways to challenge and enrich an obvious talent through differentiated curriculum and individualized performance opportunities. The independent music teacher trains the musician through private instruction over a period of years, developing the interpretive ideas that uniquely define this young artist's performance.² This intertwining support allows the musically talented student to grow and flourish.

Yet all too often the school music specialist and independent music teacher meet for the first time at concerts similar to the opening scene. Both share a different side of this young musician, yet communication is scant through these developmental years, with no time or reason for collaboration of teaching efforts. What would happen if these music teachers communicated at the point when the spark of musical potential first surfaced in the classroom or home? What would happen if private instruction was available to students with motivation and potential regardless of their financial ability to afford lessons? How can challenging curricular choices enhance the continuation of advanced study in high school for these students? The MUSICLINK program begins with the simple idea of opening these avenues of possibilities by linking the school music program, student, and private studio to create a nurturing, supportive team for students who show musical promise. MUSICLINK seeks to provide the opportunity for many students from different cultures and economic backgrounds to share that bow on the stage.

MUSICLINK

The MUSICLINK program began in 1992, developed from research on the identification of potential musical talent at the University of Virginia.³ The pro-

gram was embraced by the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) in 1994, and national implementation was initiated in the summer of 1998. MTNA is an organization of approximately 24,000 members, representing college music faculty and independent music teachers across the country. Local music teachers associations and college music programs are initiating the MUSICLINK program in approximately thirty-five states, with a five-year plan to have the program fully implemented nationally by the year 2002.

MUSICLINK consists of two different programs, LessonLink and StudyLink. LessonLink focuses on unveiling and nurturing musical potential and offers ways to develop this talent fully through private instruction. StudyLink emphasizes the need to recognize outstanding achievement in music through independent study options for secondary students, offering academic credit linking private study with school requirements. MUSICLINK is unique because it addresses the continuum of talent development, nurturing elementary school students who show the first signs of potential and challenging motivated secondary students through advanced study.

LessonLink provides private music instruction to students of any school age who show evidence of potential talent in music and who cannot afford private

lessons. It also provides a communicative link between music teachers in the school and the community. The linking process is quite simple. The school music specialist recognizes promising students and completes a rating scale profiling each student's potential musical talent. School records or parent forms confirm financial need and appropriate level of scholarship. The program targets at-risk students who are eligible for free or reduced lunch programs. Independent teachers in the local music teachers association volunteer their instructional time to teach one student for as long as the student wishes to take lessons. MTNA suggests a minimal payment for lessons to foster family commitment, with each scholarship individually determined by the family's financial need. Student progress is monitored by periodic evaluation reports sent to the school and home. The program offers the student long-term talent development through private lessons, and the recognition of his or her ability through the school music program.

During the first year of national implementation, LessonLink has served over 600 students and linked with over 300 schools. Teachers in the program have made a commitment to the America's Promise to donate over 20,000 hours of instructional time to LessonLink students by the end of the year 2000, which exceeds \$400,000 in scholarship donation. America's Promise is a nonprofit organization, chaired by Colin Powell, whose goal is to provide resources that will improve the lives of at-risk youth. LessonLink offers these students an ongoing relationship with a caring adult, a structured activity for after-school hours, and a marketable skill for the future.

StudyLink serves the advancing music student by providing an organizational framework for developing independent study linking private lessons with secondary school course requirements. The program does not require financial need and is workable in any school system that offers independent study options. StudyLink students design their own independent study contracts. They can be performance-based, linked with the

school music program, or have interdisciplinary connections with academic content areas. The program specifies teacher qualifications, instructional hours, and assessment procedures. StudyLink encourages outstanding students to design their own challenging curriculum and repertoire and expands educational opportunities beyond the school walls. A key goal of the MusicLink program is to see LessonLink students develop into StudyLink students.

MUSICLINK is beginning to accumulate valuable information regarding talent identification and development concerning a student population that normally is not part of long-term private music instruction. Data from LessonLink rating forms provide interesting perspectives of the components of talent and their recognition in the classroom, studio, and home. Student evaluation forms offer glimpses of the role of motivation and practice in musical talent development. Students who have successfully continued lessons for a number of years offer a profile of the effectiveness of a collaborative scaffolding of support in their music education. Examples of StudyLink curricula show that outstanding music students seek challenges well beyond teacher expectations. MUSICLINK creates a simple collaborative connection between the school and the community that can work in rural and urban settings to serve promising at-risk students and challenge outstanding musical youth.⁴

Musical Talent Identification

The MUSICLINK program begins with the rationale that schools and studios should recognize and develop potential talent. Actually, the identification of students who show potential talent in music and the arts has been included in federally legislated definitions of giftedness since 1972.⁵ Until recently, however, gifted/talented identification procedures have largely ignored the arts, basing such identification on high general intelligence, IQ, and achievement test scores. Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory, which includes "musical intelligence" as one of eight different types of intelligence, has intrigued the

field of experts on gifted students to investigate ways to differentiate learning for students who show talent in "musical ways of knowing."⁶ The revised 1993 definition of "outstanding talent" reflects a philosophical shift away from "giftedness" towards a developmental approach to talent.⁷ The climate seems appropriate for expanding gifted/talented identification procedures to include music and the arts.

Music education emphasizes the importance of a broad musical education for all students and shies away from talent identification. This may stem from the fear that school administrators will limit music education to those identified as talented, rather than requiring music as part of the basic school curriculum. The *National Standards for Arts Education* cautions that "the argument that relegates the arts to the realm of passive experience for the majority, or that says a lack of 'real talent' disqualifies most people from learning to draw, play an instrument, dance, or act, is simply wrong-headed."⁸

In an educational climate where music programs are continually battling for existence, the notion of identifying promising students with minimal resources to provide services to them may seem a fruitless task. However, one may argue that formal school identification of musical and artistic talent will highlight the importance of the arts within the school curriculum. Formal identification will require schools to seek ways to challenge artistic talent with the same rigor given to other academic talent. Outstanding students will serve as role models for the arts program and receive the challenging curriculum they require for talent development. Music and arts programs will be strengthened by this extension of curricular opportunities.

The gifted identification procedure in academic areas involves a multifaceted process that includes the gathering of student information from multiple sources, with grades and test scores determining achievement and with optional testing for creativity. An identification procedure for music requires alteration of this procedure to include performance assessment and elimina-

tion of academic test thresholds for arts identification. Comprehensive identification may include a multistaged process that includes music aptitude testing and selective performance assessment with outside observers.⁹

The National Standards for Arts Education includes several curricular recommendations concerning differentiation for gifted and talented students and use of community resources to assist in enriching the music curriculum.¹⁰ Community arts resources will welcome the opportunity of assisting promising students; they simply need to be asked. The MUSICLINK program began with the idea that an independent music teacher would gladly volunteer to nurture a single, deserving child through music. This volunteer effort simply adds another student to the studio. The local association assists with music and instrumental needs. The program is free to schools. This simple idea of volunteering to teach a single deserving student could easily be transferred to the dance studio, community theater, or art studio.

LessonLink: Unveiling Potential Talent

The LessonLink program encourages school music specialists to observe students carefully in their classrooms for the first signs of potential talent. The nomination procedure reflects essential components of procedures used in academic talent identification, with adaptation to simplify the process for all concerned. Paperwork is kept to a minimum, with a single form completed by the school office, teachers, parents, and students. Observational rating scales are completed by the parent, school music specialist, and classroom teacher (if the school has no music teacher). Students and parents provide additional biographical information. This information creates a student talent profile that is given to the independent teacher prior to lessons. The independent music teacher completes the same rating scale after six months of lessons with the student. Students and parents attend an audition and interview at the independent teacher's studio to assess capabilities and explain parent and student responsibilities prior

Essentials of Musical Talent

The ten essentials of musical talent are organized into three basic categories—music aptitude and ability (1–5), creative interpretation (6–8), and commitment (9–10)—as follows:

- Music aptitude and ability
 1. Tonal memory: the student can sense sound inwardly, remembering melodies and rhythms
 2. Rhythmic sense: the student can sustain a steady pulse and respond to changes in rhythm and tempo
 3. Perceptive listening: the student perceives fine differences in pitch, rhythm, and melody
 4. Contextual discrimination: the student can identify patterns, melodies, and instruments in a musical context.
 5. Performance: the student plays or sings with accuracy and natural ease
- Creative Interpretation
 6. Experimenting with sounds: the student extends and manipulates musical ideas
 7. Aesthetic sensitivity: the student is aware of slight changes of mood, dynamics, and tonal color
 8. Expressiveness: the student shows expressive involvement through performance or reaction to music
- Commitment
 9. Perseverance: the student shows focused concentration and internal motivation
 10. Readiness to refine ideas: the student critiques self and others and sets high goals

to study. There is no testing required for acceptance to the program.

The talent criteria of the LessonLink rating scales were developed from research that involved content analysis of existing forms, review of the literature, a survey of teachers and experts across music or gifted fields, and a series of interviews with experts and teachers who work with musically talented students.¹¹ Parent rating scales have parallel construction to the teacher rating scales in eight categories, with terminology appropriate for observation of talent at home rather than in a classroom. Spanish translations are available for all parent letters and forms. High correlations between items on the forms indicate internal consistency.¹²

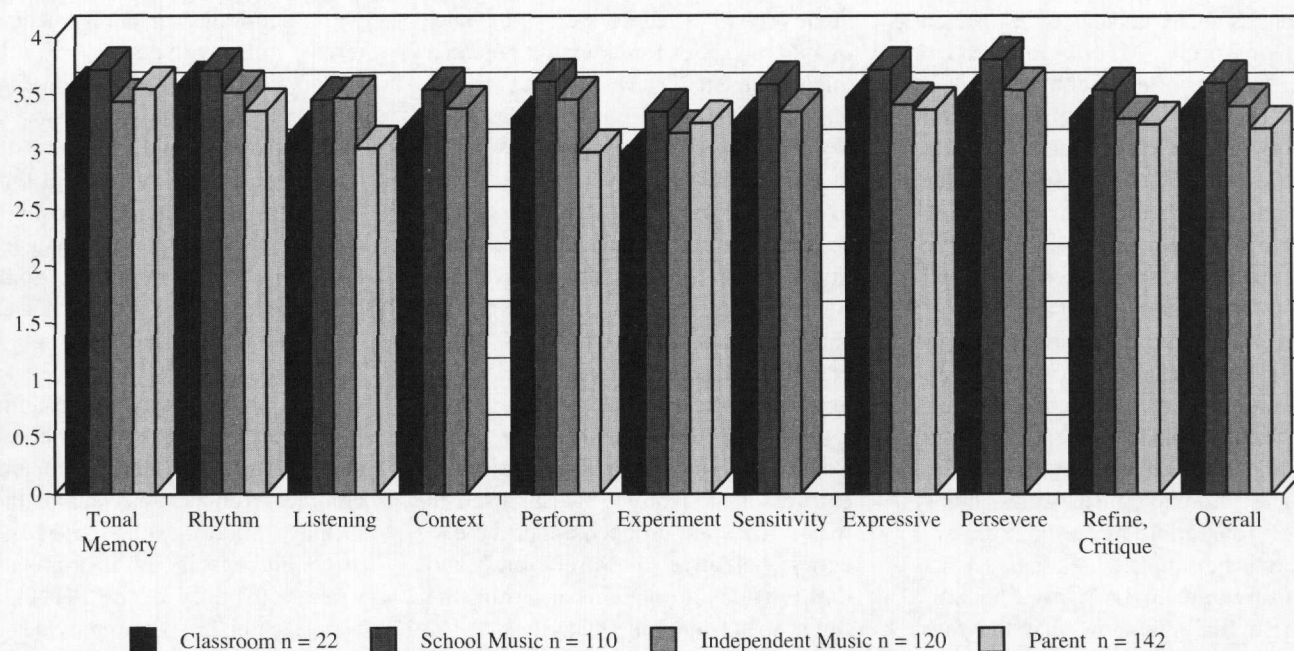
The talent criteria are organized into three basic categories, with ten items on the rating scale (see sidebar).

Statistical analysis of the LessonLink rating forms reveals valuable information regarding the observation of musical potential in the classroom and the home. The chart on page 15 (see figure 1) shows the group mean of each talent characteristic on the rating scale completed by school music specialists, classroom teachers, parents, and inde-

pendent music teachers. Parent means are omitted from items not included in their rating scale. Observed behaviors were rated using a four point Likert scale, from *seldom or never* (1.00) to *almost always* (4.00). A comparison of these means presents a talent perspective of LessonLink students as observed by their teachers and parents.

The group means reflect a range of 2.99–3.80, which shows that the observation of talent was “frequent” to “almost always.” The chart indicates that school music specialists give the highest ratings in nine out of ten items on the rating scale, with a 3.61 overall mean of all characteristics. Independent music teachers give grades with an overall mean of 3.40, with classroom teachers showing 3.37 for an overall mean. Not only do parents show the lowest overall mean in rating their children's talent characteristics (3.20), but ANOVA results reveal ratings significantly lower ($p < .001$ to $.000$) than the school music specialist's in six characteristics (rhythm, perceptive listening, performing, experimenting, expressiveness, and refining musical ideas). Parents and independent music teachers show significant differences ($p < .000$) in their rat-

FIGURE 1. Observation of Potential Musical Talent



ings of perceptive listening and performing. The school and independent music teachers show significant differences ($p < .006$) in tonal memory and expressiveness.¹³

These statistical findings indicate that parents are critically aware of their child's behavior in relation to musical talent, and their input may prove valuable in developing an accurate student talent profile. One may argue that the results indicate that parents are not able to observe these talent behaviors, but added comments clarify their ratings. Seventy-eight percent of the 142 analyzed parent forms contained added comments specifying strengths as well as weaknesses in musical abilities and learning behaviors. Early musical talent development often stems from family musical activities.¹⁴ Parent comments noted incidence of musical activities through church or synagogue (35 percent), spontaneous singing from a young age (28 percent), and lots of "playing" and experimenting on different types of instruments (23 percent), often with family members or relatives. These personal profiles reveal students who enjoy listening to music (23 percent), picking out or making up

their own tunes, and playing just for fun (21 percent).

These parent results are especially noteworthy when you consider that many of the families are considered at-risk. The comments show a vital interest in seeking out musical opportunities for their children. Local MUSICLINK coordinators note that parents who complete and return the forms are more likely to follow through on the responsibilities of transportation and overseeing practice once lessons begin. Local coordinators are urged to follow up with calls to families who do not return forms to see if there are language barriers or questions concerning the program.

The unusually high ratings from school music specialists are worth attention as well. The school music specialists rated students significantly higher than parents in 60 percent of the items, and significantly higher than independent music teachers in two items. In contrast to parents, comments were added to only 20 percent of the 110 analyzed school forms, even though these nomination forms were the sole school information source concerning student abilities. Further investigation of these

forms revealed thirteen forms with blanket perfect ratings and no comments explaining the specifics of this unusually high rating. One form circled all of the "4" ratings at once. These blanket scores will secure the student a place in the program, but may be unreasonably high in estimating the student's capabilities. Comments included showing discipline and perseverance (24 percent), intelligence (10 percent), and musical sensitivity (10 percent).

The ratings of independent music teachers generally fell between parent and school music teacher, with comments found on 48 percent of the 120 analyzed forms. Their comments and student anecdotes were specific to talent assessment after six months of lessons, noting strengths and weaknesses in practice habits, preparation of lessons, and confirming ratings with comments such as "a good ear," "conscientious," "quick learner," "diligent worker," "musically sensitive." Twenty six percent of the forms specifically indicated consistent preparation for lessons, with 10 percent indicating insufficient practice.

There was a smaller number of classroom teachers involved in the nomina-

tion process, with several forms indicating insecurity in completing the music-specific criteria. They included personal comments about students on 35 percent of their forms. MTNA independent music teachers often offer to assist classroom teachers in this observation if schools have no music specialist.

An analytic eye on the specific talent characteristics on the rating scale shows that the highest mean of all groups reflects the basic capacities of music aptitude, tonal memory (3.56) and rhythmic pulse (3.54). The characteristic with the lowest group mean was creative experimentation (3.19). The characteristics that describe aspects of creative interpretation while engaged in performance or in reaction to music were notably higher. Total group mean for expressive performance equaled 3.49, with aesthetic sensitivity rated 3.40 by teachers.

These findings show that the most recognizable characteristics of potential music talent are the basic sensory capacities that have been measured and studied since the field of music psychology was established in the late 1800s. Parents and teachers easily recognize a child who can remember and repeat a melody or rhythm. When this child keeps a steady beat and responds to changes in rhythms and tempo, adults take notice.

The role of creativity and creative interpretation in this identification is more problematic. Creative experimentation involves the extension and manipulation of musical ideas through improvisation and composition. Creative interpretation is evident through personal performance or reaction to music, revealing itself in awareness of aesthetic details and expressive involvement. Ratings reveal that recognition of creative interpretation is more apparent than creative experimentation. Are students simply not creative in musical manipulation, or are they seldom observed engaged in musical tasks that offer creative experimentation?

The research study that developed the LessonLink forms found the same complexity in dealing with creativity and talent identification.¹⁵ Surveys completed by teachers and specialists across

music fields indicated that creative tasks such as creating new sounds, improvising, describing mood, or responding creatively to listening were "not adequate procedures for assessing potential talent in music." The behavioral characteristic of "is highly creative" was rated twelfth in importance out of seventeen characteristics. However, teachers and experts across fields definitively described potential music talent as evident in the "spark" of recognition they experience when observing a student who shows personal involvement in making creative decisions through music, either experimentally or interpretively. As a result of this earlier study, the LessonLink forms show three distinctly different ways that creativity reveals itself in music. They are grouped under the category, "creative interpretation," and they provide information concerning the full scope of musical creativity.

From these findings, we can offer some recommendations concerning musical talent identification. The parents of these students provided valuable information regarding musical activities outside the school and were able to assess and explain their child's musical abilities. Tapping this resource makes sense in an art form that requires ongoing parental support for successful talent development. The church or synagogue is another outside resource that may provide useful information concerning student capabilities. Since the sensory capacities of music aptitude were readily recognized, a music aptitude test may be useful if objective data is required in identification procedures. The identification of creative musical talent will require observation of students making creative decisions through experimentation and interpretive performance. Finally, the rationale of talent identification and development in music needs to be understood and accepted by school music specialists. Students chosen for a program of long-term talent development must be observed and assessed with care at the outset.

Developing Talent

Talent development in music is a process that falls into three basic stages.

Bloom's comprehensive interview study of talent development describes the first stage as one of "play and romance," with "enormous encouragement of interest and involvement, stimulation, freedom to explore, and immediate rewards."¹⁶ The family, primary school music classes, and the first private teacher play primary roles in this nurturing environment. The second, intermediate phase is one of "precision and discipline." The dominant goals are skill, technique, and acquiring accuracy. The final stage arrives when the music student reaches an advanced level and is seeking "individuality and insight."¹⁷

The LessonLink program accepts students of all ages, but the majority of nominees (66 percent) are in the elementary grades. Although MUSICLINK offers lessons in all instruments and voice, a majority of the MTNA members teach piano, which provides an excellent introduction to private lessons for primary to elementary age students. Teachers either come to the school or are located near the child's home or school to ease transportation problems. Students usually do not have pianos, so touch-sensitive keyboards are used for the first few months to establish consistent practice and determine commitment to lessons. Local associations then try to locate donated pianos that are placed in students' homes. Teachers have found that the piano becomes an important feature in the home, and practice soon becomes part of the family routine. Many piano teachers have group classes, computer keyboard opportunities, theory work, and recitals to offer these young students. The nurturing atmosphere fosters the needs of young students in the "play and romance" stage of learning.

Many local associations seek volunteer assistance in instrumental lessons from community orchestras, bands, and jazz musicians. Colleges have shown an interest in working with MUSICLINK to offer their music majors worthwhile teaching experience with deserving students. George Mason University of Fairfax, Virginia, currently has ten seniors or graduate students working with forty area LessonLink students through

their Music Teacher Scholars program, thanks to a generous \$160,000 grant. The grass-roots nature of the program naturally attracts community resources to assist in moving and repair of instruments, music, supplies, and concert tickets for LessonLink families.

LessonLink teachers have also extended opportunities beyond the normal school nomination process. Several volunteer MTA teachers have linked with area high schools or community colleges to offer Kindermusik classes, where at-risk teenage mothers and their toddlers share musical learning. One local association in Florida works with a juvenile detention facility, offering private lessons to teenage girls in drug rehabilitation. A Miami MTA teacher has spearheaded a LessonLink program that offers the children of migrant farm workers private and class keyboard lessons.

The dropout rate of students in the LessonLink program is exceptionally low. Only 3.5 percent of enrolled students dropped out of lessons within the first year of study. Although the national program is only a year old, there are currently forty-two students who have enjoyed lessons for over three years of

the pilot program, with twenty-seven taking four or more years.

Figure 2 shows preliminary findings of Student Evaluation Reports completed by LessonLink teachers over the course of five years of study. Each student is assessed on progress made in technical work, learning music repertoire, theory and composition, and preparation and practice habits. The data are preliminary at this point, due to limited information on students taking three or more years, but the chart still hints at an interesting curve of musical development and learning.

The developmental stage of "precision and discipline" usually arrives between the third and fourth years of private instruction. At this point, talented students, who initially learn quickly, begin to reach a challenging point in repertoire and technical demands. Note that the third year of lessons shows a decided drop in ratings of students. During this transitional stage, talented students who have learned self-disciplined practice habits enjoy working through technical challenges (note the gain in evaluations in the fourth year). Those who have not established these "metaskills" of learning may discontinue lessons.

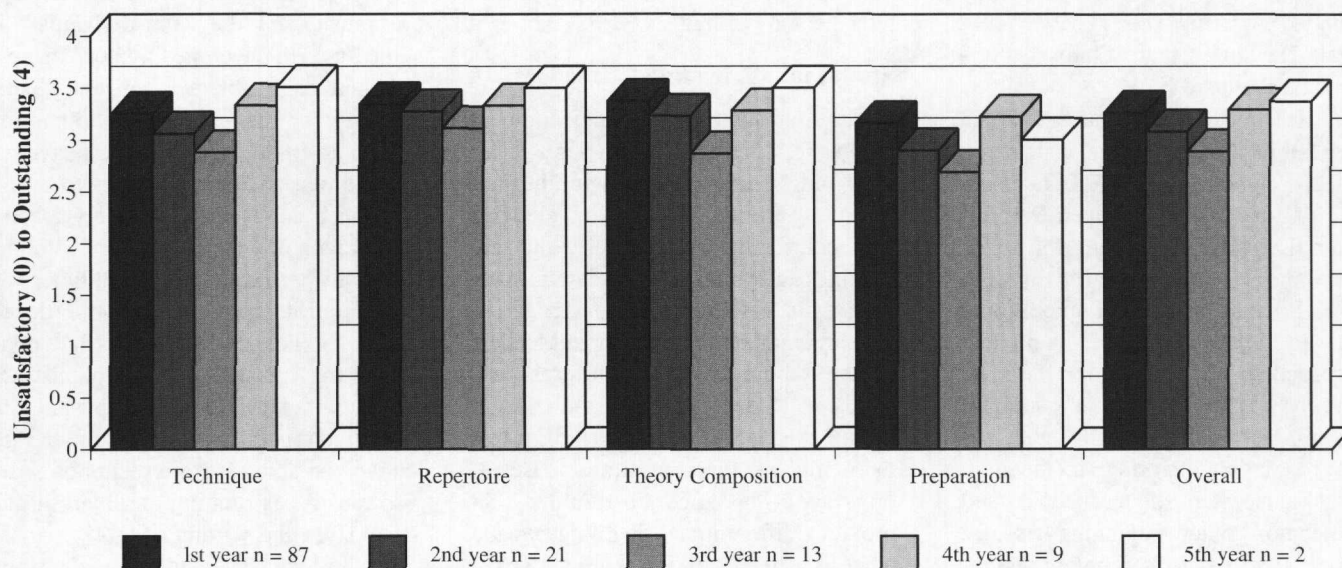
LessonLink lost only five students in this transitional stage.¹⁸

The LessonLink program is pleased if students become fine musicians through their years of study in the program. However, one aspect of the program that is generalized to other learning areas is the ability to monitor work through self-discipline and to solve problems through practice. Teachers quickly realize that LessonLink students may not understand the discipline involved with practice. One teacher explains that "a home environment without knowledge of how to become a good student through study skills is difficult for a young child."¹⁹ Cultural differences and the lack of experience in private instruction pose a challenging adjustment during the first six months of lessons. Parent also gain through the program by learning how to guide their children in the work ethic essential to music instruction and study in general.

Some typical student profiles of successful students in the program will describe LessonLink better than any statistics or charts. Here are a few:

Manuel began LessonLink piano lessons in the fourth grade and now is in

FIGURE 2. LessonLink Student Evaluations



his sixth year of study. His father did not want the lessons to be fully donated but was unable to afford even minimal payment at that time. The PTA helped pay a stipend to the teacher through the gifted/talented program. When Manuel reached junior high, a barter system was established where he would rake leaves and shovel snow in exchange for lessons. The family received a donated piano which made a great difference in practice in the home. His father careful-

performs and leads musical activities in her family's church.

Charlie is a student well loved by all of the teachers in his intermediate school as well as by the piano teacher who has worked with him over the past four years. He enjoys singing in the choir and has been asked to join the school's jazz band. He is exceptionally bright and quick to learn. He practices every day on a piano donated by the local piano dealer. When he began

essential part of gifted/talented differentiated curricula, with particular emphasis on the secondary level student.²¹ There is a growing trend for talented students to expand learning experiences beyond the school through mentorship programs, concurrent enrollment in college courses, and individualized learning programs.²² The StudyLink program offers collaboration between the school and the community that fits perfectly with these curricular ideas.

StudyLink provides an organizational framework for developing an independent study that can be performance based or linked with academic subjects in school. The program is highly adaptable to the requirements of each school, with the student serving as initiator of the study, working with guidance counselors, school teachers, and independent teachers. The program's goal is to offer these exceptional students an opportunity to reach their full potential and explore their choice of musical or interdisciplinary interests. A few examples can clarify the flexibility of the program.

An exceptional senior pianist planned an independent study that included a full program of major works by Chopin, plus research into the style and performance practice involved with Chopin's advanced repertoire. Through his school music theory and differential calculus classes, he discovered a unique similarity between the "secondary dominant" in music and the "anti-derivative" in calculus. He developed a paper that explained each abstract concept clearly enough for the teachers of both disciplines to understand how he arrived at this similarity. He was pleased to see his guidance counselor and theory teacher at his recital, where they were astounded at his performance capabilities.

A multitalented sophomore developed an independent study that combined her musical skills as pianist and flutist with her interests in Spanish. She gathered together solo repertoire in flute and piano suitable for a recital of Spanish music, researching the Spanish musical style and writing suitable program notes in Spanish. In addition, she wanted to learn how to play jazz charts so she could play the piano in her school's

Schools can provide these services for talented students in the arts with minimal budgetary concerns.

ly stripped the bright green paint that covered the piano, proud to have his children "at the piano in the home rather than in the streets."

Manuel is now in high school and has expanded his musical skills to include playing the trumpet in the school's Latin jazz group and big band jazz group, with several years in the chorus and madrigals as well. He looks forward to learning several Spanish dances by Granados for this year's MUSICLINK recital. He states that "almost everything I do is music."²⁰

An Hee began lessons as a child in Korea but had to discontinue instruction when she came to the United States because of financial constraints. She has been a LessonLink student for seven years, and is now a senior in high school. She has progressed quickly into advanced repertoire in the piano and was proud to be selected for the state Governor's School for the Arts summer program. Her enthusiasm for music extends to playing the flute in the high school band, where she has been named drum major. When beginning lessons, her goal was to assist her mother and father, a minister, in church services through her music. She now regularly

lessons, his father was in prison. Now, the entire family are staunch musical supporters of their talented child. This support even extended to sending Charlie across town to an intermediate school that was close to his piano teacher's home. She has been a confidant who often steps in at school meetings when parents are busy working during the school day. Each lesson ends with a bit of a shrug, a smile, and a teenage style of hug.

StudyLink: Providing Challenges

The final stage of talent development emphasizes the need for students to attain "individuality and insight" in their musical learning. At this point, students are technically comfortable and are seeking analytical and in-depth interpretive understanding of music. These students may be the exceptional leaders in the school choirs, orchestras, and bands, or students who are immersed in private study. Independent study offers these students the opportunity to develop student-designed curriculum that provides differentiated learning beyond what is offered in the studio, performance group, or classroom.

Independent learning has been an es-

prestigious jazz band. Her work will be assessed by her private music teacher, school music teacher, Spanish teacher, and guidance counselor.

Independent study can be developed as an honors course for talented music students seeking individualized curriculum. It can also incorporate chamber music, accompanying, teaching, or service to the community. The key ingredient is student design of curriculum that challenges student talents.

Conclusion

MUSICLINK began as a simple experiment to see if a single link initiated by school and community cooperative efforts could foster the development of talent. The program works simply and easily. There is no reason why the same type of communicative "links" could not develop programs in dance, theater, and the visual arts. Imagine the possibilities if a single student from any of these art forms receives ongoing scholarship instruction from a professional in the community. Imagine the role that student will acquire in secondary school arts programs if independent study options allow challenging differentiation to develop this talent fully. Schools can provide these services for talented students in the arts with minimal budgetary concerns. Students in the arts can attain the recognition deserved for their talents with the same attention given to students with academic talents. Such recognition is long overdue.

Schools must first establish a policy that realizes the importance of recognition. Arts education definitively requires the arts in the basic school curriculum to nurture artistic ways of knowing for all students. Stretching curricular offerings for students potentially talented in the arts reinforces the value of this artistic education. The field of gifted education has expanded its talent perspective to include different types of "intelligences" that include the arts. Arts educators, working jointly with gifted specialists, can design appropriate procedures for identification, reaching beyond the school to attract community arts professionals in the discussions. This healthy discourse between specialists in the arts

and academics will clarify the specifics of artistic learning to those beyond arts fields.

What are some basic policies needed to nurture artistic potential and recognize artistic achievement? The following recommendations derive from practical experience working with the MUSICLINK program for almost a decade:

- Gifted and talented identification procedures must include recognition of demonstrated and potential talent in the arts, using suitable criteria.²³ In music, this requires the recognition of music aptitude, observation of creative behavior in experimentation and interpretive performance, and recognition of student commitment.

- The rationale of arts talent identification must be understood by all involved, with an emphasis on an inclusive process to seek out potential talent in the arts. Discussions between arts specialists and gifted specialists must set acceptable criteria and procedures.

- A comprehensive talent profile of an arts student includes activities in the home, church or synagogue, and the community, which should be recognized in the identification process. Parents may provide valuable information showing specific behavior not noticed in the school arts classroom.

- Students who are identified as talented in the arts require differentiation of curriculum in school arts education classes beyond the normal curriculum.

- Schools can work cooperatively with community arts professionals to design suitable programs for talented students through mentorships, scholarship instruction, and independent study.

- Talented students in the arts require flexibility in scheduling and curricular design in secondary education to allow arts opportunities that extend beyond the school curriculum. Student-designed independent study encourages creation of challenging individual curricular options that reflect the needs of talented students in the arts.

If arts educators seek collaboration with the community, the future audience for young performers will resound with applause. These eager students will spy

the school arts specialist in the audience, nodding in approval to arts colleagues from the community who are sitting nearby. They will share in the dynamic of nurturing the talent of a young artist.

Notes

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12. For examples of LessonLink rating scales, see J. Haroutounian, "Drop the Hurdles and Open the Doors."

13. Statistical analysis was assisted by Todd Jamison, George Mason University.

14. L. Sosniak, "Learning to be a Concert Pianist." M. Howe and J. Sloboda, "Young Musician's Significant Influences 1. The Family and Musical Background."

15. J. Haroutounian, Assessment of Potential Talent.

16. L. Sosniak, "Phases of Learning," *Developing Talent in Young People*, ed. B. Bloom (N.Y.: Ballantine Books, 1985), 434.

17. For a comprehensive description of

musical talent development, see J. Haroutounian, *Musical Talent—Kindling the Spark*.

18. For a description of the "metaskills" of talented teenagers, see M. Csikszentmihalyi, K. Rathunde, and S. Whalen, *Talented Teenagers: The Roots of Success and Failure* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

19. LessonLink teacher Majorie Brown Azarowicz, comments to author.

20. Quotes are from personal interviews with students and their families. Names have been changed to secure anonymity.

21. G. Betts, "The Autonomous Learner Model for the Gifted and Talented," in *Handbook of Gifted Education*, ed. N.

Colangelo and G. Davis (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1991), 111-41;

22. B. Goh, "Developing Creative Writing Talent through a Mentorship Program," *Gifted Education International* 11, no. 3 (1996); D.J. Treffinger and J.F. Feldhusen, "Talent Recognition and Development: Successor to Gifted Education," *Journal for the Education of the Gifted* 19, no. 2 (1996): 181-93.

Joanne Haroutounian conceived and developed the MUSICLINK program and now serves as its national coordinator. She is on the music faculty of George Mason University.

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