**Standing at the crossroads: A report on the intersection between research and practice of the Suzuki Method in the United States and Canada**

*International Research Symposium on Talent Education (IRSTE)*

Karin Hendricks, Kate Einarson, Elizabeth Guerriero, Nancy Mitchell, Pat D’Ercole

1. **Characterizing Suzuki teachers and their studios**
   1. No dominant age group

Under 26 years = *5%* 26-25 years = *21%* 36-45 years = *19%*

46-55 years = *18%* 56-65 years = *24%* Over 65 years = *13%*

* 1. High levels of music education

Bachelors degree = *32%*  Masters degree = *40%*

* 1. A variety of instruments

Violin = *57%* Piano = *20%* Cello = *11%*

Viola = 3% Guitar = 3% Flute = *2 %*

Other instruments (e.g. bass, harp, organ) = *4%*

* 1. Training intensity

Workshop format = *62%* Long term format = *7%*

Both types = *28%* Other training = *2%*

* 1. Training amount

Zero courses = *7%* 1-5 courses = *40%*

6-10 courses = *31%* 11-20 courses = *19%*

* 1. Average number of students in studio

Piano = *22*  Violin = *22*  Cello = *19*

Guitar = *18*  Viola = *18*  Flute = *15*

* 1. Types of program offered

No groups and no parent education = *6.3%*

Group class *and* parent education = *66.7%*

1. **Group class benefits identified by teachers**
   1. Community-building or social benefits (e.g. cooperation)
   2. Musical benefits (e.g. mastering repertoire)
   3. Motivation/fun for students
   4. Development of artistic traits (e.g. ensemble playing)
   5. Development of personal traits (e.g. confidence)

1. **Group class challenges identified by teachers**
2. Scheduling
3. Differentiation
4. Management
5. Planning
6. Parents
7. Logistics
8. **What makes a Suzuki teacher more likely to offer group classes?**

On average, teachers who **DO** offer group class:

1. Have significantly more private students
2. Have significantly more training
3. Have significantly higher ‘training intensity’
4. Age is not different between teachers who do or don’t offer group
5. **Parent education offerings and structure**
6. 75% of teachers offer initial parent education for incoming families

Those who did offer initial education reported using one or more of the following:

Meetings/workshops = *55%* Reading materials = *43%*

Parent/student lessons = *43%* Discussion with teacher = *25%*

Observation = *18%*

1. Only 50% of teachers offer continuing parent education for returning families

Of those offering continuing education, three-quarters reported it was “minimal”

Workshops/meetings = *55%*  Readings/online resources = *35%*

Lessons = *25%*  Discussion with teacher = *20%*

1. **Conclusions from IRSTE 2014-2015 survey**
2. Suzuki teachers are well-educated musicians of all ages, but are mostly female
3. Likelihood of teachers offering group class is related to studio size, amount of training, and intensity of training, but not teacher age
4. Teacher perceptions of the ‘joys of group class’ are consistent with Suzuki philosophy​
5. However, teachers report many barriers and challenges of group class
6. Initial parent education is widespread but varies in both format and intensity
7. Ongoing parent education is less common and less intense
8. **Implications for teacher training: Group class**
9. Teachers with more training and more students are more likely to offer group classes in their studio
10. Many concerns teachers report about group class can be addressed via training:
    * Lesson planning and resources
    * Classroom management
    * Differentiated instruction and inclusive education
11. Training teachers to offer effective, engaging group classes may encourage parents to prioritize and value group class
12. **Implications for teacher training: Parent education**
13. More effective and sustained parent education by teachers will help parents to be more effective members of the Suzuki triangle and to understand value of group
14. Many teacher concerns can be addressed through parent training:
    * Parents only making time for private lessons
    * Scheduling and logistics of classes for busy families
    * Parent expectations about level/composition of classes
15. Training teachers to offer effective, sustained parent education may improve teacher satisfaction, student retention, and teaching consistent with Suzuki philosophy

**You are invited to participate in the Empathy Study**

**in 2015-2016!**

Contact any IRSTE member:

Pat D’Ercole (pdercole@uwsp.edu)

Karin Hendricks (khen@bu.edu)

Kate Einarson (einarsk@mcmaster.ca)

Elizabeth Guerriero (eguerrie@mc3.edu)

Nancy Mitchell (n.mitchell@alum.utoronto.ca)