

Ellefson Studio Handbook 2018-2019

Progress on your instrument through your one-on-one lesson is likely the single most important aspect of your education at Indiana University. Here are some guidelines to make the most of your private study with me:

- Arrive for your lessons warmed-up and ready to play. Lessons follow a specific agenda which is outlined in Appendix I. If you have not prepared, please postpone/cancel the lesson, otherwise you are wasting both your time and mine. **DO NOT** buzz in the hallway! It is very distracting.
- Lessons are 50 minutes in length (not 60), as directed by Jacobs School of Music. We may go longer or shorter based upon progress, preparation and lesson momentum. Please remember that your progress is not necessarily based upon our minutes of “face time” together but more importantly based upon you *doing what I tell you to do* and how focused you are during your lesson and practice sessions. Imagine how much better you would be if you did everything I told you to do.
- View each lesson as a performance, demonstrating progress made since the previous lesson. Please remember that nothing significant is ever accomplished in a single practice session—no cramming! The benefits from one practice session will likely be noticed days later. Steady progress is achieved by daily, diligent, thoughtful, *undistracted* practice employing contemplation and understanding of CONCEPT.
- In order to achieve optimal progress, you are expected to practice three or more hours throughout the day (in addition to ensembles), at least 6 days per week. The more we engage in thoughtful practice, the better we get. Steady progress, not perfection, is the goal. Remember the saying, “One catches more fish with the line in the water.” Get the horn on the face. Create sound. How good can you get? You will decide. I will help guide you but the work is up to you.
- You are expected to audio record and review lessons as well as frequently record during your practice. This will help speed up the learning process on key fundamentals and concepts of playing. If you are serious about learning, you will do this. I am not your mother or a policeman. I won’t check up on you but doing this demonstrates your level of seriousness and commitment to improvement. I do notice.
- Lessons begin at specified time, *not before*. Please knock on studio door at your lesson time and wait for me to answer. I will probably not answer your knock until your appointed time. We will have a better lesson if you respect this policy. Just because you arrive early does not mean that I am ready for you. Be patient and never open the door without being invited into the studio.

- 24-hours advanced notice is required to reschedule a lesson. If you miss a lesson it will be made up at my discretion. If I miss a lesson, it will be rescheduled. If I am delayed to your lesson, I will send you a text message to advise you of my arrival status. If you have not heard from me by 10 minutes past your lesson time, you are free to go and we will reschedule. On the other hand, if I have not heard from you by 10 minutes past your lesson time, your lesson is canceled and will not be rescheduled. Communicate. Learn how to be responsibly manage your calendar. Being a musician requires calendar mastery.
- You may be dismissed from the lesson if you are unprepared (e.g. not knowing musical terms, lack of preparation etc.). It is a lesson, not a practice session. You are paying a great deal of money to learn from me. Set yourself up for success, not failure. Prepare for our time together.
- You will be required to own an original copy of each work performed in public. Photocopying or printing a PDF without owning the original is theft. You are depriving compensation to those who composed, published and sold the work, making it available to you. By not paying, you are stealing by benefitting from the work of others without compensating those who made it possible.
- You are encouraged but not required to participate in the Brass Concerto Competition. Suggested repertoire will be provided. Communicate if you have other repertoire ideas.
- You will enroll in MUS-I 300, MUS-I 500, MUS-I 301, MUS-I 501 (undergrads are the 300s and grads are the 500s). Performance Master Class. No exceptions. These are zero credit classes. There is no fee and your grade does not impact your GPA. A studio lesson grade of “Incomplete” will be assigned to those not enrolled. Take care of this detail.
- Studio Class, Performance Class and Monday Masterclass are not optional. These classes are a valuable resource to becoming musically astute, positive and goal focused. As in many other areas of your life, you will get out of Masterclass what you put in. If you show up late and act bored, you are missing an opportunity to learn. ***Stay off of your device during Masterclass.*** You are especially encouraged to perform/participate in the masterclasses of Prof. Lenthe and Dr. Pollard to avail yourself of the vast knowledge and experience in the trombone area of the Jacobs School of Music. Attendance will be taken each Monday and your I-500 grade will reflect your attendance. If you have a prior commitment, ***email me in advance.***
- All studio members are expected to attend all recital performances by fellow studio members. Why wouldn't you want to support and learn from your studio mates? If you have a prior commitment, ***email me in advance.***
- Refrain from speaking disparagingly of those “higher on the food chain” than you. Be respectful. Be classy. Be positive. See Appendix 2 for further thoughts.

- In the circumstance that you “need” to miss a required event (Performance Class, Masterclass, recital of a studio member, etc.) you will need to submit to me, via **email**, your reason for absence, **prior to the event**. Any notification after the event will result in an unexcused absence and your lesson grade will be lowered. Get used to acting responsibly.
- You will be responsible for any word in the music that you present in lessons. It is required that you know every musical term, know about composers, arrangers, musical forms, etc. You will be quizzed at my discretion and a record made of your deficiencies. You may be dismissed from a lesson if you do not know the meaning of every word on the page.
- Lessons are not always about the music and/or trombone playing. Sometimes they are about life or other things to help you become the musician and person you profess you want to be.
- Be a good citizen on campus and in the world. Look before you cross the street. Don’t just wander out and expect cars to stop. Don’t be distracted by earbuds—do you really need them in your ears ALL the time? Listen to the world. Hear the car coming that is about to hit you. If cars are waiting to turn, don’t cross when it says, “Don’t Walk.” Be **aware** and **considerate** of others. Small actions on your part will make things easier for others.
- Consider the idea of diversified success. Very few of you will make your living as only a classical trombonist. Learn to cut your living expenses and save money. Learn other styles of music. Learn notation software and make extra money by doing projects for others. Learn how to record recitals. Learn how to teach lessons. Learn how to market yourself. Learn to arrange. Study composition. Be a complete musician. There is so much more opportunity in music than playing in an orchestra. Keep your mind open.

Practice/Playing Tips

- “Distraction by device” is a disease. Learn to manage your disease. Learn to enjoy living in the real world and not merely through your screen. Be present. Invest in your relationships with others. The choices **you** make determine **your** future. Learn to live in the moment, without having to document everything to the rest of the world. Additionally, don’t worry about what everyone else in the world is doing. What matters is what **YOU** are doing to better yourself. You build your future one day at a time. You have a choice. You determine your future.
- We live in an age of information overload. We all have more information coming at us from more sources than we can possibly process. We all must learn to sift out what is important. The person who is able to do this and prioritizes intelligently will be more successful than one who doesn’t. We cannot be all things to all people. Choose intelligently.
- Practicing is about reinforcing what you already know as well as accumulating new knowledge, then reinforcing that new knowledge and so on. This is a life-long process.

- Eliminate physical/mental struggle. Embrace ease. Relax. Only use as much muscle engagement as is needed. Think positively. Believe you can be great.
- LEARN your music. Don't read the music so much. Digest it. Focus. Think. Retain. Use the printed page as a reminder. You must invest to be great.
- Recognize and address your current limits of range (high AND low); dynamics (loud AND soft); velocity (fast AND slow). Pay particular attention to the synchronization of the tongue and slide and strive for excellence in note connections. No TWA-TWA-TWA
- Engage in improving fundamental development every day.
- Produce clean attacks followed by consistent timbres. Listen. CONCEPT.
- Check in with a mirror. Look for symmetry, supportive posture, relaxed face and minimal chop motion.
- Fix your right hand position. Don't be lazy about this!
- Breathe! Low and slow.
- Play in tune. Put the slide in the right place, not merely where you have always put it. For example, understand that A-flat, C, E-flat, G-flat are all in a different third position! Get serious and make the adjustments necessary to play in tune. LISTEN! Don't be lazy.
- CONCEPT is vastly more important than exercises. Exercises are a waste of time without CONCEPT.
- Sing, conduct, and move when practicing without the horn. Live the music. Transfer that life to the horn.
- Whatever has been mentioned repeatedly in your lessons needs to be addressed and fixed. Make it a goal for me to not repeat myself in our lessons.
- Your success is contingent upon your being able to separate yourself from others and not making the same mistakes as everyone else.

Ellefson's 5 Elements of Success and 3 Distillations

1. Sound
 2. Intonation
 3. Articulation
 4. Rhythm
 5. Style/Artistry/Musicianship
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- A. Starting a note
 - B. Sustaining a note
 - C. Moving from one note to the other without the use of the tongue

The Ellefson Studio Model Student

- Practices diligently and hungers for knowledge and improvement.
- Exhibits musical curiosity by knowing all words on the page, information on composers, arrangers, editors, etc.
- Has a duet book in music bag for musical interaction with others.
- Takes every aspect of career at IU seriously, i.e. academics. No academic probations!
- Accepts suggestion and criticism gracefully and non-defensively.
- Is largely self-taught and self-motivated using me as a guide.
- Is always prepared for lessons and always has something ready to perform.
- Exhibits flexibility and a positive attitude.
- Listens to great recordings and reads about instrument/music daily.
- Is respectful, helpful and supportive to others in the IU low brass community.
- Purchases sheet music, understanding the negative effects of piracy aka theft.
- Invests time, thought and financial resources in their art.
- Browses numerous resources looking for new literature.
- Plays “offensively” not “defensively.”
- Utilizes good posture.
- Is curious about technology and how it can be of great benefit.
- Is patient and understands that greatness takes time and attention.
- Knows how to maintain instrument. No clanky valves!

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~ thoughtful practice ~  
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Communication

Messages sent to your IU email address are considered “official” correspondence. I need you to check your email several times a day. Set up your phone to retrieve your IU email. It’s simple and the instructions can be found in the IU Knowledge Base. While I understand that this is not how you communicate with each other, it is the way the university and I communicate with you. Comply.

Required Juries and Recitals

Freshman students are required to perform a jury during their first year of study. Freshman BMs are required to play a jury at the end of the first semester. Freshman BME/BSOF majors are required to play a jury at the end of the second semester. Upper Divisional Exams are given at the end of four semesters of study for all undergraduate students and performed in front of the entire brass faculty. Juries and “Upper Ds” are important events, which offer an opportunity for the student and faculty to discuss further participation in the student’s degree program. In other words, these hurdles are a time to reconsider if you are in the appropriate degree program. A jury may be assigned at any time, at the discretion of the instructor.

Performance Class

Several performance classes are scheduled each semester. The dates of these classes will be made available near the beginning of the semester. Your level of seriousness and dedication will be shown by the presentations you make in Performance Class. Perform. Learn how to navigate the hazards of performance.

Piano Accompanists

JSoM now has a Collaborative Piano program, which provides pianists for degree recitals, school competitions and Upper Ds. The most important ingredients in working with a pianist are planning and timely, respectful communication. I have no sympathy for procrastinators. Act. Procrastination that negatively impacts others is disrespectful. I will not tolerate disrespect in my studio. It is required that I hear you in rehearsal with your pianist prior to any public performance.

Recital Procedures

I must hear and coach all pieces (including ensemble works) on your recital. Your recital is a representation not only of your playing but also a representation of my instruction, therefore I must have input on all aspects of your recital. For non-doctoral degree recitals, a recital hearing is required. You will receive specific information on how to schedule your hearing. Recital hearings take place on Thursday afternoons beginning at 3:30, in Recital Hall. The two most important aspects regarding scheduling your recital hearing are:

- Your hearing must be at least two weeks prior to the recital.
- You must sign up for a hearing at least ten days prior to the desired hearing date.

Procrastination or inattention is disrespectful to all involved and will not be tolerated. There is a difference between “degree” (required) and “student” (not required) recitals. No recital hearing is required for “student” or doctoral recitals.

Caution—Warning—Notice

I am not your academic advisor!!!! You are responsible for monitoring your own educational curriculum. The *IU Jacobs School of Music Bulletin* is a very valuable resource and should be referred to often. It is available online via a link from the JSOM homepage. Any questions not answered by the *Bulletin* should be directed to the Undergrad or Grad office. The fine people in the Undergrad/Grad office do not teach trombone and in turn, I do not advise. Read and understand the *Bulletin*. Clarify any confusion with your advisor.

Letters of Recommendation

Many of you will ask me for letters of recommendation. I take these letters quite seriously and write letters that are specific to each student. I do not follow a form letter and paste in the student's name. Since each letter is drafted from scratch, I require **at least 2-weeks notice** to complete the letter. I am also very honest in my letters. I write letters based upon the type of letter I would like to receive from a colleague about a student. When/if you seek a letter from me, please understand that I will give an honest assessment of your work, as seen through my eyes. You may wish to confer with me to be certain that what I will write is consistent with what you hope I will write. In addition, you must ask me for permission to use my name to gain access to other high profile musicians, composers. This is a professional courtesy that must be followed.

Summer Festivals

One very important option for maximizing your study is participation in summer festivals. Be curious, do some research and plan ahead to meet all deadlines. Some of the recommended summer festivals/workshops:

The Alessi Seminar
Cleveland Trombone Seminar
Eastern Music Festival
Music Academy of the West
Monteux Festival
Mulcahy Summer Trombone Workshop
National Orchestral Institute
National Repertory Orchestra
Pacific Music Festival
Rafael Mendez Brass Institute
Summer Brass Institute
Tanglewood Music Center

Appendix 1

Scales/Key Studies

Scales and arpeggios are to music what math facts are to math. Scales and arpeggios are the DNA of music. If you do not know the basic structures, you will not be able to accurately execute more advanced material. These will be an important component of each lesson. If you are a serious student, scales and arpeggios will occupy a vitally important place in your daily practice.

Fall 2018 Lesson Routine

Key of your choice, covering all 12 keys during semester.

All performed from memory:

- Major in modal pattern ascending and descending, covering 3 octaves
- All 3 relative minors, 3 octaves up and down. I will pick which to hear
- Arpeggio sequence (will send)
- Arban 47 or Kreutzer 2 (will send)

Etudes:

One lyrical, one technical

Lyrical:

Bordogni
Blazhevich
Kopprasch
Snedecor

Technical:

Bleger
Goldman
Kopprasch
Tyrrell

Solos

Excerpts

On your own, you should also be working out of Arban, Kopprasch, Schollossberg and Marsteller to further your fundamental mastery of the trombone.

Appendix 2

Ellefson's Elucidations:

1. Read your teacher's writings, blogs, articles, syllabus, etc. If you don't understand something or disagree, ask and discuss...you will learn something. You and your family are paying a lot of money for this knowledge.

<http://peterellefson.com/blog/index.html>

2. As a student, you are at the bottom of the food chain. Learn from those above you. As a student you don't know enough to know what you don't know. As you learn more you understand what more there is to learn. Enjoy the learning journey. It never ends.

3. If you are not consistently placing in the top 2 or 3 in your school auditions, why would you ever expect to win a professional audition? Your study is not necessarily to prepare you to win an audition, it is to make you a musician of such quality that potential employers will want to hire you for your expertise. Prepare.

4. The path to excellence is well worn. Stay on the path. You are not different. You have not found a new way. There are no "million dollar ideas" but only "million dollar executions." Hard work outdistances talent. There are no shortcuts. As Thomas Edison said, "Vision without execution is hallucination."

5. Disable your phone and other distractions during your practice. What you are trying to accomplish requires all of your focus. Your brain needs time to absorb what you are learning. Don't bombard it immediately with distraction. Give your brain a chance to learn.

6. Invest your time. Don't spend your time. Quality of practice is more important than quantity of practice. The ideal is a large quantity of quality practice.

7. Live aggressively and use each day to its fullest. You will never get it back.

8. Be curious, be interested, seek knowledge and progress. Apathy may seem "cool" but it only leads to mediocrity. Be proud to be good. Don't pretend it's not important. It is vitally important.

9. Be the best you can be. You are cheating yourself by doing anything less than your absolute best. Don't be upset with the results you don't get with the work you don't do. Remember...the world needs ditch diggers too. Not everyone has what it takes to succeed as a musician. It doesn't mean you are a lesser person. Happiness can be found in lots of easier pursuits/endeavors.

10. Be a doer, not a talker. Don't pretend to be something you are not. Become great so that you do not have to pretend.