

Ellefson Studio Handbook 2022-23

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

- Arrive for your lessons warmed-up and ready to play. Lessons follow a specific agenda (Lesson Routine) which is made known to you in advance. If you have not prepared the lesson material, please postpone/cancel the lesson, otherwise you are wasting both your time and mine. While waiting for your lesson, please do not buzz your mouthpiece in the hallway or stairwell. It is very distracting to all studios in the vicinity. In all areas of your life, be aware of how your actions affect others.
- View each lesson as a performance, demonstrating progress made since the previous lesson. Progress is the key word. Please remember that nothing significant is ever accomplished in a single practice session— “cramming” is not effective. The benefits from one practice session will likely be noticed days later. Steady progress is achieved by daily, diligent, thoughtful, *undistracted* practice, while employing contemplation 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. Get out of bed and invest in your future. The more we engage in thoughtful practice, the better we get. Steady progress, not perfection, is the goal. Remember the adage, “One catches more fish with the line in the water.” Get your first practice session in before noon. Create sound. Create great sound! How good can you get? You will decide. I will guide you but how much you work to improve is ultimately up to you.
- You are encouraged/expected to record your lessons. Doing so documents what you are presenting and my advice/guidance to address aspects of your playing that need attention. This will help speed up the learning process on key fundamentals and concepts of playing. You will progress faster if you record your lessons and write a summary to be referenced later. Organize your lesson recordings by date, repertoire, and concept, then tag each for ease of location later. Refer to them when trying to solve future difficulties. Also, frequently record your practice sessions to learn what you really sound like. It is not fun but immensely valuable. The recorder is more truthful than the brain.
- Lessons begin at the 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 the appointed time. Be patient and never open the door without being invited into the studio. It is bothersome to me if anyone walks into the studio without being invited. You will get used to this policy.

- 24-hours advanced notice is required to reschedule a lesson. 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 leave and we will reschedule. This indicates that I messed up or something urgent has commanded my attention. On the other hand, if I have not heard from you by 10 minutes past your appointed lesson time, your lesson is canceled and will not be rescheduled. Communicate. Learn how to responsibly manage your calendar. Being a successful musician requires calendar mastery.
- You may be dismissed from the lesson if you are unprepared. 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. Prepare for our time together. If not prepared, canceling or postponing is better than arriving unprepared. Questions are always welcomed and encouraged and reveal the amount of thought that you put into your progress.
- You are required to perform from an original copy of each work presented in public, either through private purchase or from the JSOM (or other) library. Photocopying or printing/using a PDF without owning the original is *theft*. You are depriving compensation to those who composed, published, and/or 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. Don't be cheap or lazy. "Just because you *can* doesn't mean you *should*."
- You are required to own and use the following mutes for use when specified in your ensembles: straight, cup, harmon, plunger. Be responsible. Be prepared. Being serious about your career requires having the proper tools.
- You are encouraged but not required to participate in the annual Brass Concerto Competition. A list of suggested repertoire will be provided. Communicate if you have other repertoire ideas. I'll be happy to learn from you.
- Nomenclature for clarification: "Studio Class" or "Performance Class" are names for our studio's gatherings. In Fall 2022, we will meet most Tuesday evenings from 7-8:30pm. "Masterclass" is the gathering of all three studios, which occurs on several Monday evenings. Prof. Lenthe, Dr. Pollard and I take turns running Masterclass. In addition to our studio calendar, there is a Trombone Area calendar, so you will know what is happening and when.
- You must enroll in MUS-I 301/MUS-I 501 Departmental Masterclass and MUS-I 300/MUS-I 500 Studio Masterclass (undergrads are the 300s and grads are the 500s). These are zero credit classes. There is no fee and your grade does not impact your GPA. It is easy to register for these classes and important to document the classes you take. Please make sure you do this.
- Studio Class, Performance Class, and Monday Masterclass are not optional. As in many other areas of your life, *you will get out of Masterclass what you put into it*. 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-301/501 grade will reflect your attendance. If you have an unchangeable prior commitment, **email** me *in advance*.

- All studio members are required to attend all recitals by fellow studio members. If you have an unchangeable prior commitment, **email** me *in advance*. No exceptions. Unexcused absences will negatively impact your lesson grade. Be interested. Be involved. Be responsible. Focus. Our studio is your family while at IU. Support each other. Learn from your colleagues.
- In the circumstance that you must 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 respectfully and responsibly.
- Refrain from speaking disparagingly of those “higher on the food chain” than you. Be respectful. Be classy. Be positive. Don’t be a tattletale but please alert me to problems that may have a negative impact on our studio culture. Hold each other to a high standard. The quality of our studio is highly respected and recognized school-wide and nation-wide. Don’t do anything to endanger that reputation.
- You are accountable for any/every word in the music that you present in lessons. It is required that you know every musical term. Also, learn and retain information about composers, arrangers, musical forms, etc. You will be quizzed at my discretion and a record will be made of your deficiencies. You may be dismissed from a lesson and receive a failing grade for the lesson if you do not know the meaning of every word on the page. Merely knowing the notes is not enough. Be interested, not lazy. Be serious. Be curious. You have chosen a career where laziness/irresponsibility/apathy will prevent you from being successful. Learn now. Practice for the real world now, while in the safe environment of school. If you are unable to do the small things, how will you ever be able to do the big things?
- 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. I am here to help you. Communicate with me. As my students know, lessons are confidential. I cannot help if I do not know what’s going on. I don’t need/want details, I just need to know if you are struggling or if you are concerned about another studio member. We all care for each other.
- 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 inconvenience others. Don’t be distracted by earbuds or the “zombie text and walk.” Do you really need to be on your device all the time? Listen to the world. Be aware of the car coming that is about to hit you. If cars are waiting to turn, don’t cross when it says, “Don’t Walk.” Don’t stand directly in front of the elevator door, as others

must exit before you can enter. Be *aware* and *considerate* of others. Small actions on your part will make things easier for others.

- Consider and pursue the idea of diversified success. Very few of you will make your living as only a classical trombonist. Learn to reduce your living expenses and save money. Learn other musical genres. Learn notation software and make extra money by doing copy work projects for others. Learn how to record recitals. Learn how to teach lessons. Learn how to market yourself. Learn how to arrange. Study piano. Study arranging. Study composition. Be a complete musician. There is so much more opportunity in music than playing in an orchestra. Keep your mind open to outside-the-box opportunities. Meet with the Office of Entrepreneurship and Career Development early in your study and check back with them often. They are a great help to guide your career and preparation.
- Discuss any equipment (mouthpiece/instrument) changes with me. I need to be involved with these choices.

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 ‘analog’ 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. One gets out what one puts in.
- We live in an age of information overload. We all have significantly more information coming at us from myriad sources than we can possibly process. We all must learn to efficiently sift out what is important. The person who is able to accomplish this and prioritizes intelligently will be more successful than the one who does not. We cannot be all things to all people. Choose carefully and thoughtfully. Who are **you**?
- Practicing is about reinforcing what you already know as well as accumulating new knowledge and developing new skills, then reinforcing that new knowledge, etc., etc. This is a life-long process. It’s the journey...not the destination that matters. We never “arrive.”
- Eliminate physical/mental struggle. Embrace ease. Relax. Only use as much muscle engagement as is necessary. Think positively. Believe that you can be great. You can be great but you must believe.

- LEARN your music. Don't bury your eyes in the printed page. Digest it. Focus. Think. Retain. Use the printed page as a reminder. You must invest both time and *concentration* to be great. We use only a fraction of our brain's capabilities. Try utilizing more.
- Recognize and address your current limitations 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 and consistency in note connections. No TWA-TWA-TWA!!!!
- Engage in improving fundamental development every day. Produce clean attacks followed by pure, consistent timbres. Listen. CONCEPT is the operative word. Just because it is *simple* does not mean it is *easy*.
- Check-in with a mirror often but not constantly. Look for symmetry, supportive posture, relaxed face, and minimal chop motion. Get the bell up. Look good. Look confident. Make it look easy.
- Fix your right hand position. Don't be inattentive and lazy about this. It helps.
- Breathe! Low, slow, full, and in rhythm.
- Play in tune. *Put the slide in the right place, not merely where you have always placed it.* For example, understand that A-flat, C, E-flat, G-flat are all in a different third position! Get serious and make the micro-adjustments necessary to play in tune. LISTEN! Don't be lazy. Separate yourself from others. Be great!
- CONCEPT is vastly more important than exercises. Exercises are a waste of time without CONCEPT. Is your concept well developed? How will you enrich your concept?
- Sing and conduct when practicing. COUNT! Live the music. Transfer that life to the horn. Project and communicate musical character. Be an actor of sound. No dull playing!
- Whatever has been mentioned repeatedly in your lessons needs to be addressed and fixed. Make it your goal for me to not repeat myself in our lessons.
- Your success is contingent upon you being able to separate yourself from others and not making the same mistakes as everyone else. Get serious. Separate yourself.

Ellefson's 5 Elements of Success and 3 Distillations

1. **Sound**- Great sound in all registers and all dynamics
 2. **Intonation**- It is either in tune or out of tune. There is no such thing as “a little out of tune”
 3. **Articulation**- More options than just tongued or slurred. Many different ways to articulate
 4. **Rhythm**- Both keeping a steady pulse and executing the rhythms correctly within the pulse
 5. **Style/Artistry/Musicianship**- Listen, listen, listen. Learn how music “sounds.” Convey it.
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- A. Starting a note- cleanly and reliably
 - B. Sustaining a note- attention to pure consistent timbres and note shapes
 - C. Moving from one note to the other without the use of the tongue- note connections

The Ellefson Studio Model Student

- Practices diligently and seeks knowledge and improvement.
- Exhibits musical curiosity by knowing all words on the page, information about composers, arrangers, editors, musical forms, etc.
- Has a duet book in music bag/on tablet for musical interaction with others.
- Takes every aspect of career at IU seriously, i.e. academics. No academic probations...ever!
- Accepts suggestion and criticism gracefully and non-defensively.
- Is largely self-taught and self-motivated, merely using me as a guide.
- Is always prepared for lessons and always has something ready to perform for others.
- Exhibits flexibility, adaptability, and a positive attitude.
- Is interested and listens to great recordings and reads about instrument/music daily.
- Is respectful, helpful and supportive to others in the JSoM low brass community.
- Purchases sheet music, understanding the negative effects of piracy (a.k.a. theft).
- Invests time, thought, and financial resources in their art.
- Browses numerous resources looking for new literature.
- Plays “offensively” not “defensively.”
- Utilizes good posture, efficient breathing and correct hand position at all times.
- Is curious about technology and how it can be of great benefit.
- Is patient with progress expectations and understands that greatness takes time and dedication.
- Knows how to maintain instrument. No clanky valves!
- Subscribes to the Bulletproof Musician to learn about performance psychology.
- Subscribes to Last Row Music to learn about what is going on in the Brass World.
- Develops the skill of discernment.

Communication

Messages sent to your IU email address are considered “official” correspondence by the University. You need to check your IU 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 the way you communicate with each other, it is the way the University and I communicate with you. Comply. If it is time-sensitive, send me a text, if not, send me an email. I urge you to set up a rule so that any email message from me goes to a dedicated folder in your email client. That makes it easier for you to find messages that may be important.

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/BSOFs are required to play a jury at the end of the second semester. Freshman juries are performed without piano. A repertoire form (I’ll give it to you) needs to be completed and brought to the jury, which usually takes place in the next-to-last week of class. Upper Divisional Exams (Upper Ds) are given at the end of four semesters of study for all undergraduate students and performed with piano in front of the entire brass faculty. They usually take place during the last week of classes, most often in Spring but sometimes in Fall, depending on degree progress. Scale preparation is paramount in all juries. Juries and Upper Ds are important events, which offer an opportunity for the student and faculty to discuss the student’s further participation in the degree program. ***In other words, these mileposts 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. For all juries and recital hearings, please dress for the occasion...we will discuss. Also, we will review the hazards of performing in Recital Hall.

Studio Class

Studio Class is scheduled every Tuesday evening from 7-8:30. Your level of seriousness and dedication will be shown by the presentations you make in Studio Class. Perform. This class helps you learn how to successfully navigate the conditions of performance.

Pianists

JSoM now has a Collaborative Piano program, which provides pianists for degree recitals, school competitions and Upper Ds, free of charge. The most important components in working with a pianist are planning and timely, respectful communication. I have no sympathy for procrastinators. Take action. 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. You will receive information on how to request a pianist for degree recitals, Upper Ds, etc. nearer to the start of class.

Recital/Recital Hearing 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 all non-doctoral degree recitals, a recital hearing is required. The recital hearing will include your pianist. You will receive specific information on how to schedule your hearing, which must be followed or you will endanger your recital. You will need to bring 3 copies of your recital program, complete with timings to your hearing. Recital hearings take place on Thursday afternoons usually beginning at 3:40pm in Recital Hall. The four most important aspects regarding scheduling your recital hearing are:

- Your hearing must occur at least two weeks prior to your recital.
- You must sign up for a hearing at least ten days prior to the desired hearing date.
- Communication and coordination of hearing date/time with your pianist.
- Arranging to be away from any ensemble responsibility that conflicts with your hearing.

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. Over time, you will learn the nomenclature of the school.

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 referenced often. It is available online via a link (to follow later) 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. Not being aware of your curriculum may delay the completion of your degree, i.e. cost you even more money.

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 provide 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 activity 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
Brevard Music Center
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
Pokorny Seminar
Rafael Mendez Brass Institute
Tanglewood Music Center

Key Studies and Lesson Routines

Scales and arpeggios are to music what math facts are to higher math. Scales and arpeggios are the DNA of music. If you do not know the basic structures, you will be slow to accurately execute more advanced material. Scales and arpeggios will be an integral component of each lesson. If you are a serious student, the reinforcement of scales and arpeggios will occupy a vitally important place in your daily practice. Familiarity is the goal. Reinforce and drill the scales that are less familiar to you. Three-octave scales and arpeggios are the goal but you should also be able to cover the entire range of your instrument.

In addition to scales and arpeggios, each lesson will follow a particular plan, called the “Lesson Routine.” Each semester I will design a recipe for you to prepare and present each week. This will be made known before classes begin. Sometimes the routine will remain the same the entire semester, sometimes I will change it part way through. The material will increase your proficiency, which in turn will enhance the performance level of your etudes, excerpts, and solos. My goal is to make sure you know what to practice every day. I never want you to go to the practice room and think, “Hmmm, I wonder what I should practice today.” I have solved that question for you.

Ellefson's Elucidations:

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

<https://www.peterellefson.com/blog>

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 with me is not necessarily to prepare you to win an audition, but rather to make you a musician of such quality that potential employers will want to hire you for your expertise. Prepare. Be serious. Check-in with reality.

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 declared, "Vision without execution is hallucination." Don't hallucinate, get to work. Execute.

5. Disable your phone and other distractions during your practice. What you say you want 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.

Ellefson Studio Policy Acknowledgement

Please print, sign and return this policy acknowledgement page prior to your first lesson of Fall 2022.

I, the undersigned, have read, understood, and will comply with the procedural and grading policies listed in the Ellefson Studio Handbook and Ellefson Studio Syllabus. Any questions, concerns, or clarifications from the student shall be listed under the signature and returned. Those questions, concerns, or clarifications will be addressed by Prof. Ellefson, also in writing, and the student will sign, acknowledging resolution of understanding.

Print name _____

Signature _____

Date: ____/____/____