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Introducing the Learning Portfolio into Music Theory Core Pedagogy

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Recommended Citation

Ferenc, A. (2011). Introducing the Learning Portfolio into Music Theory Core Pedagogy. *College Music Symposium* 51. DOI: 10.18177/sym.2011.51.sr.19. Available as a PDF at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/40374522.pdf>

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Source: *College Music Symposium*, Vol. 51 (2011)

Published by: College Music Society

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26513060>

REFERENCES

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Introducing the Learning Portfolio into Music Theory Core Pedagogy

By [Anna Ferenc](#)

Volume: 51

Introduction

Undergraduate music programs at North American institutions of higher learning typically require music majors to complete successfully a core grouping of theory courses in order to fulfill degree requirements. These courses are considered foundational not only for further study of music theory, but for all areas of music specialization because they provide students with basic analytical and musicianship skills necessary to understand musical organization in the western tradition. Although specific curricular content may vary from one institution to another, the theory core usually includes the study of diatonic and chromatic harmony, form and analysis, aural skills and possibly instruction in keyboard harmony, counterpoint and/or post-tonal analysis. Individual courses vary in credit weight and in design, but the theory core is commonly two years in length at the majority of music schools according to a survey of music theory core curricula conducted by the College Music Society in the year 2000.¹

Typically, instruction in the theory core is carried out in lecture-style courses that accommodate increasing class sizes and follow a receptive-transmission model, whereby an instructor assumes the role of an expert who imparts knowledge to recipient students. Teaching materials published for use in theory core courses support this model of instruction. Such materials normally consist of a textbook that instructs and one or more workbooks that provide exercises through which students may demonstrate mastery of subject matter in which they are being instructed. Most texts combine the study of harmony, part writing and voice leading with form and analysis and are intended for use in more than one course over a two-year core. In recent years, more comprehensive packages that include instruction in aural skills, keyboard harmony and/or post-tonal analysis have been developed in an attempt to integrate as many of the various cumulative subjects as possible that have become part of the theory core. New editions often update music examples to broaden repertoire, and accompanying CDs and DVDs conveniently provide recordings of them.²

Despite valuable instructional improvements that each new edition of a supporting text provides for the introductory study

of music theory, instructors still struggle with student engagement and motivation in required theory courses. Such fundamental difficulties beg reconsideration of our technologically progressive but nevertheless conventionally prescribed model of instruction and its accompanying methods of learning assessment. Post-secondary academic culture trains students to respond to assessment requirements. Our conventional models of assessment that include short assignments, tests and examinations can determine individual achievement in comparison to others at a given moment in time, but they do not encourage students to internalize course content in a meaningful way. Nor do they motivate them to retain or transfer their learning beyond the theory classroom to other areas of professional development as intended by the theory core. This is because the assessment is concerned primarily with product rather than process. By completing exercises, tests and examinations, students can show that they have received information, but not necessarily that they have interpreted it, integrated it with other knowledge they already have and made it their own. For students to take such responsibility for their learning, attention must be directed toward the learning process. A pedagogical tool that can transform subject teaching into learning-process oriented instruction and that has demonstrated effectiveness in fostering meaningful learning in other disciplines, but has not yet received attention in the field of music theory, is the learning portfolio.

This paper reports on the experimental adoption of a learning portfolio to supplement the curriculum of a core theory course at the second-year university level. It describes a portfolio project design that combines writing-to-learn activity with peer review and individual reflection to serve both formative learning and evaluation purposes. Drawing on lessons learned from the trial experience, it discusses criteria that must be met to create a successful portfolio project, highlights benefits of portfolio use, points out challenges, and comments on the observed value of this pedagogical tool for the field of music theory.³

What is a Learning Portfolio?

In general terms, a portfolio is a collection of evidence or artifacts gathered together to document a person's competencies. From this general perspective, the portfolio is certainly not a new idea. Artists, architects and designers have long used portfolios to document their work and demonstrate professional skill. Today, portfolios are used in a variety of educational and professional contexts for purposes of learning, assessment, appraisal or promotion. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to offer a detailed study of the portfolio and its many adaptations, it is appropriate to discuss its development as a pedagogical tool in order to establish the context for its application to instruction in music theory.

In educational environments, learning portfolios are used to document a student's formative learning, to serve as the basis for assessment of learning, or to do both.⁴ Learning portfolios are often valued as alternative forms of assessment, that is, as alternatives to standardized achievement tests. Indeed, it appears that the learning portfolio originally emerged as a tool for alternative assessment as a result of educational reforms that took place predominantly in the 1980s. In Great Britain, portfolios were the answer to a challenge from government authorities to replace standardized testing of English language skills at the secondary level with a more effective method of assessment.⁵ In the United States, educators of writing skills at the secondary level adopted portfolios to address similar assessment concerns.⁶ At the post-secondary level, interest in portfolios developed in direct response to a growing demand by state and federal authorities for standardized assessment of writing skill that could remedy perceptions of eroding standards and satisfy a call for academic accountability. As an alternative to standardized tests that may not have reflected institutional goals or

departmental curricula, learning portfolios were adopted for purposes of state-mandated assessment of writing skills, which kept the assessment process in the hands of faculty rather than administrative authorities.⁷ Since then, portfolios have grown in popularity in various educational contexts throughout Europe and North America. While they have historically received more attention in primary and secondary school levels, learning portfolios are now mainstream requirements in many post-secondary areas of study especially in such disciplines as English, journalism and communications. Some evidence indicates that teacher education is currently most advanced in working with portfolios, but innovative use of the instrument is being made in language instruction and in training students within such professional fields as medicine, dentistry, nursing, psychology, engineering, business, information systems, and of course art, design and architecture.⁸

Specific definitions of the learning portfolio vary as applications to different contexts take different forms and yield diverse contents. Indeed, one of the portfolio's strengths is its adaptability to serve a variety of purposes, which in turn is responsible for diversity of portfolio designs. If the purpose is assessment, the portfolio may be a collection of a student's best work, much like an artist's portfolio. Adding a reflection component transforms the artifacts into evidence of achievement. If the purpose is to focus on learning or formative evaluation, the portfolio may include drafts or work in progress along with final products. Since the two main reasons for maintaining portfolios, learning and assessment, are not exclusive, portfolios that fulfill both purposes by documenting process and product enable learners and instructors to better understand the depth of student progress and achievement. Notwithstanding the variety of resulting designs, there is consensus that the learning portfolio constitutes a purposeful and organized collection of student work that captures learning and includes reflection on the portfolio contents. Portfolio literature suggests that well-structured learning portfolios are characterised by:

- Clarity of purpose
- Student involvement in compiling portfolio artifacts
- Student reflection on the artifacts and learning process
- Criteria that defines quality performance⁹

Reflective writing is recognized as a crucial component of the portfolio. It maintains a learner-centered focus and is a fundamental feature of a deeper approach to learning.¹⁰ This is because reflective thinking moves one away from a primary focus on product to a concern with process or learning about learning. By standing back from the content and evaluating the learning process involved, one begins to make sense of one's own learning and is encouraged to take responsibility for it. As reported by Karen Mills-Courts and Minda Rae Amiran:

Most of the best research on cognitive development suggests that it is extremely important to create situations in which students must think about their own thinking, reflect on ways in which they learn and why they fail to learn. . . . It is clear that the more students are aware of their own learning processes, the more likely they are to establish goals for their education and the more deeply engaged they are in those processes . . . students who can use information in an active and critical way are those who acquire further knowledge.¹¹

Through reflective writing, learners develop metacognitive skills that help them achieve an awareness of how they do intellectual work, which is a useful ability to cultivate in general and particularly for the study of music theory.

In recent years, using portfolios to assess student learning at all educational levels has been much discussed. Experts in

favor of portfolio-based assessment describe it as being authentic, which means that it "require[s] students to actively accomplish significant tasks using prior knowledge, recent learning and the relevant skills to solve real-world tasks.' In other words, rather than merely telling or answering questions about what they know and what they can do, students actually demonstrate their knowledge and skill."¹² Broad interest in using portfolios is being fuelled not only because the instrument is perceived as a superior assessment tool, but also or perhaps even more so because of its reported ability to engage students in their own learning.

The Music Theory Portfolio Project

My interest in the portfolio as a pedagogical tool was piqued by its promised ability to motivate students and enhance their learning. To test this claim, I adopted it for use in a required music theory core course on chromatic harmony, to which students are not necessarily equally committed, as they do not attend only by choice. The portfolio was used both for formative learning and assessment. Therefore, it was designed to include evidence of student work in progress, samples of their best completed work and reflection on the work submitted.

In this initial trial the complete portfolio was conceived as a collection of two or more well-defined projects that endeavoured to activate student learning by combining writing-to-learn assignments with peer review and reflection.¹³ Each project gave students an opportunity to demonstrate knowledge of a particular concept covered in the course by applying critical thinking skills to a writing assignment in order to complete an activity that may be encountered in the field of music theory. To accomplish this, students were required to work together in partnerships of two, in which one student assumed the role of an author and the other the role of an editor. Roles were switched from one project to the next to ensure equal requirements for all students over the course of the complete portfolio. Each portfolio project was submitted by a particular deadline; it was assessed and returned to students before the next project was due so that students could benefit from instructor feedback before their next submission. The portfolio design challenged a common characteristic of portfolios by limiting student choice of artifacts, but in this initial implementation, a more mentored approach was required to meet curricular requirements that included examinations, for which the portfolio also served as a preparatory aid. The resulting standardization of portfolio contents yielded a set of artifacts in common to all project submissions, which facilitated assessment.

An example of a music theory portfolio project is provided in the appendix to this article, which reproduces my "Portfolio Project 1" on the topic of applied chords.¹⁴ While the assignment itself needs no additional explanation, I will comment here on the project design and on elements that contribute to its effectiveness. An immediately noticeable feature of the project is its relatively detailed instructions. In my experience, this is an essential component of a successful portfolio project design especially if the project is used for assessment. The greater the level of clarity provided to students regarding what is required of them, the greater the chances that they will meet project expectations.

The project begins with a statement of purpose that transforms students into aspiring music theorists with mandates to write and edit articles on the topic of applied chords. The instructions that follow outline partnership and assessment submission requirements. The completed project consists of a title page, an initial version of a completed article on applied chords, a review of the first version of the article, a revised version of the article, and reflections of the author and editor.

The project has internal deadlines in addition to the submission deadline. Internal deadlines teach lessons in time management and guard against potential procrastination by author and/or editor that could negatively affect the project

experience. These deadlines may be set by the instructor or may be agreed to between partners themselves, but the requirement of adhering to them is articulated in author and editor instructions and the importance of doing so is reflected in the rubric for assessment. The project submission deadline serves a similar purpose. While some students may possess the discipline and responsibility necessary to submit several projects as one complete portfolio toward the end of a course, most students benefit from the pacing that individual project deadlines provide and from instructor feedback between project submissions.

Instructions for author and editor specify the tasks to be fulfilled by each role in detail. The author is charged with writing a 500-word encyclopedia article on applied chords that must be illustrated by original examples based on exercises discussed in class and by an example from music repertoire, preferably a composition that the author is learning to perform, has performed or would like to perform. The editor is charged with writing a review report that must address content requirements of the article, must present and compare alternative music examples and offer a recommendation with supporting rationale on which examples to include in the revised version of the article. Thus, in addition to correcting grammatical weaknesses, the critique must engage with substantive issues in the article. The editor's written report completes the first part of the peer-review process. It is followed by further consultation between author and editor to create a final and best version of the article to submit for assessment. By engaging in this process, students hone critical thinking skills, acquire skill in negotiating the presentation of knowledge and begin to realize that careful attention to language is required for a text to convey what its author intended, all of which are normally afforded by peer review.¹⁵

To complete the portfolio project, both author and editor must provide written statements of reflection on their engagement in the project and on lessons learned from it. Not all students are equally skilled in reflection. For many this may be a new activity. To aid students in developing this skill, questions are provided that indicate the kind of information that may be included. Furthermore, the rubric for assessment shows greatest reward for perceptive and illuminating comments about what participants learned from the project, which encourages them to think about their learning process.

Assessment can be a problematic issue in portfolio use. This is particularly true for portfolio designs that allow students exclusive control over artifact selection. By designating items to include, the project portfolio mitigates potential problems of assessment to a considerable extent. In addition, the inclusion of a rubric facilitates assessment for the instructor while clarifying assessment criteria for students.

What is a rubric? Educators Chris Anson and Deanna Dannels explain that "rubrics come in many forms; at their simplest, they are evaluative scales based on categories that usually derive from expectations for an assignment."¹⁶ For this portfolio project, the rubric contains a total of nine different assessment categories. There is one for project presentation and one for each of the five required artifacts that document work in progress (the author's first version of the article and the editor's review report), best work (the final version of the article) and reflections of author and editor. It gives additional weight to the inclusion of chorale-style examples and a repertoire excerpt by allotting separate categories for these two important project components that form part of the final version of the article. The rubric also includes a category that evaluates demonstrated mastery of subject matter (understanding of applied chords), which is the goal of the project. For each category, evaluative expectations are specified at every point along a scale from a minimum of 0 to a maximum of 4 points. The rubric indicates that participants are not assessed in categories for which they have no responsibility and illustrates where both partners are expected to take equal responsibility. Thus, the author's achievement on his/her specific contributions does not affect the editor's score and vice versa. However, in all categories into which both partners

have input, each is awarded the same score.

It is important to disclose the rubric at the same time as the portfolio project instructions. Withholding the rubric does not allow students to make productive use of the information it contains. Disclosing it clarifies requirements, which helps students to meet expectations. It also allows for transparency in comparison of submitted work against quality standards and reveals criteria against which all project portfolio submissions are equally judged.

Pedagogical Outcomes

This music theory portfolio project yielded a number of rewarding pedagogical outcomes, many of which were identified in student reflections. Most if not all students experienced writing or editing a music theoretical essay for the first time. Many authors and editors commented on the value of the writing assignments observing that writing helped them to understand the topic of applied chords more thoroughly than had they been asked only to complete or compose music exercises. Students realize that this kind of disciplinary writing requires clarity of thought and that it can solidify comprehension or reveal faulty thinking, gaps in knowledge, or lack of understanding, which can then be remedied. Such observations confirm that writing to learn engages students in a process that leads to deeper understanding of subject matter.¹⁷

The requirement to find repertoire examples of applied chords prompted students to make connections between theoretical studies and musical training beyond the theory classroom, as indicated by the following reflective comments:

"I used to think that materials that are being taught in theory class are too 'theoretical' and not practical enough to be used in real life, but as I was able to find so many musical compositions that consist of applied chords, music theory to me became alive in terms of its application in real, living music."

"I am now able to pick them [applied chords] out while listening to music and it is a really wonderful feeling to hear these harmonies and think, 'Ah, that's why the music goes this way.' "

Sometimes, students discovered the relevance of the project itself to their career development as indicated in this reflective comment:

"Striving to explain this concept [applied chords] in a straight-forward and understandable way has prompted me to cultivate skills that will be important in a possible future career as a music educator."

Even more encouraging are observations that reveal honing of critical thinking skills and a developing awareness of learning process as reflected in the following comments:

"I also believe that working as the editor gave me a chance to think critically about the sources I use in research, whether it is related to music theory or another field. ... Looking at a piece of writing for what it is . . . and thinking critically enables you to develop an opinion of your own based on previous knowledge and the subject matter the author presents. Developing my own opinion based on documented knowledge not only makes my writing not only [sic] better, but makes my writing far more credible and interesting. This is I believe the main skill developed as the editor in this task, and it is the skill which I will take away with thanks."

"This project was not only helpful in my understanding of applied chords, but it also allowed me to understand how my brain works as an individual and the different techniques I can use to better my studying habits. I found myself constantly reviewing readings and class notes while in the process of writing this article. . . . I discovered that sitting down and writing the article based on what I could remember helps me to study and to learn the material. This method outlines the points I already know and which points I need to focus on."

Overwhelmingly, reflections give credit to peer review for enabling participants to produce better products. Often, editors recognize their responsibility to be at least as well-informed as their authors in order to perform due diligence and they take their review work seriously when grades depend on the quality of their commentary. Reflections also recognize the benefits of encountering and reconciling different interpretations of subject matter, of enhancing mutual understanding of a topic through partnership, and of being motivated to submit high quality work because a partner's evaluation depends on it too. The peer review process thus emerges as a valuable component of the project design for students and for instructors; for students because they experience the value of learning through revision and for instructors because the improved work that is submitted for assessment is not only rewarding for all parties, but also provides a more accurate indication of student abilities. While students in theory core courses are usually evaluated on individual work, this project indicates that they can learn much from each other through controlled peer review.

Conclusion

The pedagogical outcomes of the portfolio project described in this study are noteworthy all the more so because they confirm results of portfolio use in other fields. Positive results were obtained from this portfolio project because of activities that draw attention to the process of learning. Its design invites students to think deeply about their individual learning and challenges them not only to articulate what they think, but more importantly to understand why they think it. Consequently, it fosters internalization of learning and engages students in ways that can be extraordinarily meaningful.

A portfolio approach that assumes everyone in the class is a developing theorist elicits responsible work and engages even those students whose generally less-than-inspired attitudes toward music theory hinder their progress. In crowded classrooms with ever-growing enrollments, the project portfolio customizes student learning experiences through writing, reflection and peer review. Writing-to-learn assignments transform students from passive to active learners and deepen their understanding of subject matter while engaging them in the thinking processes of our discipline. Reflection is the vehicle through which students learn to take ownership for their learning and responsibility for becoming self-directed learners. At some point, it entails modifying previous knowledge to connect it to new material and thereby develops perceptive skill that is not only useful in introductory theory courses, but also necessary for more sophisticated analytical work later on. Reflection also develops conscious awareness of strengths and weaknesses, encourages students to recognize areas for improvement as well as promotes confidence through recognition of accomplishments. Through reflection, students begin to move beyond the ordinary focus on assignment completion to a deeper awareness of the learning involved in building their own understanding of the subject matter. Peer review engages students in real-world practice and develops interpersonal skills valuable in any field of study including music theory: the ability to accept constructive criticism respectfully, to express opinions clearly and openly, to offer advice tactfully, to empathize with alternative perspectives, and to reach compromise between different points of view. The process involves students in generating rather than passively receiving knowledge. Perhaps most importantly, it affords them an opportunity to

experience the social construction of knowledge by groups that negotiate their way to consensus. In the end, the peer-review process produces a much improved final product that is submitted for evaluation without additional instructor input and one that better reflects student abilities. Even if they are not stellar writers, students can be excellent peer editors because they readily recognize lack of clarity in someone else's work if not their own.

There are aspects of portfolio use that may deter instructors. Portfolios in general and project portfolios in particular require careful thought and preparation. Instructors must determine well in advance how best to connect portfolios to curricular goals and a considerable investment of time and energy is needed to design effective projects and to provide detailed guidelines necessary for their successful completion. Perhaps the greatest deterrent to portfolio adoption for instructional purposes is the time required to grade individual and unique portfolio submissions. As class sizes and workloads increase, learning portfolios can become overwhelming and burdensome. To some extent, the design of the portfolio project presented in this study mitigates this latter concern in three significant ways. Firstly, it cuts portfolio submissions in half by requiring two students to complete one submission. Secondly, the peer-review component catches and corrects many errors that instructors ordinarily encounter when reviewing assignments thereby reducing time spent on recurring error correction. Lastly, the rubric for assessment streamlines the grading process.

Notwithstanding these acknowledged challenges to portfolio use, the benefits of the music theory learning portfolio project described in this study are too attractive to dismiss. The portfolio project allows students to demonstrate knowledge of subject matter while integrating skills in academic writing, critical thinking and reflection thereby developing professional skill at an early level. Moreover, it engages students in their individual learning of theoretical subject matter and encourages them to recognize the relevance of theory and its abstractions to musical realities outside the classroom. The effectiveness of the portfolio project in this regard derives from its focus on the process of student learning rather than on subject teaching. The adoption of such a change in focus in music theory pedagogy transforms an instructor productively from dispenser of knowledge to a higher-order facilitator of learning and allows for a more informed evaluation of student achievement.

As indicated by my trial implementation, the learning portfolio project is a potentially powerful pedagogical tool for undergraduate instruction in music theory and it brings to light pedagogical issues worthy of further consideration in this field. Its effectiveness calls for instructors of music theory core courses to pursue a process-oriented focus on student learning rather than the conventional focus on subject teaching and especially to engage students in reflection on their work. It also suggests that more attention should be directed toward creating assignments that include peer review as a middle step between initial and final versions of assignments submitted for assessment as peer review plays a valuable role in student learning and produces a better final product. Perhaps most encouraging is the revelation that, by working with portfolio projects, students in theory classes experience the relevance of studying music theory because they engage in the kind of analytical, creative, critical and reflective work that music theorists do.

Notes

¹Nelson, "The College Music Society Music Theory Undergraduate Core Curriculum Survey—2000," 61. Consult this article for more information regarding data collected by the survey as well as for trends and concerns identified by its author.

²Examples of such instructional materials used in the music theory core include, but are not limited to the following

publications: Clendinning, Jane Piper and Elizabeth West Marvin, *The Musician's Guide to Theory and Analysis and The Musician's Guide to Aural Skills* Volumes 1 and 2 (with Joel Phillips and Paul Murphy), 2nd edition (New York: W. W. Norton, 2011); Gauldin, Robert, *Harmonic Practice in Tonal Music*, 2nd edition (New York: W. W. Norton, 2004); Kostka, Stefan and Dorothy Payne, *Tonal Harmony: With an Introduction to Twentieth-Century Music*, 7th edition (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2004); Laitz, Steven, *The Complete Musician: An Integrated Approach to Tonal Theory, Analysis, and Listening*, 3rd edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Roig-Francoli, Miguel, *Harmony in Context*, 2nd edition (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2011).

³The Research Ethics Board of Wilfrid Laurier University has approved collection of student comments for purposes of this research project. I gratefully acknowledge the consent of students to include their comments in this article. I also acknowledge the Educational Development department at Wilfrid Laurier University, in whose workshops I first encountered information about the learning portfolio. My own project design is indebted to the work of my colleague in the department of Languages and Literature at WLU, Dr. Mercedes Rowinsky.

⁴Traditionally, portfolios have been paper based as is the portfolio project discussed in this study. However, web-based portfolios are currently being developed that, in addition to text, may include multimedia artifacts such as graphics, sound and video allowing for ever richer representations of student learning.

⁵Scott, "Step by Step," 80-85.

⁶Camp and Levine, "Portfolios Evolving," 195.

⁷Rosenberg, "Using the Portfolio to Meet State-Mandated Assessment," 69-71.

⁸For information on portfolio use in various educational contexts, see: Beishuizen et al, "The Introduction of Portfolios in Higher Education"; Butler, "A Review of the Literature on Portfolios and Electronic Portfolios"; Gonzalez, "Promoting student autonomy through the use of the European Language Portfolio"; Klenowski et al, "Portfolios for Learning, Assessment and Professional Development in Higher Education"; Zubizarreta, *The Learning Portfolio: Reflective Practice for Improving Student Learning*.

⁹Arter et al, "Portfolios for Assessment and Instruction," 5.

¹⁰For an introduction to reflection and reflective learning, see: Moon, Jenny. *The Higher Education Academy Guide for Busy Academics No. 4: Learning through reflection*.

¹¹Mills-Courts and Amiran, "Metacognition and the Use of Portfolios," 103.

¹²Bauer and Dunn, "Digital Reflection: The Electronic Portfolio in Music Teacher Education", 10-11, quoting S. R. Farrell, *Tools for Powerful Student Evaluation* (Ft. Lauderdale, FL: Meredith Music Publications, 1997), 2.

¹³For information on project portfolios, see Crockett, *The Portfolio Journey*, 63 ff. For an example of a different kind of project portfolio, see Mulnix and Mulnix, "Using A Writing Portfolio Project to Teach Critical Thinking Skills."

¹⁴This is a revised version of a substantially identical document assigned to students in September, 2010.

¹⁵For more information on instructional use of student peer review, see Holt, "The Value of Written Peer Criticism" and Paton, "Approaches to Productive Peer Review."

¹⁶Anson and Dannels, "Developing Rubrics for Instruction and Evaluation," 388.

¹⁷Bean, John C. *Engaging Ideas* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2001), xvii. For a discussion of learning portfolios and the power of writing, see Zubizarreta, *The Learning Portfolio*, 26-29. For more information on writing to learn, see: Bean, *Engaging Ideas*; Duquesne University Center for Teaching Excellence, "Using Writing-to-Learn Assignments to Actively Engage Students in the Learning Process"; Emig, "Writing as a Mode of Learning."

APPENDIX

Learning Portfolio Project 1

Topic: Applied Chords

Purpose: Part of a music theorist's work involves writing articles and submitting them to editors for peer review. In this assignment, you have an opportunity to experience this professional process as you demonstrate your learning about applied chords and their musical application.

Project Instructions: This project requires that you work in groups of two. Each group consists of an author and an editor. Between you and your partner, decide who will assume which role and then follow the instructions for that role. When completed and ready for submission, this project will consist of 7 items:

1. A title page "Portfolio Project 1" including the names of author and editor
2. A first version of a complete article
3. A review of the first version of the article
4. A revised version of the article
5. Reflections of the author
6. Reflections of the editor
7. Rubric for Assessment of Portfolio Project 1

All 7 items constitute Portfolio Project 1. Bind them together in the above order when you submit Portfolio Project 1 for evaluation. It will be evaluated according to the Rubric for Assessment.

Note the following important deadlines:

Deadline for author to submit first version of article to editor: _____

Deadline for editor to submit review report to author: _____

Deadline for submission of completed Portfolio Project 1: _____

If you encounter difficulty at any point during this project, please contact the instructor.

Instructions for Partner 1: Author

1. Write an article.

You have agreed to write an article on the topic of applied chords for a music encyclopedia. Assume the readership to be an informed audience that understands music terminology at a second-year university level. The article you submit must be double spaced, in 12-point font, and approximately 500 words in length plus music examples. The article must be written in your own words. If you use material from any text, you must provide reference in a footnote or endnote. Write this first version of your article on your own without input from your editor so that it represents your best possible independent work. You may consult with your editor after you receive her/his review report.

Your article must include the following information:

1. The title "Applied Chords", your name and date of submission to your editor.
2. What is an applied chord and what is its purpose?
3. Identify the different kinds of applied chords.
4. Explain proper voice leading for applied chords.
5. Compose two or more chorale-style music examples to illustrate points 3 and 4 above. If done by hand, these examples must be of publishable quality, not in pencil. In your article, identify precisely the applied chords you have used in your composed examples and point out required resolutions of tendency tones.
6. Illustrate the use of an applied chord within a musical composition. To do this, find an example of an applied chord in repertoire you are performing, have performed, or would like to perform. Examples from your course textbook are not acceptable. In your article, identify the composer, title of the composition and its tonality. Identify the applied chord, and explain the musical purpose it serves. Note: This repertoire example should be no more than 1 page long. If the composition you have chosen is more than 1 page long, provide only an excerpt from your chosen piece that sets the musical context and includes the applied chord. Add measure numbers to your excerpt to show its placement relative to the rest of the piece.

2. Submit your article to your editor

Submit the completed first version of your article to your editor and keep a copy for yourself.

3. Revise the article

When your editor returns your article to you, write at the top of the Editor's Review Report: "Received by author on [fill in the date] ". **Do not alter your first reviewed draft in any way** as it forms part of the complete Portfolio Project 1 submission. Consider your editor's comments and consult further to reach consensus on differences of opinion. Revise your article as needed to create a new final version that is the best it can be.

4. Reflection

Having completed revision of the article, think about what you have learned from this project activity. On a separate sheet of paper under the heading "Reflections of Author", compose your thoughts about this assignment in a few paragraphs in 12-point font. You may use the following questions to guide your reflection, but you need not limit your observations to them:

What was valuable to me in this project?

What did I learn about the topic by doing this project that I didn't know before?

What difficulties did I encounter while engaging in this project? How did I remedy them?

What did I learn about writing?

What did I learn about my own learning?

Instructions for Partner 2: Editor

1. Review the article

You have agreed to review and edit your author's article on applied chords. This involves correcting mistakes, suggesting changes, and writing a review report. To review the article, you must have sufficient expertise on the topic. While your author is writing the article, your responsibility is to search out an excerpt in your own repertoire and to compose your own chorale-style examples that would illustrate the different kinds of applied chords and their voice-leading adequately and that you think would be appropriate to include in the final version of the article. If done by hand, the chorale examples must be of publishable quality, not in pencil. The report must be written in essay form, double-spaced and in 12-point font.

Your review report must include the following information:

1. The title "Editor's Review Report", your name and date of submission to your author.
2. The date of your receipt of the article. Was it submitted to you on time?
3. Does the presentation of the article comply with expectations? This means:
 - Is the article appropriately titled and does it include the author's name?
 - Is it double-spaced and in 12-point font?
 - Is all work neatly presented?
4. Is the article an appropriate length? It must be approximately 500 words long.
5. Is the article written well overall? Are sentences and paragraphs structured properly? Are there typographical errors in the article? Identify problems and make corrections.
6. Does the article explain the purpose of applied chords? If not, suggest an appropriate explanation.
7. Does the article identify different kinds of applied chords? If not, suggest possible additions keeping in mind the 500 word length of the article.
8. Does the article include music examples in chorale style that illustrate different kinds of applied chords and proper voice leading? Do tendency tones resolve correctly? Address any problems.
9. Does the article include an example of an applied chord in an excerpt from music repertoire? Is the context of the excerpt and the musical purpose of the applied chord explained clearly? If not, point out what is incorrect or unclear and suggest changes.
10. Present your own chorale-style compositions and repertoire excerpt as possible alternative example suggestions. How do they compare with your author's compositions and choice of repertoire excerpt? Which ones should be included in the final version of the article? Explain why.

2. Submit your review to your author

Return the corrected article with your review report to your author. Keep a copy for yourself.

3. Consult with your author

Consult with your author as needed to create a revised final version of the article that is the best it can be. If you and your author have different opinions on certain matters, discuss them until you reach a consensus.

4. Reflection

Having completed revision of the article, think about what you have learned from this project activity. On a separate sheet of paper under the heading "Reflections of Editor", compose your thoughts about this assignment in a few paragraphs in 12-point font. You may use the following questions to guide your reflection, but you need not limit your observations to them:

What was valuable to me in this project?

What did I learn about the topic by doing this project that I didn't know before?

What difficulties did I encounter while engaging in this project? How did I remedy them?

What did I learn about writing?

What did I learn about my own learning?

Rubric for Assessment of Portfolio Project 1

Assessment Categories	0	1	2	3	4	Author Points earned	Editor Points earned
Presentation of Portfolio Project 1	Not submitted for assessment.	The portfolio project is disorganized. Items are missing or incomplete.	The portfolio project is essentially complete, but some items are out of order.	The portfolio project is complete and in order, but not all individual items comply with presentation requirements. Some parts may lack neatness.	The portfolio project is complete and in order. All items comply with presentation requirements. All work is neatly presented.		
Author's first version of article	Not submitted for assessment.	Submitted late to the editor. Or, submitted on time, but is disorganized,	Article is submitted on time and is somewhat organized, but does not comply	Article is submitted on time and is well organized. Sentence and	Article is submitted on time, is well organized and clearly written. All content and		N/A

		incomplete, poorly written, and/or contains incorrect information. It may lack proper paragraph or sentence structure, or contain many typos. Music examples may be sloppy and contain errors.	with many requirements regarding content, length and/or presentation expectations. The work appears to be half-done.	paragraph structure is good, but needs improvement. Content is complete, but presentation or length does not meet expectations. Music examples may not comply with requirements or meet presentation expectations.	presentation requirements meet expectations. It is obvious that the article matters to the author.		
Editor's Review Report for	Not submitted for assessment.	Submitted late to the author. Or, report is submitted on time, but is disorganized, incomplete, poorly written, and/or contains incorrect information. It may lack proper paragraph or sentence structure, or contain many typos. It may omit suggestion of alternative chorale examples or repertoire excerpt. It does not comply with several requirements and/or is not helpful.	Report is submitted on time and is somewhat organized, but does not comply with many requirements regarding content and presentation expectations. Alternative chorale examples or repertoire excerpt are sloppy, contain errors or are poorly explained. Review misses many errors in article. The review work appears to be half-done.	Report is submitted on time and is well organized. It makes several helpful suggestions. Sentence and paragraph structure is good, but some errors or improvements to the article are overlooked. Most, but not all suggestions for alternative chorale examples or repertoire excerpt are error-free or explained well. Report content is mostly complete, but presentation	Report is submitted on time, is complete, well organized and clearly written. All or almost all errors in the article and/or music examples have been corrected. Suggestions for alternative chorale examples and repertoire excerpt are helpful, correct and explained well. Overall, a helpful review that meets expectations. It is obvious that the review matters to the editor.	N/A	

				requirements may not meet expectations.		
Final version of article	Not submitted for assessment.	Article explains applied chords poorly or does not include required information. Sentence structure may be improved, but article still contains most of the same content errors present in the first version or includes new errors.	Errors in content still remain. Article is not consistently clear. It may not comply with presentation requirements. Chorale examples and/or repertoire excerpt may not meet requirements.	Article is well organized and clearly written. Some problems still require attention.	Article is well organized, clearly written and contains no errors. All content and presentation requirements meet expectations. Article is ready for publication.	
Chorale-style examples in final version of article	Not submitted for assessment.	Examples are inadequate, contain many errors and/or are not explained. They do not support the article and/or do not comply with requirements.	Examples are appropriate, but contain errors or are poorly explained. Presentation may not meet requirements.	Examples are mostly well done, but may not be presented neatly or explanations may lack clarity.	Examples contain no errors, are explained clearly and comply with requirements.	
Repertoire excerpt in final version of article	Not submitted for assessment.	Does not feature an applied chord. Musical context or purpose is not explained. The excerpt does not support the article.	Features an applied chord, but its context or purpose is misunderstood. Presentation is sloppy or messy.	Is a good example from the repertoire that features an applied chord. Its context or purpose may not be explained well. Presentation is reasonable.	Is an excellent example from the repertoire that supports the article. Its context and purpose are clearly explained. Presentation is excellent.	
Understanding of Applied Chords	No understanding of this topic is evident.	Portfolio project shows limited understanding of this topic.	Portfolio project indicates that about half of the information on	Portfolio project demonstrates that applied chords are understood	Portfolio project demonstrates a thorough understanding of	

			applied chords has been understood. Errors in comprehension are apparent or much required information is missing.	reasonably well. Some required information may be missing.	applied chords. All required information is included.		
Author's reflections	Not submitted for assessment.	Displays very little thought.	Some critical thinking is apparent.	Demonstrates a good effort to learn from the experience of creating Portfolio Project 1.	Very perceptive and illuminating comments.		N/A
Editor's reflections	Not submitted for assessment.	Displays very little thought.	Some critical thinking is apparent.	Demonstrates a good effort to learn from the experience of creating Portfolio Project 1.	Very perceptive and illuminating comments.	N/A	
Total Score:						/28	/28

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Download attachments: [Rubric-for-Assessment-of-Portfolio-Project-1.doc](#) (360 Downloads)



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Anna Ferenc is Associate Professor of Music Theory at Wilfrid Laurier University. Her research interests include the work of Roslavets and Scriabin, the transformation of chromatic harmony into post-tonal compositional practice, and the pedagogy of music theory. On these topics, she has published essays and articles and has presented papers at conferences in the disciplines of Music, Slavic Studies, and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.