

TLEF Project Plan Document
Online Music Practicing Log
Principal Investigator: Dr. Milton Schlosser, Professor of Music
Augustana Faculty, University of Alberta

I. Statement of Project Goals

I propose to develop an *online music practicing log* for use by students and faculty. As tools for self-directed learning, music practicing logs have been available until recently only in paper format. While online versions now exist, they are limited in scope and format, being designed primarily for pre-university learners. This project situates the experiences of the university musician at the centre of teaching and learning through a series of innovations. The log will not only track and total practice times, but also isolate specific types of practicing for analytical purposes. The design provides space for extensive critical reflection on issues related to practicing (e.g., mind, body) and, related to Schlosser's McCalla research project, may serve to store video files. A computer and video camera will be provided in each of the Augustana Campus's practice rooms to promote the log as a ready tool in experienced-based learning.

II. Definition of Concrete Objectives

A. Functionality of Existing Software

The running log on which this project is based (<http://run.dolphinstreet.com/>) incorporates a series of features more advanced than extant commercially available online music logs. Specifically, the running log exhibits the following characteristics:

1. *Global accessibility.* As an internet-based software, the running log may be accessed anywhere there is a computer and internet connection. Individuals choose a login name and password to gain access to the running log.
2. *User-friendly design.* The running log is designed for use by those with limited computer or internet experience. Once signed in, users encounter a software designed specifically for ease in navigation and in accessing the log's helpful features. The running log is intended to assist the individual in the tracking of workouts and, importantly, in the types and effectiveness of workouts. For each workout entry, the user is required to provide certain details (date of run, shoes, type of run: prompted by drop-down menu) and optional information (time in minutes, distance in kilometers, heart rate, comments: fill-in-the-blank). Within the "comments" box, users are able to format text and include web links and image files.
3. *Automatic sorting of information.* The running log promotes experienced-based learning through its ability to not only track individual workouts, but to also automatically sort information in a variety of ways that are helpful to the runner in assessing the number, types, and quality of runs/workouts. The log's functions are divided into the following categories which are listed at the top of every web page for easy reference:
 - a) LOG—this page prompts for the entry of training information for the

most recent workout and also lists all workouts entered in multiyear, chronological format (starting from most recent entry). Each entry consists of information prompted by provided categories of date, shoes, type of run, time in minutes, distance in km, heart rate, comments, automatic calculation of average pace. The first three categories are facilitated with handy drop-down menus. As well, the provision to edit (edit/delete) at any time is included.

b) **WORKOUTS**—this page lets the runner filter her/his runs according to workout type (e.g., easy run, hills). Once filtering has taken place, information is provided in the same manner as the LOG—i.e., according to date, shoes, type of run, time in minutes, distance in km, heart rate, comments, automatic calculation of average pace, and with the provision to edit (edit/delete) at any time;

c) **STATISTICS**—this generates statistics within three larger categories. The first, “Yearly Statistics Running,” lists information according to year, runs, kilometres, hours, and minutes. The second, “Monthly Statistic Running,” adds the month to the information provided in the first category. The third, “Weekly Statistic Running,” is more specific, adding the exact week to the rest of the information as provided in the second category.

d) **SHOES**—allows for entering different shoes used. Once these shoes are entered, a drop-down menu prompt lists them when entering workout information.

e) **FORUM**—eight discussion groups operate on a variety of topics.

4. *Coaching Access.* The individual log user may give permission to Robert Renman, who is not only the designer of the software but also an elite runner and experienced coach, to access the personal log.

B. Functionality of Proposed Software

The proposed software builds upon the features described above and adapts them to the music practicing situation at the University of Alberta in the following ways and according to the following timelines:

1. *Global accessibility.* The software will continue the internet-based format. However, the hosting site will be located at the University of Alberta’s Augustana Campus. The software designer will interface with TLS Augustana as to the best login/password system to be employed, of particular significance given that some individuals may be studying at least two instruments.
2. *User-friendly design.* The practicing log also assumes limited computer or internet experience and the need for ease in navigation. The practicing log is intended to assist the individual in tracking practicing and performing. For each entry, the user is required to provide certain details (date, type of practicing: prompted by drop-down menu) and optional information (time in minutes, comments: fill-in-the-blank). Within the “comments” sections, users will continue to have the opportunity to format text and include web links and video files. However, two important functions that will be added to the practicing log:
 - a) **musicians will be able to indicate “type of practicing.”** A default drop-menu will be provided (warm-up, technique, studies, piece/song 1 to piece/song 8), but individuals will be able to personalize the dropdown

menu to their particular instrumental and repertoire requirements (e.g., stretching, meditation, score study, technique, studies, Beethoven/Opus13/movement 1, Beethoven/Opus13/movement 2, etc.).
b) musicians will be able to store video clips. As with image files in the running log, these video clips will appear within the “comments” section. The amount of storage available for each log needs to be investigated and may need to be limited given storage limitations on the server.

3. *Automatic sorting of information.* To assist the musician in experience-based learning, the practicing log will automatically sort information in a variety of ways that are helpful to the individual. The log’s functions will be divided into the following categories which are listed at the top of every web page for easy reference:
 - a) LOG—as in the running log, the practicing log will have this page that prompts for the entry of practicing information for the most recent session and also lists all sessions entered in multiyear, chronological format (starting from most recent entry). Each entry consists of information prompted by the “type of practicing” drop-down menu. The rest of the functions are the same.
 - b) PRACTICING SESSIONS—this page lets the musician filter her/his practicing according to the exact type of practicing, as set-up in the drop-down menu. Once filtering has taken place, information is provided in the same manner as the LOG—with the provision to edit (edit/delete) at any time.
 - c) STATISTICS—this generates statistics within three larger categories. The first, “Yearly Statistics Practicing,” will list information according to year, practices, hours, and minutes. The second, “Monthly Statistics Practicing,” adds the month to the information provided in the first category. The third, “Weekly Statistics Practicing,” is more specific, adding the exact week to the rest of the information as provided in the second category.
 - e) FORUM—the opportunity for discussions on given topics will be provided and will allow for a variety of topics.
4. *Instructor Access.* A function of the log will be to allow the individual instructor of each student to view the student’s log to provide coaching assistance. Security measures will be ensured to maintain confidentiality, including that a given instructor access has access to her/his own students and to no other students.

C. **Three-year Timetable for Developing Software Tool**

YEAR ONE, 2007-2008

- **July 1, 2007** Software development begins by Vital Effect Inc. on all aspects related to functionality as described in II.B.1-3, in direct consultation with TLS Augustana. 50% payment is given to Vital Effect per contract.
- **September 1, 2007** With possible exception of II.B.2.b (video clip function), all functions of English version come online for students of principal investigator at Augustana Campus (8 piano students). The online version is maintained and stored at Augustana TLS.
- **September 15, 2007** First usability test: piano students of Schlosser.
- **January 15, 2007** Second usability test: piano students of Schlosser.

- **March 15 –April 15, 2008** Online survey is available for 8 Augustana piano students.
- **May 2008** Journals of Schlosser piano students (8) become available to Schlosser as research data in helping to assess effectiveness of the log in learning. At the conclusion of the academic year, the software may be modified given responses to the surveys.
- **June 2008** Data from survey and journals is assessed to further refine software, if required. 25% payment is given to Vital Effect per contract.
- **June 2008** Annual report is submitted to E-Learning Development Officer.

YEAR TWO, 2008-2009

- **September 1, 2008** Function described in II.B.2.b goes online. The log becomes accessible to all Augustana private lesson students and their instructors. The function of the log to allow the individual instructor of each student to view the student's log for coaching assistance is ready, with security measures in place to maintain confidentiality and instructor access to the students of the given instructor and no other students. Over the summer, computers installed in and video cameras made available to Augustana practice rooms.
- **September 15, 2008** Presentation to Augustana students and faculty will be made at the beginning of classes on how to use the online log and related technologies.
- **March 15-April 15 2009** Online surveys are made available to all Augustana students and faculty using the practicing log.
- **May 2009** French edition of log prepared.
- **May-June 2009** Journals of Schlosser piano students become available to Schlosser in helping to assess effectiveness of the log as a learning tool. At the conclusion of the academic year, the software may be modified given responses to surveys.
- **June 2009** Annual report is submitted to E-Learning Development Officer

YEAR THREE, 2009-2010

- **September 1, 2009.** The software goes online to all students and faculty associated with applied music courses within the University of Alberta system, with a choice between English and French versions. The online versions are housed within TLS at Augustana.
- **September-October 2009.** Presentations to Department of Music, North Campus, and Saint-Jean Campus at the beginning of classes on how to use the online log and related technologies.
- **March 15-April 15 2010** Online surveys are made available to all students and faculty (Arts, Augustana, Saint-Jean) using the practicing log.
- **May-June 2010** Journals of Schlosser piano students become available to Schlosser in helping to assess effectiveness of the log as a learning tool. At the conclusion of the academic year, the software may be modified given responses to surveys and experiences of students and faculty using it.
- **May-June 2010** A formal paper is written tracing the intent, development, and effectiveness of the software, in addition to evaluating the impact of the log as a

tool of experienced-based learning. This paper will inform the larger academic community of the results of this initiative. Remaining 25% is given to Vital Effect per contract

- **June 2010** Annual report is submitted to E-Learning Development Officer.
- **June 2010** Dates are set for seminars on project's findings for University of Alberta instructors (tenured and sessional) from all three campuses.

III. Statement of Research Questions Related to the Scholarship of Teaching

Great artists are not necessarily great teachers. As Yehudi Menuhin has indicated, "forced labour" is not an uncommon approach to learning within the competitive world of classical music; the needs and experiences of students can become secondary to the goals and reputations of instructors and institutions. In the race to "succeed," lessons become overly didactic, teacher controlled, and constrained by enforced standards. But, experiential learning offers an alternative approach. Andresen, Boud and Cohen outline in the article "Experienced-Based Learning" three factors that commonly characterize such learning: involvement of the whole person, the valuing and applying of experiences past and present, and transformation.

The proposal reflects the holistic nature of music performance. A form of human expression that is interdisciplinary at its core, music requires continuous investigation of scholarship centering on the mind, body, and emotions. The learner must experiment with all types of new knowledge, including that gained from experience. Importantly, the log, computers, and video cameras validate practicing as a form of learning ripe for exploration in unprecedented ways given its potential to transform the individual.

The proposal both seeks to construct a software tool that supports *discovery learning* and to ascertain the effectiveness of the developed software through survey questions submitted in my ethic's proposal. These questions are contained within Appendices A and B of my ethic's application. Please see section IV (below).

IV. Research Methodology Description

The following information is an excerpt from my ethic's application. Further information regarding the methodology involved may be found in said application

Participants in this project will consist of three subsets: A) Subset A--students in my own piano classes who indicate that I may use their log material for the research project in order for me to evaluate the effectiveness of the developed software as a learning and teaching tool; B) Subset B--students and faculty from applied music courses within the Augustana, Arts, and Saint-Jean campuses who voluntarily fill out an online survey to assist in evaluating the effectiveness of the developed software as a learning tool in their practicing; C) Subset C--Augustana, Arts, and Saint-Jean faculty teaching applied music courses who voluntarily fill out an online survey evaluating the effectiveness of the developed software as a teaching tool.

Subset A (my own piano students) will be informed at the beginning of classes in each year about the project and will be given an opportunity to sign consent forms in the last week of classes. In this way, students know what material they are consenting to have included in the research project.

V. Dissemination Plan

A. University of Alberta Workshops and Seminar(s)

1. **September 2008** Presentation to Augustana students and faculty will be made at the beginning of classes on how to use the online log and related technologies.
2. **September 2009** Presentation to Department of Music, North Campus, and Saint-Jean Campus students and faculty will be made at the beginning of classes on how to use the online log and related technologies.
3. **Fall 2010** Seminar(s) on project's final results for University of Alberta instructors (tenured and sessional).

B. Peer-Reviewed Publication

1. **September 2010** Submission to peer-reviewed publication of paper, informing the larger academic community of the results of this initiative. The paper outlines the intent, development, and final results of the software's development, in addition to evaluating the impact of the log as a tool of experienced-based learning.

VI. Budget

Software design	\$12,000
iMac computers (9)	\$11,700
Multimedia server	\$4,600
Video recorders (6)	\$6,000
Infrastructure materials	\$5,000
Hard drive upgrading	\$3,000
TOTAL	\$42,300

VII. Payment Schedule to Vital Effect

July 1, 2007	\$6,000, 50% of total payment
June 30, 2008	\$3,000, 25% of total payment
June 30, 2010	\$3,000, 25% of total payment