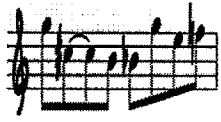


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The Jazz Curriculum by Brian Lillos

In a perfect world you'd meet and study with Jazz God. He/She would be the embodiment of the teacher that knows everything, can play everything, can teach everything to anyone and is there to nurture you all the time. Further, you would study with Him/Her in small groups, large ensembles, privately, "gig" together, "hang" together, and subsequently, learn the music holistically. It would not be compartmentalized. You would never have to connect any informational/conceptual dots by yourself. All materials would be relevant and follow in logical learner order, customized, at all times, just for you. To further improve the situation, there would be no issues of motivation - you'd be motivated all the time. There would be no tuition, you'd actually be paid a liveable stipend to attend school. After all, you, as an artist, will contribute significantly over your lifetime to the betterment of the society in which you live. Simply put, you are worth society's investment and for this reason, your education can take as long as it needs - there are no deadlines, no timelines, no stresses of completion. It is a process that is completely about you and your development. Ever had this fantasy? I certainly have. The reality, however is that there simply are not enough jazz gods to go around. Instead we are faced with teaching jazz to more than one person at a time, and somehow we must do it in a cost recovery mode. This mindset, or reality therapy, unfortunately involves breaking apart the "whole" of jazz music and compartmentalizing it. This is where curriculum plays a major role.

Curriculum understands how to break apart the whole into complimentary parts and when to introduce these parts to one another. It understands how much weighting to give each part of the whole, how to ensure they interact, and how to measure their interaction. In less metaphorical terms, curriculum is a suggested learner pathway that scopes and sequences complimentary functions in such a way that subject mastery can be attained.