

Suzuki Principles in Action



What is SPA?

Suzuki Principles in Action© (SPA) is a course designed to help teachers incorporate Suzuki's principles effectively in their teaching. The course is designed to focus on **how to teach, not what to teach**, and to allow for the sharing of ideas among all instrument areas. It is based on Dr. Suzuki's belief that knowledge is an important first step, but "knowledge plus 10,000 times" is what produces ability. This important principle, which teachers frequently explain to their students, applies equally to the art of teaching.

What are the principles that SPA reinforces?

The inspiration for SPA came from a need, identified by both Trainers and Teacher Workshop Participants, to deal with the challenges of implementing the knowledge gained from Unit courses into the reality of day-to-day studio teaching.

Topics include:

- Setting standards of excellence for students at all levels
- Identifying the appropriate time to move ahead in the repertoire
- Incorporating regular, productive review work in daily teaching and practicing
- Incorporating ear training and learning by ear in daily teaching
- Focusing attention on tone development
- Giving productive, balanced, frequent feedback to students
- Communicating effectively and working productively with parents
- Structuring lessons to facilitate successful progress

These are all issues that surface repeatedly in Teacher Workshop courses and in communications among colleagues. The course offers thoughtful exploration of these topics—topics that spring from the Suzuki principles that have been articulated in the *Every Child Can!* course and other Teacher Workshop courses—to help us to move towards a realization of the potential that Suzuki education offers.

Who should attend?

Any teacher—from the very experienced to the novice—who has completed training through Book 1, is an SAA member and has taught a minimum of one year. Teachers of all Suzuki-taught instruments and Suzuki Early Childhood Education are welcome!

What special values result from taking the course?

SPA is required for those applying for the SAA's Certificate of Achievement and is valuable to those working toward becoming Teacher Trainers. Like the longer SAA Practicum, this course provides tools for assessing and evaluating one's own teaching. Video materials provide examples to discuss and bring the principles to life. Course materials received by participants provide guides, articles and activities to reinforce and expand on the ideas presented in the class.



Who arranges for and hosts the course?

The SAA administers the course in cooperation with a hosting organization or individual—local programs, state or provincial chapters, Suzuki schools and other groups are among those who may be the hosts for the course. By holding the course in local programs and specific geographic areas, SPA helps develop and support valuable, supportive Suzuki communities at grassroots levels.

When is it offered?

During the academic year, SPA provides a special opportunity for teachers to reflect on and enhance their teaching, as they work together with a group of colleagues from the immediate area, program or school. It is offered September 1 through May 15 as a 10-hour event over two days—5 hours per day with short breaks. (One 4-hour and one 6-hour day is also an acceptable format.) The course includes required pre-course work and post-course assignments, all of which can be done over the internet and reviewed by the Teacher Trainer.

Who teaches this course?

The Teacher Trainers who worked as a Committee for five years to develop the course will facilitate the training at least through 2010. Additional Trainers will be trained to teach SPA in future months.

How will I know where the course is being offered?

SPA offerings will be posted on the SAA website under Events. Links to course offerings will also appear in the SAA Newsletter. Register early. Course registrations will always close no later than 2 weeks before the class is to take place. This allows for pre-course assignments to be completed by registrants. SPA tuition is \$175. Registrations are online on the SAA website.

I loved participating in the Suzuki Principles in Action course. I learned so much, and I have taught for 40 years! SPA affirms our beliefs in the Suzuki Philosophy and empowers us to continue to grow and be even more productive in our teaching and outreach. I appreciated the focus on tone – a welcome review of one of our strengths, and the reminder to keep it foremost in our teaching. The utilization of the descriptors and the emphasis on communication skills were also extremely important reminders. Especially valuable was the visualization of the teaching segment. I have since used it repeatedly with parents in helping with home practice. Such a succinct, clear explanation – wonderful! The course curriculum is well thought out and carefully crafted. Our colleagues who put this project together did an amazing job, focusing on the core our teaching. I highly recommend it—we are “life-long learners”!

—Betsy Stuen-Walker



Interested in setting up a SPA course?

When to begin planning

Begin early. For this event, you will need to get a head start on marketing the course, determining who will be the host or hosting organization, and making arrangements with the SAA. Four months (no less than 3 months) is needed for good planning and to allow time for good enrollment. (Enrollment of 10 teachers is the minimum to hold the course.)

Determine who will host the course

The hosting organization may be a local Suzuki program or school, a chapter, workshop or an individual. The host will need to name a liaison or contact to work with the SAA to make arrangements.

Find out who is interested in your area

Assess the possibility that there are at least 10 (maximum of 20) Suzuki teachers in the area who would qualify and be interested in SPA:

- Teachers should be Active level SAA members with at least a year's teaching experience.
- Teachers may teach any Suzuki Method instrument area or ECE (especially relevant if the teacher teaches an instrument as well).
- Teachers must have Book 1 (or 1A and 1B) registered with the SAA.
- Teachers must be available to attend the full course and do pre-course and post-course work.

Determine when and where SPA will be hosted

- Find a weekend (at least 3 months out), two consecutive days or even two consecutive weekends when the course could be held in your area. The course is a full 10 hours of class time, so schedule the time exclusive of lunch or dinner breaks. A group dinner or lunch break preferably on the first day (potluck or possibly provided by the hosting organization) is highly recommended for building community.
- Be prepared with an alternate choice of dates.
- Make tentative arrangements for the meeting space with setup as described above. (Look for inexpensive or free space that meets the specifications given below.)

Arrange with the SAA

- Contact Pam Brasch at the SAA office (pam@suzukiassociation.org) to arrange for SAA to offer the course. She will arrange for a trained SPA facilitator to present the course on your preferred or alternate dates. Do not try to make your own arrangements.
- SAA will clarify its responsibilities: hiring the Facilitator, arranging for and funding his/her travel; reimbursing Facilitator's costs for hotel; honorarium for the Facilitator; providing course manuals, nametags and other materials required for the course. (Trainer will provide video material to be shown on DVDs.)



- SAA will expect the host or hosting organization to provide the required meeting space, the A-V equipment, snacks and to help with other needed arrangements. See below.
- SAA website will launch the registration for the course (\$175/person) as soon as possible (or as mutually agreeable).
- All registrations and fee collection for the course will be managed through the SAA website, along with communications with the sponsor and the Trainer and the pre- and post-course work and subsequent course registrations.

Make final arrangements for location and schedule

- Finalize meeting room arrangements. Room should be no smaller than 500 – 600 square feet. Participants should be able to sit at tables arranged in a horseshoe pattern. Convey final location details to the SAA .
- Arrange for the A-V equipment: LCD Projector, screen, DVD player with remote and external speakers.
- Set exact starting and ending times. Convey that information to the SAA.
- Promote and advertise the course. SAA will help too!

Other responsibilities of the host

Host is to assume the following responsibilities:

- Arrange for a social event—light dinner, lunch or other—usually for the end of the first day’s presentation.
- Arrange for a coffee/tea break for participants.
- SAA prefers that you make the the hotel reservation for the Facilitator and send information to the SAA. If necessary, select an appropriate hotel and send the SAA the information for making the reservation.
- Arrange for ground transportation to and from the airport for the Facilitator, if s/he is arriving by air.
- Make arrangements for transportation from hotel to meeting place each day.
- Provide for at least one additional meal for the Facilitator, as the schedule allows.



Host Sponsorships

If the sponsoring group wishes to underwrite the course for its participants, the website program can adjust fees to allow for discounted registration fees for the group or those qualifying for the discount.

In some cases, registration for the course can remain private for an agreed-upon period of time after launching to give a registration advantage to members of the sponsoring group. Remaining spaces can be advertised afterwards. However, registrations must be closed at least 2 weeks prior to the first day of the course to allow for pre-course work to be completed by participants. No late registrations will be allowed.

Courses which do not attain the 10 registration minimum with a reasonable number of weeks may be cancelled at the SAA's discretion. All fees will be returned to registrants in such cases.

Other Sponsorships

- If your organization doesn't have easy access to free meeting space, ask around. Perhaps the local luthier, piano store, music store or other organization might like to "sponsor" your group for the SPA course. A church meeting room might be ideal.
- Local restaurants or food outlets might like to sponsor your SPA dinner or lunch.
- Your meeting location may have the A-V equipment you need. Perhaps a local electronics, video or camera store will give you a break on rentals.
- Please send us your ideas to add to this list!

Questions?

Please contact Pam Brasch, 303-444-0948, ext. 105 or pam@suzukiassociation.org .

