

Teaching Cassettes by Subject

Tape 1Microphones

Covers microphones types and related terminology, the construction of dynamic, ribbon and condenser mics, how a simple lack of knowledge can cause a person to misuse a mic, the Five Classic Microphone Polar Patterns, how to use the 3:1 Rule, how to approach miking a choir and other voices or instruments.

Tape 2Mic Placement Techniques

Continues the discussion of microphones by illustrating various microphone techniques. The student will hear an acoustic piano miked with several different approaches, and then an acoustic guitar also miked from several different approaches.

Tape 3How to Hook Up Your Sound System

Covers the various types of cables and connectors that are typically used in audio. Proper construction of cables is also discussed.

Tape 4Maximizing Your Console (Signal Flow Logic)

Understanding signal flow logic is the key to operating a sound console with confidence. This tape discusses signal flow at length, as well as establishing proper gain structure.

Tape 5Relationships & Burnout, Mic Splitters, Equalization, Signal Processors, & Mixing

This tape started as we returned from a break in the workshop, and it turned out to be an appropriate time to approach the important subject of Relationships & Burnout. The discussion then returned to the technical issues listed.

Tape 6Putting Together a Great Mix

Armed with the technical fundamentals, we can now apply that knowledge and explore the art of putting together a great mix.

Tape 7Loudspeakers & Sound System Design

Not everyone is interested in the art and science of sound system design, so this section is considered a Bonus Study Section. The first portion is relevant to anyone, though, because it discusses stage monitors as well as the main "house" loudspeakers. Several comparisons are made between properly and improperly clustered loudspeakers, and then the discussion explores acoustical modeling with EASE, and other related issues.

Workshop Concepts & Agenda

The study program you hold in your hands is your key to unlocking technical excellence in your ministry! I can't emphasize that enough. Your careful presentation of this material to your sound team volunteers will help you literally change their lives! Your technical support ministry will never be the same after your team studies this program together and puts these techniques and concepts into action!

I've conducted eight versions of my Soundcheck Workshop program since I first introduced this concept in 1987. As I perfected the process, each successive program became even more powerful than its predecessors as I improved not only the content of the seminar but also the manner in which I presented the information.

If there's one thing I've learned in teaching over 3,000 church music pastors, technical staff and support team volunteers, it's to keep the material and the presentation simple. There are a lot of things we could talk about, but unless your team is equipped with a thorough understanding of the basic principles found in this program, they'll never be able to fully understand more complex issues or concepts.

I think you'll find that this question and answer format is very effective at helping your students learn quickly. The idea is to present "golden nuggets" of information rather than confuse them with tons of detail they don't yet need and wouldn't understand. Instead I've boiled it down to the basic set of principles that every student of church sound reinforcement needs to know!

The advantages to your students are that their hands won't be hurting from furious note taking, and they won't get distracted by trying to write down a comment while you're presenting the next point. Don't get me wrong – they *should* be furiously taking notes. But at least they won't have to write down each question; all they'll need to do is fill in the blank and jot down your supportive comments.

Later on, the points I make in this guide will provide an outline for them to refer back to as they study on their own. And anytime they have a question they can refer to the accompanying set of tapes, recorded at a live workshop, to help them fill in any points that they missed during your presentation.

The basic format of the workshop is simple yet powerful. I'd like you to take particular notice of the **Strategies** page that follows each study section. This is where you'll find the real power of this study program. These pages challenge your students to take the information off the page and apply it to your specific situation! This will help you rally your team around specific problem areas in your ministry. If your ministry has stagnated over time, these Strategies sections will definitely get your team off the fence!

An effective way to launch your seminar would be to sit your students down and let them watch a good videotape overview. With that in place, they will excitedly receive a more detailed study of each subject. There are three we would recommend, *Live Sound*, *Live Sound for Houses of Worship*, both by David Scheirman, or *How to "Do" Church Sound* by Mark Jenkins. All three of those videotapes can be ordered directly from us. The *Live Sound for Houses of Worship* can also be ordered for free by contacting the literature department at Crown International in Elkhart, Indiana – (800) 342-6939.

A Suggested Schedule

Using this program, you'll be able to present a tremendous amount of information in a very short amount of time! If the need to train your sound team is urgent, you could even bring them up to speed over a single weekend. Just schedule the workshop based on the same format that I used – a Friday evening and all day Saturday.

In fact, the workshop agenda that you'll find on page three of the workbook shows the material broken up into four sessions. In my Friday / Saturday format, Session One was held from 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm on a Friday evening. That gave us time to get to know one another a little better, and allowed me time to lay out the plan of attack.

Session Two was held from 9:00 am to 12:45 pm on Saturday. We broke at that point for lunch, and in an effort to encourage people to build relationships I called it the "Take A New Friend To Lunch" Break.

Session Three started at 1:30 pm and picked up where we left off from the morning session. The day ended at 4:30 pm with an invitation to spend the next hour or so taking turns mixing a multitrack ADAT tape that I had prepared for that purpose.

I've called Session Four a Bonus Study Section because some individuals may not be interested in going to that depth, and that's okay. I think it will help everyone, but you'll need to be the judge in your own situation. In our case, we took a short dinner break, started the evening session at 6:00 pm and ended up around 9:30 pm. That made for a very long day, and my voice was toast by the end of it, but we had a great time. I expect you and your team would too if that's the approach you'd like to take.

One special note before we move on: If you choose this weekend class format, ask your Church to pay for the lunch. It doesn't matter if it's catered, brought in from a favorite restaurant, or prepared by folks in the church. Don't look at it like you're doing this great thing for your students by providing this class for them. Your team is also making a major investment of their time specifically for improving the technical excellence at your Church, and for your Church's leadership to honor that investment by simply paying for a great-tasting, memorable lunch would be a wise gesture on their part.

You *can* deliver an effective workshop in a single weekend, and if that's all the time your team can afford to invest right now, or if your need for training is especially urgent, then by all means go for it.

However, I would encourage you to invest more time than that. Shorter seminars spread over a longer time will have a more lasting impact on your team. One format that has worked well for me in the past is a two or three hour class held, for example, each Monday night for ten weeks. Shorter classes spread over a longer time span will help your team absorb the information better. That also gives you an opportunity to reinforce the previous week's lesson before you move on to the next subject.

This short class format will also help the individuals in your ministry build lasting relationships over a period of time, and those relationships will help you build a "team" instead of "a-bunch-of-guys-who-kinda-like-to-get-together-and-do-this-stuff-sometimes." With just a little planning, I think you'll easily discover a way to build a schedule that your team can work with. Here's one suggestion.

An Eight Week Workshop Schedule

- Week 1 Microphones & Mic Technique
- Week 2 How to Hook Up Your Sound System
- Week 3 Maximizing Your Console
- Week 4 Equalization & Signal Processing
- Week 5 How to Build a Great Mix
- Week 6 Hands On Mixing Session
- Week 7 Loudspeaker Usage
- Week 8 The Only Stuff That Matters

The last session titled "The Only Stuff That Matters" is specifically about your ministry. All the cool technical stuff on the planet isn't worth a thing if your team is fighting with each other, holding grudges against folks in the worship team, or worse yet – if your team is at odds with the pastoral staff and won't submit to their authority over the ministry. Burnout is a reality in technical support ministries, and you as their leader should address these issues clearly. We did spend a portion of our time during the workshop talking about this issue. Listen to the end of Tape 2 and the beginning of Tape 5.

How to Use the Tape Set & Transparencies

The cassette tapes from my live workshop are there to help you make your seminars as powerful and effective as possible. They will help you prepare to teach your volunteers, they will provide a backup system of instruction in case any of your team has to miss one of your classes, and they will provide your team with additional materials for their own review after your seminar has been completed.

Probably the most effective approach for using these tapes would be for you to make copies of the tape set for each of your volunteers who will be attending your seminar. Prior to your first seminar together send each one of your volunteers home with their own set of my tapes along with instructions on which tape to listen to in preparation for each of your seminars. Then each of your presentations would consist of reviewing the assigned materials for the week, discussing that material in greater depth, applying that information to your specific situation and equipment, and answering any questions that come up.

For example, if the subject for next week is microphones, you would assign your students to listen to the first tape on microphone technique. When they come to your class about microphones you would cover the questions on pages four through seven of the workbook, answer any of their questions that came out of their homework assignment, discuss the specific mics that they will get to work with at your church, and illustrate the mic technique that you're using and discuss why you've chosen to do it that way. It would also be a good time to experiment with other possible microphone choices or placement techniques.

Another way to use the program would be for you to assign your students to listen to the specific section of tape needed for the next class – in this case the one on microphones – and to also answer the questions on pages four through seven while they listen to the tapes. Then when you come back together for your seminar a lot of that basic groundwork will have already been established, and you can use your time together more effectively to relate that knowledge to the specific equipment you have to work with.

You know your team, and my guess is that by now you already know which solution would be best for them and best fit their personalities.

I've also enclosed a set of my transparencies – comprising over fifty illustrations – to help you teach your students. All of the diagrams that are a part of your students' workbook are included so that you can discuss them in detail with your team, plus other illustrations that are not in their workbook. You'll still want to have some blank transparencies on hand to illustrate certain points. Several of the issues we discussed in the workshop found me drawing illustrations freehand at the overhead projector.

Some Closing Thoughts

Ninety percent of the key to a successful tech support ministry is attitude. A successful ministry is built with people that have a willing heart. I can't teach that – that's between them and God. But I'm very good at teaching people about complex technical issues. With this program, you can be too!

If some of the musicians or singers in your Church want to attend your seminars as well, welcome them. The better the sound team and the worship team understand each other's needs, the more smoothly your services will run. You may find that your vocalists would be bored silly by a class about console signal flow, but they would be helped greatly by your seminar on microphones. So you may want to give them the option of attending select sessions.

You may find that not everyone in your team has the "ear" or is even interested in doing the house mix on Sunday mornings. But that's okay. There are lots of tasks that need to be done each week, and not all of them need to be done on Sunday. Look for ways that you can open up the sound team's schedule to allow for those who could do things during the week, even on week nights, like fixing mic cables, straightening up around the sound booth, setting up on stage for the weekend service, presetting the stage for that Saturday wedding you don't have time to set up for, taking inventory of parts and batteries, ordering supplies as needed, and so on. If you have a good electronics technician in your team, maybe they could do some light equipment repairs on an occasional week night. Maybe you have some members of your team who are good at carpentry and who could build the equipment storage closet you've been dreaming about. There's never a shortage of things that could be done in a tech support ministry. Give your team a chance to serve!

Now it's up to you to be their leader. I can't do that for you, but I can help you in the process. Study the information in this workbook carefully as you listen through the tape set. Gather up the necessary items to do the demonstrations. And when you're ready, schedule your first seminar with your sound team. Then get ready for a life changing experience. I'm serious – your technical support ministry is never going to be the same again. We're excited for you as you start this process, and we encourage you in your efforts. Go for it! He is worthy of our pursuit of technical excellence.

Blessings in Christ!
Taipale Media Systems, Inc.



Curt Taipale
President

Postscript: By the way, if you have questions as you go through the material, please feel free to contact me. I'm kind of a moving target at times, so you'll probably find it easier to catch me via email at <curt@churchsoundcheck.com> or at <ctaipale@aol.com>. But it's okay to call me as well.

**And if you're not already a member of our
ChurchSoundcheck Discussion Group
. . . you need to be!**

There you'll find a phenomenal group of individuals who are ready, willing and able to help you understand any technical principle or ministry issue that you're facing. They share your passion for technical excellence, and they'll help you keep refining your efforts as you help them refine theirs. Just go online at <http://www.churchsoundcheck.com> to learn how to become a member!

If you don't have internet access you can still join our discussion group, get answers to your technical questions, and receive our quarterly newsletter. Call or write to us and we'll get you started right away!