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Outreach Offerings and Practices in Piano Areas of Community Music Schools Affiliated with Colleges and Universities Accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music

by Anna Hamilton, University of South Carolina at Aiken

The Community Music School

Origins

The ideas which motivated the founding of settlement schools in America at the turn of the nineteenth century would permeate the evolving concept and function of settlement music schools and community music schools throughout the century and into current times. The first settlement music school in the United States was founded by Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr in 1892 in conjunction with the Hull House settlement school of Chicago. Both women hoped to share the cultural opportunities of the privileged classes with their less fortunate neighbors (Ramsey 1933, 21). Other settlement schools were founded in the years following, and a tradition was established to offer low-cost instruction not only for students seeking a professional career, but also for the training of amateur musicians (Pflieger 1985). Although many immigrants served by early settlement schools were reluctant to accept charity, Ramsey (1933, 316) reported that no talented person should be turned away because he was unable to pay a minimum fee. Egan (1989, xi) explained, “From the [social settlement movement] came the idea that the art of musical performance and its related areas – music theory, ensemble playing, composition, and teaching – should be available to all regardless of age, nationality, or cultural or religious background, and no one should be denied music study only for the want of money to pay the cost of instruction.”

Initially, settlement school music teachers lived in the communities in which they worked and served the members of the surrounding neighborhood. Early settlement music schools often grew from a small offering of piano lessons to a larger music school with diverse lessons and classes including private lessons in various instruments, group instruction, ensembles, and classes in music theory, history, and ear-training (Ramsey 1933, 21). Evolving out of the concept of the one-room settlement music school were independent schools with staff, administration, and many students from all parts of a city. The Cleveland Music School Settlement, founded in 1912, grew to include a main school, branches, affiliates, and extension department programs and served as a model for other schools in the United States and Canada (Egan 1989, 121). Music school settlements or settlement music schools were later called Community Music Schools. Many of the Community Music Schools founded before the turn of the twentieth century would later become affiliates of American colleges, universities, conservatories, or seminaries (Egan 1989, 60). Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, universities and colleges formed associations with pre-existing schools or established and created new preparatory music programs (Uszler and Larimer 1984).

The National Guild for Community Arts Education

The National Guild of Community Music Schools of the Arts was founded in 1937 with the purpose of meeting the need of concerted action in focusing attention on the nature and purpose of community music schools (NGCAE 2010). In 1974, the name was changed to the National Guild of Community Schools of the Arts, and again in 2010 to the National Guild for Community Arts Education (NGCAE). The number of member institutions increased greatly in the 1980s and 1990s. New community school models appeared within departments of colleges, universities, and divisions of other social service agencies and organizations, and community schools formed partnerships with public schools, arts organizations, and other local agencies (NGCAE 2010).

NGCAE Service Expectations

Service expectations for members of the National Guild for Community Arts Education have been established. Full members of NGCAE are expected to be committed to a code of best practices which fall into three categories of quality, accessibility, and accountability (NGCAE 2006). A number of the listed examples for actualizing each of the categories of practices reflect an emphasis on service to individuals and community. The NGCAE code of best practices lists examples of the practice of accessibility including serving students regardless of age, sex, gender, race, religion, national and ethnic origin, sexual orientation, ability, or financial circumstances, eliminating physical and communication barriers that prevent people with disabilities from participating fully in their programs, and offering need-based financial aid and/or other subsidized arts education programs. Examples of quality and accountability include offering broad, sequential programming that is responsive to community needs and reflects their organization's mission, and sustaining and monitoring service to the community (NGCAE 2006) Member schools of NGCAE are provided with suggestions and guidelines pertaining to scholarship offerings and community outreach.

Non – NGCAE Service Expectations

As of December 2010, 341 of the 428 member schools of NGCAE were community music schools or offered music instruction. Of these schools, 65 were divisional members (those affiliated with degree granting colleges and universities.). While service standards are set for the member organizations of NGCAE, including divisional members, community music schools and preparatory programs with college and university affiliations are in existence without membership in NGCAE and perhaps also without standards for service to communities and individuals. The Accrediting Commission for Community and Precollegiate Arts Schools (ACCPAS) was established by the Council of Arts Accrediting Associations (CAAA) to review and accredit schools and programs providing non-degree instruction in the arts disciplines to children, youth, and adults. Developed by ACCPAS and NGCAE, *A Guide to Assessing Your Community Arts School: Questions for Internal Review and Reflection*, was designed to assist community arts school leaders with organizational assessment and to make the ACCPAS accreditation process more user-friendly. The guide is used also by NASM as a tool for

assessing community arts schools of member institutions. In *A Guide to Assessing Your Community Arts School*, questions are given pertaining to various elements of the purposes, operations, and programs of a community arts school. Included are questions about financial aid and community involvement (CAAA 2003).

Research Needs

Research has been conducted in recent decades to gather information about the activities of NGCAE member schools, including community outreach efforts (Alexander 1997, Buescher 1933, Fischler 2007, Pflieger 1985). Much of this research does not distinguish between survey results of divisional versus non-divisional NGCAE members and there is a lack of studies focused on the offerings of community music schools that function outside of Guild membership. The National Guild for Community Arts Education, Inc. requires that organizations seeking full institutional membership offer scholarships and financial assistance programs for students. In addition, outreach programs offerings are recommended and encouraged by the National Guild of Community Schools of the Arts, Inc. (Pflieger 1985). It is unknown whether similar standards exist for non-Guild affiliated community music schools with parent institutions. Studies show that, in the past, there was a significant difference in the scholarship offerings of NGCAE member community schools of the arts and NASM member schools of the arts (Alexander 1997).

Surveys have been conducted of National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) members to determine the presence and scope of preparatory programs and pre-collegiate instruction (Blaker 1995, Clark 1989, Drew 1971, Peters 1979), but little is known about the community outreach efforts of these college-affiliated community music schools. Further research is needed to assess the community outreach and financial scholarship offerings of community music schools with affiliated NASM member parent collegiate institutions.

Importance of Community Music Schools in Colleges and Universities

In recent years, the importance of engagement between institutions of higher education and the larger community has been expressed. A 1991 NASM report stressed the need for more research to understand better the ties between community music programs and degree granting institutions (Hope 1991). Murdoch (1995, 123-124) stated that “degree-granting institutions should move in the direction of creating community based music programs as part of the institution’s outreach mission. Preparatory programs operated as part of continuing education extension divisions can be as important to a music department’s offerings as the degree-granting curricula.”

Cox (2000, 19) explained the effect of partnerships between institutions of higher education and communities, “Through their research and outreach, [institutions of higher education] become more responsive to the issues and conditions of their communities and society. The reciprocal relations within successful partnerships help to produce engaged citizens, faculty members, and students, thereby contributing to civil society and democracy.” Boyer (1996, 18) reiterated the importance of engagement between colleges

and universities and the broader communities of which they are a part. He pointed to universities and colleges as the greatest sources of hope for intellectual and civic progress in this country if they reaffirm the historic commitment to what he terms the scholarship of engagement. He further explained that the scholarship of engagement means “connecting the rich resources of the university to our most pressing social, civic, and ethical problems, to our children, to our schools, to our teachers and to our cities.” In a further description of engagement, Froehlich (2009) explains that reaching out to the community becomes living purposefully and consciously in the community.

As community music schools and college-affiliated preparatory programs continue to evolve in current times, Pflieger (1985) expressed the necessity that they also continue to reflect both the changing needs and constituents in their communities. He stressed that “New or expanded outreach program offerings may be necessary to bring the arts to those not now being served. If community schools of the arts are to remain a vital force in arts education, a constant evaluation of current outreach program offerings is important.”

The Research Survey

To address the need for greater evaluation of the community outreach practices and offerings of Community Music Schools with affiliated NASM parent collegiate institutions, I created and conducted an internet-based research survey (2012). The survey instrument consisted of seventy-eight (78) questions divided into six sections:

- Section I: Institutional Information (9 questions)
- Section II: Community Music School Information (18 questions)
- Section III: Teacher Information (11 questions)
- Section IV: Financial Assistance (8 questions)
- Section V: Community Outreach Specializations (27 questions)
- Section VI: Community Engagement and Outreach (5 questions)

The population of the survey consisted of the 642 accredited institutional members on the 2011 National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) directory list. Of these, thirteen had previously opted out of internet-based surveys from *surveymonkey.com*, resulting in a final survey population of 629 NASM accredited institutions. One hundred eighty-one (181) responses were returned, resulting in a participation rate of twenty-nine percent (29%). The study focused on community music schools with affiliated NASM member parent collegiate institutions, but the 2011 NASM Directory list included members who were independent Community Music Schools without NASM member parent collegiate institutions. Of those NASM affiliated institutions who participated in the survey, six (3%) did not have a NASM member parent collegiate institution.

The Results

Section I (Institutional Information)

Section I consisted of nine questions designed to elicit basic institutional information.

The results indicated that the majority of institutions surveyed were public four-year institutions with a Department of Music. Most of these institutions had a piano area described as a Keyboard Studies Area or Piano Department. The majority of these institutions offered undergraduate Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Music, and Bachelor of Music Education degrees through a piano area, but the majority did not offer master's or doctoral level degrees in piano.

The data revealed that over half of respondents (56.4%) classified their institution as Public and the remaining classified their institution as Private (43.6%). The largest percentage (32.8%) of the institutions reported a university enrollment during the surveyed academic year of between 1,001 and 5,000 students. The remaining were smaller in size (7.9%) or larger in size: 5,001-10,000 (18.6%), 10,001-20,000 (16.4%), 20,001-35,000 (15.3%), and 35,000+ (9.0%). The majority of respondents (51.7%) described their academic unit as a Department of Music (51.7%) or School of Music (26.7%) and reported unit enrollment of less than 151 (49.5%) or more than 300 (26.2%). Most respondents described the piano area of their institution as a Keyboard Studies Area (50.8%) or Piano Department (39.7%). A significant majority of responding schools offered four-year degrees (85.5%) including Bachelor of Arts (72.9%), Bachelor of Music (66.7%) and Bachelor of Music Education (62.7%). Over half of respondents did not offer master's level or post-undergraduate degrees (53.7%) or doctoral degrees (85.1%). Of those who did, the most commonly offered degrees were Master of Music in Piano Performance (39.5%), Master of Music in Music Education (29.9%), and Doctor of Musical Arts (13.8%).

Section II (Community Music School Information)

Section II consisted of eighteen questions designed to elicit basic Community Music School information including accreditations and memberships, enrollment, location, budget, and music lesson and class offerings. Participants were informed that, "For the purposes of this survey, Community Music School will be defined as: A program offering music education and instruction to community members, including precollege students, non-music major college students, and/or adult students."

The results indicated that over half of institutions surveyed (56.4%) did have a program to offer music education and instruction to non-collegiate community members, and this program was most often described as a Community Music School (43.5%) or Preparatory Program (35.9%). Respondents who did not have such a program were automatically directed to Question 68 of the survey to answer questions pertaining to performance outreach and their opinions about the importance of community outreach and engagement. The majority of respondents (57.3%) were directors of a Community Music School. Most institutions surveyed did not have Community Music Schools that were members of the National Guild for Community Arts Education (70.2%) and were not accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Pre-Collegiate Arts Schools (90.2%). The Community Music Schools ranged in size, with a nearly equal number of respondents reporting a smaller student enrollment of less than 50 students (28.9%) as reporting a

larger enrollment of greater than 300 students (25.3%). Schools were located in a variety of city sizes, with the majority in midsize cities (30.7%), small towns (28.4%), and major metropolitan areas (20.5%) and the least number of locations in inner cities of major metropolitan areas (4.5%), rural areas (5.7%), and suburbs of midsize cities (1.1%). The vast majority of institutions surveyed had music lessons and classes for their Community Music School that were held on a college or university campus (94.3%). Both private and group lessons were most offered for piano. A number of Community Music Schools at surveyed institutions did not offer music ensembles (33.3%) or non-lesson music courses (36.8%). At schools that did, choir (37.9%), chamber ensembles (34.5%), and orchestra (33.3%) were the most offered music ensembles, and Music Theory (44.8%) was the most offered music course. Music lesson, ensemble, and course offerings were available to all age groups, but most often to elementary through high school aged students. Almost half (44.9%) of Community Music Schools at surveyed institutions did not have students currently enrolled in Preschool music classes.

Section III (Teacher Information)

Section III consisted of eleven questions designed to elicit basic information about Community Music School teachers including number of instructors and collegiate or faculty status of instructors for private lessons, group lessons, and music courses.

The results indicated that most Community Music Schools at institutions surveyed employed ten or less private piano instructors (76.4%) who were university or college faculty (65.6%), community teachers from outside the university or college (54.4%), undergraduate music students (42.2%) or graduate music students (37.8%). A number of Community Music Schools did not employ instrumental/voice group music lesson instructors (17.9%), ensemble directors (32.6%), or music course instructors (in Music Theory, Music Appreciation, Music History, Aural Skills, Improvisation, Recreational Music-Making or other related topics) (40.0%). At schools who did employ instructors in these classes, the instructors were less often graduate (20.5%) or undergraduate (8.0%) students than in private lessons, and more often college or university faculty (42.0%) or community teachers from outside the university or college (36.4%).

Section IV (Financial Assistance)

Section III consisted of eight questions designed to elicit basic information about financial assistance and scholarships in Community Music Schools.

The results indicated that almost half of Community Music Schools (47.1%) at surveyed institutions did not provide financial assistance to students. Most schools that did provide financial assistance did so with less than 11% of their operating budget (73.2%). The most reported criteria for awarding financial assistance in the form of scholarship was financial need (87.8%). Documentation to award financial aid based on financial need included a US Tax Form 1040 (27.5%) or US Tax Return (25.0%). Over half of schools who provided financial assistance also did so based on teacher recommendation (58.5%). The majority of Community Music Schools at surveyed institutions who provided

financial assistance did not provide full scholarships (64.3%), but did provide partial scholarships (95.2%).

Section V (Community Outreach Specializations)

Section V consisted of twenty-seven questions designed to elicit information about the community outreach specializations of Community Music Schools at surveyed institutions, including offerings for students with disabilities, offerings in detention centers and students' homes, affiliations with other agencies, and performance outreach. Participants were informed that, "For the purpose of this study, the term Music Courses refers to courses in Music Theory, Music Appreciation, Music History, Aural Skills, Improvisation, Recreational Music-Making or other related topics."

The majority of respondents (76.3%) did have Community Music Schools equipped with facilities for students with physical disabilities. The majority of respondents did not have currently enrolled students with visual impairments (75.3%), or students with hearing impairments (85.9%). The majority of respondents (70.5%) did have currently enrolled students with learning disabilities including ADD/ADHD, reading disorder (dyslexia), writing disorder (dysgraphia), nonverbal learning disability, and auditory processing disorder. The minority of respondents (40.0%) did have currently enrolled students with developmental disabilities including Autism, Aspergers, Down Syndrome, and Cerebral Palsy. Students with visual impairments and hearing impairments, students with learning disabilities, and students with developmental disabilities were most often enrolled in private music and piano instruction. No respondents (0.0%) provided educational services to populations at correctional institutions or juvenile detention centers in the forms of private music and piano instruction, group classes, group piano classes, music ensembles, or music courses.

Almost half of respondents (42.1%) engaged in instructional programs in cooperation with public and/or private schools. Lesser percentages of respondents worked in conjunction with other agencies including but not limited to nursing homes (22.4%), senior citizen centers (18.4%), home school organizations (17.1%), and churches (17.1%). A significant majority of respondents (92.1%) did not offer services in students' homes.

Questions about performance outreach were answered both by respondents at institutions with and without Community Music Schools. Many respondents (71.8%) did report that their Community Music School, College, or University engaged in performance outreach in community environments such as public schools (79.4%), churches (77.6%), community centers (57.9%), retirement homes (69.2%), assisted living facilities (49.5%), museums (29.0%), libraries (28.0%), hospitals (25.2%), and less often in children's homes (6.5%), homeless (2.8%) and women's shelters (2.8%), adult detention centers (2.8%), and Juvenile detention centers (1.9%). Performance outreach was most offered by faculty members in piano areas (76.5%).

Section VI: Community Engagement and Outreach

Section VI consisted of five questions designed to elicit responses about opinions of the importance of community engagement and outreach. These questions were answered both by respondents at institutions with and without Community Music Schools.

The majority of respondents felt that community engagement and outreach was very important. When asked how important they felt community engagement and outreach were for their university or college, the respondents answered very important (61.1%), important (28.9%), somewhat important (8.1%) and not important (2.0%). When asked how important they felt community engagement and outreach were for their university or college professors, the respondents answered very important (53.0%), important (28.2%), somewhat important (16.8%) and not important (2.0%). When asked how important they felt community engagement and outreach were for their university or college students, the respondents answered very important (53.0%), important (27.5%), somewhat important (14.8%) and not important (4.7%).

The ways institutions saw themselves most engaged in the community: performance outreach (72.5%), ensembles (61.1%), and private music instruction (62.4%) were very similar to the ways they would most like to see themselves engaged with the community: performance outreach (71.8%), ensembles (59.1%), and private music instruction (56.4%).

Conclusion and Recommendations for Further Study

Recent research and opinion have expressed the importance of engagement between institutions of higher education and the larger community (Boyer 1996, Cox 2000, Ellsworth 1996, Froehlich 2009, Hope 1991) and the need for degree-granting institutions to move in the direction of creating community based music programs as part of the institution's mission (Murdoch 1995). The large majority of respondents to this survey felt that community outreach and engagement were very important (61.1%) or important (28.9%) for their university or college, yet a significant portion of respondents (43.6%) reported that their institution did not have a program to offer music education and instruction to non-collegiate community members. For those institutions with Community Music Schools, almost half of respondents (47.1%) did not provide financial assistance to students. Greater attention and response to the financial needs of students would better reflect the opinions and spirit of the early founders of settlement music schools that the art of musical performance and its related areas should be available to all and no one should be denied music study only for the want of money to pay the cost of instruction (Egan 1989). Schools also may greater examine and improve accommodations to include students with differing abilities. While a majority of schools surveyed were equipped with facilities for students with physical disabilities, a notable portion (28.8%) were not. While a majority of respondents (70.5%) did have enrolled students with learning disabilities, a minority of respondents (40.0%) had enrolled students with developmental disabilities.

The results of this survey revealed that opportunities for music education were least offered (0.0%) in correctional institutions. Pflieger's 1985 survey of Community Schools of the Arts found a greater percentage of correctional institutions were served by community schools of the arts. In response, I began a program for piano study at a women's correctional institution in 2012.

Complete results from *Survey of Outreach Offerings and Practices in Piano Areas of Community Music Schools Affiliated with Colleges and Universities Accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music* by Anna Hamilton may be accessed from UMI Dissertation Publishing or online at www.proquest.com.

Recommendations for Further Research:

1. Research is needed to explore the relationship between college or university size and presence, absence, and scope of affiliated Community Music Schools.
2. Research is needed to explore the correlation between the size of the city/community in which a college or university is located and the presences, absence, and scope of affiliated Community Music Schools.
3. This survey explores the offerings, outreach, and engagement of Community Music Schools from the perspective of college or university institutions. Further research should explore the perspectives of community agencies and persons to assess the expectations community members have of Community Music Schools in colleges and universities in their communities.
4. Further comparative research should be conducted to determine the differences in offerings of Community Music Schools with and without membership in the National Guild of Community Arts Education (NGCAE).
5. The offering, outreach, and engagement in areas of Community Arts Schools other than music (dance, theatre, visual arts) should be determined.
6. Though this study gathered information on what courses and music lessons Community Music Schools offer and how many instructors are employed; further research should determine the number of students who are currently benefitting from enrollment in each of these areas.
7. Further information about the employment criteria (educational background, teaching and professional experience) for instructors at Community Music Schools with college and university affiliations should be gathered.
8. For Community Music Schools with enrolled students with disabilities, further assessment of the training and experience requirements for teachers is needed.
9. More detailed information about financial aspects of Community Music Schools and the affect this has on financial assistance offerings should be obtained.
10. Further research should assess the lack of music offerings to underserved communities and persons including correctional institutions and students with disabilities.

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Anna Hamilton is a native of Michigan where she received her Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance and Piano Pedagogy Certification from Grand Valley State University. Hamilton received both her Master of Music and her Doctorate of Musical Arts degrees in piano pedagogy from the University of South Carolina. She studied piano with Aviram Reichert and Charles Fugo, and piano pedagogy with Helen Marlais and Scott Price. Hamilton has been the recipient of teaching awards such as the Music Teachers National Association Star Award for excellence in teaching and the William H. Nolte Graduate Student Teaching Award. She has maintained a piano studio in Columbia

SC since 2006, teaching private lessons for students of all ages and group piano classes. Her areas of special interest include community engagement and outreach in piano education, and she recently began a program for piano lesson study at the Goodman Correctional Institution. Hamilton currently serves as Lecturer in Piano and Accompanist at the University of South Carolina Aiken. During the Fall 2014 semester she assisted as Interim Piano Director of the Community Music School and Interim Supervisor of Group Piano at the University of South Carolina in Columbia. She is active as a solo and collaborative pianist, teacher, adjudicator, and presenter. Hamilton is published in the July/August 2014 issue of Clavier Companion. She has given recent presentations at the local and state level, as well as the Music Teachers National Association National Conference and the National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy.

Survey of the Integration of Learning Theories in American Undergraduate Piano Pedagogy Curricula

by Michael Rushing

The integration of learning theories in the undergraduate piano pedagogy curriculum was recommended in the first publication of curricular guidelines in 1984¹ and continues to be included in curricular guidelines published by the National Association for Schools of Music (NASM)². Guidelines for the Bachelor of Music in Performance includes “orientation to and experience with the fundamentals of pedagogy” as an essential competency. While the inclusion of learning theories in the undergraduate piano pedagogy curriculum was considered important during the construction of curricular guidelines and is recommended in the NASM handbook, recent research implies that the subject does not receive significant consideration in piano pedagogy classrooms. This article presents the results of a survey designed to provide information about the integration of learning theories within undergraduate piano pedagogy courses.

Materials and Methods

A web-based survey was sent to the five hundred and forty-eight member schools of the National Association of Schools of Music. One hundred and eleven individuals responded. Data was collected pertaining to the extent and nature, the philosophy, and instructors’ perceived effect of the inclusion of the integration of learning theories in the curriculum.

Results

Most respondents held degrees in piano performance, and had been teaching undergraduate piano pedagogy for fifteen years or less. Ninety-one percent of respondents also teach applied piano and 73.6% teach group piano. The piano pedagogy textbook most commonly used by respondents was *The Well-Tempered Keyboard Teacher* by Marianne Uszler, Stewart Gordon, and Scott McBride Smith.

Instructors’ experiences as students

Respondents were first asked about their experience as students. When asked if they took a piano pedagogy course as an undergraduate or graduate student, 86.9% replied yes. Fifty-four percent of those who did take a piano pedagogy course responded that the topic of learning theories was covered in their class.

¹ Marianne Uszler and Frances Larimer, *The Piano Pedagogy Major in the College Curriculum: A Handbook of Information and Guidelines*. Part 1: The Undergraduate Piano Pedagogy Major (Princeton, NJ: The National Conference on Piano Pedagogy, 1984), 32.

² National Association of Schools of Music, *National Association of Schools of Music Handbook 2007-2008* (Reston, VA: National Association of Schools of Music), 91.

The broad categories of behaviorism and cognitivism were the most common theories that were covered, with 66.7% of respondents indicating they remembered studying behaviorism and 62.7% remembering the topic of cognitivism being included in their courses. Other general theories included in the curriculum were developmental theory (60.8%), spiral curriculum (56.9%), stimulus/response (49%), multiple intelligences (49%), classical conditioning (47.1%), and gestalt theory (45.1%).

Specific learning theorists and psychologists that respondents remembered being covered in class included Jean Piaget (87%), Jerome Bruner (78.3%), B.F. Skinner (69.6%), Howard Gardner (63%), Abraham Maslow (54.4%), and Ivan Pavlov (52.2%).

Learning theory in the undergraduate curriculum

Respondents were then asked about the integration of learning theories in the piano pedagogy courses that they taught. Seventy-two percent included learning theories in their undergraduate piano pedagogy courses. About half (51%) spend one to two weeks covering the subject matter, and the same percentage (50%) place the topic of learning theories within the first four weeks of the course. The topic is presented primarily through reading assignments and lecture/demonstration. Supplemental reading materials include selected reading assignments from the following sources:

Journal of Research in Music Education
Keyboard Companion
Clavier
Piano Pedagogy Forum
The Process of Education, Jerome Bruner
Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences and *Intelligence Reframed: Multiple Intelligences for the 21st Century*, Howard Gardner
How Children Fail and How Children Learn, John Holt
The Myth of Laziness, Mel Levine
The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life, Parker Palmer
Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain, Oliver Sacks
Learning Sequences in Music, Edwin Gordon
Learning Patterns and Temperament Styles, Keith Golay
The Way They Learn, Cynthia Tobias.

Respondents were asked which topics and theorists they include in their courses. The broad categories of behaviorism and cognitivism were again the most common responses. Seventy-one percent of respondents indicated the inclusion of behaviorism while 58% cover cognitivism. Other general theories included were Stimulus/Response (56.5%), Developmental Theory (56.5%), Theories of Music Intelligence (53.2%), Spiral Curriculum (54.8%), and Music Learning Theory (45.2%).

Specific theorists that were indicated by a significant number of respondents as being discussed in undergraduate piano pedagogy courses included:

Jean Piaget (84.2%)
Jerome Bruner (63.2%)
B.F. Skinner (63.2%)
Howard Gardner (59.6%)
Ivan Pavlov (47.4%)
Abraham Maslow (40.4%)

A Likert-type scale was used to determine the amount of emphasis that respondents placed on various topics concerning learning theory. Of the broad categories of behaviorism, cognitivism, associationism, and constructivism, cognitivism received the highest rating mean (3.18). The topic related to learning theories receiving the highest rating mean was spiral curriculum (3.41). Other single topics receiving a rating mean of 3.00 or above include Music Learning Theory (3.33), developmental theory (3.25), stimulus/response (3.19), operant conditioning (3.07), and behaviorism (3.02).

A similar question was asked to determine the amount of emphasis that respondents placed on specific learning theorists in undergraduate piano pedagogy courses. Only one theorist, Jerome Bruner (3.16), received a rating above 3.00. Theorists receiving a rating mean of 2.70 or above included Howard Gardner, Edwin Gordon, Jean Piaget, and B.F. Skinner.

Respondents were asked how important they perceived the topic of learning theories in the field of piano pedagogy. The rating mean was 3.30 on a five-point scale. Nine respondents considered the topic not important. Twenty considered the topic very important.

Qualitative Responses

Lastly, respondents were asked open-ended questions designed to elicit qualitative responses regarding the topic of learning theories in the undergraduate piano pedagogy curriculum. They were first asked about the importance of learning theories within the undergraduate curriculum. Some implied that little importance was placed on the topic of learning theories within their piano pedagogy course:

... peripheral to the task of trying teach young pianists, many of whom come from completely inadequate backgrounds, the great literature for the piano that will result in real pianistic progress. In one hour per week, it is a waste of time to pass over Anna Magdalena Bach's Notebook to discuss Skinner.

In the context of our curriculum, we just need a very basic piano pedagogy course, and while offered every semester, it is only taken, on average, by one student every three years or so. It's quite informal, and usually focuses on teaching private piano to children.

Others wrote that they do not place much emphasis on the topic, partly because of their limited knowledge of the subject:

I would need to know more about them myself before I attempted to instruct someone else.

My training in this area is quite limited, and I have not stayed current. Most of what I know now is based on research done by students and presented in class. In my own teaching, specific learning theories form a very subtle undercurrent that I rarely think of at a conscious level. I believe good teaching is an instinctive process that is developed mostly through lots of teaching, with some guidance from a master pedagogue to help. A course in pedagogy can help as well, but I don't really think academic mastery of learning theories will really make someone a more effective teacher.

Other responses seem to reflect a similar stance that teaching might not be improved with knowledge of learning theories. For example,

Learning theories explain the process of good teaching. They don't define good teaching. Successful teachers don't rely on learning theories to tell them how to teach. Learning theories in essence explain what good teaching is all about.

I have a doctoral minor in music education from _____ where I studied learning theory extensively. I find the topic fascinating. However, I have had less success applying theory to practice in my pedagogy classes. I'm not convinced that the quality of teaching improves with knowledge of learning theory, but with experience and understanding of individual learning styles. In that regard, I suppose I lean towards Gardner and Bandura, but I don't specifically address their theories. I do teach modal preference and some temperament theory.

Learning styles and modalities were a recurring theme in response to this question:

All learning environments include many dimensions that must interact to produce learning and achievement in students. In the past, the focus has been largely centered on how teachers teach and not so much on how learners learn. A "good" learning environment was often judged and measured by how well the teacher organized and presented information and not on how much students learned or achieved. As a result of the development of cognitive and related learning theories, students were "discovered" to be unique individual learners who perceived and processed information in their own ways. One way of teaching no longer was assumed to be appropriate or effective with all students. It is vitally important that students in piano pedagogy classes learn to design teaching strategies that allow various types of learners to achieve learning and performance goals.

Another common response type involved a perceived importance placed on this topic, but some concern about the amount of time available in the undergraduate piano pedagogy sequence:

I do consider these to be somewhat important, but tend not to cover them much due to time constraints.

It seems obvious that as pedagogues we are constantly focused on learning, so understanding research and theories of learning is central to every other task. It is important, even if there is limited time, to make sure that undergraduates understand this topic and its relationship to their field of study.

Undergraduate students need to be exposed to the idea that there are many approaches to teaching music, some of which have a basis in research and some of which are based on tradition. However, there is a great deal to cover in a general course and I'm afraid that I am guilty of a very superficial treatment of this topic.

The undergraduate pedagogy course has limited class time and is really an overview, so there is not enough time to delve so deeply into such a specialized subject. I delve more into learning theories with the graduate courses, both at the masters and doctoral levels.

Several instructors prefer to delay any in-depth treatment of the topic of learning theories until the graduate level:

Learning theories are important, but in a one-semester undergraduate course, they receive very little emphasis. I have had to prioritize my topic choices and the emphasis tends toward as much hands on experience and feedback as possible. I hope that learning theories will be covered in-depth through any graduate pedagogy courses they will take.

I do believe that students should take other classes related to learning theories including psychology, didactics, etc. In Piano Ped we do not have time to discuss and study this very important subject. This is the problem of the education[al system] in the USA: 4 years for an undergrad degree. It's impossible to form a competent musician and teacher in 4 years, so we just introduce the subjects hoping they will develop them in grad school. Sad!

Some respondents implied that the curricular design of the undergraduate course sequence could relieve some of the time constraints placed on undergraduate piano pedagogy teachers:

My primary area of teaching experience and my personal educational experience lies within the field of Music Education. I cover learning theories much more thoroughly in music education methods courses than I do in the piano pedagogy

course. In piano pedagogy, I discuss many of the principles from learning theories without giving much emphasis to the names of the theories or theorists. In music education methods courses, I address the topic of learning theories more thoroughly and specifically.

Somewhat important; however, most of the learning theories are taught in developmental and psychology classes.

While learning theorists and theories were considered somewhat important, the practical application of learning theories in lesson planning, curriculum design, teaching practicum, and observation was a consistent response:

I look at undergraduate piano pedagogy as focusing on the basics of practical teaching. How to plan a lesson, how to teach efficiently and effectively, etc. Since I only have the students for two semesters, they start teaching a child the second week of class. Therefore it is necessary for me to focus on practical aspects. I do not spend much time on learning theories, but only mention them as they apply to the practical problems of teaching. I feel that a deeper understanding of learning theory belongs more in graduate study. If I had a few more semesters in the undergraduate curriculum, I would probably include more learning theory. I think learning theory makes more sense to students after they have taught for a while and have a sense of what teaching is like. This is also why I don't have undergrad students write a philosophy of their own teaching at the beginning of class (and rarely at the end). I think they need more time to teach and find their own style of teaching before coming up with a philosophy.

Learning theories provide the basis for us to evaluate teacher and student behaviors in piano lessons, and take a proactive approach to lesson planning.

At the undergraduate level, I use learning theories as a way to emphasize that much thought should be given to presentation of new concepts and lesson planning over the long term.

Students need to know about the existence of theories; however, the main focus should be on the practical application of them in case by case.

Learning theories are important to help students understand there are great differences among the way children learn, and differences between the way they themselves learned and the way others learn. They also need to understand developmental stages to design appropriate curriculum.

Students tend to find the topic interesting. Many come to my class without any prior experience as a teacher (most are performance majors required to take the pedagogy [sequence]) and to know that there are scientific aspects to the study of learning is motivating for them. Finding applications of the theories in our weekly group lesson and in what they observe with their students (i.e. shaping, positive

and negative reinforcement, transfer, etc.) is a big step forward in understanding the role and responsibilities of the teacher. I cover this topic early in the first term and we return to it often in our discussion.

In my opinion it is not as important for undergraduate to be able to identify key people or define learning theory terminology as it is for them to problem solve while teaching a lesson. Therefore, while we do cover some key figures and discuss several learning theories in the undergraduate pedagogy sequence, we actually cover the application of many learning theories even though they may not be identified in the syllabus or discussed in depth in class. Because students only have two semesters of pedagogical study at the undergraduate level, I prefer to focus on application and practicum rather than definition and identification.

[It is] important [that students] understand themselves and how they learn first before trying to teach someone else. Theory is just theory. We do more practicum and field testing than theory.

Learning theories are examined in historical context (viz., as an approach to teaching that post-dates traditional piano teaching practices) as well as in practical application. I consider exposure to them to be important, but the information eventually must be synthesized by the student and integrated as needed into the teaching/learning experience.

The responses of some instructors implied much importance was placed on the topic of learning theories within the undergraduate curriculum:

I believe that we must examine our beliefs as teachers and learners in order to develop an authentic teaching philosophy. Otherwise, we tend to teach as we were taught. Studying learning theories requires students to think about how they were taught and evaluate those experiences. Then they are able to begin considering those outcomes in a more gestalt manner - how their beliefs influence their own approach [to] learning and consequently teaching. Without emphasizing this, it's all just the behavioral status quo.

Learning theories give students a framework within which to understand how students learn, how they learn different types of things (concepts, skills) most effectively, and what factors to look for when learning is sporadic or not as effective as usual.

The exposure is very important. I'm not sure students are interested in expanding their repertoires of teaching techniques beyond their own experiences, however. It's hard for them to "break free!"

Many piano performance majors have had no exposure to educational psychology or developmental psychology courses. Therefore they may have little or no understanding of child development or learning theories. I feel it's essential to

include at least some coverage of this in beginning and intermediate pedagogy courses.

I feel it is very important - that is why I have hired an adjunct who specializes in this field.

Learning theories form the basis on which the remainder of the semester can be built.

Educators must be familiar not just with the information they wish to communicate but also with the most effective ways to communicate. Effective teaching takes place when one understands how the student best learns and adjusts their teaching approach accordingly.

Instructors were asked to discuss specific ways in which their students were able to associate learning theories with specific teaching techniques at the conclusion of their undergraduate piano pedagogy coursework. Most responses could be categorized as being related to practicum and observation, method reviews, or lesson planning. Some instructors wrote that they found it difficult to assess student's abilities to relate learning theories with specific teaching techniques:

Honestly, I don't spend much time on them, and I am not sure I teach them well at all.

I make no attempt to assess how well my students associate learning theories with teaching techniques, since I don't do this in my own teaching. I merely observe them teach, give very practical, common sense guidelines, and trust them to incorporate the learning theories themselves if they are inclined to. I simply try to judge whether their teaching is effective or not, whatever the reason, and give suggestions for improvement if needed.

Most instructors found that students were able to apply the theoretical concepts of learning theories in the practicum and observation component of the course sequence:

During practicum, when videos of teaching sessions are evaluated, students often point out their own missed opportunities when attempting to lead a student towards a discovery (from ages 6 to 11, say).

Task analysis is demonstrated by peer teaching and sequential steps for information presentation. Grades are given based on the success of student delivery.

This is done during their two-year teaching practicum. Students teach but also meet in a class setting. This is where most discussion and application of learning theories takes place.

Students demonstrate the ability to understand and apply knowledge of learning theories through practice teaching, lesson observations, and a final project.

Their hands-on teaching experience (in all 4 semesters) will allow them to apply the learning theories into real life situations. Also, they have opportunities to present their creative ways through the process of their planning actual teaching of their own and observing other professionals along with their peers. Their writing of the lesson plans, lesson reports, and observation reports will help them articulate, evaluate, and apply these theories into real life.

Another common response type related the application of learning theories to the process of lesson planning and curriculum design:

The primary focus of my pedagogy course (outside of technique, curriculum, and materials) centers on HOW to teach. Teacher effectiveness (through observation, modeling, and practicum) is approached as an application of behavioral theory, and is assessed from that viewpoint. Students are encouraged to apply behavioral theory in every aspect of their teaching.

We specifically address developmental differences by planning presentation of the same piece of music to different developmental levels.

Pedagogy students are able to structure lessons and long-term plans that incorporate a variety of learning styles. For instance, pedagogy students know how to approach teaching rhythm from both kinesthetic and mathematical standpoints.

Behaviorism, conditioning, Gestalt theories all apply to practice strategies; developmental theory and spiral curriculum are assessed through curriculum design.

The students are encouraged to prepare lesson plans for 8-year-old students, first for group lessons and later for private lessons. My students rotate taking charge of the class and I work closely with each student as they prepare their lesson plan. I deliberately take my students out of their comfort zone by requiring them to teach the multiple key approach. The lesson plan needs to be completely thought out. Various activities for musical and physical development are incorporated into the lesson. This is where the various learning theories come into play. I believe the practical application of these theories is the most meaningful and expedient way to teach this aspect of piano instruction.

The elements of the spiral curriculum and cognitive learning are interwoven into the fabric of our pedagogy classes as we discuss lesson planning, sequencing of concepts, and music readiness. The student's ability to lesson plan and plan for a

series of classes/lessons demonstrates their ability to apply the elements of learning theory into actions.

Other respondents focused on the use of learning theories as the basis of standard piano method series:

Students are able to discuss elementary piano methods in the context of learning theories. They are more conscious as to whether they are approaching teaching as a behaviorist, a constructivist, etc. They have a greater sense of how to develop curriculum, how instruction is sequenced, how a method is sequenced, and what goes into constructing a coherent, effective organized lesson plan.

Every published piano material at the elementary level is examined in relation to the learning theory behind its approach. This is the basis of my first semester course of study.

We try to make direct correlations between learning theory, learning style, and personality type, and then analyze teaching materials in this light - what materials fit different students, styles, teachers, etc. [We explore] why methods might use certain approaches based on learning theories.

The practical application of the concept of learning styles was also discussed:

I find Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences to be especially important for my students in ascertaining how best to approach the particular student and effectively communicate knowledge and enhance learning.

They compare Golay's description of learning styles with their own and with the students in their particular class discussions.

Throughout the semester, students are required to develop lesson plans that include writing detailed learning goals and teaching strategies based on the principles of instructional system design (ISD). Learning goals are analyzed concerning the type of learning required of students, followed by the selection of teaching methods and technologies that support that type of learning. Students are made aware at all times not to confuse student preferences and student learning characteristics with learning style. The learning process is a construct and therefore is not directly observable. It is important that piano pedagogy students not jump to conclusions about an individual student's learning style based on how they "seem" to learn.

By finding out what kind of a learner a given student is one can make assumptions on which kind of method/reading approach would be most suitable. However, in general, each student, regardless of what kind of learner they are, must be treated in an individual manner. There are more parameters to the piano lesson situation than just what kind of a child the student is: the music, the teacher,

etc. I caution my students not to make assumptions about their students, based on a perceived analysis of the child's learning style.

The last question of the survey instrument asked respondents to write additional comments in relation to the inclusion of learning theories within the undergraduate piano pedagogy curriculum. The most common themes of these responses was the application of theoretical concepts, concerns about a lack of time, and the preference to delay any in-depth treatment of learning theories until the graduate level:

My approach to piano pedagogy is clear; future teachers MUST know how students learn. I am a staunch Brunerian but have an extensive background in learning theories [...] enough to have discarded many which have no foundation in reality and application.

In my pedagogy class, rather than spending much energy on learning theories, I prefer to discuss the nuts and bolts of piano teaching: internalizing rhythm, reaching technique, sight reading, theory, harmonic analysis, discussing fingering strategies, evaluating methods, discussing the proper sequencing of material and developing a broad teaching repertoire. I believe there is enough information given in Uszler for the student to investigate learning theories further.

While the study of learning theory is important, it isn't the theory or the theorist that is important. It is the information we gain through the study of the theories that better informs our teaching. In many cases, I don't believe the theory came first and somehow instructed us how to be good teachers. I believe that most theories developed as the researchers studied both learners and teachers and determined how and why something was working. They explain why we do what we do and why certain teaching is better suited to a student than another. However, I don't feel it necessary for my undergrad students to know where the theories came from. I want them to know and understand the principles and applications.

I strongly believe that it is not enough for students just to memorize names and distinguishing features of various learning theories. They need to see their PRACTICAL relevance: i.e. they need to understand how they apply to real-life music teaching, how/where various teaching approaches springing from various major learning theories can be effectively implemented. PRACTICAL APPLICATION, that's the key to students' assimilating and remembering this knowledge and putting it to good use in the studio or classroom.

I teach LOTS about learning theory in my graduate piano pedagogy courses. I personally studied learning theory as a course that was required as part of my pedagogy program - but not the pedagogy course per se, since they were taught elsewhere.

In a single semester, it's hard to find enough time to cover the elemental basics of good teaching including concepts of technical development, fostering creativity with composition and improvisation, gaining familiarity with method books and the classical repertoire. Mostly, I had to distill my own knowledge and communicate the learning theories with demonstrations and critique of student teaching.

Conclusions

Several conclusions can be drawn from the data regarding the integration of learning theories in the undergraduate piano pedagogy curriculum.

1. Almost 30% of undergraduate piano pedagogy instructors do not include the topic of learning theories within their course.
2. Many piano pedagogy instructors have little background related to the field of learning theories. Moreover, 40% of those who took a piano pedagogy course as an undergraduate or graduate student responded that the topic of learning theories was not covered in those courses.
3. Many instructors did not recall perceiving learning theories as being important when they were students.
4. Many instructors do not consider the topic of learning theories important.
5. Spiral curriculum, behaviorism, and cognitivism are the three topics related to learning theories that receive the most emphasis in undergraduate piano pedagogy courses.

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The Self-Efficacy Beliefs of Three Adults Returning to Piano Study

by Sarah Evans Moore

Introduction

A recent survey released by the National Endowment for the Arts suggests that as many as 26 million adult amateurs play the piano for their own enjoyment, many of whom also seek formal instruction through private or group lessons.¹ Adults have clear goals and reasons for resuming piano study, including skill improvement, musical knowledge, accomplishment, skill refinement, technique, pleasure, escape from routine, music listening, and personal growth.² Teachers discover that adults unfortunately tend to not continue lessons for any significant length of time.³ While external factors such as busy schedules due to jobs, family commitments, or physical limitations often contribute to student dropout, many adult students discontinue lessons simply because they are frustrated with the learning process.⁴ They may not make as much progress as quickly as they expect, hold low perceptions of their skills and believe their efforts are useless, feel discouragement that the cognitive and motor skill interplay is not as quickly refined as expected, and fear performing.⁵ These psychological factors may negatively affect adult students' beliefs about their ability to succeed. The social cognitive theory of self-efficacy explores the beliefs of one's ability to succeed at any given task.⁶ A study of the self-efficacy beliefs of adult students returning to piano study may provide insight and information to better serve this population of students in their piano lessons.

Albert Bandura defined self-efficacy as “the conviction that one can successfully execute the behavior required to produce the outcome.”⁷ Self-efficacy is part of a larger framework in Bandura's social cognitive theory, in which he states that human achievement is based on the interaction of one's behaviors, beliefs, and environment.⁸ From his work in social cognitive theory, Bandura concluded that self-efficacy shapes the foundation of human functioning. Self-efficacy is a determinant in choice of tasks, persistence in tasks even in the face of difficulties, and attitude toward the task.⁹ In the past decades, self-efficacy has increasingly gained attention as an important predictor of achievement and success across many domains, including health, education, sports, and music, among others.

Formation of Self-efficacy

Bandura theorized the following four sources that influence self-efficacy:¹⁰

1. *Mastery experience* is gained through successful performances of skills and tasks and is considered the strongest predictor of self-efficacy. The more mastery experiences one gains for a given skill provides a much higher perception that one may successfully accomplish the task.
2. *Vicarious experience*, or *modeling*, is another factor that influences self-efficacy. As a person observes someone else accomplishing the same task, they are more likely to have the confidence that they could do it themselves.

Vicarious experiences may be more effective when subjects observe their peers, or someone they consider to be at approximately their same level, than someone who has attained mastery at a far greater level.

3. *Social persuasion* happens when an authoritative or influential person verbally encourages or reinforces that an individual possesses the ability to accomplish the task. Positive social persuasion would include commending a student for correctly completing a task, while negative social persuasion might include expressing disappointment with a student's failure.
4. *Physiological states* also affect a person's self-efficacy. This includes raised heart rate or anxiety based on a person's fears, nervousness, stress, or memories of previous bad experiences. Physiological states may lower self-efficacy, even though a person may have had positive experiences with the other sources of self-efficacy. For example, even if a student has mastered the ability to perform music and has his teacher's encouragement, nervousness or performance anxiety may still lower his self-efficacy for performing at a recital.

The four sources of self-efficacy combined with other factors such as ability perception, perceived difficulty, effort expended, and assistance received work together to form a person's self-efficacy.¹¹ All these factors are cognitively processed as a person determines his or her self-efficacy for a specific task.

Albert Bandura's theory of self-efficacy has been applied to numerous other domains with successful outcomes, and its implications may also prove beneficial to teachers who wish to improve the experiences and success of adult piano students.¹² This exploratory project centered on the observation of self-efficacy beliefs of adults returning to piano study for one semester and potential implications to important areas of piano study such as goal setting and goal achievement, practice habits, performance situations, and attitudes. By in-depth examination of several cases, exploring the role of self-efficacy theory in piano study became the basis for suggested applications and future research to the field of piano pedagogy.

Methodology

This study is grounded in qualitative research.¹³ A case study provided in-depth, descriptive data into this topic that clarified issues and problems with self-efficacy that adult students face. This study observed multiple variables including musical backgrounds of participants, elements of piano study including practice, learning achievement, and attitudes. Data were collected from multiple sources such as interviews, practice logs, self-assessments, and observations and compared to the theoretical propositions of self-efficacy beliefs as outlined by Bandura.¹⁴

This study centered on the observation and experiences of three adult students returning to piano study. Because self-efficacy theory is primarily based on a person's perception of his or her own ability to complete tasks, participants with at least three years of prior formal piano study were chosen for this study. Preference was given to adults twenty-five years old and older, and who had at least a five-year gap between prior piano study and

current piano study. Students were selected with varying backgrounds, years of experience, and levels of repertoire. The names of the participants were changed for confidentiality. Lessons were directed through the University of South Carolina's Community Music School. Participants received twelve private lessons throughout the course of one semester. For continuity in teaching style, the investigator also served as instructor to all three participants.

Participants completed self-efficacy scale questionnaires at the beginning, midpoint, and end of the semester (Appendix 1). The self-efficacy questionnaires were adapted from a validated measurement tool developed by Laura Ritchie and Aaron Williamson and conform to the guidelines specified by Albert Bandura.¹⁵ This measurement tool utilized a seven point Likert scale, with some questions asked in the negative. The questionnaire was useful particularly for comparing a numeric representation of a participant's self-efficacy, and how it may or may not have changed throughout the course of the semester. The eleven questions in the measurement tool on a seven point scale allowed for a range of 77 points as the highest representation of self-efficacy beliefs, 7 points as the lowest representation of self-efficacy beliefs, and 42 points as the middle range. Furthermore, some of the questions directly assessed self-efficacy attitudes ("I can," 49 pts.), while others assessed efficacious behaviors ("I do," 28 pts.). Total points were calculated for each person and compared to subsequent evaluations.

In addition to the questionnaires, the adult students participated in semi-structured interviews at the beginning and conclusion of the semester. The initial interview included basic questions about the demographics of the participant, background in music study, as well as open-ended questions about reasons for resuming lessons and questions about perception of his or her ability to succeed. Following the conclusion of the semester, exit interviews allowed reflection on the piano study experience and opinions on what they had accomplished.

When lessons commenced, the investigator kept records of each lesson with field notes. The instructor recorded the repertoire covered, general assessment, practice strategies discussed, and paraphrases of students' comments regarding the music, skills, and their practice time.

Participants also kept practice journals to record practice time, practice strategies, areas of accomplishment or weakness, and other comments. Practice journals provided written records of the students' thoughts about their progress and the frustrations or accomplishments.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- How do previous piano lesson experiences impact initial self-efficacy beliefs when adult students resume lessons?

- Which sources of self-efficacy formation seem to effect the greatest change in self-efficacy beliefs throughout the course of a semester of study?
- How does self-efficacy relate to important areas of piano study such as goal setting, achievement, practice habits, performance situations and attitudes?

Participant Profiles

“Mike”

At the time of this study, Mike was a 59 year-old attorney. He began lessons as a nine-year old child and continued taking through high school, and then again following law school. It has been twenty years since he last took lessons. Mike would occasionally play on his own for personal enjoyment, but returned to formal lessons with the desire of obtaining regular structure in lesson and practice formats.

“John”

At the time of this study, John was 44 years old and worked as a sales consultant. He studied piano from age seven to thirteen in an effort by his parents to build his self-confidence. It has been twenty-eight years since he last took piano lessons. He is resuming lessons at his family’s encouragement, and particularly enjoys the challenges and sense of accomplishment that come with piano study. John travels regularly for his job, and was concerned about missing lessons occasionally and having enough time to practice every week.

“Debbie”

At the time of this study, Debbie was a 45 year-old foreign language professor. She took lessons for 10 years, beginning when she was seven years old, and had not taken lessons in 29 years. She signed up for lessons so that she could sit down to help her own daughters with their piano lessons, and also play for her own enjoyment. Her short-term goals included relearning the basics of piano and desiring to be able to simply play again, while a longer term goal was to play the pieces she ended lessons with, at Grade 9 of the Royal Conservatory of Music (Canadian).

Results and Discussion

Research Question #1: How do previous lesson experiences impact initial self-efficacy beliefs when adult students resume lessons?

“Mike”

Prior to commencing lessons, Mike indicated that he had played repertoire from standard classical piano literature, including works by Scarlatti, Brahms, and Rachmaninoff. He took lessons for seven years prior to attending college and seven years following his completion of law school, for a total of fourteen years of prior piano lesson experience. It

had been twenty years since he had formal lessons prior to beginning his study with me. Prior to the commencement of lessons, Mike said he occasionally sat down and played. Mike recounted some positive and some negative experiences with his past teachers, though noting that after law school, he would only be with a teacher for one to two years until she discontinued employment in that program. He said that one teacher did not emphasize technical development, two seemed more interested in teaching merely for financial compensation, but one was a particularly excellent teacher. He did, however, enjoy lessons with all of them. Mike believed that his strengths included sight-reading, and that it was easier to play chordal textures. He did mention several areas that he felt were weaknesses in his playing, including scales and chords, pedaling, rhythm, and remembering expressive symbols.

Mike's initial self-efficacy beliefs scored 48/49 on the first assessment. In spite of his declaration of many weaknesses, and some negative experiences with teachers in the past, he had a very high belief that he could learn lesson material on a weekly basis. This may be due to his fourteen years of study and the relatively advanced repertoire he had once been able to play.

“John”

Based on some of the repertoire John mentioned he previously studied when taking lessons, I estimate that John had mastered repertoire at approximately levels 4 and 5 based on Magrath's leveling system.¹⁶ He studied piano for six years, and had not taken lessons for 28 years prior to beginning lessons again with me. Several years prior to beginning lessons, John inherited his parents' piano, but rarely played it. Prior to beginning lessons again, he did pull out his old books to see what he could still play. John had only one teacher, and enjoyed working with him. He recounted that his teacher was patient with him, and was “encouraging more than strict.” He progressed quickly at the beginning of lessons, but then felt that he “flat-lined” after a few years and did not make as much progress. John believed that he had a good ear, but that he did not remember very many of the fundamentals of music such as rhythm, reading, and expressive symbols.

John's initial self-efficacy score was 35/49. This may be due to his admission of not making as much progress at the time that he discontinued lessons, and his basic belief that he did not remember even the basics of music. It is still higher than the median score of 28, which perhaps indicated that he believed in his ability to succeed in spite of weaknesses and persevere in the case of difficulties. This may also be due to his prior circumstances of using piano study to build his confidence as a child.

“Debbie”

As a teenager, Debbie successfully completed the Level 9 Examination of the Royal Conservatory of Music (Canadian). She mentioned that she had played pieces such as Chopin's *Prelude in D-flat Major, Op. 28, No. 15*, and two of Chopin's waltzes. She took piano lessons for ten years, and had not taken lessons for the past twenty-nine years prior to beginning lessons with me. She did not indicate that she ever played music

on her own anymore, but did sit down to help her daughter practice her lesson material each week. Debbie's primary teacher was demanding, and Debbie enjoyed working with her. She indicated that prior to discontinuing lessons as a teenager, she practiced less often, but would often "skip school to practice" before lessons as to not disappoint her teacher. Debbie said that at the end, she felt that her teacher wasn't happy with her, and expected more out of her, and that things did not end well. Debbie indicated that she had been good at memorizing, but that reading and technique were difficult for her. She said that she would like to remember how to read and just be able to start playing again.

Debbie's initial self-efficacy beliefs scored 41/49. Her score was relatively high, considering she did not believe that she remembered how to do very much and hadn't actually played in 29 years. This may be due to her successful completion of literature as a child and teenager.

Mike and Debbie each had a relatively high initial self-efficacy. Both of them had been playing more advanced literature when they discontinued lessons. Mike had taken more lessons after law school, and was more confident in his ability to learn new music. Debbie was less confident in what she remembered, but still had a high efficacy. John took lessons for the least amount of time. His self-efficacy score was somewhat high, as he rated especially high in questions relating to his ability to persevere through problems, but was less sure of his ability to be successful learning music and solving problems in his own practice. John's prior music lessons did much to help build his self-confidence, and his prior successes probably helped shape his determination to succeed. Prior mastery experiences in piano study would then seem to have the most influence on self-efficacy on students who decide to take lessons again, even many years after discontinuing study. Each participant had different experiences with prior instructors and teaching styles, but past experiences with instructors did not appear to have much influence on the participants' self-efficacy scores.

Research Question #2: Do self-efficacy beliefs change throughout the course of a semester, if at all, after returning to lessons?

"Mike"

Mike's self-efficacy scores fell slightly at the final assessment, and his efficacious behaviors also fell throughout the semester. Mike's self-efficacy beliefs changed towards the end of the semester, as he realized that there were aspects of piano study that he did not feel he could learn on his own. It is interesting to note that self-efficacy theory suggests that self-efficacy determines choice of task and persistence. I asked Mike to attempt finding a left-hand fingering on his own for two lines of the Rachmaninoff *Prelude in G Minor, Op. 23, No. 5*, but he did not take the initiative to work through it in his at-home practice. He practiced sections and waited until the lesson for me to work through the next section's fingering issues with him.

Mike's self-efficacious behavior scores also dropped on his self-assessment. This is partly due to his admission that he did not begin practicing right away after a lesson.

However, his practice time increased towards the end of the semester, and he was setting higher goals and challenges for himself.

“John”

John’s self-efficacy scores rose from the first assessment to the second assessment, and then fell at the last assessment. John’s efficacious behaviors almost doubled from the first assessment to the second assessment, and then only dropped slightly for the final assessment.

John’s scores likely reflect the trajectory of the learning process, along with additional factors of less practice towards the end of his semester of study as his work schedule became busier with less time to practice. John made progress quickly early in the semester as he realized that his ability to read notes was stronger than he anticipated. Despite his difficulty reading rhythms, aural models helped him play rhythms correctly when listening to his pieces. As the semester progressed, however, we spent more time integrating more advanced concepts of musicianship, such as balance, dynamic contrast, and articulation. John had a more difficult time incorporating these aspects in his performance, and was unable to see as much progress as he did at the beginning of the semester. He was also frustrated with his limited practice time due to his busy travel schedule towards the end of the semester.

I also find it interesting that most of John’s changes in scores relate to questions of perseverance in difficulty. He stated absolutely in his exit interview that he does not give up even for difficult tasks, and I saw him practice the more difficult concepts, even if he had only a limited amount of time.

“Debbie”

Debbie’s self-efficacy beliefs remained the same for the first two self-assessments, and then rose to 49/49 on the last assessment. Her efficacious behavior scores fell with each assessment.

Debbie’s self-efficacy scores rose at the end of the semester, as she far exceeded her expectations and goals for the semester. Accomplishing the task of learning one of the last pieces in previous study gave her the confidence that she could continue learning on her own. Although her scores were very high at the end of the semester, her efficacy may decrease as she gains a more realistic perspective of limitations in the future with new literature containing more difficult technical challenges.

Debbie’s efficacious behavior scores also dropped. She constantly told me how much busier she was than she expected she would be at the beginning of the semester. Her lack of time to practice certainly influenced her efficacious behavior scores.

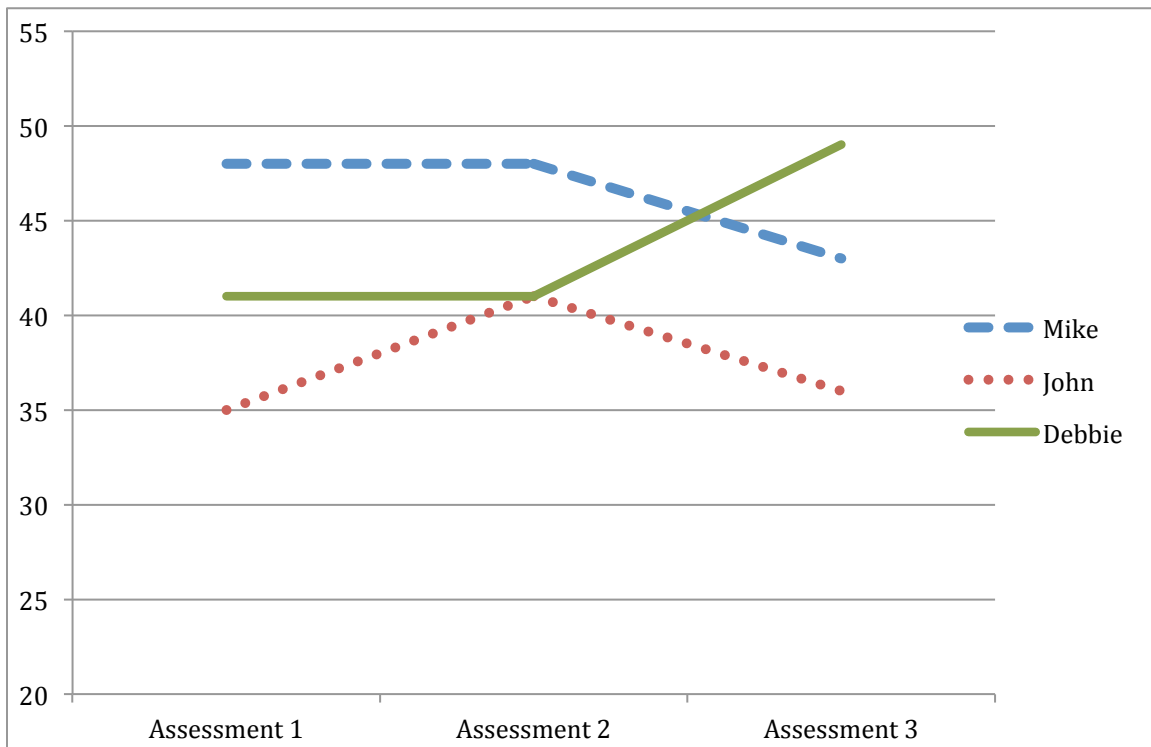
Researcher Observation on Changes in Self-Efficacy

The trajectory of self-efficacy beliefs followed a different pattern for each participant. Table 6.1 summarizes the participants' scores, and Figure 6.1 illustrates the pattern of each participant's self-efficacy beliefs throughout the semester.

Table 6.1: Summary of Self-reported self-efficacy beliefs

		Assessment 1	Assessment 2	Assessment 3
Total	Mike	48	48	43
Total	John	35	41	36
Total	Debbie	41	41	49

Figure 6.1



The results suggest that each student had different experiences throughout the semester that affected self-efficacy beliefs, even with the same teaching style in lessons. In Mike's case, while he was confident enough to make new goals, he discovered areas in which he did not feel efficacious to complete. This reflected the task-specificity idea of self-efficacy. His overall efficacy for learning may have been high, but when confronted with a particular task of fingering, his efficacy was lower for his ability to learn the week's assignment. This idea was also true in John's case. His efficacy increased dramatically

in the beginning of the learning process as he learned notes and rhythms for pieces, but as we worked on other tasks of balance and articulation, his efficacy scores decreased. Both of them, however, believed that their overall efficacy increased during the semester, as they felt that being successful laid a foundation for further success, even though their reported scores reflected the specific problems they found in the learning process at that particular time. Debbie's scores reflected her excitement at returning to piano and reaching goals higher than she imagined. She easily overcame problems at the end of the learning process this semester. As with Mike and John, I would expect her self-efficacy scores to decrease as she encounters more difficult literature with new technical concepts until she gains more mastery experience to overcome those difficulties.

Specificity in self-efficacy is vital to self-efficacy theory. If a student is struggling with a particular element, such as fingering or balance, the teacher may wish to focus on creating incremental mastery experiences for that particular student, in order to raise self-efficacy in that area. In Mike's case, it might have been helpful to choose some shorter, less difficult pieces that would keep him interested, but that would also have provided opportunity for him work on fingering on his own. In John's case, it may have been helpful to choose less difficult pieces or even simple technical exercises to begin creating mastery experiences in balance and articulation contrasts.

Additionally, it might be said that various stages of the learning process have an impact on self-efficacy. For example, if a student can learn quickly and easily in the beginning stages, they may have a higher self-efficacy. When they encounter difficult technical or musical problems, their self-efficacy may decrease. However, as one continues to master a piece, a student's self-efficacy will also rise as he or she comes closer to the desired standard of performance. Again, each stage of self-efficacy reflects the task-specificity involved in self-efficacy theory.

Research Question #3: What sources of self-efficacy seem to have the greatest impact on change in self-efficacy beliefs?

According to self-efficacy theory, mastery experiences have the greatest impact on self-efficacy.¹⁷ In all three cases, mastery experiences also had the greatest effect on self-efficacy. In Debbie's case, her ability to play at a level much higher than she thought she could have contributed positively to her self-efficacy. This was also true with John who had many early successes in regaining his ability to read and play music. Not enough mastery experience also contributed to the decline of scores in both John and Mike's cases.

Social persuasion also plays a role in self-efficacy. Students appreciated specific feedback of what they did well. General praise may raise a student's self-esteem, but will be less effective in raising self-efficacy. Even constructive criticism can have a positive result so long as the student believes it will have a positive impact and is something that they are able to incorporate. It should be noted that positive feedback is "expected" in lessons because of the nature of a student/teacher relationship, the effects of specific positive feedback and appropriate constructive criticism may still be crucial in the

student's self-efficacy. General positive feedback may boost a student's self-esteem without affecting his efficacy. Negative feedback may also negatively influence a student's self-efficacy.

Bandura theorized that the vicarious experience of seeing a peer perform an action might raise self-efficacy.¹⁸ Modeling had a limited impact on self-efficacy in these cases. Both John and Debbie found it inspiring to hear other adult amateurs perform and discuss their experiences in learning, but Mike did not find it particularly helpful.

Physiological influences played a minor role in the self-efficacy for learning. Only in Debbie's case, when she was especially stressed, did it seem to affect her self-efficacy. Teachers may wish to take note of students' stress levels and adjust assignments as necessary. Physiological influences would have a much greater impact in performance settings, but it should be noted that performance is a different task than the task of learning that was explored in this study.

Research Question #4: How does self-efficacy relate to important areas of piano study such as practice habits, progress and achievement, performance situations, and participant goals?

“Mike”

Mike's practice habits changed for the better throughout the semester while both his self-efficacy scores and efficacious behavior scores declined. His practice sessions became longer, and he was able to incorporate more strategies into his practice time. Mike completed all three movements of Clementi's *Sonatina in C major, Op. 36 No. 1* and Mendelssohn's *Songs without Words, Op. 19 No. 4*. Furthermore, he began working on Rachmaninoff's *Prelude in G Minor, Op. 23 No. 5* at his request. Even with a high self-efficacy for learning, Mike chose not to participate in performance situations. Mike's goals increased as he went from choosing relatively easier pieces to bringing in the much more difficult Rachmaninoff piece. He believed this was because through time he became more realistic about his abilities of what he could or could not accomplish and the amount of time he was able to dedicate to piano.

“John”

John's practice time remained relatively stable throughout the semester when he was not traveling due to work. He did not record a wide variety of practice strategies in his practice log, and despite a fluctuation in his self-efficacy beliefs, his self-efficacious behavior scores increased from his assessment at the beginning of the semester. In his closing interview, John discussed a “breakthrough moment” when he realized that he was succeeding and would be able to successfully build his piano skills. This helped his achievement as he began working on new pieces on his own. Furthermore, he chose to perform in the adult recital as well as his daughter's recital in December. I believe his lower self-efficacy score at the close of the semester was due to seeing less progress because of the amount of time between lessons due to travel. He also became

discouraged when he did not see as much progress when working on more difficult aspects of learning such as articulation and balance.

“Debbie”

Debbie’s efficacious behavior fell during the course of the semester. Much of this was due to her work schedule being significantly busier than she had expected. Despite a lack of time to practice and lower self-reported efficacious behavior scores, Debbie’s efficacy beliefs increased by the end of the semester. She exceeded her goals, and was able to accomplish more than she expected, even with limited practice time. She was able to incorporate suggested practice strategies and make progress. Debbie also participated in a masterclass, and expressed interest in performing in that type of situation again should the opportunity arise.

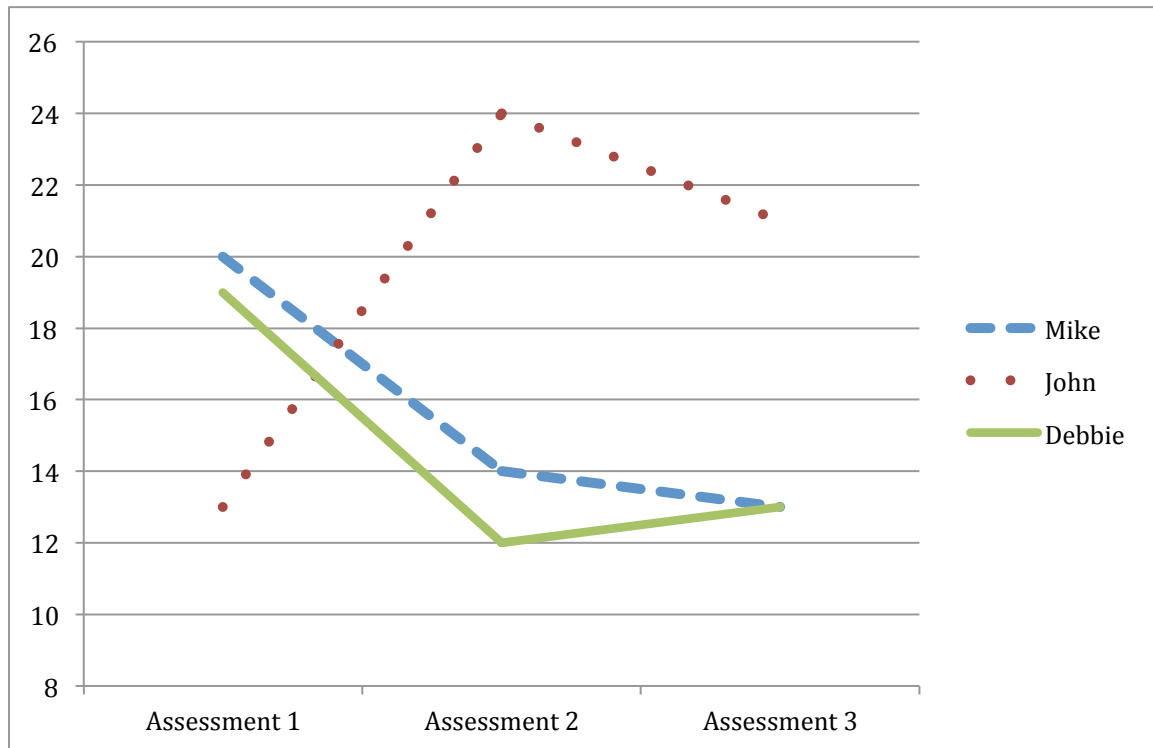
Researcher Observation of Impact of Self-Efficacy Beliefs on Behavior

The trajectory of self-reported efficacious behaviors followed a different path for each participant. Table 6.2 summarizes the participants’ scores, and Figure 6.2 illustrates the trajectory of each participant’s self-efficacy beliefs throughout the semester.

Table 6.2: Summary of Efficacious Behavior Scores

		Assessment 1	Assessment 2	Assessment 3
Total	Mike	20	14	13
Total	John	13	24	21
Total	Debbie	19	12	13

Figure 6.2



It should be noted that the self-reported efficacious behavior statements on the self-assessments for music learning were limited to statements regarding practice behaviors. While self-efficacy beliefs may have played a role in practice behaviors, it is also plausible that external environmental factors impacted practice behaviors.¹⁹ In reality, all three participants displayed higher efficacious behaviors by the end of the semester than they did at the beginning of the semester. Each participant reached his or her goal of reviewing basic musical concepts, having a renewed interest in sitting down at the piano and playing for leisure, and learning new repertoire. In addition, each participant took initiative to choose new literature and began working on it on their own, thereby setting new goals for themselves. Each participant was able to some degree to incorporate practice strategies into practice sessions, and remember previous strategies that worked and apply them in new situations. John and Debbie even chose to participate in performance situations. While each would agree that there are still specific areas that he or she needs to improve, the overall experience was positive in building musical skills.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study explored the self-efficacy beliefs of adults returning to piano and the impact of those beliefs on important components of piano study. In addition to studies of a similar nature of this, the following recommendations should be considered:

1. The study of self-efficacy in other piano student populations, such as children, beginning adults, university majors, professionals, etc. Studying self-efficacy as

- it relates to learning at any age or any level would be advantageous for piano teachers in creating strategies to build self-efficacy and ultimately student success.
2. Vicarious experiences are inherent to class piano experiences. Future research could explore the role of modeling on the self-efficacy beliefs of piano students in a group setting.
 3. Empirical studies in strategies for raising self-efficacy beliefs among students. As teachers develop strategies for successful learning, it may be useful to see quantitatively how mastery experiences, differences in positive or negative social persuasion, modeling, or physiological influences affect self-efficacy in a larger study sample.
 4. Exploration of other educational learning theories such as motivation, self-esteem, and self-regulatory learning in relation to self-efficacy in piano study.
 5. Although self-efficacy plays an important role in the learning process, future research may also wish to explore self-efficacy beliefs among those who discontinue lessons to discover the role of self-efficacy beliefs in addition to external factors.
 6. Future research could also explore the stages of the learning process in relation to changes in self-efficacy. When it is easy to see progress, scores tended to be higher. When working on more difficult tasks, the efficacy scores seemed to decrease. Similarly, efficacy scores are highest when one is achieving goals, but are lower when achievement of the goal seems further away. Teaching strategies could be explored to minimize the natural decreases in self-efficacy along the learning trajectory to help insure greater persistence in overcoming challenges and maintaining a positive attitude toward learning.

Summary and Conclusions

Understanding self-efficacy is important for the professional piano instructor for improving a student's piano study experience, because it determines persistence, forms stronger dedication to the task at hand, and attitude towards the task. Those who possess strong self-efficacy towards a task will enjoy the challenge, be less likely to give up in the face of difficulties, and persist towards mastery.²⁰ This was true with all three participants. All three participants possessed a high enough efficacy to pursue learning goals and attain mastery. Furthermore, all three created new goals and began learning on their own. John and Mike particularly saw learning new pieces as a challenge that they took pride in mastering. Debbie found that a high efficacy gave her the confidence to pursue new pieces that she previously thought would be unattainable. In contrast, those who possess a weaker self-efficacy may be less likely to pursue challenging tasks, may be quick to give up, may believe that tasks are beyond their capabilities, and may focus on negative aspects. This was also true, especially in relation to specific tasks. Mike discovered difficulties in fingering a particular passage, and would not attempt to find his own solutions, believing that he could not learn it on his own. He discovered difficulties and then felt limited by them. Likewise, when John encountered difficulties with balance and rhythm, he saw less progress and focused on the lack of progress. When Debbie was experiencing outside stress apart from piano, it frustrated her and eclipsed her view of

progress. Because of these reasons, it is vital that piano teachers focus on raising student self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy beliefs are most heavily influenced by mastery experiences, but teachers may wish to consider the additional sources of self-efficacy of social persuasion, modeling, and physiological influences. John and Debbie found listening to other students inspiring, and those experiences may have bolstered their own beliefs that they too could succeed in their piano studies. Similarly, social persuasion plays an important role in piano study. As a piano instructor is able to offer positive feedback on specific aspects of a student's playing, this can help raise self-efficacy. Constant negative feedback may negatively affect self-efficacy, though constructive criticism that the student understands and helps produce positive change may also raise self-efficacy. Physiological influences such as student stress may play a role in self-efficacy. Stress often comes from outside sources, though there are instances where piano study may cause stress to the student.

As evidenced by this study, self-efficacy is task-specific. For example, Mike's self-efficacy remained high while he was able to learn pieces he felt could be easily mastered. However, when he brought in more difficult pieces, his self-efficacy belief scores fell when he determined that he was unable to learn fingering on his own. Similarly, John was unsure of his ability to begin to learn to play the piano again, but found that his self-efficacy for learning increased when he discovered that he remembered how to realize note reading from the score to the keyboard. His efficacy scores fell when he saw less progress due to practicing more difficult aspects of music learning such as balance, articulation contrasts, and dynamic shading. It is recommended that teachers focus on students' specific problem areas and help create incremental successful mastery experiences, so that students' self-efficacy beliefs may be raised. In turn, this may help them achieve increased persistence and positive attitudes when future difficulties arise. Higher self-efficacy can then contribute to a successful, positive piano lesson experience for adult students.

¹ National Endowment for the Arts, "2008 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts." (November, 2009.)

² Peter J. Jutras, "The Benefits of Adult Piano Study as Self-Reported by Selected Adult Piano Students." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 54, no. 2 (2006): 97-110

³ While no empirical data exists on adult piano dropout rates, reflections by several leading pedagogues suggest that adult dropout rates are a problem that many piano teachers face. See Brenda Wristen, "Demographics and Motivation of Adult Group Piano Students," *Faculty Publications*, University of Nebraska-Lincoln School of Music, 2005, accessed March 1, 2011, <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/musicfacpub/2>, Ramona Graessle, "Teaching Adults: The Rewards and the Challenges." *Piano Pedagogy Forum* [On-line serial], 3, no. 1 (2000) www.music.sc.edu/ea/Keyboard/PPF/index.html, accessed September 19, 2011, and Aldstadter, J., Hwang, M., & Tobin, R. N. "What Do You Do When an Adult's Self-Criticism Prevents Normal Progress? In B. Dillon (Dept. Ed.) *Keyboard Companion: Adult Piano Study*, 12, no. 1 (2001).

⁴ Christopher Fisher, *Teaching Piano in Groups* (Oxford University Press, 2010).

⁵ Ibid.

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- ⁶ Albert Bandura, *Social Learning Theory* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1977).
- ⁷ _____, *Self-Efficacy in Changing Societies* (University of Cambridge Press, 2005): 5.
- ⁸ _____, *Social Learning Theory*.
- ⁹ _____, *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control* (New York: Freeman and Company, 1997).
- ¹⁰ Ibid., 79-115.
- ¹¹ Dale Schunk, "Self-Efficacy and Achievement Behaviors," *Educational Psychology Review* 7 (1989): 173-208.
- ¹² Albert Bandura, *Self-Efficacy in Changing Societies* (University of Cambridge Press, 2005).
- ¹³ This article contains excerpts from the study produced as part of the requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Piano Pedagogy from the University of South Carolina. For a full discussion of methodology, data, and discussion, see Sarah Evans Moore, "The Self-Efficacy Beliefs of Three Adults Returning to Piano Study" (DMA diss., University of South Carolina, 2012).
- ¹⁴ See Albert Bandura, *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control* (New York: Freeman and Company, 1997) and Albert Bandura, *Self-Efficacy in Changing Societies* (University of Cambridge Press, 2005): 5.
- ¹⁵ Laura Ritchie and Aaron Williamson, "Measuring Distinct Types of Musical Self-Efficacy," *Psychology of Music*, 59 (2011): 146-161. Guidelines must take into consideration the following areas: Content validity, domain specification, gradations of challenge, and self-regulatory challenge.
- ¹⁶ Jane Magrath, *Pianist's Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature*, (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Co, 1995).
- ¹⁷ Albert Bandura, *Self-Efficacy in Changing Societies* (University of Cambridge Press, 2005).
- ¹⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁹ Albert Bandura, *Social Learning Theory* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1977).
- ²⁰ Dale Schunk, "Self-Efficacy for Learning and Performance" (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Research Association, New York, 1996).

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Appendix 1
Self-Efficacy for Music Learning Self Assessment

1 = 0% sure or untrue of me 7 = 100% sure, or true of me

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. I am confident I can successfully learn the music assigned for the next lesson.							
2. One of my problems is that I cannot get down to practicing my weekly assignment when I should.							
3. If I cannot play the music assigned for the next lesson at first, I will keep practicing until I can.							
4. When I set important learning goals for the week, I rarely achieve them.							
5. I am likely to give up preparing for next week's lesson before learning the music or assignment.							
6. When I have something unpleasant to do in preparation for the lesson, I can stick to it until I finish it.							
7. When I receive my weekly lesson assignment, I get right to work practicing the music.							
8. When first playing the music for the next lesson, I soon give up if I am not initially successful.							
9. The prospect of failure at my next lesson makes me work harder to prepare during the week.							
10. I am likely to give up on working on my lesson assignments easily.							
11. I am capable of dealing with most problems that come up when working on weekly lesson assignments.							

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