Just because I like it

- Student autonomy in repertoire selection in 20th/21st century popular piano music -

-Kevin Burg-

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1. Preface

When I applied to the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague, I already had a research topic in my mind: The music of Federico Mompou, a Spanish composer of the 20th century, and its pedagogical impact in piano lessons. I think his piano compositions have a lot of pedagogical quality, are incredibly beautiful and not well known. So, I thought it would be a nice idea to carry out research about his music and dive into it in-depth.

However, when it came closer to planning and carrying out the research, some problems came to my mind:

- How can I investigate the pedagogical power of Mompou's music if my students do not want to play it?
- Is it ethical to force my students to play certain pieces, just because I want to investigate the pieces and carry out the research?
- Why should I select the pieces of my students?

When I was thinking about these questions, even more arguments came to my mind that were contradicting the original idea of my research:

What repertoire is played in piano lessons? Who chooses the pieces? What impact does it have if students can make their own choices in what they want to learn and play? These are the questions that concerned me as a piano student and as a piano teacher for many years.

In my personal experience, I had a lot of fun and enjoyment in my piano lessons when I could influence the choices and participate in the repertoire selection, and therefore influence the content of my piano lessons as a student. That is why I think it is truly relevant for my students as well. Having a lot of fun and enjoyment, also by actively participating and designing the lesson content, I hope to increase the motivation, development, and metacognition of my students.

Instead of investigating the impact of one or multiple specific composers in piano lessons, I ended up with an idea that is pretty much the opposite of my original idea: I let my students choose the repertoire we investigate in this research.

The focus of this research will be how student-oriented, progressive piano lessons can be created when the pupils have autonomy to choose their own repertoire, and what it takes from the piano teacher to ensure their enjoyment and development, and to create tailor-made arrangements for them.

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2. Table of Contents

3. Introduction

As mentioned in my preface, the focus of this research is to investigate how to deal with autonomous repertoire choices of students in piano lessons, and what it means for the teacher. The repertoire is mostly focused on 20th and 21st century tonal music (Pop music and film music), as these are the usual choices and wishes most of my students have. Atonal or expressionist music is not part of this research project, as none of the participating students choose to play this repertoire. As explained in the theoretical framework, the autonomy of the pupils plays a significant role in internal motivation, therefore everyone was free to play pieces of their choice. The repertoire that is used in the final collection will be an overview of what my students wanted to play. It is not possible to generalize from these choices, as not everyone likes these particular pieces. However, a lot of pupils have similar wishes. Based on my experience, I felt there was a need and lack of strategies classical piano teachers could use if students had those modern repertoire wishes. Most of those pieces and songs are composed for orchestra or a different instrumentation, so there was the need for the teacher to transcribe the songs to a musical and technical adequate level. This research will be presented in a lecture recital, accompanying the repertoire with information about pedagogical insights. The exposition in the research catalogue will be accompanied by selected recordings, for instance videos of the application of the designed material within teaching settings. The relevance of this research project can be underpinned by the importance of autonomy in education, the increasing popularity of film music and pop music compared to the decline in enjoying classical music, and the therefore resulting lack of piano transcriptions of this music. In order to explain this in detail, I will summarize research outcomes from educational psychology and human movement sciences in the theoretical framework. This research contains a chapter about teaching strategies (chapter 8), because the approach of letting students choose their repertoire implies that certain teaching skills become more relevant. These topics are discussed in this chapter.

4. Theoretical Framework -Choice of repertoire/Autonomy

A variety of educational material is based on 17th, 18th and 19th century works. The consequences of piano educational material being mostly based on baroque, classical and romantic repertoire is that pop music, jazz music and film music (as well as other styles/periods) are underrepresented. But these styles/genres are important for many of my piano students in the past years, as they enjoy this music as well. Therefore, some piano students might not enjoy the "traditional" approaches and repertoire. This 20th and 21st century tonal music education approach aims towards offering a

modern, individual alternative for piano pedagogy, based on my student's goals and wishes for the piano lessons. Since adapting the lessons to the needs and wishes of my students, in chapter 7 I describe and analyze these. The repertoire also fits nowadays preferences of pupils.

The pieces my students choose play a central role in this research. Giving them the autonomy to choose repertoire is important because it enhances intrinsic motivation. Because of this student orientated approach, there is a need to design and develop individual material and practice guides. A lot of piano education is based on pedagogical repertoire such as etudes and finger studies, therefore this approach offers a modern alternative to the traditional 18th and 19th century approaches.

In the following, I am going to present 6 publications that underpin the idea of autonomy as a key factor towards motivation and education:

- John Hattie: "Visible Learning" (meta-analysis)

- Wulf & Lewthwaite: "The OPTIMAL Theory of Motor Learning"

- Deci & Ryan: "Self-Determination Theory"

- Paul Evans: "Motivation", in: "The Child as Musician" by Gary McPherson

- Susan Hallam: "Motivation to learn", in: "The Oxford Handbook of Music Psychology"

- Lamont & Greasley: "Musical preferences", in: The Oxford Handbook of Music Psychology"

The adjustment towards my students and their interest, wishes and goals is stated as an important factor influencing motivation in John Hattie's meta-analysis "Visible Learning":

"A key aspect in the discussion about motivation needs to relate to the purposes and goals, the learning intentions and challenges, and the personal strivings of students, as much as it needs to relate to the intrinsic properties of the task and who makes the demands... Dörnyei (2001) noted that motivation is highest when students are competent, have sufficient autonomy, set worthwhile goals, get feedback, and are affirmed by others...Students who take on personal responsibility for live events such as learning can be labeled internals, whereas those who consider learning are out of their hands are externals. The typical finding is that more internal beliefs are associated with academic achievement...

Certainly interest plays a part in choosing subjects and choosing to commit to expending effort, and, as Schiefele, Krapp, and Winteler (1992) discovered, interest is also related to achievement (d = 0.62)."[1]

Furthermore, the idea of autonomy is one of three key factors in "The OPTIMAL Theory of Motor Learning" (Wulf & Lewthwaite, 2016)[2] as well as in the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Deci and Ryan:

"The theory specifies that people have three basic psychological needs that are evolved rather than learned: the needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 2000)."[3]

According to Paul Evans, the subjective task value is a component of the expectancy-value theory of achievement motivation by Eccles (2005). The Subjective task value has four dimensions:

"1 Attainment value is the importance of doing well on a task. Tasks are perceived to be important when people view the task as being closely related to their sense of self...

2 Intrinsic interest value refers to the enjoyment one gains from a task. At a general level there appear to be core differences in intrinsic interest value that are relatively stable, that is, some individuals simply enjoy music activities more than others, perhaps based on personality or other relatively stable traits stemming from genetic differences or experiences of music learning early in life. At a more specific level, intrinsic interest can be influenced by educators varying the challenge level of tasks and the degree to which they arouse curiosity and provide opportunities for attaining competence. Intrinsic interest can be measured by asking questions such as, "Do you find learning music enjoyable?," "Is music practice very boring, or very interesting?," and "Do you like going to music lessons?"...

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1 Hattie, J. (2008). Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement. Routledge.

2 Wulf, G., & Lewthwaite, R. (2016). Optimizing performance through intrinsic motivation and attention for learning: The OPTIMAL theory of motor learning. Psychonomic bulletin & review, 23(5), 1382-1414.

3 Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2012). Self-determination theory.

3 Utility value is the degree to which a task is useful for attaining some future goal that is important to the self. For example, learning to play a musical instrument may be seen as useful if a child wishes to participate in an orchestra or aspires to become a professional musician...

4 Perceived cost is influenced by how much effort is required to participate in a task, anxiety or stress that will be induced by participating in a task, the mental effort required to sustain involvement, and social costs. In music this can range from the anxiety imposed by a performance in front of a large audience, to the social costs in missing out on lunchtimes in order to rehearse with the orchestra at school. [4]

The first two are particularly interesting, as they describe how different values/aspects ("task being closely related to their sense of self"; "enjoyment"; "arouse curiosity") can influence motivation. I try to emphasize these values within this research by autonomous repertoire decisions, in order to increase motivation.

Furthermore, Evans explains the importance of autonomy and the influence on motivation according to the SDT as follows:

"1 Cognitive Evaluation Theory: External motivators such as rewards and punishments do not add to already existing intrinsic motivation for tasks. Rather, external motivators undermine intrinsic motivation. For example, parents or teachers providing rewards for practicing or attaining new skills is theorized to undermine, not enhance, intrinsic motivation (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 2001)...

3 Basic Psychological Needs Theory: People are more psychologically adaptive and have enhanced well-being when their basic psychological needs are met. Music students who do not feel a sense of competence, relatedness, or autonomy will not be able to develop the more internalized forms of motivation outlined here (Evans, McPherson, and Davidson, 2012).

4 Goal Contents Theory: Goals themselves can be intrinsic or extrinsic in quality to the extent that they fulfill basic psychological needs. For example, the goal of attaining fame and notoriety is an extrinsic goal. It is less likely to help motivate effective practice than more intrinsic goals, such as the goal of learning an instrument for its own sake...

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4 McPherson, G. E., Davidson, J. W., & Evans, P. (2006). Playing an instrument. The child as musician: A handbook of musical development, 331-351.

The perception of autonomy is central to SDT. In music lessons, the fulfillment of the need for autonomy can occur through the things that parents and teachers say and do. Theoretical coverage of the concept of autonomy has been provided by Renwick and Reeve (2012), emphasizing recommendations for socializers involved in children's music education, summarized as follows:

1 Nurture inner motivational resources as much as possible by appealing to students' intrinsic interests in the music itself, creating a sense of challenge by providing material that is difficult but within reach, and explaining the reasons behind choosing learning tasks."[5]

Letting my students choose their repertoire and develop/design material that suits them is the key point of this research. As explained by Evans, autonomy influences intrinsic motivation, which should be enhanced more than extrinsic motivation. This idea is also supported by Susan Hallam:

"Where the environment satisfies individual needs and facilitates personal goals, motivation is likely to be enhanced... Evidence of the links between intrinsic motivation, self-determination and the use of self-regulating practicing strategies support this (Austin et al., 2006). When children can choose the repertoire that they learn, they practice with heightened attention, persistence and enhanced strategy use (Renwick and McPherson, 2002)... We know relatively little about how these cultural and societal factors mediate motivation to engage with music or the type of activity selected, although in the Western world, children's musical role models tend to be pop stars, typically vocalists. Emulating them is an aspiration held by many young people (Ivaldi and O'Neill, 2010)."[6]

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5 McPherson, G. E., Davidson, J. W., & Evans, P. (2006). Playing an instrument. The child as musician: A handbook of musical development, 331-351.

6 Hallam, S. (2009). Motivation to learn. The Oxford handbook of music psychology, 285-485.

The idea of using pop music and similar styles and genres when teaching children is underpinned by Lamont and Greasley:

"Preference for Sophisticated music such as blues and classical, which is complex and valued for its aesthetic qualities, was highest during adulthood, a time when individuals are concerned with establishing social status and career success (see also Bonneville-Roussy, 2014)."[7]

According to David J. Hargreaves, Adrian C. North, and Mark Tarrant, children at the age of 10 and 11 years prefer pop styles rather than classical styles:

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7 Greasley, A., & Lamont, A. (2016). Musical preferences. The Oxford handbook of music psychology, 2, 263-281.

Table 1 Summary of empirical studies of age differences in musical preference

	Participants	Music	Results
Rogers (1957)	635 grades 4, 7, 9, 12	"seriously classical," "popular classical," "dinner," "popular"	preference for classical > with age, diversity of preferences > between grades 4 and 12
Baumann (1960)	1410 12–20 y	range of styles within "art music," "popular," "traditional"	popular preference > with age, classical preference < with age
Taylor (1969)	800 8–11 y	paired excerpts of art music by composers from six historical periods	preference for twentieth-century composers > with age, for later baroque composers < with age
Meadows (1970)	982 grades 7–college students	30 excepts from 10 "popular" and "art music" styles	art music preference < with age
Greer, Dorow, & Randall (1974)	134 grades K–6	"top 20 rock" and "non-rock" styles, operant listening task	older Ps preferred "rock," becoming significant at grade 2
Bragg & Crozier (1974)	12 at each of 8–9, 14–15, 20+ y	random electronic stimuli at six complexity levels: studies I, II, III with different preference tasks	I older Ps preferred more complex on verbal rating scale task: II no age effect on paired comparison task: III no age effect on untimed task
Eisenstein (1979)	64 grades 2–6	Webern tone rows	younger Ps listened for longer than older
May (1985)	577 grades 1–3	24 pieces representing 9 generic styles including art music, popular music, non-Western music	overall preference > with age, decline for "rock" and "country" styles less than for other styles
Hargreaves and Castell (1987)	96, 16 in each of grades K, 2, 4, 6, 9, college	familiar/unfamiliar real melodies, near/far approximations to music	preference for approximations > with age; preference for real melodies suggest inverted-U preference function with age
Haack (1988)	108 25–54 y	pop song titles 1945–82: selection of "top 10 of all time"	preference for music popular in mid-20s
LeBlanc et al. (1988)	926 grades 3, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, college	24 trad. jazz pieces at different tempo levels	preferences summed over tempo levels: U-shaped curve with age
LeBlanc et al. (1993)	2262 6–91 y	"art music," trad. jazz, rock	preference > in adolescence, < in adulthood, > in old age

Table 1 (continued) Summary of empirical studies of age differences in musical preference

	Participants	Music	Results
Hargreaves, Comber, & Colley (1995)	278 grades 7, 11	ratings of 12 style category labels	overall liking > with age, especially for "serious" styles
Holbrook & Schindler (1989)	108 adults 16–86 y	preference ratings of 28 music examples from Billboard Top 100 1932–86	use of song-specific ages: inverted-U preference curve over age with peak at 23.5 years
North & Hargreaves (1995)	275 9–78 y	nominations of 30 most eminent pop artists 1955–94	general preference for artists from late adolescence/ early adulthood: The Beatles/Elvis nominated by all
Hargreaves & North (1999)	275 9–78 y	ratings of liking for self-nominated styles	liking for rock/pop styles > with age, for classical < with age: "cross over" in middle age?
Gembris & Schellberg (2003)	591 grades K–6	popular, classical, avant garde, ethnic	overall preference > with age: grade 1 most positive, grade 6 most negative, overall preference for pop
Kopiez & Lehmann (2008)	186 6–10 y	preference ratings of eight sound examples in five different styles	decline of "open-earedness" for "unconventional" styles: effect disappeared when "classical" was excluded
Muller et al. (2009)	238 Dutch 12–17, 18–22 and 23+ y	nominations of favorite three artists/bands and genre ratings at three points in time over 21 months	high turnover of favorite artists: general consistency in genre preferences
Nieminen et al. (2012)	38 6–7 y; 40 8–9 y	3 piano pieces: major, minor, free tonal	major piece preferred to minor, and also received higher happiness ratings: only 8–9s found minor pieces more sad than major
Hemming (2013)	473 6–86 y	25 examples from German top 10 1960–2008	follow-up to Holbrook & Schindler (1989): their inverted-U peak shifted to 17.36 years

HOW AND WHY DO MUSICAL PREFERENCES CHANGE IN CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE?

DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACHES: QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE STUDIES

"A closer look at Table 16.1 shows that with one or two exceptions, LeBlanc's generalizations receive general support. The "dip" in open-earedness in later childhood seems to occur at around the age of 10 or 11 years, and this typically shows itself in very strongly expressed preferences for a narrow range of pop styles, and strong general dislike for all other styles."[8]

One of the reasons for the preference of pop music and similar styles might be the connection between familiarity and liking:

"In terms of interactions between music and listener, arguably the most work has been conducted on the link between familiarity and liking for music (Dunn et al., 2012; Huron, Chapter 15, this volume; Greasley and Lamont, 2013; North and Hargreaves, 2008; Schubert, 2007, 2010; Schubert, North and Hargreaves, 2014; Teo et al., 2008). Early theories include 272 Musical Preferences Zajonc's (1968) mere exposure hypothesis which posited that the greater the exposure, the greater the liking, and Berlyne's (1971) psychobiological theory which stated that liking increases and decreases with familiarity in an inverted U shape, and numerous studies have provided support for these (see North and Hargreaves, 2008; Zajonc, 2001).

Familiarity also plays a central role in the preference for prototypes theory (cf. Martindale and Moore, 1988), which stipulates that stimuli (e.g., pieces of art or music) that are experienced more frequently (and therefore can be considered more prototypical) activate stronger mental representations than those experienced infrequently, and that preference is a positive function of the degree of prototypicality of the stimulus... More recent research has shown that familiarity accounts for a large percentage of the variance in preferences (Schubert, 2007, 2010; Teo et al., 2008); however, few studies have investigated changing levels of familiarity with preferred music."[9]

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8 Hargreaves, D. J., North, A. C., & Tarrant, M. (2015). How and why do musical preferences change in childhood and adolescence. The child as a musician: A handbook of musical development, 303-322.

9 Greasley, A., & Lamont, A. (2016). Musical preferences. The Oxford handbook of music psychology, 2, 263-281.

Developing material covering the 20th and 21st century includes the idea of implementing atonal music, twelve-tone technique, avant-garde and similar styles. In this master research, these styles are not part of the repertoire and material development. The reason is that none of my students wished to learn music that could be considered one of these styles.

A possible reason for the joy of tonal music can be the biological predisposition of human beings. Research by Zentner and Kagan (Perception of music by infants)[10] has shown that babies at the age of four months prefer consonant over dissonant melodies. This might be a possible cause why a majority of people enjoy tonal music as it is highly consonant, and a minority of people prefer atonal music as it is very dissonant.

Furthermore, I hope to increase the familiarity of the mentioned repertoire in music education through my master research project. From a teacher's perspective, I always find it interesting to design material based on a combination of research, practical application as well as my students wishes. As the past 150 years are the most recent, not much focus has been put on the repertoire and its use in piano pedagogy. I hope that my master research project can contribute to a more intensive use of this repertoire.

The last point I want to mention is the process of designing individualized material for my piano students. I hope that my ability to design high quality material will improve and I hope the material collection can inspire my piano teacher colleagues to develop material for their students.

To summarize the theoretical framework of this research, I want to state that autonomous repertoire choices are an approach towards a student-oriented piano education that tries to emphasize intrinsic motivation, enjoyment, relatedness, and fun. As a lot of young piano students want to play specific pieces (mostly pop music or film music from the 20th/21st century), I try to adjust my teaching approach towards their needs and goals.

Next, I will explain the methodology of this research.

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10 Zentner, M. R., & Kagan, J. (1996). Perception of music by infants. Nature, 383(6595), 29-29.

5. Research question

As summarized above, I felt the need to enable my students to choose repertoire more autonomously. Obviously, this increased emphasis on student-selected repertoire has important implications for the lessons I teach. Therefore, my research questions are:

- How to deal with autonomous repertoire choices by students in piano lessons?

Sub-questions:

- Which information is needed from the pupil? (hand size, age, experience among others)

- How to create tailor-made transcriptions and arrangements?

- Which information is needed from music?

- What are the teaching strategies needed in this approach?

(Harmonic structure, tempo, form, range of melody...)

6. Research methodology

6.1 Type of research:

In a broad context, my research can be described as qualitative research as it is aiming at non-numerical aspects that require description (for example the arrangement design). Furthermore, it can be described as a case study (or multiple case study), as I am designing   piano arrangements that are used in a real-life context (within my teaching activities). I am looking into how my students react to and work with the material I design based on their repertoire wishes and if I can observe similar phenomena.

As I am analyzing/developing/designing educational material for piano lessons, and looping the design/evaluate/redesign cycle, this approach can be described as producing research-based outcome. Furthermore, I hope to gain knowledge and experience in research-based design of educational material for piano (music) lessons.

First, I will receive repertoire wishes and suggestions by my students. How to incorporate this into (our) piano lessons and (their) daily practice is the problem I want to investigate. During the analysis, I will look into the criteria (difficulty, form, texture, harmonic structure) that the material needs to fulfill in order to be adequate for my students. Furthermore, I will investigate the similarities and differences between the pieces in order to see if useful generalizations/categories can be made. Based on this analysis, I am going to create the arrangements/transcriptions. These will be evaluated through observations.

How my students respond to the material will be the focus of the case studies (3 students). This part of the research is needed to make an in-depth analysis concerning the learning process and in order to develop individually appropriate material. Furthermore, the case studies will support the material design as I can show in detail how the developed approach can work for various repertoire and various students, and how other piano teachers can use this approach. The learning process of the case studies can illustrate similar phenomena in piano learning.

Case study research can be defined in numerous ways. Thomas A. Schwandt and Emily F. Gates describe a variety of those definitions in "The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research". Two of them are:

"In-depth study of a single unit (a relatively bounded phenomenon) where the scholar's aim is to elucidate features of a larger class of similar phenomena. (Gerring, 2004, p. 341)"

and

"A research approach that is used to generate an in-depth, multi-faceted understanding of a complex issue in its real-life context. (Crowe et al., 2011, p. 1)". [11]

Yin describes case study as follows:

"A case study is an empirical inquiry that

- Investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. (Yin 2009, page 18)" [12]

The question of how case studies are conducted is answered by Sarah Crowe et al in the BMC medical research methodology.[13] They define the following 5 stages:

1. Defining the case

2. Selecting the case(s)

3. Collecting and analyzing the data

4. Interpreting data

5. Reporting the findings

I am going to conduct the case studies as follows:

1: The first part is to define the case study that I want to conduct. The cases will be piano students (3 students) that I teach in Den Haag and Amsterdam, either at a music school, at the student's homes or at the Royal Conservatoire Den Haag, and that have chosen particular repertoire (20th and 21st century) they wish to learn. How I can help them to learn those pieces is the main question I have. (Time span of cases is explained in context)

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11 Schwandt, T. A., & Gates, E. F. (2017). Case study methodology. In The Sage handbook of qualitative research. SAGE Publishing.

12 Yin R.K. (2009). Case study research: design and methods Vol. 5. Sage.

13 Crowe, S., Cresswell, K., Robertson, A., Huby, G., Avery, A., & Sheikh, A. (2011). The case study approach. BMC medical research methodology. 11(1). 1-9.

2: The cases will be selected based on the level of playing. Beginner students as well as professionals (experts) or advanced students on the threshold to professionals usually require a particular approach that is different to the average intermediate player.

3: The data will be collected using the materials (transcriptions and arrangements), exercises, recordings and observations, interviews as well as review by experts and peers. (Data collection is described in detail on the next page)

4: After the data collection, the analysis and interpretation will be done by coding, rankings (1-6), review and expert review. In order to see if the approaches were useful/successful or not, I will include expert and peer review as well as surveys and interviews with the students.

5: The outcomes and findings are going to be written down for each student separately. How did they cope with the designed material? How fun / motivating was it to play repertoire they chose themselves? Did the designed materials have positive effects on the learning curve? How is the quality of learning and teaching?

6.2 Data collection:

The data will be analyzed by coding in one layer (colors). Therefore, I have created three categories:

Categories (blue, green, yellow)

-Autonomy and its relation to fun, motivation and development

-How did the lessons go?

-Adequacy of designed material (not sufficient – average - very effective)

The data (observation sheets, interviews, surveys, lesson recordings) will be analyzed and the colors will be applied to indicate the topic this data is about.

-Transcriptions / Arrangements

-Observations by video recording

-Interviews with students

-Characterization of students

The following data collection and analysis illustrates the three groups of topics by the use of three unique colors. If a question is marked green, it is mainly about gaining information about the adequacy of the designed material for instance.

-analysis of the designed materials

-observation and review of lesson recordings by at least 3 piano teachers (experts) in order to evaluate the created transcriptions (ratings from 1-6)

How did the lessons go? What can be improved?

-Interviews / surveys with students, parents and teachers :

Open question for teachers / experts : -Do you have suggestions or recommendations on how to improve the learning process / designed material?

Question for teachers / experts : -How would you rate the learning quality of this particular lesson in your opinion?

Questions for students:

-How fun / motivating was it to play repertoire / material that you chose?

-How satisfied are you with your piano playing development?

The interviews will be rather short (about 5-10 minutes, depending on how long the answers will be) and the interview sheets I designed will work as starting point for those semi-structured interviews. The interviews will be conducted with all participants of the case studies and at least one of their parents if underage, and with at least 2 expert piano teachers.

6.3 Data analysis:

Main questions:

- How is the impact on autonomy, motivation and fun?

- What exercises worked effectively?

- (How) can the designed / used material be improved?

The questions from the data collection will be rated on a scale from 1 (lowest) - 6 (highest) and for the open questions there will be the chance to answer in full sentences.

The open questions will be analyzed towards gaining information about how other teachers approach this topic and what recommendations they have for my individually designed material.

6.4 Context:

Royal Conservatoire of The Hague, academic year 2020/21 and 2021/22

The recordings for the observation and evaluation phases will be made using the camera of my phone (Huawei P20 lite).

Where: Most piano lessons will take place at the Royal Conservatoire of The Hague and at the home of my students, where they receive their piano lessons or at the piano school in Amsterdam where I teach (Pianolessen Amsterdam).

Instruments: Variety of concert grand pianos, upright pianos and e-pianos

Students: 3

In cooperation with my supervisors, we decided to limit the number as stated above.

Lesson length: 30, 45 or 60 minutes. The time span of piano lessons where the designed material is being used and the case studies are conducted is almost 20 months. It is anticipated that the time span is neither too long nor too short to have as much validity in the data as possible, however this depends on the individual students and is also influenced by the nature of educational case studies.

Teachers and experts:

- Current students of the Master IVLT at Royal Conservatoire of The Hague

- Faculty members at Royal Conservatoire of The Hague

Indicative time plan:

Concept and methodology planning, preparation and literature review (September-December 2020)

Exploration of repertoire together with my students (September 2020 - August 2021)

Analyze repertoire (March-August 2021)

Interview / Survey with teachers and students about repertoire, criteria and music education skills (May-December 2021)

Develop primary exercises/material (January-September 2021)

Discuss and analyze material with teachers and peers (May -December 2021)

Application of material in teaching placement and case studies (2020-2022)

Revision / Evaluation of material (2021)

Reapplication of revised material (2021-2022)

Possible cycles (2021-2022)

Create final revision and final material collection, presentation / lecture recital and thesis (January-May 2022)

7. Characterization of students

In order to create individualized arrangements and teaching approaches, I need to have certain information about each student. Therefore, I have created the following characterizations.

Lara

11 years old

She had piano lessons for a couple of years before she joined my class

Born in Turkey, then came to Netherlands -> she learned the fixed-do notation system first, then she learned ABC-notation when she came to Netherlands. After talking with Lara and trying out both systems, we discovered that she feels more comfortable with the fixed-do system, so we started using this again.

Particularly good aural and audiation skills.

Notation skills could be improved.

In the first lessons, after talking with Lara and observing the materials she had been working with her prior teachers, I had the impression that there has been a lot of emphasis on notation and technical skills like scales in the past. I also had the feeling that these topics did not motivate her a lot. So, my goal for her was to play a lot, make music together, and to get her into a positive circle of playing and practicing without too much emphasis on technical or theoretical topics. By doing this, my hope was to increase the fun in the lessons, and I was convinced that by playing a lot of music, the notation skills will come over time by playing and practicing a lot.

Lara had about 1 year of lessons with me. She wanted to learn the following pieces:

2 Themes from the movie "Pirates of the Caribbean"

Hedwigs theme from "Harry Potter"

"Pink Panther" theme

Yann Tiersens "Comptine d`un autre ete - l`apres-midi"

Grieg – In the hall of the Mountain King

Rondo alla Turca by Mozart

Emma

20 years

Born in the Netherlands

International Law student

Emma was my roommate in the first year of my Master studies. She was extremely interested in music, and when she had the opportunity to have piano lessons, she was excited about it.

Emma had little musical experience and could not read notes before she joined my class. She had Guitar lessons for a few months when she was about 10 years old.

After spending the first lessons on notation skills, which she learned fast within 3 lessons, we spent the rest of the 15 lessons learning the 2 songs she wanted to work on:

Yann Tiersens Comptine d`un autre ete - l`apres-midi and

Bohemian Rhapsody by Freddie Mercury.

Lisa

25 years old

Born in the Netherlands

Works in the cultural sector in Den Haag

She was my pedagogical student in the first year of my Master studies, assigned to me by the Royal Conservatoire The Hague.

No prior musical experience, no notation and reading skills.

As Lisa had no prior musical experience and difficulties learning notation in the first lessons, we decided on an approach using a lot of audiation and aural skill to learn the notes. She wanted to combine singing and playing piano, and her wish was to learn

Fallin by Alicia Keys.

8. Teaching strategies

This chapter touches upon the different teaching strategies needed for skills (Scales, chords, playing-by-ear) that become relevant when students are given the chance to choose their repertoire autonomous. The in-between steps on page 30 can also be used to learn chord structures with any piece or chord combination.

Chords:

- 1: First, with novice students we learn an arrangement of a piece that requires a one-voice melody accompanied by the root notes in the left hand. Therefore, each hand must play just one note. This approach has similarities to the two-part inventions by J.S.Bach.

- 2: Next, we can add the 3rd to the left hand to create a 3-voice arrangement. This step can be done in the same piece, or with another piece after focusing on step no.1 for a certain time.

- 3: Then, the full chord can be introduced (root note, 3rd and 5th). By this time, students can play four-voice patterns. If this step is applied to other pieces, pupils usually discover that the chords are remarkably similar, and they experience that those chords occur in most (popular) music.

- 4: With advanced pupils, it is possible to explore even more (7th chords or extended chords)

Scales

Practicing scales is another topic that is important for the teacher. There are multiple strategies to learn scales (by singing and audiation, or by the circle of fifths). One example is counting the full- and half-steps according to the major and minor scales (Major: Half-steps at position 3-4/7-8; Minor: Half-steps at position 2-3/5-6). Usually, scales with the tonality of white keys are easier to remember, as they require fewer black keys and therefore less movement of the hand. Therefore, we start with the "easiest" scales (C-major/a-minor) and work our way up to the more difficult scales (Ab-major for example).

Aural skills

Training auditory skills is the last part I want to mention. Body-percussion, rhythm-language (Takadimi for example) and sports activities (dancing; throwing a ball back and forth in a steady

pulse) can be used to explore and experience rhythms. Another game I like to play with my students is a little quiz where they must turn away from the piano, so they cannot see what I play. Then, I play a major or minor chord, and the pupils must guess (Does this sound happy or sad?). This can be a fun game for young students. By playing chords at high and low registers of the piano, I can increase the difficulty. For novice students, it can be beneficial to start in the melodic registers towards the middle of the keyboard. Another variation of this game can be played by finding single notes that I play while they have their eyes closed. A series of notes (melody) can be trained by playing easy patterns (broken chords; ascending or descending scales) and first asking broad questions: In which direction did the melody go? This approach is used in video no.3 with Lara, when introducing the Davy-Jones-Theme from "Pirates of the Caribbean". Of course, singing with students also contributes towards audiation.

Giving students the autonomy to choose their repertoire is a tool for me to increase fun, intrinsic motivation, and development, especially with novice students. But giving them autonomy in repertoire selection does not mean that I do not try to ensure that their repertoire knowledge grows over time. Here are some aspects that I want to mention:

- Sometimes, after playing several pieces of their choice, students say that they don't know what to play next and they ask me for an idea. This gives me the chance to introduce pieces from a range of periods, in order to enlarge their stylistic horizon, and let them choose based on my preselection. This way, I ensure I don't force them to play certain pieces, it is more a suggestion, and they still have the autonomy to choose or to request other pieces.

- Stylistic knowledge can also be built by listening to music, either at home or when I play pieces in our lessons, and we switch roles: The pupils have to be the teacher for a few minutes.

- Family and friends can also be involved to broaden the musical horizon.

One of the musicianship skills that is needed from the teacher is the ability to figure out melodies/chords from pieces by ear. Here is a strategy on how to improve this skill:

- First, I try to have a clear "inner hearing" of the note that I want to figure out in my mind. Usually, the start or end note of the melody can be such a point to focus on. Another way would be to focus on the root note of the tonic chord, or any other chord.

- The next step is to try to think about the most familiar piece I know. For me, this is the German children song "Alle meine Entchen" (All my little ducks).

Alle meine Entchen

Folksong, composer unknown. Arr.: Kevin Burg
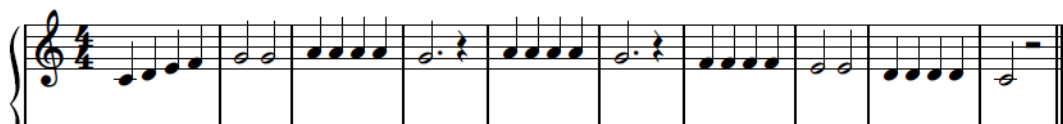
- As you can see, this piece in C major starts with the first 5 notes of the C major scale, and even goes up until the sixth note, before it descends back to the root. When having a clear inner hearing of this piece (or any other familiar piece), I am able to compare the notes of the C-major scale with the note that I want to figure out from the first step.

- If I am unlucky, the note I am looking for is a black note and I will not find it with this step. If so, I have to modulate the C-major scale in my mind to a c-minor scale. Then, I have 3 out of 5 black notes covered.

- If the last step does not lead to finding the note from the first step, the only two possibilities left are Db and Gb.

Of course, this approach is quite time-consuming. However, since I have been doing this for many years, I can figure out most notes in a few seconds. If trained consistently and over a long period of time, teachers and students can improve these skills.

9. Theoretical analysis and in-between steps of transcriptions I made

The basic idea of my transcription is to be able to play melodies in the right hand, accompanied by chords or root notes in the left hand to have a symbiosis of melody and harmony. Depending on the age, hand size, development of muscles, finger independence and prior experience, it is possible to play one, two, three or even more notes in the accompaniment, as full or broken chords (Alberti-Bass for example). By using this method, the students will learn chord structures by playing them and by muscle memory, without too much theoretical explanation needed. It is also a great preparatory exercise for learning harmonic functions and relations.

Pink Panther theme

arr. Kevin Burg

Example 1: Root note in left hand; particularly interesting for beginners as this approach is usually using one note per hand

Example 2: Root note and 3rd; In this example the students can start exploring double notes in one hand

Example 3: Full chords; Strength and finger independence is needed, therefore example 1 and 2 can work as preperatory exercises for example 3

Example 4: After the full chords are learned, they can be broken up in differet ways. In this example I am using the Alberti-Bass

30
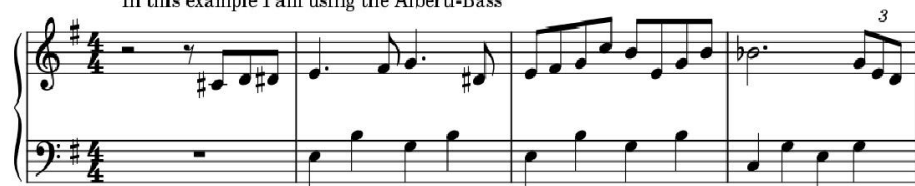
10. Observers

The purpose of including two observers that participate in this research was mainly for means of triangulation and therefore to support the validity of this thesis, by ensuring that the data is reviewed by multiple experts from the field of piano pedagogy. The tasks they had was to evaluate and assess the educational quality of the arrangements/transcriptions as well as the lesson recordings, and to give suggestions for further improvement. The observation sheet in the appendix shows the exact tasks.

The expert observers that participated in this research in order to ensure validity by triangulation are:

Bastiaan van der Waals

and

Pedro Jesús Baquedano Lobera

Bastiaan is my piano pedagogy teacher at the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague. He has a piano studio in Leiden and has experience with young students and the PI program at the Conservatoire. I have experienced Bastiaan as a highly competent piano teacher, especially in topics about student activation, student-oriented teaching as well as room for the students' needs and wishes. I think Bastiaan is very well informed about piano education theories and has a great overview over the research that has been carried out in piano pedagogy. His teaching style seems very progressive to me, that is why I think he is an optimal observer for the topic of this research.

Pedro is one of my peers in the Master studies in Instrumental and Vocal Learning and Teaching in The Hague. He has a lot of international experience due to his studies in piano performance in Spain and piano pedagogy in the Netherlands. I have experienced him as an extremely sensitive piano teacher, who has an eye for detail and is genuinely concerned about the well-being and development of his students. That is why he is the ideal addition to the team of observers.

I have also asked more people from the IVL&T program to participate as expert observers in this research in order to increase diversity, validity and collect more opinions. Unfortunately, I just found the two observers mentioned above.

11. Data analysis

Autonomy and its relation to fun, motivation and development

How did lessons go? (exercises, in-between steps and practice approaches)

Adequacy of designed material

Coding by colors, they indicate the topic.

Part 1: Survey with Emma (Student no.1)

• Experienced a lot autonomy (question 1 and 2)

• Lessons and content experienced as helpful (question 3)

• A lot of fun and motivation (question 4 and 5)

• "It helps if a piece is familiar"

--> argument for autonomous repertoire choice in question 7

• Own practice experienced as ok (4 out of 6 points in question 6)

• "I want to play just because I like a certain piece"

Part 1.2: Survey with Lisa (Student no.2)

• Experienced a lot autonomy (question 1 and 2)

• Lessons and content experienced as helpful (question 3)

• A lot of fun and motivation (question 4 and 5)

• Own practice experienced as ok (4 out of 6 points in question 6)

• Familiarity is experienced as important in repertoire choice

Part 2: Interview Lara and Mother

• Lara experiences a lot autonomy in repertoire choice, fun and motivation

• Lara points out that autonomy does not mean playing just familiar pieces, but her family, friends and piano teacher can give ideas and expand her horizon of repertoire knowledge

• Lara experiences the lesson content and exercises as helpful. She recognizes her development

• Mother thinks autonomous repertoire choices are a good idea, since the autonomy increases her interest in piano

• Mother likes the lessons and thinks that Lara has fun

• Mother says that Lara plays the piano very often now

Part 3: Expert observations (1)

• Experts: Bastiaan van der Waals and Pedro Jesús Baquedano Lobera

• Rating of adequacy of transcriptions (designed material): Good to very good (5.5 out of 6 points in question 1)

• Simplicity of transcriptions is once rated positive (easy to understand for the students) and once negative (could have more variety)

• Bastiaan points out the potential to learn explorative or aurally with the designed, notated material (use of audiation and notation)

• Pedro suggests more variety in the accompaniment of the "Pirates of the Caribbean" theme

Part 3: Expert observations (2)

Suggestions to further improve (Pedro question 2):

• Playing melody in octaves

• Chords in right hand

• More variety and challenge in left hand accompaniment

Suggestions to further improve (Bastiaan question 2):

• Stay closer to original notes of the pieces, as stated with examples in

the "Pink Panther theme"

Part 3: Expert observations (3)

• Lesson content experienced as effective (Pedro and Bastiaan question 3)

• Suggestions to make the homework and practice strategies more explicitly clear (Bastiaan question 3)

• Bastiaan describes various situations in which I use a variety of strategies such as exploration, modelling, task and dialogue

Summary

• Transcriptions experienced as adequate by students and experts

• Autonomy contributed to fun and motivation

• Development of students was very good

• Lesson content experienced as good by students

• Few suggestions for improvement from expert observations and interviews

In summary, the autonomous repertoire choices of the students contributed to their fun and motivation. Furthermore, the designed material and lesson content is experienced as adequate.

Additional thoughts about the data

• Both Lara and Emma rated the questions about their own practice lower than the questions about the material and lessons. This could be an indication that they wanted to be nice to me with their ratings, therefore I have to consider this aspect when looking at the results of the data analysis.

• It is also an indication that they are kind of strict assessing themselves. I experienced the practice of both as very consistent and effective. There is always room for improvement, however I would have rated them a little bit higher.

• Although I admire their strict self-assessment, I could work on confidence and work more with compliments

12. Conclusion

In conclusion, the surveys, interviews and observations as well as the analysis indicate that the participating students (Lara, Emma and Lisa) had a lot of fun in our piano lessons, and they think that the autonomy to choose self-selected repertoire played a certain role in their enjoyment and motivation. I also do think that they had a lot of fun, and I had a lot of fun in the lessons as well. I think the development of all three students is positive, and I was surprised how fast they all were learning. Furthermore, playing often together in the lessons played a central role as I think that making music together is a very relevant element of music lessons.

Another important outcome of this research concerns the teacher: When working with this kind of approach, it is relevant that certain general musical knowledge is incorporated in the lessons, that usually comes in the form of method books. As per definition, we do not work with method books in this research, therefore it is important to ensure some aspects are clear:

- Notation should not be forgotten: The teacher can use notation exercises from a method book, however I prefer to create my own exercises, tailor-made for the individual needs of my students

- Audiation plays a relevant role in teaching popular music styles, especially when students try to figure out the melodies and chords of certain pop-pieces by ear. It is also possible to use audiation in the beginning stages of piano lessons when the notation skills are not so far advanced yet.

- Rhythms in popular styles can be challenging. Tools to work with can be (body-)percussion and rhythm-language as well as dancing or other physical activity (playing with balls for instance).

- Chords and scales play a very dominant role in popular music compositions, therefore it can be helpful to work on them

The last point I want to mention is that I want to encourage all my piano teacher colleagues to include more repertoire in their lessons that is based on students wishes. This means that arrangements/transcriptions need to be designed, and certain musicianship skills like notation, audiation, scales and chords need to be taught with a strategy that supports the development and content.

13. Appendix

Star Wars

John Williams, arr. Kevin Burg
1977

# 3 Haselnüsse für Aschenbrödel

Davy Jones Theme - Pirates of the Carribbean

Hans Zimmer   arr. Kevin Burg

(2006)

Forrest

Soprano - arr. Kevin Burg

(2021)
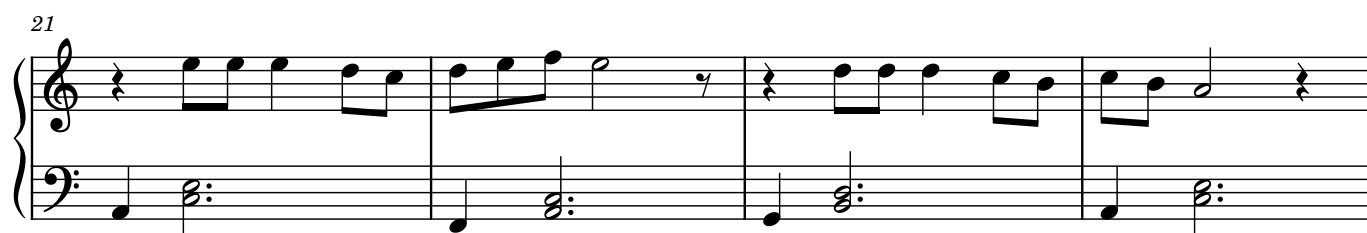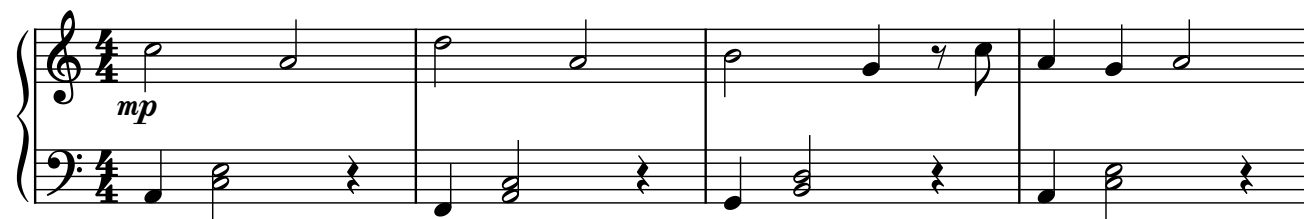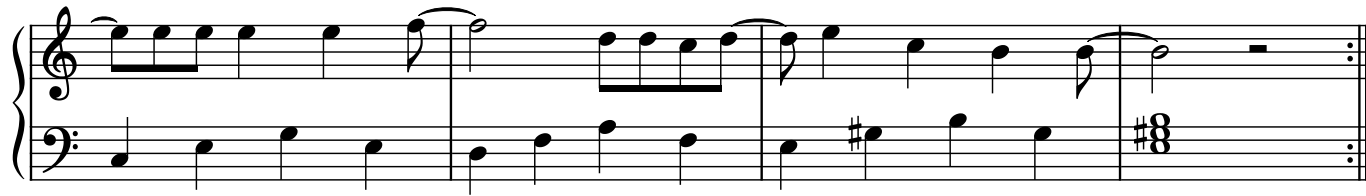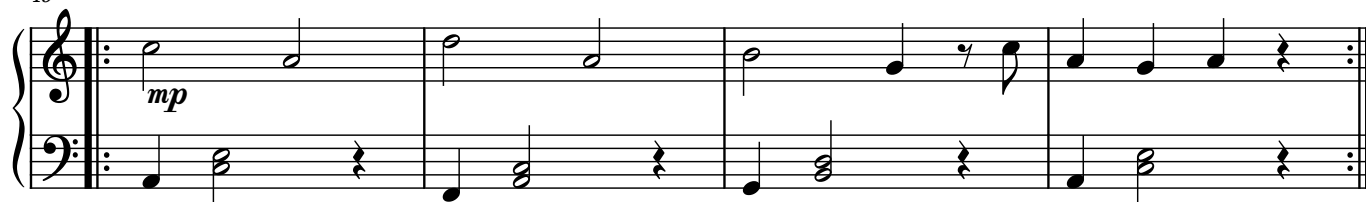
Harry Potter

Hedwig´s Theme

John Williams - arr. Kevin Burg
(2001)

Misterioso ♩. = 44

Jingle Bells
part 1

James Lord Pierpont -   arr.Kevin Burg
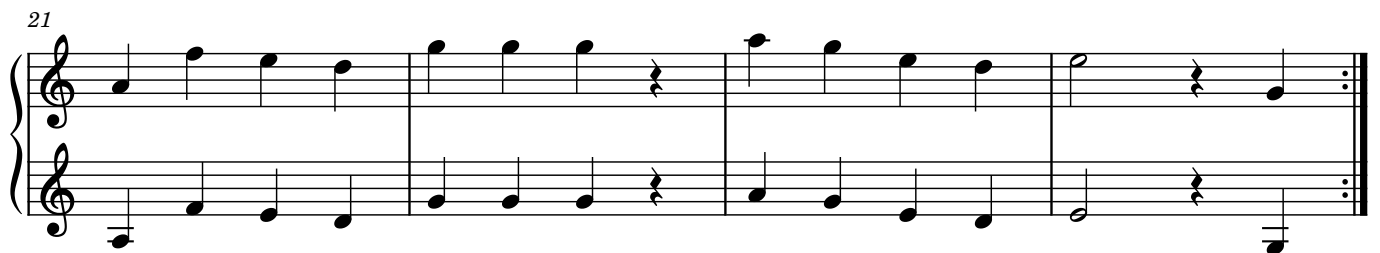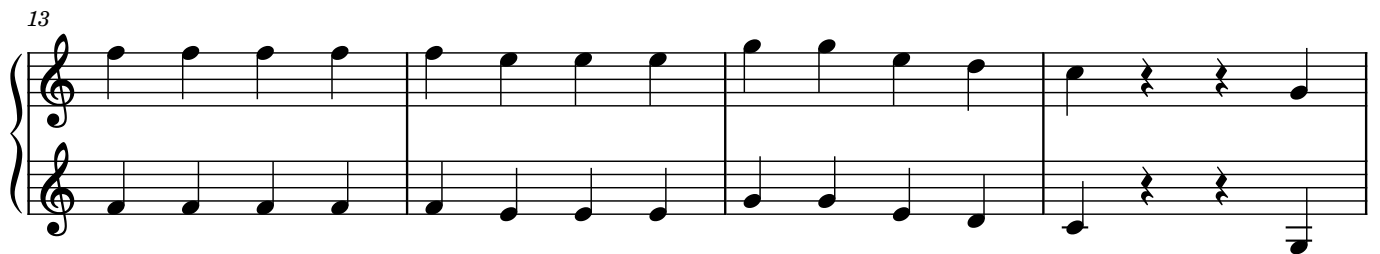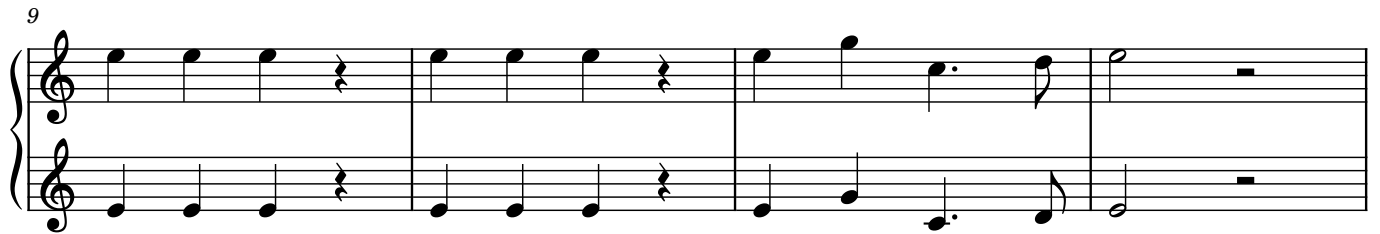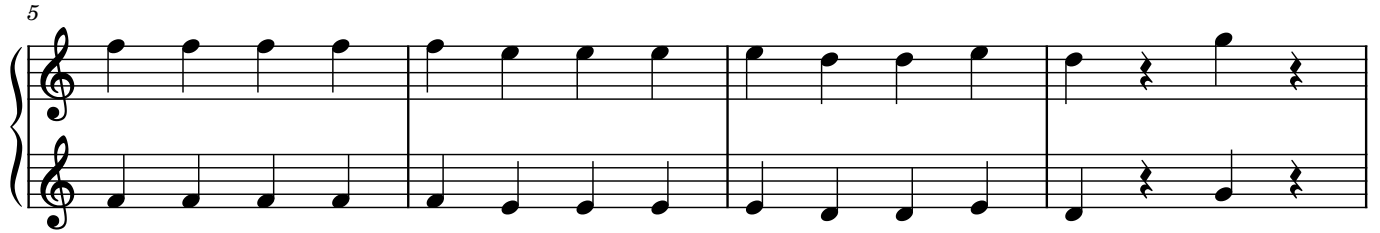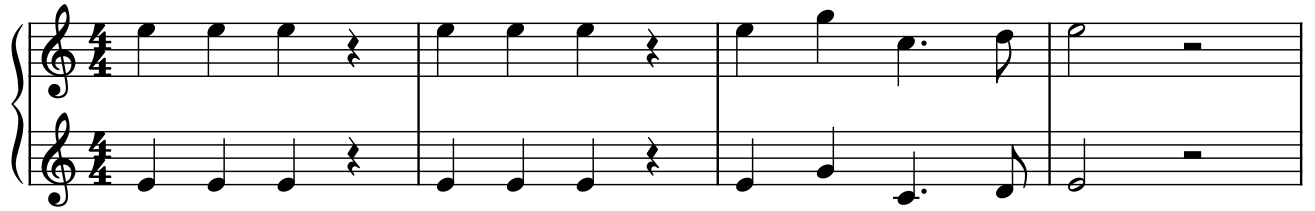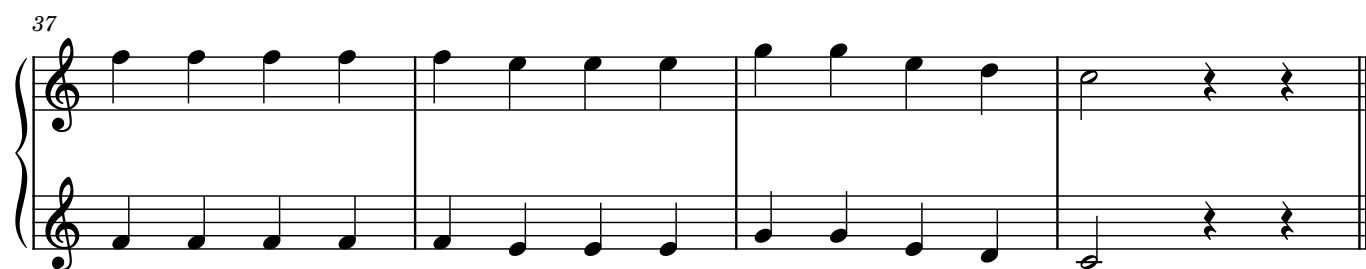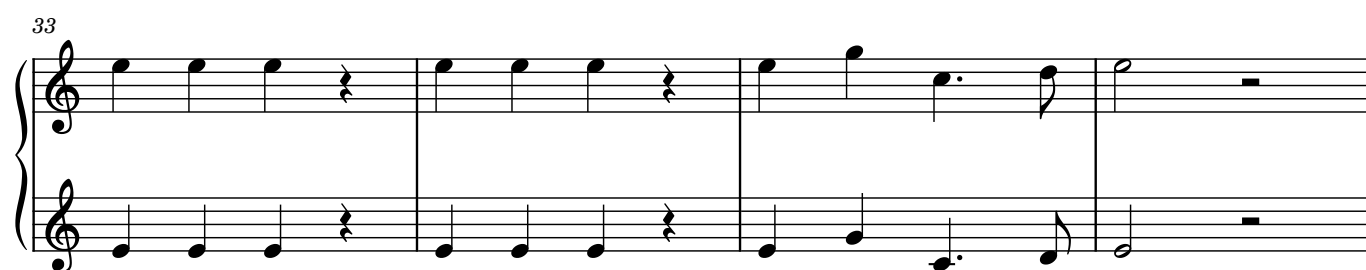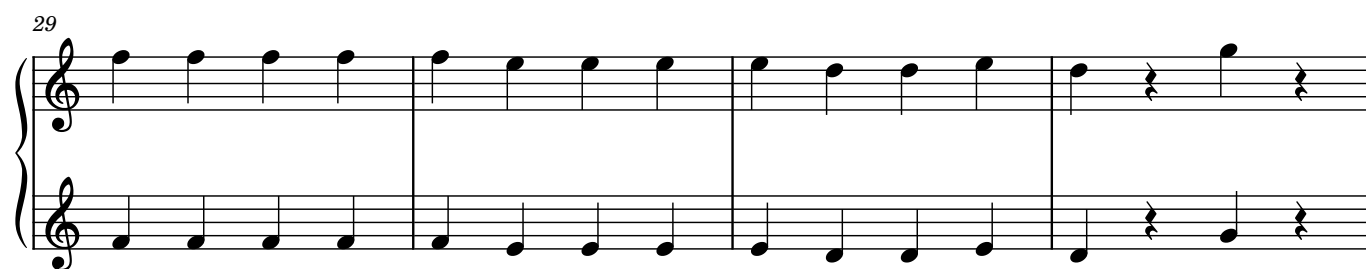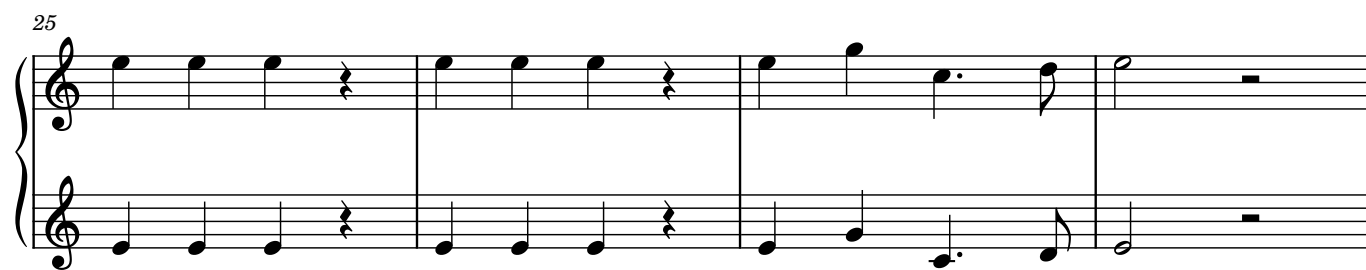
(1857)

Jingle Bells
part 2

James Lord Pierpont -   arr.Kevin Burg
(1857)

Pink Panther theme

Henri Mancini   -   arr. Kevin Burg
(1963)

Pirates of the Caribbean Theme

Hans Zimmer -

Arrangement: Kevin Burg
(2003)

Star Wars

John Williams, arr. Kevin Burg
(1977)

Titanic

My heart will go on, sung by Celine Dion

James Horner, arr. Kevin Burg
(1997)
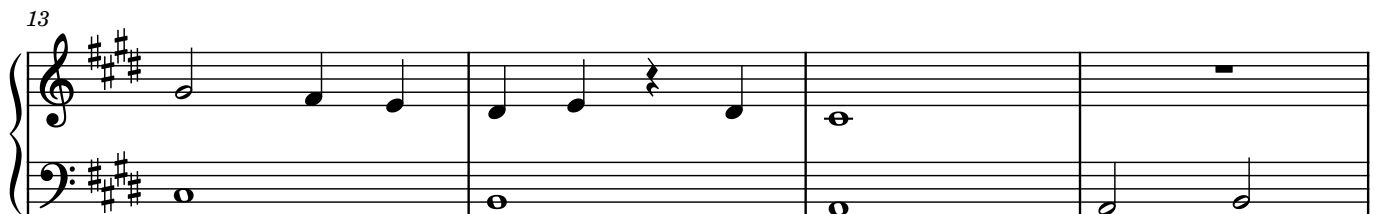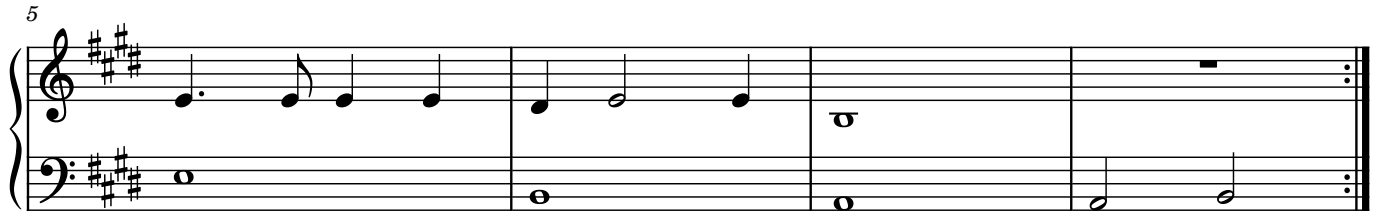
En feu

Soprano -   Arr. Kevin Burg
(2016)

Consent form piano lessons (Research Thesis)

To carry out a research thesis on individual piano lessons, video recordings of several lessons, surveys and short interviews will take place. To do this, we need your written approval.

Type and purpose
The video recordings will be made during your weekly piano lessons. The purpose of these recordings is to gather data on the development of the lesson and the interaction between teacher and student. A survey will be sent after the lesson to be filled in and a little discussion about the answers will take place shortly after with the researcher of the thesis.

Storage and distribution
The recordings will only be watched by people involved on the research (your teacher, field colleagues and research supervisors). The video recordings will be stored on our server until the researcher has formally completed his master thesis. After that, the recordings will be deleted.

Approval
For making this recordings, filling in the surveys and discussing the answers, we need your consent and therefore we kindly request you to sign the form and return it.
You can withdraw your approval at any time by sending an email to 3315673@koncon.nl

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Consent form piano lessons (Research Thesis)

3 responses

Publish analytics

I am   Copy

3 responses

- ● an adult pupil
- ● parent / legal guardian of an underage pupil

33.3%

66.7%
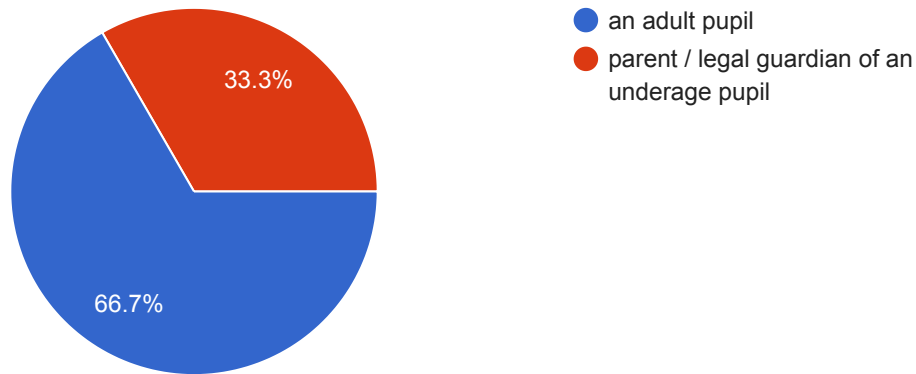
With this form I give consent for making video recordings of the lessons (please enter your first and last name)

2 responses

Lisa Prins

Emma Hoogland

please enter your email address

2 responses

Lisa.prins92@gmail.com

emmahoogland2000@gmail.com

I give consent for making video recordings of the lessons   Copy

2 responses

Yes
No

100%
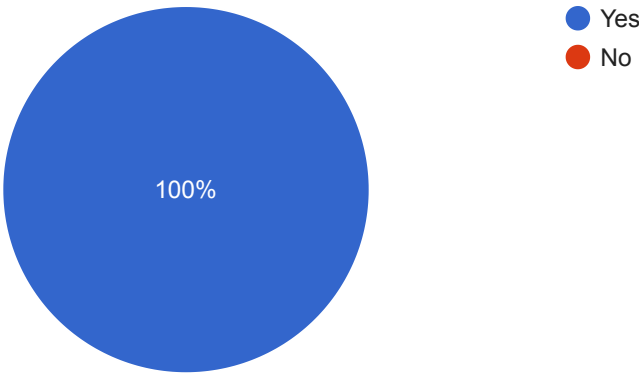
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1 response

Lara Evtimov

Please enter your first and last name

1 response

Nataliya Raycheva

Please enter your email address

1 response

nese_g78@hotmail.com

I give consent for making video recordings of the lessons   Copy

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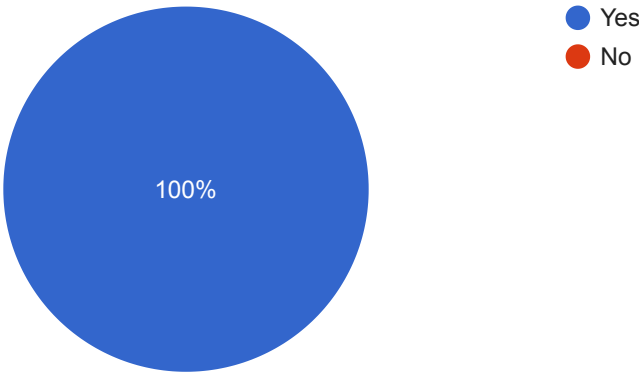
Yes
No

100%

Google Forms

13.3

Interview questions - Emma (student no.1)

This questions are going to be asked to my students to find out more insights about the piano lessons. They act as starting points to semi-structured interviews.

Email *

_____

To what extend did you experience freedom to choose pieces yourself?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
not much freedom	○	○	○	○	○	◉	a lot freedom

Why?

I could choose whatever was within my capacity

To what extend did you experience the content of the lessons to be adapted to what you wanted to learn?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Not much	○	○	○	○	○	◉	Very much

Why?

I wanted to learn how to play some specific pieces, and that is exactly what we did

To what extent did you experience the lessons and exercises to support your learning process of the pieces?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Not much	○	○	○	○	○	⦿	very much

Why?

The exercises were necessary in order to get the right technique to play the pieces wanted to play

How did the freedom / autonomy influence your fun ?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
not much fun	○	○	○	○	○	⦿	very much fun

Why?

I wanted to play pieces I liked and I could

How did the freedom / autonomy influence your motivation ?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
not much motivation	○	○	○	○	○	⦿	a lot motivation

How did the freedom / autonomy influence your practice?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
not much practice	○	○	○	◉	○	○	a lot practice

What are for you the most important aspects to choose a piece?

○ Difficulty

○ Atmosphere

○ Style

○ Popularity

○ Familiarity

◉ Other

Please also explain why

Probably a combination of the above, I want to play just because I like a certain piece, however, I am limited by my current capacity of what I can and cannot play. I mean I would like to play Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata 3rd movement but that is simply not gonna happen. It helps if a piece is familiar.

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Interview questions

This questions are going to be asked to my students to find out more insights about the piano lessons. They act as starting points to semi-structured interviews.

Email *

lisa.prins92@gmail.com

To what extend did you experience freedom to choose pieces yourself?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
not much freedom	○	○	○	○	◉	○	a lot freedom

Why?

Because I could give my preference and Kevin helped choose the most fitting song

To what extend did you experience the content of the lessons to be adapted to what you wanted to learn?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Not much	○	○	○	○	◉	○	Very much

Why?

Because I wanted to learn notes, and learn to sing while I play. Kevin helped out with all of thaf

To what extent did you experience the lessons and exercises to support your learning process of the pieces?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Not much	○	○	○	○	○	◉	very much

Why?

Very good, he really took me through the song step by step

How did the freedom / autonomy influence your fun ?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
not much fun	○	○	○	○	◉	○	very much fun

Why?

How did the freedom / autonomy influence your motivation ?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
not much motivation	○	○	○	○	○	◉	a lot motivation

How did the freedom / autonomy influence your practice?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
not much practice	○	○	○	◉	○	○	a lot practice

What are for you the most important aspects to choose a piece?

○ Difficulty

○ Atmosphere

○ Style

○ Popularity

◉ Familiarity

○ Other

Please also explain why

I wanted to play a song I am comfortable with

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Observation sheet for experts and peers   **(Pedro)**

This sheet is intended to find out more insights of my piano lessons and the materials used in it. In the beginning, you will receive transcriptions (in form of scores) and video recordings of a piano lesson, where this material is used.

Email *

3308278@koncon.nl

Do you think the material is adequate for the students needs? (Age, Level)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Not much	○	○	○	○	◉	○	Very much

please explain why

I think the material is an adaptation of the pieces that the student wants to play and they fit perfectly the level of the student. Nonetheless, I think that the Pirates of the Caribbean theme could add a little bit of rhythmical variety on the left hand throughout the piece.

Do you have recommendations how to improve or further develop the transcripts?

Playing melody in octaves, adding chords to the right hand, apart from the melody. Vary a little bit the accompaniment on the left hand, so that it is a little bit more challenging rhythmically.

Please comment on how effective the exercises, in-between steps or practice forms are (if applicable in the lesson)

I really like the way the exercises are constructed. First, you start with very simple indications or questions and little by little, when the student is more comfortable and gets to know the piece a little bit better, you then challenge her to reach the next step, always trying to use guided discovery methods (does it go up or down?/how many notes am I playing?) and explanation which constitute very effective teaching tools to achieve the goal of the lesson.

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Observation sheet for experts and peers

This sheet is intended to find out more insights of my piano lessons and the materials used in it. In the beginning, you will receive transcriptions (in form of scores) and video recordings of a piano lesson, where this material is used.

Email *

bastiaanvanderwaals@gmail.com

Do you think the material is adequate for the students needs? (Age, Level)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Not much	○	○	○	○	○	◉	Very much
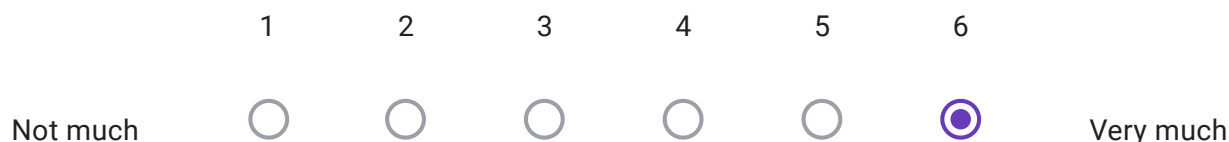
please explain why

Your transcriptions are very basic, in the sense that the left hand is in full chords in root position. This seems very useful to me, since it allows you to explore various accompaniment patterns that can be derived from it, like for example various rhythms and arpeggiated patterns. Your transcriptions do not contain too many expression marks, such as markings for dynamics and articulation. You only indicate the 'crucial' fingerings, that can be tricky to find. This implies that during the lesson, you work on these quality aspects mostly by means of modelling and/or active exploration by the pupil, rather than just pointing out that (for example) something must sound louder because it is written that way in the score. The learning process of performance qualities thus becomes more procedural ('learning by doing') and less declarative ('learning of facts'), which I experience as positive. The fact that your transcriptions just contain 'the basics' of the tunes (the melody, the chords in their simplest form, only the tricky fingerings and not too many expression marks) works well for Lara, in my view. She hardly watches the scores in the lesson and therefore applies your instructions successfully. She explores a wide range of accompaniments, which I feel is very valuable, as it stimulates her ability to coordinate musical layers (melody and accompaniment), which is a key skill in piano playing, and generally takes a lot of time and effort to develop.

Do you have recommendations how to improve or further develop the transcripts?

As for recommendations how to improve the transcriptions in the future, I have only one suggestion. Especially for pieces in Swing-time (like for example the Pink Panter theme), writing down the precise rhythm of the original version of the theme can be complicated. I completely agree with your choice to indicate the Swing-feel in the tempo markings, rather than trying to write it down literally by means of triplets or dotted rhythms. This allows readers to play in Swing-time intuitively, based on listening to the original tune, which enables them to take over the subtleties of swing-time that can be heard in expert performances, such as the original big-band version of the Pink Panter theme. My suggestion focuses on the notation of the triplets at the end of the 1st and 3rd phrases: I prefer to maintain the A at the beginning, so that the melody becomes AGEDE. Also, this series of notes starts a little earlier in the bar, namely on the second triplet of the 3rd beat, so that the final note comes just before the bar line. This way, your notation comes closer to the original big band version of the theme. There is also one spot in the transcription where the melody is different than in the original version, namely in bar 7 (in the second phrase): the 6th and 7th note of this bar are EG in your transcription, but GB in the original version. I have to say the EG also sound good, and can be found in other transcriptions as well, so there it is not a big deal. In general, my recommendation would be to stay as close as possible to original versions of themes in transcriptions, even if this means that the notation looks more complicated. Perhaps pupils cannot 'decipher' the notated rhythm without help, but if you make use of modelling and/or repeated listening to the original, they can generally do it.

Please comment on how effective the exercises, in-between steps or practice forms are (if applicable in the lesson)

In these five lessons, you often apply preparatory exercises and/or in-between steps. Also, you regularly discuss with pupils how to practice (parts of) their pieces, which usually implies using these same exercises at home as well. In my experience, you make use of these teaching strategies in a very effective way. In my view, these teaching strategies are extra important when your work on student-selected repertoire, since pupils typically choose challenging pieces, and the difficulties in pieces are not 'prepared' by instructions or exercises that can be found in regular methods. It is therefore up to the teacher to come up with relevant and helpful exercises and practice instructions in this type of lessons, and in my opinion you succeed at doing this. Here is a selection of exercises and/or practice instructions that I experienced as very relevant/helpful: •   You asked Lara and Lisa to come up with various ways of playing the same tricky passage, so that they can train their flexibility and achieve fluency in creative and non-repetitive ways •   You presented them with additional variations, in order to broaden their range of options • You challenged Lara to play a difficult passage with her eyes closed. After achieving this difficult challenge, surely playing it normally will become easier. This practice strategy can therefore be seen as a 'desirable difficulty' (a concept described by Robert Bjork) •   You asked Emma to play only the 'thumb melody' of the difficult passage in 16th notes in Amelie, which helped her to make the rhythm more smooth. This is an in-between step. In Emma's lesson, you explicitly gave her a homework assignment, namely to practice the difficult bit, making use of the in-between step she learned in the lesson. In Lara's lessons, I did not recognize moments in which you explicitly discussed what to do at home. Perhaps this took place outside of the recording. In general, I would recommend explicitly discussing (and generally also writing this down in a notebook) what to do in the coming week. This makes it even more likely that pupils will apply what they learned during the lesson in their own practice sessions.

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Google Forms

Data – Video recordings

Lara lesson 1

https://youtu.be/t3HqlD0et_A

Lara lesson 2

https://youtu.be/VBxBTMRO9Xs

Lara lesson 3

https://youtu.be/O_ItUkLxVPY

Emma lesson 1

https://youtu.be/jEO-ERJV6Z8

Lisa lesson 1

https://youtu.be/CDgauFOL-Zk

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