

**Basic piano instruction for vocal art students at the Tshwane
University of Technology in Pretoria, South Africa**

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SUMMARY

At most universities internationally, secondary piano instruction is compulsory for all music students regardless of their field of specialisation. Vocal art students studying at the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) are also expected to complete three years of basic piano tuition. Since the researcher teaches secondary piano at the Department of Performing Arts: Vocal Art (TUT), the aim of this study was to determine the objectives of the tuition, and appropriate methods through which they can be best achieved.

The research is based on an investigation of relevant literature on secondary piano instruction for music majors at universities in South Africa and abroad. Since the researcher was primarily trained to teach basic piano to very young beginners, it was thought necessary to firstly investigate the field of adult education and basic piano instruction for adults and college-age students. The results of the literature search confirmed that basic piano tuition for children differs greatly from that for older beginners. It became clear that the success of basic piano instruction for adults greatly depends on the teacher's understanding of these fundamental differences as well as knowledge of appropriate approaches and methods with which to accommodate adults' unique characteristics.

Subsequently, the purpose of teaching piano playing skills to non-piano music majors was investigated. Results indicated that there is a broad spectrum of skills which can aid the musician in his future career. These include technique, sight-reading, accompanying, harmonisation, transposing, repertory study, vocal score-reading and reduction, instrumental score reduction, improvisation, playing by ear, playing of folk songs, developing musicianship skills, critical listening, performance skills, chord playing, ensemble playing, realisation of figured bass, modulation, memorisation, music analysis, playing two or more parts from multiple staves, playing warm-up exercises, singing a vocal part while playing other parts, and jazz piano playing.

The most important piano playing skills for non-piano music majors to acquire were identified as technique, sight-reading, accompanying, repertory study and improvisation. Controversies exist about the importance of each of these skills, but most teachers agree that they should all be present in the secondary piano curriculum. The most common method used to teach these skills to instrumentalists and singers was identified as group tuition. This method of teaching is not used merely because it is more economical but also

for various musical and sociological reasons. Musical advantages include the acquisition of a broad spectrum of skills such as critical faculties, listening skills, ensemble activities, self-assessment skills, improved practice habits and progress, rhythmic stability, improved intonation, memory training and notational reading. Social advantages include interaction, peer-learning, motivation, encouragement, discovery-learning, enjoyment, involvement and the development of individuality and self-esteem.

At the end of each chapter, specific guidelines for teaching basic piano to vocal art students at TUT are given. The study culminates in conclusions and recommendations drawn from the results of the literature investigation.

KEYWORDS

Basic piano instruction

Secondary piano instruction

Adult piano instruction

Vocal art

Singers

Group piano instruction

Adult beginners

Basic piano for adults

Basic piano for students

Piano minors

OPSOMMING

By meeste buitelandse universiteite is sekondêre klavieronderrig verpligtend vir alle musiekstudente, ongeag hulle veld van spesialisering. Vokale kunsstudente wat aan die Tshwane Universiteit van Tegnologie (TUT) studeer, word ook verplig om drie jaar van basiese klavieronderrig te voltooi. Aangesien die navorser sekondêre klavier by die Departement van Uitvoerende Kuns: Vokale Kuns (TUT) onderrig, was die doel van hierdie studie om die spesifieke doelwitte en gepaste metodes waardeur hulle die beste bereik kan word, te bepaal.

Die navorsing is gebaseer op 'n ondersoek van relevante literatuur oor sekondêre klavieronderrig aan musiekstudente by universiteite in Suid-Afrika en die buiteland. Aangesien die navorser hoofsaaklik opgelei is om basiese klavier aan baie jong beginners te onderrig, is dit belangrik geag om eerstens die velde van volwasse onderrig en basiese klavieronderrig aan volwassenes en universiteits-ouderdom studente te ondersoek. Die resultate van die literatuurstudie het bevestig dat basiese klavieronderrig aan kinders baie verskill van dié aan ouer beginners. Dit het duidelik geword dat die sukses van basiese klavieronderrig vir volwassenes grootliks afhanklik is van die onderwyser se begrip van hierdie fundamentele verskille, so wel as kennis van gepaste benaderings en metodes om die volwassene se unieke eienskappe te akkomodeer.

Gevolgtrek is die doel van klavieronderrig aan nie-klavier musiekstudente ondersoek. Resultate het gewys dat daar 'n wye spektrum van vaardighede is wat die musikant kan aanleer om hom in sy toekomstige loopbaan te help. Hierdie funksionele vaardighede sluit in tegniek, bladlees, begeleiding, harmonisering, transposisie, repertoriumstudie, vokale partituur-lees en redusering, instrumentale partituur redusering, improvisasie, speel op gehoor, die speel van volksliedere, ontwikkeling van toonkunsenaarskapsvaardighede, kritiese luistervaardighede, uitvoeringsvaardighede, akkoordspel, ensemble-spel, realisering van besyferde bas, modulاسie, memorisering, musiekanalise, die speel van twee of meer parte vanaf meervoudige sisteme, speel van opwarmingsoefeninge, die sing van een vokale part terwyl die ander parte gespeel word, en jazz-klavierspel.

Essensiële vaardighede wat nie-klavier musiekstudente moet bemeester, is geïdentifiseer as tegniek, bladleesvaardighede, begeleidingsvaardighede, repertoriumstudie en improvisasie. Twispunte bestaan aangaande die belangrikheid van elk van hierdie

vaardighede, maar meeste onderwysers stem saam dat almal in die sekondêre klavierkurrikulum teenwoordig moet wees. Die mees algemene metode wat gebruik word om hierdie vaardighede aan instrumentaliste en sangers te onderrig, is geïdentifiseer as groepsonderrig. Hierdie metode van onderrig word nie net gebruik oor die ekonomiese voordele daarvan nie, maar ook vir talle musikale en sosiologiese redes. Musikale voordele sluit in die bemeestering van 'n wye spektrum van vaardighede soos kritiese vermoëns, luistervaardighede, ensemble-aktiwitiete, self-evalueringsvaardighede, verbeterde oefengewoontes en vordering, ritmiese stabiliteit, verbeterde intonasie, geheue-opleiding en die lees van notasie. Die sosiologiese voordele sluit in interaksie, portuur-leer, motivering, aanmoediging, ontdekkingsleer, genot, betrokkenheid en die ontwikkeling van individualiteit en selfbeeld.

Aan die einde van elke hoofstuk word spesifieke riglyne vir die onderrig van basiese klavier aan vokale kunsstudente by TUT gespesifiseer. Die studie sluit af met gevolgtrekkings en voorstelle wat afgelei is uit die resultate van die literatuurstudie.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and context

Most musicians start their music education and training as children. Since the singer's instrument is part of his physical body, his voice develops with age and therefore formal voice training usually starts in the teen years or in early adulthood. It is therefore possible for someone with a passion for music and a talent for singing to start their music education at a much later age than an instrumentalist. In South Africa, there are countless young and adult musicians with no formal music education due to their social and financial circumstances. Consequently, there are many singers who look to the tertiary institution to provide them with a basic music education.

At most universities, in South Africa and the rest of the world, prior practical and theoretical music tuition is a prerequisite for tertiary-level music studies. An exception is the Department of Performing Arts: Vocal Art at Tshwane University of Technology (TUT). As the department only trains singers, there are no minimum music education prerequisites for entry. Prospective students are selected through an audition and an interview. Consequently, the majority of students enrolling at TUT for Vocal Art have received little or no formal music training. The course itself therefore provides the students' basic music education.

Thirty years ago, Bastien (1977:315)¹ stated that at most music schools piano tuition forms part of the complete music programme for all music majors regardless of their specialisation. Christensen (2003:3) found that current practices and trends in tertiary music education still regard the acquisition of functional piano playing skills as a crucial part of every music student's education. The literature gives clearly defined reasons for the importance of basic piano instruction for non-piano music majors. One of the reasons is offered by Benson (2000:2) when she states that:

One of the many goals for group piano students is to teach them to become independent learners at the keyboard...that they can continue to develop functional skills or learn new music on their own.

Price (2001:3) further illuminates the purpose of secondary piano instruction through the following remarks:

¹ Please note that some sources were published up to 30 or 35 years ago. These sources are not, however, outdated as the fundamental issues which they address are still relevant.

Being able to apply learned skills to another foreign instrument is a measure of how well one really understands the basics of the musical craft...Secondary instrumental study can make students more marketable in the employment arena...Through keyboard study, students can fully experience and apply the knowledge learned in music theory classes at the keyboard thereby fully understanding the concept and, most importantly, making it work for themselves...students gain practical skills that have direct impact on their ability to function in their chosen career field...The keyboard is the medium for practical applications of comprehensive music skills.

Consequently, piano instruction is part of every vocal art student's curriculum in the first, second and third year. Since voice is the student's first instrument, piano is taught as a secondary or minor practical subject. This type of piano instruction is often referred to as 'secondary piano' and the students are referred to as 'piano minors'. Until 2002, secondary piano at TUT was taught individually for half an hour per week. Thereafter, due to financial and time constraints, it was decided to teach basic piano in groups. The new curriculum for instructing secondary piano in groups at TUT was developed and implemented by myself.

Taylor (1976:8) eloquently describes the importance of a well developed curriculum and method of teaching secondary piano to non-piano music majors:

Whether the music major pursues a career as a performer, conductor or teacher, how well he understands the concepts relating to the playing characteristics of the piano will play a significant role in determining his eventual success. Since this portion of the music major curriculum is so vital, it is the responsibility of every preparational institution to discover the best way to attain these objectives.

I was therefore compelled to investigate the curriculum and method through which singers are instructed in basic piano at other tertiary institutions.

1.2 Statement of the research question

My training as a music teacher and my experience in teaching basic piano had been restricted to the young beginner. I therefore developed a curriculum and method with much the same approach and objectives in mind as for a young pianist. After two years of applying the same methodology to teaching technique, repertory and sight-reading as I would to a young beginner, questions arose regarding the method and curriculum. As repertor for the vocal art students, I also noticed that they still could not learn their singing repertory independently by using the piano. The following main research question therefore arose:

- How can vocal art students be successfully instructed in basic piano at the Tshwane University of Technology?

In order to structure the main question into manageable research elements, the following sub-questions were asked:

- What are the specific characteristics of adult and college-age students which influence the learning process?
- What are the differences between basic piano instruction for adults as opposed to that for children?
- Which piano playing skills are essential for vocal art students to acquire?
- Are these skills generally most successfully instructed through the method of individual or group tuition?

1.3 Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to investigate current relevant literature on teaching basic piano to singers in South Africa and abroad, thereby establishing which functional piano playing skills they are learning, and if possible, the methods and curriculum by which this is best achieved. Arising from this literature study, guidelines toward best-practice in the teaching of basic piano playing skills to vocal art students at TUT are provided.

1.4 Research methodology

This study is primarily based on existing relevant literature in the discipline of basic piano instruction. It is a non-empirical investigation, applying the research methodology of a literature review (Mouton 2001:175, 179).² Utilising Mouton's (2001:179) definition of a literature review, this study will provide an overview of scholarship in the discipline of basic piano instruction for non-piano music majors through an analysis of current trends and debates. It can therefore be described as a critical literature review of relevant sources which includes academic books, articles in journals, dissertations and websites (Bak 2004:25; Mouton 2001:179,180). A search for existing relevant literature was conducted through discipline-related online databases (Mouton 2001:89), for example

² Leedy (1997) was consulted but no references to the source will appear because he focuses mainly on qualitative and quantitative research.

JSTOR, SACat, RILM, EBSCO, WorldCat and Google Scholar. The selected sources were consequently downloaded or loaned from the relevant libraries where it is located.

In order to locate the study within the field of basic piano instruction for non-piano music majors, the target group is described as adults. Through regular personal contact with the group, it is evident that it consists of both traditional college-age and adult students between the ages of 18 and 38. As previously mentioned, my methods of and approach to teaching basic piano had been developed with the young beginner in mind. This required therefore widening the focus of the literature study to an in-depth investigation of current literature in the field of adult education and basic piano instruction for adults. Scholarship in the field of general education and piano instruction for adults is analysed in order to identify and summarise the differences between basic piano instruction for adults as opposed to that for children.

The secondary nature of basic piano instruction for vocal art students guides the literature search toward a thorough investigation of secondary piano instruction for singers in South Africa and abroad. Research studies and articles on basic piano instruction for non-piano music majors are extensively investigated in order to:

- Identify and describe the purpose of secondary piano instruction for singers;
- Determine and outline the specific functional piano playing skills that singers need to acquire;
- Conclude whether secondary piano tuition is generally most successfully carried out through individual or group tuition.

1.5 Literature investigation

As previously mentioned, this study is primarily based on a literature review. Sources consulted can be clustered into those relating to:

- Adult and college-age students;
- Basic piano instruction for adults;
- The secondary piano curriculum and teaching method;
- Group piano instruction.

The first area of investigation is the education of adult and college-age students. The characteristics of and the differences between young adult and adult students will be summarised from the studies by Beder and Darkenwald (1982), Roelfs (1975) and Kasworm (1980). Cranton (1989) provides a good summary of existing adult education theories and methods of teaching. Secondly, basic piano instruction for adults will be investigated. Teaching basic piano to adults and students of average university age requires a very different approach from that used in teaching children (Schutte 2002:91; Thompson 1982:44; Johnson 1986:20). Le Roux (1990:x) states that adult students have physical and psychological characteristics that need to be addressed by the teacher, and that some of these are an advantage and some a disadvantage in acquiring piano playing skills.

Mackworth-Young (1990:73) indicates that even though piano teachers are conscious of psychological and emotional factors influencing education, there has been too little research and discussion about the influence of these factors. Studies which aimed to address the specific characteristics of adults in music education, for example Myers (1986) on age and music learning, and Cooper (1996) on adults' perceptions of their piano lessons, will be investigated. Subsequently, information more specifically concerned with basic piano instruction for adults will be gathered from articles written by experts in the field over the last 40 years, for example Den Boer (1969), Farrand (1976), Ozanian (1979), Thompson (1982), Arrau (1983), Gay (1983), Gerrish (1986), Johnson (1986), Orlofsky and Smith (1997) and Graessle (2000).³

The third area of investigation is basic piano instruction for non-piano music majors. Studies by Exline (1976), Tollefson (2001:2), Beres and Johnson (cited in Sisterhen 2007a:4-5) and McWhirter (cited in Sisterhen 2007b:2) investigated the secondary piano curriculum. These studies explore the relative importance of different functional piano playing skills and the degree to which music educators use them on a daily basis. Two main sources deal directly with the purpose and objectives of secondary piano instruction for non-piano music majors, *Das Klavier als Pflichtinstrument* edited by Müller-Bech &

³ As previously mentioned, the basic principles discussed in the sources dating back more than ten years are still relevant. References to these sources were repeatedly found in studies and articles younger than ten years and thus the researcher was compelled to investigate these primary sources and include them in this study. Extensive searches for current literature on adult piano instruction and secondary piano instruction were done over the last four years. The absence of sources younger than ten years emphasises the urgent need for new research in this discipline.

Vetter (1975)⁴ and the electronic journal *Piano Pedagogy Forum* (1999-2007). The majority of the authors who contributed to these two important sources are actively involved in the design and implementation of the secondary piano courses at their respective colleges and universities. These authors not only provide essential information on the functional piano playing skills that piano minors are being taught, but also on the methods by which it is being successfully achieved.

Studies on secondary piano teaching methods were conducted by Goltz (1975), Pounds (1975), Taylor (1976), Lancaster (1978), Jackson (1980), Thompson (1983), Stevens (1989), Sturm (cited in Betts 2003)⁵, Mackworth-Young (1990) and Kim (2001). These studies investigated different teaching methods, the factors influencing music learning, student- versus teacher-directed lessons, the concept of peer-learning, the effectiveness of group instruction and instructors, and the effect of group size on the success of basic piano instruction. A preliminary literature search established that basic piano tuition for non-piano music majors is most commonly carried out in groups (Price 1998; Pearsall 1999; Benson 2000; Christensen 2003; Sisterhen 2007a). Therefore, literature on the method of teaching basic piano in groups will be comprehensively studied. The preceding authors as well as McLachlan (1994), Coertzen (1995), Lyman (1999), Gray (2000), Coats (2000), Reist (2002) and Betts (2003) all discuss aspects of and guidelines for successful piano instruction in groups.

Research by Hunter (1973), Kou (1985), Le Roux (1990), Schutte (2002) and Daniels (2002) address both the secondary piano curriculum and method of teaching.

The literature survey ends with proposals about what should be taken into account when revisiting the curriculum and method of teaching basic piano to vocal art students at TUT.

⁴ This source is a compilation of papers presented at a conference on secondary piano instruction for piano minors. Since the original articles were published in this source, consequent references will be made to the respective authors and not to the editor.

⁵ Betts reports on a presentation by Sturm involving video excerpts of American Group Piano Pioneers. Sturm's (Arrau 1990) study on the *Classroom behavior of exemplary group piano teachers in American colleges and universities* were also consulted but the information in Betts' article was found to be more useful in providing relevant information and practical guidelines. Therefore, this study only includes secondary references to Sturm.

2. THE ADULT AND COLLEGE-AGE STUDENT

It has become a more common phenomenon for adult students to enrol for fulltime studies at universities. Many of these students did not previously have access to tertiary studies due to social, financial and other circumstances (Schutte 2002:1). As mentioned previously, students enrolling for voice studies in the Tshwane University of Technology's (TUT) Department of Performing Arts: Vocal Art do not need any previous music education for entry; only a practical audition and an interview are compulsory. This absence of any specific prerequisites regarding former music education creates an opportunity for talented singers from diverse backgrounds to embark on music studies at TUT. As a result the Vocal Art student group consists of both traditional college-age and adult students between the ages of 18 and 38.⁶ Paganini (1977:69) states that secondary piano instruction is generally basic instruction for adults, or young people who see themselves as adults.

2.1 Characteristics of the adult and college-age student

Very few studies have been done to determine if there are significant differences between the characteristics and learning preferences of pre-adult and adult students. Knowles (1980:24) states that adults can be defined in physiological, legal, social and psychological terms. Physiologically, the ability to reproduce can define one as an adult, although the significance of this differs from era to era, culture to culture and individual to individual. The legal age at which one can for example vote, drive and purchase alcohol also differs from society to society. More appropriate guidelines for educational purposes are therefore social and psychological definitions. According to Knowles, an adult can socially be defined as someone who performs an adult role, such as worker, spouse, parent, responsible citizen or soldier. Psychological definitions are determined by a person's self-concept, for example does he⁷ perceive himself as an adult who takes responsibility for his own life. Knowles also states that it is possible for younger people to adopt adult-like responsibilities because of economic and social circumstances, and therefore take more responsibility for their own lives than their peers.

⁶ A note of interest: In South Africa, the ANC Youth League includes all ANC members of 36 years and younger. Therefore it can be said that, in South Africa, the term 'Youth' includes persons up to the age of 36.

⁷ For the practical convenience thereof, all references to the third person will be made in the male form.

Beder and Darkenwald (1982:142) define an adult as a person of 16 years and older, not enrolled for a full-time course in school or college, who has assumed characteristics of adult status, for example work, marriage or parenthood. A pre-adult is defined as a person other than an adult, including full-time college students of traditional college-age. Roelfs (1975:2) and Kasworm (1980:30) distinguish between younger and older college students, the latter being defined as 22 years of age and older. According to Kasworm (1980:30), American colleges and universities have historically focused their curriculum and institutional mission on the younger adult between 16 and 25 years of age. She states that the education of the older adult has mainly been restricted to study with the purpose of gaining access to higher education.

The study by Beder and Darkenwald (1982:143), which investigated the differences between teaching adults and pre-adults, identified no specific teaching behaviours that might be expected to vary with student age; their study suggest that instructors do not approach these two groups very differently, and found that most teachers emphasise learner-centred behaviour rather than controlling and structuring behaviour when teaching adults, as opposed to pre-adults.

Roelfs (1975:2-4) determined that the learning preferences of adults and pre-adults differ greatly. She states that older college students have different counselling needs and instructional preferences to traditional college-age students. She found that adults generally prefer instructor-centred instruction, while pre-adults prefer student-centred instruction. In student-centred instruction, the course content is designed in collaboration with the students, informal discussions rather than texts or assignments constitute class content, and topics of student interest receive priority above programme content.

Roelfs (1975:4) however identified two distinct types of preferences among younger students:

- Those who prefer more responsibility for their own academic progress, above the demands of specific course requirements as determined by the teacher, even if it requires more work;
- Those who prefer a mixture of self-reliance and dependence, wanting the course structured according to their desires but with additional availability of out-of-class help from teachers and peers.

Kasworm (1980:40) found that older students' preferences lean toward theoretical problems and to the use of logical, analytical and critical problem-solving techniques. She states that younger students prefer aesthetic stimulation and introspection. Adult students are generally more task-oriented, motivated, psychologically mature, pragmatic and self-directed than pre-adults, and tend to have more positive attitudes toward education and clearer educational goals (Beder en Darkenwald 1982:142; Roelfs 1975:3). Roelfs (1975:4) states that older students carry less academic load, experience fewer academic problems and are more motivated, but need more encouragement toward higher aspirations. She found that students older than 30 years of age feel six times more satisfied with instruction and generally spend more time studying than those under 22.

According to Kasworm (1980:40), adult students generally display the following characteristics: self-confidence, independence, an overall sense of well-being, minimal fears and anxieties when entering the new academic and social environment, and positive attitudes of social and emotional adjustments. She states that older students show a greater sensitivity for other people's opinion toward themselves as well as a desire to achieve success for their own sake as much as for the people close to them. They also display continued growth in their capabilities and awareness thereof. In Kasworm's opinion, adults have had a greater exposure to life, rich experiences, opportunities and career role models, and therefore have greater capacity for delayed gratification and decision-making. They have to provide emotional and financial support for their families, cope with constant demands on their time, such as work, family, community and study responsibilities, and therefore they identify with many different roles and constantly renew their self-identity.

Roelfs (1975:3-4) indicates that college-age students (younger adults) feel unchallenged more easily but also often seek academic counselling because they feel that they are underachieving. They are more uncertain about their programme choice and possible future careers. Younger students, she writes, have more problems with understanding instructors and keeping up with the workload. In every age group, dissatisfaction with classes is related to the academic load (number of classes being taken) and the length of time on campus (the heavier the load, and the further along in college, the more dissatisfaction is voiced).

Kasworm (1980:40-43) found that younger students are sensitive to environmental stimuli, take pleasure in new situations and ideas and have a higher tolerance for dealing with complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty. They have the desire to convey impulses promptly,

and try to find fulfilment through attentive consideration or explicit action. She states that the younger adult is a quasi-dependant being with limited emotional and financial responsibilities toward family, and the majority of his time is therefore focused on academic activities. The college-age student displays a high identification with his student role, is still seeking out a personal identity, and has limited awareness of his own capabilities.

According to Kasworm (1980:43), younger adults have had limited life experiences and minimal exposure to career role models for future behaviour and aspirations. Other characteristics are minimal self-confidence, a developing sense of maturity, impulse or short-term decision-making, limited exposure to learning strategies, unknown readiness to learn (passive learner role), limited history of self-directed learning, and minimal analytical and critical problem-solving skills. The younger adult faces general anxiety as he enters the new academic environment with its diverse social and intellectual activities. Kasworm observes that pre-adults view their entry into undergraduate studies as an extension of their compulsory high school education, and therefore often display erratic and unfocused involvement. She finds that younger and older adults are similar in autonomy, religious orientation, practical outlook, thinking introversion (reflective thought and interest in academic activities), and commitment in learning and academic involvement.

From the preceding discussion, it is evident that adults and pre-adults display many varied and complex characteristics and cannot merely be defined according to age. The ideal approach toward categorising students as either adults or pre-adults would be to evaluate them according to their individual social and psychological characteristics. According to Cranton (1989:1-3), audience analysis is a valuable tool that can be utilised to gather relevant information from the students. Through this process, learner characteristics such as age, work experience, social responsibilities, educational experience, special needs, interests and reasons for involvement in the instruction can be gathered. This information aids the teacher in establishing an appropriate teaching approach for every student.

Cranton (1989:14-17) indicates that an audience analysis can be done formally or informally through questionnaires or discussions. The two key aspects of this analysis are audience description and entry behaviours. According to Cranton, audience description involves aspects such as mother tongue, educational background, age or age range as well as prior knowledge of and experience with the subject. These descriptions will help to determine the level of curriculum content, as well as the methods, materials and sequencing of instruction. She states that additional information on unusual

characteristics, such as emotional and physical handicaps, which could influence the learning and environmental setting can also be included. She emphasises that it is only necessary to analyse characteristics relevant to the instructional situation. Entry behaviours, she states, are the knowledge, skills and abilities with which the learners enter the educational setting as well as the prerequisites needed to ensure effective instruction and success. She recommends that the required entry behaviours of the university, or department, should not overlook obvious or simple aspects such as verbal expression and comprehension. Cranton indicates that formal assessments of prerequisites are often done through pre-testing.

Here the suggestions of Schutte (2002:164, 169) for the Certificate course at the University of Stellenbosch are also applicable for secondary piano instruction at TUT. She suggests that at the beginning of the year students complete an information sheet as well as an aptitude test, which will aid the teacher in deciding on methods and materials for the subject. Information can be gathered on issues such as why the students chose the study field, how familiar they are with it, what their attitude toward it is, as well as learning preferences, musical potential, individual differences and possible learning problems.

Cranton (1989:12-13) describes the complex task undertaken by Brundage and Mackeracher⁸ who analysed, synthesised, integrated and summarised the voluminous research and writings on adult learning into 36 learning principles and their implications for planning instruction. Some of these principles are:

- Adults enter learning activities with their self-concept and self-esteem based on past experiences and on their interpretation and validation thereof;
- When the adult's representation and interpretation of his own experiences are valued, acknowledged and respected as being essential for change and potentially a resource, learning is facilitated;
- Past experiences create stability and confidence to learn, as well as instability when the meanings, values, skills and strategies of those experiences are changed or challenged. This may lead to a loss of confidence and possible withdrawal from the process.
- When the individual's personal problems are the focus of learning, solutions should come from his values, expectations, resources and skills, and be congruent with personal meanings, strategies and life-style;

⁸ The original source is currently unavailable.

- Transforming previous experiences demands more time and energy than other types of learning, as well as a raised consciousness;
- Adults learn best at their own pace rather than under time constraints, but compensate by more efficient learning strategies;
- Adults learn best when they are healthy, rested and not stressed;
- Every individual has his own learning and cognitive style that is effective in some situations and ineffective in others.

In conclusion it is evident that:

- The characteristics of pre-adults and adults differ greatly, and therefore these two groups can in all probability not be most effectively instructed through the same approach and method;
- Teachers instructing college students generally do not distinguish between younger and older students in their class approach;
- Instructors who do differentiate in their approach toward these two groups tend to be more learner-centred in their approach toward adults and older students;
- Generally, adults prefer teacher-centred instruction and younger students prefer learner-centred instruction.

In order to establish which method of teaching would be most appropriate for vocal art students at TUT, existing adult education theories and their implications for programme design are now investigated.

2.2 Programme design for adult learners

In the light of the previous discussion, it is clear that instruction for younger and older adults should be planned very carefully. This section aims to give a concise overview of theories on adult education, as well as discuss the assumptions and implications of these theories on programme design for adult learners.

2.2.1 An adult education theory

Cranton (1989:5) states that “no unified theory of instruction for adult learners exists”. According to Cranton (1989:10), the differences between individuals, and the ways in which they learn, are too great to expect any one theory on adult education to operate as

law. The practitioner and researcher should therefore continually reflect on, analyse and question the work that has been done on adult education. She points out that Knowles' writings (1978, 1980, 1984) have been the strongest influence on adult education and have guided researchers and practitioners for the previous 20 to 30 years. On investigating Knowles's writings, it is interesting to find that a combination of circumstances brought him to his theory on adult education.

Knowles' (1984:1-3) college training was geared toward a vocation in the U.S. Foreign Service, but on completion of his studies in 1935 there were no available positions within the service. In order to provide for his new wife and possible family, he accepted the post of director of related training at the National Youth Administration (NYA) in Massachusetts. This was the start of his more than fifty years of experience with and career in adult education. The two educators who most influenced his thinking on adult education were Eduard C. Lindeman and Dorothy Hewitt. Lindeman's book, *The Meaning of Adult Education* (1926), made Knowles conscious of the need for a different approach in teaching techniques and methods when confronted with the adult learner's unique characteristics. Dorothy Hewitt's book, co-authored with Kirtley Marther, *Adult Education: A Dynamic for Democracy* (1937), became Knowles' manual on designing and managing adult education programmes. Knowles states that these two pioneers recognised aspects about adult education only recently verified by research.

From 1960 to 1974, while working at Boston University, Knowles (1984:5-6) developed his theory on adult education. It was only in 1967 that he discovered that European adult educators had a term for what he was discovering and teaching about adult learning, namely andragogy - "the art and science of helping adults learn" (Knowles 1984:6). At first, he regarded andragogy and pedagogy as tools for adult and child education respectively, but soon discovered that, depending on subject matter and circumstances, both models have their place in all education. Teachers from elementary and higher education institutions found success in applying an andragogical model in youth education, while adult educators found that in certain circumstances – especially when teaching basic skills – the pedagogical model delivered greater success.

Between 1960 and 1980, research by adult educators and various aspects of the social sciences all contributed to the development of a theory on adult education. Clinical psychologists and psychiatrists made discoveries about behavioural change; developmental psychologists discovered that the transitions from one stage of life to the next (which occur continuously throughout youth and adulthood) trigger readiness to

learn; social psychologists studied the effects of the environment on learning; and sociologists explained how institutional policies and procedures influence learning (Knowles 1984:6-7). Cross (1981:228) raises critical ideas about andragogy as a “theory”. She points out that the contrast between pedagogy and andragogy is difficult to maintain and that andragogy is a theory of education, offering guidance to teachers in general, rather than of adult education. She asks whether andragogy leads to researchable questions which will advance knowledge in adult education. Knowles (1984:8) states that he regards andragogy as a “system of concepts” which describes “assumptions, principles and strategies” on adult learning, and which does not exclude the concepts of pedagogy.

It will be useful at this point to investigate the definitions of, and differences between, pedagogy and andragogy, in order to further establish their role in adult education.

2.2.2 Definitions of pedagogy and andragogy

According to Van Rensburg, Kilian and Landman (1979:332-333), pedagogy can either be used as a synonym for education, or refer to “scientifically refined, post-scientific education”. The term can also refer to “the reconstitution of the original educative occurrence in the mind of the pedagogician”. A pedagogician is an “educational scientist”, not to be confused with the term pedagogue which refers to an educator. Van Rensburg, Kilian and Landman (1979:257) define the concept of education as follows:

Education is the practice – the educator’s (pedagogue’s) concern in assisting the child on his way to adulthood. Education may then be defined as a conscious, purposive intervention by an adult in the life of a non-adult to bring him to intellectual independence. Bearing in mind that education is the positive influencing of a non-adult by an adult, with the specific purpose of effecting changes of significant value. It is therefore a purposive act, designed to guide the child’s humanization on a determined course, with an educand co-operating in full acceptance of his mentor’s guidance. The final issue cannot be scientifically determined or guaranteed, nor can education go on indefinitely. As the educand shows himself progressively amenable to decide for himself and to accept responsibility for autonomous choice, the educator removes himself more and more from the scene of action, leaving his charge to do things on his own.

Pedagogy therefore implies adult-to-child education, where the adult is the educator and the child the educand.

Van Rensburg, Kilian and Landman (1979:220-221) state that andragogy is synonymous with agogics, agology, and andragogics. The term andragogics is defined as “a level or mode of the agogic sciences”. Translated from Greek, the word is divided into two: “aner” - meaning man or adult, and “agogos” – meaning “leader, or attendant”, which results in

the following definition – “attending (leading), accompanying the adult”. It can be regarded as “the science of mutual adult leading (accompaniment)”. Andragogy thus refers to an educational setting where both the educator and the educand are adults.

From these definitions, it seems obvious that contrary to Cross’ criticism there is a palpable difference between pedagogy and andragogy. Pedagogy refers to the educational leading of a child by an adult (adult-to-child), whereas andragogy refers to an adult-to-adult relationship in the educational setting. The characteristic differences between adults and children result in the need for different educational approaches, methods and materials. These differences, and the effects thereof on the educational setting, can only be successfully determined through research, and therefore, andragogy should lead to researchable questions which will advance knowledge in adult education.

Knowles (1978:53) states that the teachers of ancient times - for example Lao Tse, Confucius, Jesus, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Euclid, Cicero and Quintilian - were all adult educators who made assumptions about the learning process very similar to andragogy. They taught their students through the processes of discovery, dialogue and experiential learning. With the fall of Rome and the formalisation of child education by the monastic schools in the Middle Ages, these procedures of education was labelled ‘pagan’ and forbidden. Knowles (1978:53) states that “The teaching monks based their instruction on assumptions about what would be required to control the development of these children into obedient, faithful, and efficient servants of the church”. These monks established the processes and procedures of education which later became known as pedagogy, and which was applied in European and American secular schools. Even though pedagogy literally means “the art and science of teaching children” (Knowles 1978:53) adults have since then been taught according to the same model as children, for all the ancient wisdom of adult education was forgotten.

Knowles (1978:31) points out that Lindeman “did not dichotomize adult versus youth education, but rather adult versus ‘conventional’ education, thus implying that youth might learn better, too, when their needs and interests, life situations, experiences, self-concepts and individual differences are taken into account.” He agrees with this approach which differentiates between the assumptions about learners and learning in the two different models of pedagogy and andragogy, and believes that “the assumptions of andragogy apply to children and youth as they mature, and that they, too, will come to be taught more and more andragogically” (Knowles 1978:54). Below, the assumptions inherent in the pedagogical and andragogical models are investigated.

2.2.3 Assumptions inherent in the pedagogical and andragogical models

According to Knowles (1984:8-9), the assumptions inherent in the pedagogical model are:

- The learner is a dependent personality and the responsibility for ‘what’ should be learned and ‘how’ it should be learned lies completely with the teacher;
- The learner’s experiences are not a valuable resource; the only resources of value are the teacher’s, the textbook writer’s and the audiovisual aid producer’s. These resources are presented to the learner through transmission techniques which include lectures, readings and audiovisual material.
- Readiness to learn is a product of age and therefore the institution decides what a student is equipped to learn;
- Learners are subject-oriented and it is the responsibility of the teacher to divide the subject matter into logical and sequential units of learning;
- Motivation to learn is developed through external factors, for example pressure from teachers and parents, grades and the consequences of failure.

Knowles (1978:56-59; 1984:9-12) describes the assumptions inherent to the andragogical model as follows:

- The learner is self-directing. “The psychological definition of an adult is ‘One who has arrived at a self-concept of being responsible for one’s own life, of being self-directing.’” (Knowles 1984:9). Adults have the desire to be self-directed learners, but are conditioned through their previous pedagogical learning experiences to be dependent learners. They therefore need to be guided from dependence to self-directed learning. If his desire for self-direction is ignored, the adult learner will experience tension between the learning situation and his self-concept, which might result in resistance and resentment.
- Adults enter the learning situation with a great wealth of life experiences which become a rich resource for fellow students. Therefore, the andragogical model includes learning techniques such as group discussions, simulation exercises, laboratory experiences, field experiences and problem-solving projects. The adult’s experiences are part of his identity and should therefore be utilised with care; when these experiences are denied or rejected, the person himself feels denied and/or rejected.

- Adults want to learn when they discover that, in order to function more effectively in a specific area of their life, they need to learn. This need to learn can be a natural product of a new development in their life, or it can be induced by exposure to role models, career planning or planned diagnostic experiences which establish their shortfalls.
- Once adults have discovered their need to learn, they enter the learning situation with the expectation of learning a certain skill, solve a certain problem or improve their quality of life. Learning experiences must therefore be structured around life-application categories rather than subject matters.
- Adults are strongly motivated by internal factors such as self-esteem, recognition, better quality of life, greater self-confidence and self-actualisation.

Knowles (1984:12-13) suggests that, in choosing which model to use, it is important to take all aspects of learner characteristics and previous experiences into consideration. When entering a totally new environment for which the student has absolutely no frame of reference, the assumption that the student is dependent on the teacher's didactic instructions for learning is most likely correct, and therefore the pedagogical approach will be more appropriate. Indeed, even children enter the learning situation with experiences that may enable them to be self-directed learners in certain situations. This can be most clearly observed at home, away from the formal educational setting, where children are predominantly self-directed learners. Children are also taught more effectively once they have discovered their need to know, instead of being forced to learn, and are much more intrinsically motivated than is commonly believed.

According to Knowles (1980:19), the main difference between pedagogy and andragogy can be described as a shift in the purpose of education from 'teaching to learning'. Previously the purpose of education was to create 'educated people' who would become good, responsible and productive members of society. This was a realistic view in a relatively stable and slowly developing era, but with the knowledge explosion and technological revolution the need for 'competent people' emerged. 'Competent people' can be defined as those individuals who can apply their knowledge under changing circumstances, and are capable of lifelong self-directed learning. Knowles states that "in a world of accelerating change learning must be a lifelong process" (Knowles 1980:19). Education therefore needs to focus more on "developing the skills of inquiry" (Knowles 1980:19) and equipping adults with the support and resources for self-directed learning.

According to Knowles, during the 1970s and 1980s this developing need for competent people resulted in competency-based education.

The assumptions of pedagogy and andragogy have direct implications for programme design for adult learning. These implications will be further investigated.

2.2.4 Implications of assumptions of pedagogy and andragogy for programme design

Knowles (1984:13-14) states that the pedagogical model is content-driven and that the teacher needs to answer four basic questions:

- What content needs to be covered?
- How can this content be best divided into units?
- How can these units be most logically sequenced (as determined by the subject matter and not the student's readiness to learn)?
- How can the content be most effectively transmitted?

In contrast to the pedagogical model, the andragogical model is process driven, and the teacher's first consideration is the design and management of the methods through which the student will acquire the content. The andragogue has a tremendous responsibility to introduce the adult student to all resources available which will contribute toward his process of self-directed learning: peers, specialists in different fields, knowledgeable community members, material and media resources, and opportunities for field experiences (Knowles 1984:14).

According to Knowles (1984:14-19), the andragogical process design consists of seven elements:

i) Climate setting

This includes both the physical environment and psychological atmosphere. Knowles prefers an informal setting, with chairs and tables in a circle, as well as colourful and cheerful decor. In his opinion, the traditional rows of tables with the lecturer in front, enforces the pedagogical tradition of one-way communication. A psychological environment favourable to learning includes:

- a) mutual respect: when students feel rejected or undervalued, their energy goes toward dealing with the emotion instead of learning;
- b) collaborativeness: the pedagogical approach has conditioned students to perceive peers as competitors rather than sources for learning, and it is therefore important to establish an atmosphere of sharing;
- c) mutual trust: the traditional pedagogue is perceived as one who dictates and judges, and therefore the andragogue needs to establish a climate of trust between him and his students;
- d) supportiveness: support creates better opportunities for learning than judgment or fear; the teacher needs to establish his role of helper and also teach the students how to support one another;
- e) openness and authenticity: through the example of the teacher this attitude will create an atmosphere in which the students will be more willing to challenge their own preconceptions and behaviour;
- f) pleasure: the journey toward self-discovery and self-actualisation should be exciting, satisfying and definitely not dull;
- g) humanness: treating students as human beings aligns with the psychological elements that contribute to a positive learning environment, and includes issues such as proper lighting and ventilation, comfortable furniture, lunch breaks, availability of refreshments and designated smoking and non-smoking areas.

ii) Involving learners in mutual planning

Knowles (1980:48) states that “human beings tend to feel committed to a decision (or an activity) to the extent that they have participated in making it (or planning it)”. Learners can be involved in a planning committee where the teacher provides optional activities and the students discuss their preferences.

iii) Involving participants in diagnosing their own needs for learning

Students can be supplied with a list of competencies which reflect personal needs as well as needs prescribed by the organisation and/or society. The list serves as a self-evaluation tool to determine each learner’s needs.

iv) Involving learners in formulating their learning objectives

Learners need guidance in translating their needs into clearly defined learning goals. The teacher must help them to describe the desired behaviour or improvement in ability that they want to achieve.

v) Involving learners in designing learning plans

Guidance is provided to establish the best possible way to utilise all available resources and strategies, which will enable the student to reach his learning objectives.

vi) Helping learners carry out their learning plans

Learners also need to specify which outcomes will prove that they have reached their learning objectives.

vii) Involving learners in evaluating their learning

In andragogy, learners are involved in choosing methods of assessment (how the learning outcomes will be judged or validated) in order to determine whether they have successfully carried out their learning plans, and how much progress they have made toward their educational goals.

Knowles (1980:45) notes that children in the pre-primary and early primary school years are often more involved in planning and executing their learning activities than they are in later years. The older students become, the more responsibility for their education is transferred to the teacher. According to Knowles, teenagers, especially, develop the need to take more responsibility for their lives and often rebel against the adult world when none is given to them. He (Knowles 1980:45) states that “The tragedy is that in our culture the adult world tends to hold onto its concept of the child as a dependent personality until the last possible moment”. Knowles hopes that in future a more andragogical approach will be incorporated into the education of children and youth, since they, too, experience new life phases which result in the need for immediate learning and application. Knowles (1980:58) states that students of all ages should learn ‘how to learn’, and youth education, especially, should be geared toward developing adults “who are capable of engaging in a lifelong process of continuing self-development”.

As mentioned before, the previous exposure of the adult to a pedagogical teaching model necessitates that all adult education programmes incorporate exercises which prepare the adult for self-directed learning (Knowles 1980:45-46). Knowles states that when the adult discovers his inherent need and capability to take responsibility for his education, he becomes liberated and excited. He (Knowles 1978:123-124) gives an example of such an exercise: firstly, he explains and discusses the difference between, what he calls, proactive and reactive learning (being a dependent versus a self-directed learner); secondly, he divides the students into groups of four or five, and guides them to discover what resources they hold for each other (the secondary aim is to establish a working relationship between students instead of between learning subjects and material); thirdly, a mini-project involving the skills of proactive learning follows, for example reading a book, or proactively making use of a supervisor. In Knowles' experience, even a short and simple exercise like this can make adults more comfortable and self-directed in the new learning environment.

A brief look at the functions of the adult educator within the andragogical model follows.

2.2.5 The adult educator

According to Knowles (1980:26-27), the functions of the adult educator can be derived from the seven elements of the andragogical model:

- The diagnostic function: helping the students discover and verbalise their specific needs within the specific learning field or programme;
- The planning function: working with the students to design a series of learning experiences that will answer these needs;
- The motivational function: creating a positive learning environment.
- The methodological function: selecting methods and techniques which would result in effective learning;
- The resource function: making sure that the students know about, and can access, the material and human resources needed to achieve the preferred learning outcomes;
- The evaluative function: helping the student to design and implement the appropriate evaluative measures to determine if the desired learning outcomes have been reached.

Knowles (1980:33-34) points out that the adult educator not only has to establish and provide for the needs of the adult student, but he also has to consider the needs of the institution and of society. Each institution has its own educational policies, regulations and goals. He states that “Most institutions with adults in their constituencies have some sort of image of the kind of people they want to influence their members to become” (Knowles 1980:33). It is possible for conflict to arise between the needs of the individual and that of the institution. The adult educator needs to act as a mediator, or decide whether it is more important to support the student in his growth or insure the survival of the institution (Knowles 1980:33-34).

Knowles (1980:37) observes that, where adult educators used to be volunteering amateurs, they have become trained specialists in the field of helping adults to achieve their full potential. Adults are no longer treated as grown-up children, and the role of the adult educator has changed to that of “helper, guide, encourager, consultant, and resource – not that of transmitter, disciplinarian, judge, and authority” (Knowles 1980:37).

Satisfactory conclusions and suggestions for programme design in adult education cannot be drawn if existing criticisms on andragogy are not also investigated.

2.2.6 Criticisms on andragogy

Cross (1981:220-225) regards as optimistic Knowles’ view that andragogy serves as a unifying theory for all adult education. In her opinion, the “spectrum of learning situations in adult education” (Cross 1981:221) is too broad and diverse to be unified into one theory. She considers a lack of research as the reason for the absence of a unifying theory on adult education, argues that Knowles contradicts himself, and states that it is not clear whether he regards andragogy and pedagogy as dichotomous (one more appropriate for adult education and the other for children), or whether he proposes replacing pedagogy with andragogy as a better approach to education in general. Cross however quotes Knowles (1979:53) as saying that he does not regard these two different approaches as exclusive to one type of learning situation, thus contradicting herself in her criticism of Knowles. She does however credit Knowles with “a valuable service to the profession in at least setting forth a plan for critique and test in an otherwise barren field” (Cross 1981:225).

The biggest question about andragogy is whether it is a theory of learning, or rather a theory of teaching and facilitating learning. In Cross’ (1981:227-228) opinion, andragogy

can be more accurately described as a theory of teaching, because it consists of a list of assumptions about adult characteristics which can aid the teacher in facilitating learning. She is convinced that what andragogy has not been successful at is stimulating research to test these assumptions about adult characteristics and learning. She states however that it has brought three important questions to the fore: 1) Should we distinguish between the learning needs of adults and children? If so, are these differences dichotomous, continuous, or both? 2) What is really needed: a theory of teaching or a theory of learning, or both? 3) Is it possible to develop a basic framework on which future educators can build? Can andragogy provide this framework for further research in adult education?

Brookfield's (1986:94-95) criticism of andragogy refers to the characteristics of adult educands. He states that "while self-directedness is a desirable condition of human existence it is seldom found in any abundance" (Brookfield 1986:94-95). In Brookfield's opinion, this emphasises the importance of focusing on enhancing students' self-directedness in the educational process. He discusses the concept of self-directedness in his book *Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning* (1986), and places it in a much broader perspective than does Knowles. He states (Brookfield 1986:19) that "Self-directed learning in adulthood, therefore, is not merely learning how to apply techniques of resource location or instrumental design. It is, rather, a matter of learning how to change our perspectives, shift our paradigms, and replace one way of interpreting the world by another." Thus the role of the facilitator not only includes the diagnosing, planning, motivating, methodological, resource and evaluative functions but the responsibility for challenging the learner's way of thinking, behaving and living, and providing alternative possibilities.

Brookfield (1986:51) indicates that most research on self-directed learning has been conducted on "advantaged, white, middle-class Americans". He states that although these studies provide valuable information about the learning characteristics of this population, it is dangerous to generalise the findings and apply them to all adults. He emphasises that very little research has been done on the learning characteristics of working-class adults in America, and almost completely absent is any research on blacks, Puerto Ricans, Hispanics, Asian Americans or Native Americans. This raises the question whether these American studies are at all applicable to the South African educational situation which is very diverse in social, cultural, financial and racial content. If not, this could imply the need for studies specific to the current South African adult learner's characteristics.

According to Brookfield (1986:67), a number of problems can occur when self-directed learning is incorporated into the teaching model, especially in the formal educational context. Firstly, teachers often experience resistance from students to the idea of taking control. Some adults find it intimidating when confronted with designing their own learning plans, while others perceive the exercise as laziness by the educator and a lack of leadership from the institution's side. Secondly, self-directed learning experiences can be inhibited by institutional policies on curriculum, grading and evaluative criteria. Thirdly, not all of the adults in the classroom or course may be equally ready for self-directed learning. Brookfield therefore feels that it is dangerous to presume that self-directed learning is the best approach for all adult learners under all circumstances.

The only assumption about andragogy that Brookfield (1986:98) fully agrees with is that adults possess a vast range of life experiences that positively aid the learning process and are an important resource for curriculum development and learning experiences. Two assumptions about andragogy that he feels should be carefully scrutinised for their wide-ranging applicability are that adults' learning experiences should be structured around life-application sequences, and should therefore necessarily be competency based. He feels (Brookfield 1986:99) that these two assumptions neglect other important areas of adult learning such as "the reflective domain of learning" and learning for the sake of pure enjoyment, instinctive fascination and fulfilment. He does agree with Knowles that andragogy is a valuable set of assumptions about adult learning from which a number of appropriate teaching methods can be developed and that "pedagogy and andragogy are both appropriate, at different times and for different purposes, with children, adolescents, young adults, the middle aged, and the elderly" (Brookfield 1986:120-121).

Brookfield (1986:122) concludes that:

Moreover, learning is far too complex an activity for anyone to say with any real confidence that a particular approach is always likely to produce the most effective results with a particular category of learners, irrespective of the form, focus, or nature of that learning...Once we realise that every learning group contains a configuration of idiosyncratic personalities, all with differing past experiences and current orientations, all at different levels of readiness for learning, and all possessing individually developed learning styles, we will become extremely weary of prescribing any standardized approach to facilitating learning.

2.3 Summary

Adults and pre-adults can be defined according to age, or social and psychological characteristics. In the educational setting, age is not the most reliable defining factor since

young adults often display adult characteristics. Therefore, it is more appropriate to evaluate students individually according to their own unique social circumstances and psychological self-perceptions. Adults can be defined as those individuals who have adopted adult responsibilities, for example financial and social responsibilities (work and family), who have an established self-identity which is constantly renewed by the different roles they fulfil, have had greater life experiences and display an attitude of self-directedness. Younger adults generally fulfil the primary role of student, have few or no social responsibilities toward others, are extremely self-centred and are in the process of developing an individual and mature identity.

From this literature review, it is evident that adults and pre-adults also display different learning preferences because adult learners enter the educational setting with more former life experiences. Adults have established personal problem-solving skills through which they deal with new situations. These already acquired skills generally lean toward analytical, critical and logical thinking patterns. It could be said that adults generally prefer teacher-centred instruction because they are confident, do not need to prove anything, can accept authority and consciously enter the classroom with the intention to learn from an expert. Younger students are more self-centred, are less certain about their educational goals and often display problems with authority. Therefore pre-adults typically prefer learner-centred instruction, aesthetic learning and introspective activities. Although younger adults are more insecure, they have a higher capacity for complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty, while more secure adults characteristically prefer stability and predictability. Ironically, research has shown that teachers tend to use learner-centred instruction with adults (because they are perceived as more self-directed) and teacher-centred instruction with young adults (because they are perceived as more uncertain).

Since no unified theory of adult education exists, the educator carries the responsibility to continuously study and research developments in adult education and learning theories. The preceding discussion indicates that all theories of learning are appropriate under different circumstances. In order to establish the most appropriate method of teaching, the teacher should carefully assess the learning characteristics and type of learning that occurs within the specific environment. The instructor needs to determine whether the students in his class are familiar with the subject, and whether they prefer teacher or student-centred instruction and why. Adults very often prefer student-centred instruction because they have been conditioned to learn pedagogically and not andragogically. To prevent students from feeling threatened or regarding this approach as laziness on the

part of the teacher, great care must be used in introducing andragogical concepts into the learning environment.

In educational settings where the student has no prior knowledge or experience of the subject, a pedagogical approach may prove more appropriate. When students have no frame of reference for the knowledge and skills that have to be acquired, they cannot effectively be involved in planning the instruction. Andragogical concepts can to a lesser degree be successfully incorporated in such a setting by providing the student with a limited number of options. Involving students in verbalising their needs, goals, learning plans, method of learning, and establishing methods and requirements for assessments may help them to grasp more quickly the content and value of the instruction.

The most important andragogical aspect which should be incorporated into any method of teaching is creating self-directed learners. On completion of the course, students must be able to develop continuously their newly acquired knowledge and skills through their own efforts, without the help of an expert. All education should aim to ultimately create independent students capable of life-long learning. Society's progress and survival depend on constantly growing and developing individuals. In andragogy, adult students share with the educator the responsibility of learning, and thus move from dependence to self-directedness. The role of the educator becomes one which is guiding and facilitating rather than authoritarian.

Lastly, it is the responsibility of the instructor to create a positive physical and psychological class atmosphere. The concept of climate setting can successfully be incorporated in both the pedagogical and andragogical models of teaching. Teachers are often restricted in space and media, but can improve the friendliness of the physical setting with appropriate décor and furniture arrangement. The psychological atmosphere is predominantly created by the characteristics of teacher commands and comments. Specific characteristics of successful secondary piano teachers who create positive learning environments will be further investigated in chapter five.

2.4 Implications for teaching basic piano to vocal art students at the Tshwane University of Technology

Currently, the secondary piano teaching method for vocal art students (TUT) does not distinguish in its approach toward adults and pre-adults. Since the student group is extremely diverse in cultural, financial, social and educational background as well as age,

it is suggested that an audience analysis be done to determine the students' individual social and psychological characteristics. This would enable the secondary piano teacher to classify students as either adult or pre-adult and decide which method of teaching will be most appropriate.

Classifying vocal art students at TUT as either adults or pre-adults is however more complicated than it may seem. All the students are enrolled full-time, and therefore Beder and Darkenwald (1982:142) would classify them as pre-adults. In reality, many of these full-time students have previously worked, have children or are married, and can therefore be more appropriately defined as adults. Several of the traditional college-age students have children who are primarily raised by family or community members, as is common in many African communities. Thus, though these students are parents they do not necessarily adopt the responsibilities of adulthood. Such students generally display characteristics and learning preferences more typical of traditional college-age students and can therefore be classified more accurately as pre-adults.

Furthermore, students who are not married or are without children but are working to provide for their own study and living costs may display more responsibility than their college-age counterparts who are dependent on parents or sponsors. Some college-age students are naturally more responsible than others, and display this in the manner they approach their studies and classes (for example regular class attendance, conscientious homework, working through additional material and conducting their own research). The secondary piano teacher should therefore especially strive to determine these specific students' learning preferences (student or teacher-centred) and their level of self-directedness. Once the teacher has classified the students as either younger or older adults, and determined their individual learning preferences, the plan of instruction can be evaluated and improved upon.

A purely student-centred approach will, in all probability, not prove effective when learning a new practical skill such as playing the piano. Learning to play the piano involves the development of many different but interdependent skills, which need to be taught in a chronological and sequential order. Due to the fact that most singers have no prior piano playing experience, it is very unlikely that they would know 'what' they 'want' or 'need' to learn. Currently, the secondary piano instruction at TUT follows a purely pedagogical approach, and this is possibly the most appropriate teaching approach for a new study field and, especially, for learning a practical skill.

The secondary piano teacher might benefit, though, from incorporating andragogical concepts into the pedagogical model. At TUT, the secondary piano students could be more involved in planning and especially verbalising the goals and objectives of the instruction. This form of involvement would enhance their perception of the importance of the subject (which they are often not clear about or convinced of) and improve their level of motivation. Within the limited framework of the curriculum, student involvement can also be improved by occasionally providing optional activities and emphasising active responses and participation. After the basic knowledge and skills of piano playing have been acquired, the instructor can sensitively guide the students toward self-directed learning through self-study projects. Success in these exercises will develop students' awareness of personal growth in capabilities and therefore greatly improve their level of motivation.

Because secondary piano instruction is a practical subject which focuses on the development and refinement of practical skills, the learning process is naturally based on experiential techniques. Every lesson and evaluation is performance and competency oriented. It is important to define the goals of every lesson, assignment and assessment in these practical terms to students. What we as instructors consider as common knowledge, they still have to learn. Understanding 'why' and 'how' competencies will be learned is of utmost importance for student motivation and satisfaction. Students need to be properly informed of the purpose of secondary piano instruction to make it applicable to their dreams of becoming great singers. Since piano study is an entirely new and unfamiliar field to them, they start their studies as dependent learners, and as they become more familiar with the subject they should move toward independence. Progressing from teacher-centred lessons (a pedagogical model) to more pupil-centred lessons (an andragogical model) might, for that reason, prove most effective in secondary piano instruction.

Against the background of this chapter on adult and pre-adult characteristics and education theories, the literature on teaching basic piano to adult and college-age students will now be examined.

3. TEACHING BASIC PIANO TO ADULT AND COLLEGE-AGE STUDENTS

Ozanian (1979:26) regards the traditional age of the child piano beginner as between that of eight and ten years. She states that any person who is not considered a child is labelled an older beginner and that they have certain similarities with and differences from children. According to Orlofsky and Smith (1997:22), most literature on keyboard instruction focuses on the characteristics, needs and pedagogical approaches for the young beginner and very little is written about the adult piano student. As discussed previously, the majority of piano pedagogy courses at tertiary institutions also focus primarily on basic piano instruction for the young beginner. The aspiring piano teacher is rarely prepared for the ever increasing field of adult piano instruction, and even less so for instructing secondary piano to adult and college-age students.

Teaching basic piano to adults and students of average university age (18 – 24 years) requires a very different approach from teaching children (Schutte 2002:91, Thompson 1982:44, Johnson 1986:20). Le Roux (1990:x) states that adult students have psychological and physical difficulties that need to be addressed by the teacher, and adds that some of these characteristics are an advantage and some a disadvantage to piano instruction. Therefore, the differences between teaching basic piano to children as opposed to adults must be investigated in order to establish their implications for secondary piano instruction for vocal art students at TUT.

3.1 Differences in teaching basic piano to children as opposed to adults

Orlofsky and Smith (1997:23) divide the differences between teaching basic piano playing skills to adults as opposed to children into three categories: physiological, psychological and logistical. Considerations which positively or negatively influence the educational process exist within each category, and these are discussed here.

3.1.1 Physiological considerations

The greatest physiological consideration when teaching piano playing skills to adults, as opposed to children, is the development of technique. Robilliard (1967:27) is of the opinion that children develop piano technique more easily because they can acquire the necessary skills over a longer period of time, and at a slower, more natural pace than

adults normally do. According to her, the best time to learn a new skill is when the desire to do so is discovered. Adults who aspire to play the piano should therefore have an advantage in developing piano technique. Ozanian (1979:26) is convinced that, even though adult students usually possess a greater sense of rhythm, pitch differentiation and finger-hand-arm coordination than do children, finger dexterity is the same for beginners of all ages and that there is no quick manner in which to train the muscles. She emphasises that “Physical coordination takes time, practice, and training.” (Ozanian 1979:26). Johnson (1986:21) remarks that some adult pupils’ fingers are not as flexible as others’ or those of children, and that some adults even attempt playing the piano with arthritis or other irreversible mobility problems. She suggests that the piano teacher should practice patience, maintain a slow pace and choose appropriate material that can be mastered by each student.

According to Johnson (1986:21), piano teachers differ greatly in their approach toward technique. Some teachers prefer to use only exercises related to the challenges in a piano piece, while others assign various drills regardless of their immediate relevance. She highly recommends the use of Hanon exercises because they can be easily memorised. Johnson states that the advantages of playing these exercises from memory include the opportunity to focus on technique while gradually increasing the speed, as well as playing the exercises in different rhythms and keys. With regard to the development of technique, Robilliard (1967:21) advises adult students to relax in order to counter unnecessary tension in the muscles and to regard practicing as the best tool for acquiring piano playing skills. In her opinion, the main objective of adult piano study should be the development of musical understanding and not the acquisition of “technical skill for its own sake” (Robilliard 1967:9).

Graessle (2000:2) highlights other physiological characteristics of older adults which can dramatically influence the learning process, namely a decline in eyesight and hearing abilities. According to her, either problem can be fairly easily rectified through the use of special reading glasses, bifocals, proper lighting or hearing devices. According to Robilliard (1967:20), the adult’s ability to learn is determined more by his intelligence and self-belief than by age-related factors. She is also convinced that the effect of the aging process on the older student’s ability to learn can be remarkably improved by regular learning activities. Myers’ (1986:164-165) study, which investigated the relationship between age and music learning in adults, suggests that “chronological age in adults does not significantly condition achievement in a performance-based, success-oriented beginning music learning programme” (Myers 1986:170). According to him, the slower

learning rates often displayed by older adults do not diminish the overall achievement, and certain conditions even facilitate higher achievement among older adults. He does however emphasise that slower learning rates do necessitate more repetition, structured practice sessions and rehearsal time in order to ensure successful learning.

3.1.2 Psychological considerations

Orlofsky and Smith (1997:23) state that older keyboard beginners often enter the educational setting with psychological baggage due to previous learning experiences. According to Ozanian (1979:26), these already acquired life and learning experiences of adults lead to more definite expectations of the new educational environment than is the case with children. She indicates that older students' expectations range from uncertainty about their capabilities due to their age to over-confidence that they will acquire piano playing skills within a short period of time. She observes that learners of all ages start their piano instruction with a certain level of enthusiasm, but warns that adult students also often enter the learning environment with an underlying fear of failure. Since children have limited past experience of failure, they do not commonly have such fears. She concludes that while older beginners' preconceived ideas about their capabilities might be an obstacle, adults are generally more committed to the learning process than children because they enter the educational setting voluntarily.

According to Robilliard (1967:2-3), the adult learner's success is not only influenced by his own expectations but even more so by that of the teacher and to a lesser extent family and friends. She states that a teacher who displays confidence in his student's abilities also unknowingly conveys enthusiasm and inspiration. Kim (2001:151) agrees that it is of great importance that the teacher foster positive expectations of the student and strive to enhance his confidence, enthusiasm and inspiration while constantly anticipating success. To further ensure the adult's continued participation in the learning process, the learning environment also needs to be pleasant and positive, and provide a great deal of student motivation (Schutte 2002:131). Gay (1983:31) adds that establishing clear and definite goals for the adult learner minimises unrealistic expectations, maximises his sense of achievement and therefore greatly improves motivation.

Gerrish (1986:13), Graessle (2000:3) and Johnson (1986:21) agree that the foremost psychological problems faced by adult beginners are lack of self confidence and low self-esteem. Older students often display inhibition and self-doubt as well as feelings of foolishness, especially when confronted with pianistically proficient children (Gerrish

1986:13; Johnson 1986:21). According to Graessle (2000:3), adults particularly doubt their ability to learn and constantly fear making mistakes. As a result, they frequently tend to disengage from instruction when they experience discomfort or perceive lack of success (Myers 1986:171). Gerrish (1986:13) believes it takes considerable courage to become an adult beginner, and that these internal problems are more often the reason for terminating lessons than external factors such as time, money and social responsibilities. According to her, the teacher can help the adult overcome these internal obstacles by being perceptive of his feelings and by effectively communicating understanding and encouragement. Johnson (1986:21) suggests that the teacher frequently assure the older student of his capabilities and improvement, and where possible organise adult performance classes separate from those for the younger students.

Thompson (1982:44) explains that adults are also more self-critical because, through attending concerts and listening to recordings, they have acquired a broader knowledge and experience of professional music standards than children have. She warns that this critical characteristic may cause unnecessary frustration and that the teacher needs to use the adult's patience and already acquired problem-solving skills to overcome this psychological obstacle. In her opinion, adults' self-critical attitudes can be turned into determination to master musical and technical concepts. Ozanian (1979:26) and Johnson (1986:20) both indicate that another form of frustration occurs when the adult student's greater intellectual capabilities, which enables him to develop faster musically than a child, are in conflict with the slower development of his technical abilities. Johnson (1986:20) recommends maintaining a careful balance between stimulating the adult's greater intellectual capabilities while developing the weaker motor skills. She suggests the use of sufficient supplementary repertory material to ensure continued interest while developing specific technical abilities. Ozanian (1979:28) emphasises that the teacher should assign well organised technical drills weekly in order to increase the adult student's piano playing skills.

The adult's intellectual and musical frustration with his relatively slow technical development may also sometimes result in boredom. Johnson (1986:21) recommends that, to prevent this, the teacher should continually discuss the progress a student has made with a certain piece as well as the aspects that can be additionally mastered if he chooses to continue with the piece. In her opinion, the student should move on to new repertory material if he wishes to. She however emphasises that even though it is important for the adult student to enjoy his piano tuition, the teacher should always ensure that he establishes clear goals and upholds high standards of performance. According to

her, such requirements will guarantee constant growth and development in the student's technical and musical abilities. In her opinion, the goal is to enable the student to learn and master piano pieces independently.

Orlofsky and Smith (1997:22) and Kim (2001:143) highlight the fact that learner characteristics such as motivation to learn, learning attitude, emotional factors, innate ability, regular practice and quality instruction influence the learning process more than age, physical capacity, intelligence, musical background and the instructor's teaching approach. According to them, the teacher needs to assure the adult student that these characteristics, combined with consistent practicing, will greatly improve his perception of personal skill and consequent success.

3.1.3 Logistical considerations

According to Graessle (2000:3), the adult's time is constantly divided between work, social responsibilities, study, and leisure activities. Schutte (2002:93-94) states that the teacher must take these non-academic responsibilities and interests of the adult student into consideration and respect the fact that the student's time and energy is divided. Personal responsibilities may sometimes take preference over studies. She is of the opinion that when a student, for instance, has to take a sick child to the doctor, it would be inconsiderate of the lecturer to refuse alternative arrangements for tests and class work. In Daniels' (2002:17-18) view, ignoring the realities of the additional demands on an adult student's time will lead to a false understanding of and expectations from these students. Graessle (2000:3) adds that teachers need to be flexible when arranging lesson times for older students. Some adults may prefer to attend classes during lunch hour, after hours, over weekends and sometimes bi-weekly instead of every week. She states that the teacher must adjust to the needs of the adult student especially when family and work responsibilities require a change in lesson time.

Daniels (2002:17) emphasises that the adult's conflict between leisure time and study time is even greater where a practical subject is concerned. In contrast with most theoretical subjects, a practical instrument has to be practiced regularly in order to develop and refine the necessary skills (Daniels 2002:18). These additional demands on the adult's time require effective practice habits and concentration during practice sessions (Thompson 1982:44). Students need to be taught how to use their time efficiently (Orlofsky and Smith 1997:23) because good practice habits increase motivation and satisfactory achievement during each practice session (Daniels 2002:18).

According to Thompson (1982:44), children and adults are motivated by distinctively different methods. Johnson (1986:21) states that children are easily motivated to practice through games and rewards while adults require varied and interesting teaching material to keep them motivated. Because adults have established musical tastes, choosing appropriate material for them is often more difficult than for children. Johnson however emphasises the importance of stimulating the adult's interest for motivation purposes and to broaden his taste. Both adults and children need clear objectives to ensure effective practice sessions as well as for the development of self-evaluation skills.

To further ensure success during practice sessions, Robilliard (1967:29) strongly suggests not practicing when feeling tired. She states that a tired mind can not concentrate effectively which leads to reading errors, while physical fatigue hinders technical development. Robilliard is convinced that tiredness will cause the practice session to be unsatisfactory and will influence consequent practice sessions due to learned errors. She finds the early morning hours ideal for practicing technique, and the evenings best for interpretation.

In conclusion, Le Roux (1990:52-54) advises that patience and a sympathetic approach to the physiological and psychological factors influencing the older beginner are of utmost importance. He states that these difficulties cannot be overcome overnight, but is convinced that the teacher's moral support will improve the student's self-esteem and confidence.

3.2 Adult characteristics which aid the learning process

Adult students have distinctive learning characteristics, which are not yet developed in children, that aid the teaching process (Orlofsky and Smith 1997:22). According to Graessle (2000:2), adults are highly motivated because they personally desire to acquire piano playing skills. They also generally display more self-discipline, drive, enthusiasm and established work habits than children do. Those adults who undertake piano instruction mainly for purposes of enjoyment generally display more positive goals and attitudes toward the instruction than children do. In Johnson's (1986:20) opinion, the majority of adults are primarily self-motivated as opposed to children who are generally externally motivated by teachers and parents. This internal motivation is largely due to the fact that adults voluntarily devote their time and money toward piano instruction. She states that because adults have fixed and personalised learning styles, piano teachers

need to be more perceptive and flexible with regard to the adult student's thought processes and learning preferences.

According to Gerrish's (1986:13) comparison of the time-span needed to acquire certain skills in basic piano instruction by adults as opposed to that of children, adults reach their objectives faster than children do. Den Boer (1969:14) is of the opinion that adults develop faster than children because of their greater intellectual capabilities combined with an element of pride. Gerrish (1986:13) agrees that the adults' academic aptitude can assimilate musical and technical information much more quickly than can children. She states that due to the adult student's greater scholarly capacity, some elements of piano instruction such as keyboard harmony, composition and memorisation can be introduced much earlier. This improves the adult's general understanding of music as well as his performance skills.

Robilliard (1967:26) is convinced that most adults can and will develop faster than younger students because: 1) Successful learning is greatly influenced by the adult's personal desire and willingness to do so; 2) The adult's greater intellectual abilities ease the process of learning music notation (as opposed to young children who are still learning to read their own language); 3) Due to prior experiences with music, the adult enters the learning situation with a level of musical maturity and self-evaluative capabilities; 4) The financial implications of starting piano instruction will motivate the adult to make effective use of lessons and practice times; 5) The size and weight of the keys are more suited to the adult than the child.

Cooper (1996:v-vi, 245-247, 249, 254) studied the attitudes and perceptions of adults toward past and current piano study, their non-music interests, as well as their perceptions of home-related influences on their music and piano studies. The study indicated that a student's perception of his own piano playing skills as well as the rating of his piano lessons correlate strongly and positively with his actual piano playing, practice habits, and other lesson aspects. Students who perceive their skills as good are more motivated to practice, enjoy practicing more than less able students and experience an enhanced sense of achievement due to consistent practice habits. Adults are somewhat different because, although they often rate their own skills low due to self-doubt and little self-esteem, they still foster and take pleasure in regular practice habits and enjoy their lessons. The study also found that participation in choosing lesson content, ensemble activities and performance opportunities (formal and informal) correlated with a positive perception of skill and lesson experience.

These results emphasise the fact that the adult's intellectual and social maturity enables him to enjoy and develop the acquisition of a new skill such as playing the piano despite numerous difficulties and challenges, as opposed to younger students who become discouraged more easily.

3.3 Guidelines toward successful basic piano instruction for adults

Gay (1983:31-32) believes that the adult piano student's rate of progress is determined by talent, commitment, regular practice, motivation and clear goals. He emphasises the importance of establishing realistic objectives in logical stages of achievement, and supplying them in conjunction with clear and abundant information. He gives an example of how he simplifies this process through sequential accomplishment levels for his students: 1) The music reader; 2) The amateur musician; 3) The classical musician/The popular musician/The church musician; 4) Serious classical musician; 5) College preparatory students. The specific student and level generally determine the amount of time required to complete the objectives. He emphasises that at the end of each level the teacher must be sure to congratulate the student on a job well done in order to establish a constant sense of achievement. This example can be adjusted to suit the needs of the teacher, the learner population and the educational material involved.

Thompson (1982:44) provides four guidelines which can contribute to the success of adult piano lessons: 1) "Always give a reason": adults pay better attention to advice given with a clear and logical explanation; 2) "Stress efficiency": the student is responsible for efficient practicing through concentration and self-evaluation. The more effective the practice sessions, the greater the outcomes; 3) "Stress information": adults must be encouraged to research the background of the music they are studying because it increases their interest and involvement in the instruction; 4) "Stress detail": paying attention to musical aspects such as tone production, phrasing, articulation, ornamentation and rhythm will diminish the focus on slow technical development. According to Thompson, adults should realise that the benefits of learning to play the piano include not only developing musicality but also channelling their concentration and intelligence in a stimulating manner.

Ozanian's (1979:28-29) recommendations for teaching adult piano students include: 1) Treat adult piano students as colleagues and friends; 2) Allow students to select repertory according to their own preferences; 3) Motivate adults to attend all scheduled lessons by demanding monthly payments in advance; 4) Organise lessons in clusters and schedule time off during the holiday seasons; 5) Be structured; adult learners prefer well organised

lessons and specific information. She states that teachers should select appropriate course material for the adult piano student which: a) Incorporates a variety of musical styles; b) Moves at an even pace; c) Follows a clear conceptual framework; d) Has an appealing presentation; e) Supplies an abundance of practice pieces; f) Has little fingering written in; g) Includes sufficient supplementary material and well-organised technical studies as well as contemporary music.

According to Graessle (2000:4), selecting appropriate learning material for adult students is a challenge. Even though materials are available which can simultaneously address the developmental and aesthetic needs of older students, she finds that many piano teachers use children's method books despite the fact that adults often find the pictures and large print insulting. The greatest challenge regarding older beginners is that they often want to 'prematurely' play their 'favourite' pieces. She regards it as the teacher's responsibility to search for well composed arrangements of these favourites so as to meet the aesthetic needs of the student while avoiding unnecessary technical frustration.

Strydom and Helm (1981:17-19) discuss the importance of the educator's role specifically at the tertiary institution. According to them, the professional lecturer must impart knowledge in such a way that the student can assimilate and apply the knowledge and skills he has acquired in a meaningful manner. They emphasise the fact that first year students, especially, are not familiar with the tertiary learning environment, do not know what is expected of them and therefore need to be guided with extra care. Every lecturer therefore needs to teach his first years how to listen to the lecture, take notes, and use relevant resources. They state that evaluation is an important tool for establishing each student's learning progress as well as the success of the lecturer's approach and methods in teaching.

The secondary piano teacher carries the responsibility to prepare the student "for a rewarding and successful career" (Farrand 1976:11). In Farrand's (1976:12) opinion, the value the teacher attributes to the subject greatly influences the student's approach and attitude toward the instrument, and therefore music educators need to promote their subject more. Strydom and Helm (1981:18) state that the lecturer has the additional responsibility constantly to update his own knowledge and skills through research and to enhance his ability to teach successfully. The teacher must lead by example and influence the student's feelings and values in such a way that they contribute to shaping the individual's overall contribution to the community. According to them, the educator's ultimate goal must be to help students become independent thinkers.

3.4 Teaching approaches toward adult students

“There seem to be as many pedagogical approaches to accommodate adult learners as there are students” (Orlofsky and Smith 1997:23). Johnson (1986:20) states that many piano teachers avoid teaching adults because it requires knowledge of the difficulties adult beginners face as well as the appropriate repertory with which to help them overcome these difficulties and reach their individual learning goals. As an adult beginner herself, Gerrish (1986:13) experienced first hand how most private piano teachers treat adult students as ‘older children’. She emphasises that adult pupils require a very different approach because they do not react positively to being treated as minors or being spoken down to.

According to research on college-level beginning students, different teaching methods do not influence achievement (Taylor 1976:vii-viii). As established by Cooper (1996:236, 249) and Dyal (1991:121), enjoyment and success in adult piano instruction is greatly influenced by the presence of the following factors:

- Proper challenges;
- A demanding but supportive teacher;
- Positive feedback and constructive criticism;
- Immediate demand of student response and performance;
- The acquisition of practice techniques;
- Enjoyable repertory pieces;
- A variety of lesson content (for example improvisation, ear-training, theory, transposition and sight-reading).

There seems to be a great difference in approach toward adult students between private teachers and lecturers at tertiary institutions (Gerrish 1986:13). Le Roux (1990:x) states that there are some similarities but also great differences between the adult who learns piano for purely personal reasons and students who need piano playing skills for the sake of their profession. Adults who undertake piano lessons of their own choice are usually highly motivated to fulfil a lifelong dream of playing the piano (Arrau 1983:31). Arrau experiences them as more receptive and asking more perceptive questions than children or music majors for whom basic piano instruction is a required course. According to her, the aim of the music major's piano study is to develop complete and well-rounded musicianship, whereas the objectives for the adult learning piano for personal pleasure

should be pure enjoyment through music making. She states that adult leisure classes should focus mainly on familiar music, sight-reading, improvisation and playing by ear while theory, analysis, technical exercises and transposition should only be taught if requested. Arrau therefore regards the selection of appropriate learning material for both personal and professional adult piano tuition as very important.

Den Boer (1969:14) promotes group instruction as the most effective method of teaching basic piano playing skills to adults. She states that in a group setting the student's motivation to practice is greater because of the desire to keep up with the group and contribute to class activities in a meaningful manner. Adult students also find comfort in the knowledge that others encounter similar problems in the learning process, and stage-fright can be more easily conquered by ensemble activities and the presence of a sympathetic audience of peers. In addition, group tuition relieves the teacher from deadening repetition of directions and explanations, and students are stimulated by diverse questions and answers. Den Boer emphasises that to ensure the success of adult piano lessons the teacher needs to be understanding, patient, encouraging and possess a healthy sense of humour.

Graessle's (2000:3) approach involves teaching adults individually in order to meet their individual logistical needs but incorporating bimonthly get-togethers. The purpose of these social encounters is to introduce the students to other adult beginners who share their joys and frustrations. She regards this social component of adult teaching as very important. Although the students are not formally required to perform at these gatherings, they all eventually do and in the process enhance their performance skills, build confidence, become less self-conscious and learn to support and encourage each other.

According to Mackworth-Young (1990:73), even though most piano teachers are conscious of psychological and emotional factors influencing education, there has been too little research on and discussion of the influence of these factors. She studied the effects of three different teaching methods during piano lessons: teacher-directed, pupil-directed and pupil-centred. Although her study was conducted on secondary school pupils, no similar study for adults was found and the results on how these different approaches influence the success of piano instruction might prove relevant for adult students as well. The approaches are:

- In teacher-directed lessons, the teacher is in control and makes all the necessary decisions regarding lesson content and learning materials;

- During pupil-directed lessons, the pupil is in control and the teacher provides advice and makes suggestions without being judgmental;
- Pupil-centred lessons are “Lessons in which the pupil's emotions and interests are the major considerations” (Mackworth-Young 1990:76). During a pupil-centred lesson the teacher is sensitive to the pupil's preferences and employs both teacher-directed and pupil-directed methods, depending on the aims and objectives of the lesson.

Results of the study by Mackworth-Young (1990:82-83) showed that piano lessons are most often discontinued due to lack of enjoyment on the part of the pupil; they may dislike their pieces, or the teacher. It also established that fear was the cause of most problems encountered during conventional teacher-directed lessons; for example, the fear of making mistakes created negative feelings, reluctance to study examination pieces, self-conscious reluctance to take control and fear of discussing thoughts and feelings with the teacher. Because the pupil's thoughts and feelings have a great influence on his quality of learning as well as his enthusiasm and motivation to continue learning, it is important that the teacher pays adequate attention to his lesson experience. The study found that pupil-centred lessons increase enjoyment, interest, positive attitudes, motivation, progress and communication, and improve the relationship between teacher and pupil. Although these results occurred when pupils established their own goals for the lesson, pupil-direction also often resulted in feelings of abandonment, helplessness and self-consciousness. In order to counter such negative results, the teacher intervened (teacher-direction) to purposefully guide the pupil toward mastering the skills considered necessary to achieve his goals.

During pupil-direction, Mackworth-Young (1990:83) discovered each pupil's true level of intrinsic motivation and found that their goals were realistically correlated with their abilities. An important positive result of pupil-directed lessons was more effective communication between teacher and pupil with students being less inhibited in expressing their opinions and emotions. It is important to note that in this study the pupils needed time, space and encouragement to become accustomed to the freedom to communicate their feelings with regard to their lesson experience with their teacher. Everyday society tends to condition children, in particular, to suppress their feelings and refrain from freely expressing themselves. Pupil-centred lessons also gave the teacher the opportunity to observe and gain additional insight and understanding into the emotional and psychological factors which influence each pupil.

Most pupils made the same and more progress in student-centred lessons as in teacher-directed lessons. Mackworth-Young (1990:84) found that pupil-centred lessons placed the responsibility of setting goals and objectives, and achieving them, on the pupil's shoulders and that this reduced the teacher's stress. She states that the success of pupil-centred lessons largely relies on the teacher's knowledge and skills, because pupils often want to enter into territory unknown to the teacher, for example improvisation and harmonisation. Mackworth-Young feels that if the teacher cannot teach these skills himself he needs to refer the pupil to someone who can. She emphasises that during pupil-directed lessons the teacher needs to be flexible in adjusting to the emotions and needs of the pupil, and when necessary intervening to guide the pupil toward reaching his goals. In this study, the necessity for flexibility indicated that even within one lesson period a shift can occur from a pupil-directed to a teacher-directed approach.

Kim (2001:151-152) studied the factors affecting music learning by undergraduate non-music majors. She found that music reading is mostly influenced by intelligence and learning attitude (for example concentration), and therefore suggests using a more student-centred approach, promoting active responses and self-directed activities, when teaching this skill to young adult beginners. In her opinion young adult beginners need structure, support, guidance and practical hints, and she therefore recommends a teacher-directed approach when teaching other music related skills. Kim's research confirms that no single approach can be considered the best, and that both the pupil-directed and teacher-directed approaches have their purpose, depending on the skills that are being taught as well as the characteristics of the students and teacher involved.

In conclusion, Schutte (2002:132) emphasises the importance for adult learners of understanding the demands of starting or continuing academic studies. An information session at the beginning of the year can help to clarify the demands that will be made on their time as well as practical tips on how to deal with this new load.

3.5 Summary

The literature on teaching basic piano to adults illustrates that there are many differences between older students and younger pupils. Adults are commonly distinguished from children by certain physiological, psychological and logistical characteristics which considerably influence the learning process. Some of these characteristics are an advantage and some a disadvantage to adult basic piano instruction.

The most controversial aspect concerning adult pianists is their technical development. Piano teachers do not agree on the older beginner's ability to acquire technical piano-playing skills, and some even feel that adults are at a disadvantage in this regard. The adult learner however has certain characteristics which aid him in developing technique: his desire to do so, intellectual capabilities, patience and problem-solving skills. As well as using these positive characteristics, the teacher also has the responsibility of practicing patience and selecting appropriate material for enhancing the adult's technical abilities. Other age-related aspects such as loss of hearing and eyesight can also substantially influence the learning experience but under most circumstances these are solvable problems. Although adults tend to learn more slowly than children, research has shown that this does not have a significant impact on the success and results of their instruction. Clear practice guidelines and adequate repetition often compensate for a slower learning rate and also improve the adult's learning capabilities.

Older students' prior life and learning experiences can positively or negatively influence their piano instruction. Their expectations of the lessons may be coloured by fear of failure and uncertainty about their own capabilities as well as insecurity and feelings of inferiority when confronted with pianistically proficient children. Adults tend to judge themselves by professional music standards, and since their greater intellectual capabilities enable them to develop quite fast musically they are often frustrated with their slower technical development. Under such circumstances, the teacher must convey understanding and provide sufficient motivation through effective communication methods. Most importantly, the adult needs to learn proper practice techniques and effective time management through clear and structured objectives. Since adults have many work and family related responsibilities which children do not have, it is important for teachers of adult students to be flexible about logistical considerations, such as scheduled lesson times.

Fortunately, adults also have characteristics which positively contribute to the learning process. Due to the voluntary nature of their entrance into the learning environment, adults are generally more committed and self-motivated than children and also display greater levels of self-discipline, drive, enthusiasm and customary work habits. The adult's greater intellectual abilities, which enable him to assimilate information faster, and his previous exposure to music which makes him musically more 'mature', often result in faster musical development as compared to children. Adults' psychological maturity also allows them to enjoy lessons and practice experiences despite physical and psychological challenges, whereas children are more easily frustrated and discouraged when problems arise. It is vitally important to treat the older student as an adult and actively engage him in

the learning process. His greater capability to analyse and comprehend new information requires that the teacher communicates properly, supplies plenty of information and involves him in the planning and structuring of the learning experience. Adults have the need to fulfil an adult role in their educational surroundings by active understanding and participation.

The choice of appropriate repertory material is another aspect which greatly contributes to the success of basic piano instruction for adults. While developing technical piano playing skills, older students need to be intellectually and musically stimulated through variety in lesson content. When choosing material, the teacher must consider the individual's learning preferences and musical tastes in order to ensure enjoyment, stimulation and challenges, at the same time ensuring that his technical skills and musical tastes are being broadened. Other issues which contribute to the success of the instruction are fostering positive expectations, creating a positive learning environment; being a source of motivation, inspiration and enthusiasm; providing clear objectives; teaching the student how to practice properly; and upholding high standards of performance. Because older students have established learning skills and preferences, the teacher needs to be more flexible in his approach toward them as compared to children. Adults also respond positively to a social learning environment where they feel less exposed and where they meet other adults with the same challenges and frustrations. Group activities provide the opportunity for sharing, learning from each other, building self-confidence, supporting each other and developing performance skills.

The success of adult learning is more influenced by the student's learning attitude (motivation and commitment), emotional factors (psychological history), talent, good practice habits and the quality of the instruction received than by his age, physical capacity, intelligence, musical background and the instructor's method of teaching. A combination of student- and teacher-directed lessons seems appropriate for the adult learner. Student-direction promotes enjoyment, enthusiasm, communication between teacher and student, positive attitudes, motivation and progress, and provides insight into the psychological workings of the individual student. Under certain circumstances, student-direction can however create feelings of abandonment, helplessness and self-consciousness. When the student feels overwhelmed and is unsure of the way forward, or when new skills and unfamiliar concepts need to be introduced, the teacher needs to intervene (teacher-direction) with clear guidance and encouragement. Even though adults are mature and independent, they also prefer structure and unambiguous direction in order to function freely within the learning environment.

3.6 Implications for teaching basic piano to vocal art students at the Tshwane University of Technology

Previously, attention was not paid to the physical, psychological and logistical characteristics which influence the learning process of secondary piano students at TUT. It is consequently of vital importance to determine which of these characteristics that distinguish older from younger learners are applicable to the specific student group, and establish the subsequent effect thereof on the quality and success of the instruction. Audience analysis, as discussed previously, can contribute formally and informally to such an assessment of learner characteristics. Although physical difficulties can easily be observed by the teacher, students tend to be ashamed of and purposefully hide them. It could therefore prove effective to periodically interview each student to determine the unique physical, psychological and logistical characteristics which influence their instruction.

Currently, only one method's course material is utilised to teach technique and other piano playing skills to vocal art students. Because secondary piano instruction at TUT is taught in groups, it might prove more beneficial to incorporate a broader variety of teaching methods and material in order to address group dynamics as well as cater for individual learning styles and preferences. Technically, some students develop more naturally than others. Those who do not progress adequately could benefit from additional exercises and extra classes. Supplementary technical material can be provided for those students who develop technically fast as well as those who struggle. The most important factor affecting the students' technical improvement is a patient teacher who provides clearly defined practice objectives. To ensure successful practice habits, it is advisable to demonstrate all assigned exercises in class, at least once, especially in the early stages of the piano instruction. As students progress technically and musically, they can easily receive self-study exercises. The present secondary piano syllabus is largely selected from basic piano material for the young beginner. Basic adult piano material urgently needs to be investigated in order to find repertory material which will stimulate the students' learning preferences and musical tastes. Piano renditions of appropriate vocal pieces might prove effective here.

Where deterioration of hearing and eyesight is a problem, the teacher must immediately address the problem and refer the student to an appropriate specialist or the campus clinic. Previously, poor eyesight has often been mistaken for slow or problematic reading abilities, especially during the first few lessons. In future, the teacher should try and

ascertain as quickly as possible the cause of apparent reading problems. When problems such as dyslexia are identified, special arrangements should be made promptly to improve the student's reading, as it unquestionably affects all learning activities.

When confronted with an entire student group who need to learn piano playing skills in only three years, it is very easy for the secondary piano instructor to feel frustrated and become impatient with slow learning rates and other problems. Under such circumstances, it is important that the teacher stays positive and strives to discover the root of the problem in order to find a workable solution. The teacher must maintain sensitivity toward individual learning preferences as well as the possibility that students' previous learning experiences have created fear of failure or doubt in their own abilities to learn a new practical skill. In order to try and prevent unnecessary psychological effects, the teacher should frequently assure students that they possess the ability to learn piano playing skills provided they practice regularly and have patience with their own personal learning rate and physical challenges.

It will be easier for the teacher to address specific problems if she has a good knowledge of students' personal circumstances influencing their progress, for example the availability of a piano at home or at the hostel, family responsibilities, other time constraints on study activities as well as problems with other subjects in the course. If it becomes evident that a student is not coping, the teacher can try to adjust the work load or provide extra practice opportunities and supplementary material to develop the skills that are lacking. Students can also be assigned to help each other with particular problems. The secondary piano teacher must remember to treat older students as adults and positively utilise their greater intellectual capability to reason and solve problems.

In the section which follows, the objectives of secondary piano instruction for non-piano music majors will be investigated.

4. BASIC PIANO INSTRUCTION FOR INSTRUMENTALISTS AND SINGERS

Bastien (1977:315) states that at most music schools piano tuition forms part of the overall music programme for all music majors regardless of their major field of study. In his opinion, the primary purpose of secondary piano instruction is to equip the non-keyboard music major with functional piano playing skills. According to Walter (1977:15) and Schwenzer (1977:24), these should be developed with the principle intention of supporting the first instrument. This supportive role has two elements:

- The development of knowledge and skills to support the theoretical aspects of the first instrument (in its simplest form key-signatures, intervals, scales, general bass playing, chords and cadences);
- The ability to accompany easy beginner's pieces from the first instrument's repertory (Walter 1977:15; Stierschneider 1983:5-7).

Walter (1977:16) observes that different instrumentalists require different piano playing skills. String instrumentalists, for example, need to be able to accompany easy pieces from relevant beginner's material, as well as easy accompaniments from the baroque and modern literature. Clarinetists must be able to play easy exercises and pre-classical accompaniments, while the recorder teacher needs to be able to accompany group classes as well as easy baroque and modern literature. Walter states that other wind instrumentalists often use the piano to compose ensemble exercises. In his opinion, it is unnecessary for guitarists to acquire the skill of piano playing. Because different instrumentalists' objectives in acquiring piano playing skills are dissimilar, Walter stresses the importance of developing a separate secondary piano course outline for each instrument.

Korčák (1977:9) advises that due to this diversity of aims for secondary piano instruction it is important that the teacher regularly establishes whether the goals of instruction are meaningful and accomplishable, and if any improvements can be made, or alternatives given, to the current instructional method and content. Several researchers, who are secondary piano teachers themselves, have aimed to establish which functional piano playing skills are most important for specific music majors to acquire. In the following

section, these studies are investigated in order to ascertain the most common aspects included in the curriculum design of secondary piano instruction.

4.1 Curriculum content: functional piano playing skills

In 1962⁹, William Richards (cited in Bastien 1977:316) surveyed secondary class piano curricula by distributing a list of twenty functional piano playing skills to two different groups of educators - group secondary piano instructors, and lecturers in music education. These educators were asked to rate the following keyboard musicianship items according to importance: transposition, playing by ear, repertory study, vocal score reduction, improvisation, technical development, sight-reading, accompanying, harmonisation of melodies, playing of patriotic songs, instrumental score reduction, critical listening, development of style concepts, playing before others (performance skills), chord progressions, ensemble playing, realisation of figured bass, modulation, memorisation and analysis (melody, harmony and form). Both groups of educators regarded playing by ear, chord progressions, music analysis, transposition and improvisation as more important than playing figured bass or memorisation. Secondary piano teachers regarded repertory study as important, while music educators rated it as last on the scale.

In an effort to increase the practicality of her secondary piano classes, Tollefson (2001:2) surveyed 893 state music educators on how, and how often, they use their piano playing skills in the classroom. The results indicated that 90% of these educators use the piano in the classroom, of whom 96% had completed a secondary piano course. The following skills were listed:

- Playing accompaniments to melodies;
- Harmonising melodies with no given harmonisation;
- Playing instrumental and vocal accompaniments;
- Transposing a single part to concert key¹⁰;
- Playing two or more parts from multiple staves;
- Playing two parts, transposing one or more parts;
- Playing piano repertory;
- Improvising music at the piano;
- Playing jazz piano (styles);

⁹ The original study by Richards proved to be unavailable.

¹⁰ Tollefson does not define the meaning of 'concert key'.

- Demonstrating the instruction of piano technique and interpretation.

The ratings ranged between 29% and 90%, and some educators indicated that they often utilise all the skills listed.

McWhirter (cited in Sisterhen 2007b:2) surveyed the use of piano playing skills by secondary choral music educators. The purpose of her study was to establish which piano playing skills educators regularly utilise in class, and consequently determine the skills that student teaching interns should necessarily acquire. McWhirter found that choral music educators apply functional piano playing skills 'daily' or frequently', and would do so even more if they felt better equipped, especially with regard to accompanying skills. Their piano playing activities in class mostly involve playing warm-up exercises, sight-reading vocal scores, singing a vocal part while playing the other parts, and playing accompaniments. Harmonisation, transposition and improvisation are used very seldom. Most music educators feel that memorised piano repertory should be excluded altogether from the secondary piano curriculum.

Beres and Johnson (cited in Sisterhen 2007b:4) surveyed the importance of different piano playing skills for performers and studio teachers. 35% of the respondents were vocalists, 40% wind instrumentalists, and 19% string players. The skill of accompanying received the highest rating of importance at more than 50%. Other skills were rated much lower for example 15% for chord progressions, 11% for score-reading, and even lower scores were indicated for technique, harmonisation, improvisation, playing by ear and solo piano repertory. More than 80% of the respondents regarded piano playing skills as 'important' to 'very important', 30.6% sight-read accompaniments daily, and 21.7% did so in their individual practice times. The researchers came to the conclusion that sight-reading should be part of every secondary piano lesson, since this skill, combined with chord progressions and technique, form the building blocks of accompaniments.

Bastien (1977:315) regards sight-reading, score-reading, transposition, harmonisation and improvisation as important functional piano playing skills for choir and instrumental directors, as well as for general music educators. Korčák (1977:13) underlines the importance of sight-reading, playing from ear and improvisation.

From the preceding discussion, it is evident that sight-reading and accompanying skills go hand-in-hand as the most important piano playing skills for any music major to acquire. There is less agreement about technique and repertory study which are assigned differing

significances by music educators. The following very important question arises: Is it possible to develop good accompanying skills without proper technical training and repertory study? Improvisation is also mentioned often but not necessarily utilised or taught to its full capacity. The five above-mentioned important functional piano playing skills will now be discussed.

4.1.1 Sight-reading

Sellier (1977:73-75) states that the importance of sight-reading is widely recognised and that the skill thereof is necessary for almost every music occupation. A musician's success can depend on being able to realise previously unknown music with little or no study of it. He mentions that until the time of Liszt sight-reading was the norm, and therefore believes that every student has the ability to acquire the skill of sight-reading. Stierschneider (1983:20) states that the success of teaching sight-reading, as well as improvisation, depends substantially on the teacher's approach. The teacher must for example create within the student an interest and desire to use sight-reading as a tool continuously to discover new music.

According to Stierschneider (1983:17-18), developing sight-reading skills should focus on the following aspects:

- Orientating the hands to the topography of the piano - this should be developed more through touch than visual orientation to minimise the shifting of the eyes from the music to the keys or hands. Neumann (1977:33-34) believes that students should learn to orientate their fingers according to the black keys on the keyboard. According to her, being able to play from two clefs without looking at the keyboard, or the hands, is one of the most difficult and important skills the student must master.
- Developing the skill of reading, and hearing the music internally, prior to it being played;
- Sight-reading not only the notes but all the music elements on the sheet music. This skill takes a lot of practice and may require the writing of appropriate exercises.
- Learning to read music from the bass clef upwards since most instrumentalists read the treble clef only;

- Using appropriate fingering that takes aspects such as articulation, accents and phrasing into consideration;
- Developing transposing skills;
- Regular and consequent sight-reading exercises.

4.1.2 Accompanying skills

Stierschneider (1983:37) emphasises the need for an even greater focus on developing accompanying skills with singers than with instrumentalists. According to Sisterhen (2007a:3), accompanying skills are especially important for aspiring choral directors who often double as accompanists. She adds that vocalists should also be able to accompany themselves, or alternatively to analyse the music harmonically to simplify the accompaniment. Stierschneider (1983:37) suggests that this implies the need for more transposition, cadence playing and general bass playing exercises in the singer's secondary piano curriculum. He also mentions that singers should be able to play vocal exercises on the piano. Walter (1977:16), Wilhelms (1977:21), and Stierschneider (1983:34) believe that the minimum requirement for singers should be the ability to accompany easy *lieder* different style periods, simplify aria accompaniments, and play general bass accompaniments to recitatives. Korčák (1977:13) indicates that another important goal is establishing an instrumental relationship with the piano to such an extent that the singer can, for example, develop his own interpretation to a *lied* accompaniment. However, he immediately indicates his doubts about whether this objective is realistic and achievable. The secondary piano teacher must therefore follow the advice of Walter (1977:15) and Stierschneider (1983:6) who are of the opinion that it is extremely important to distinguish between the ideal and necessities in secondary piano instruction.

4.1.3 Repertory study

According to Sisterhen (2007b:3), secondary piano teachers differ greatly on the importance of studying solo piano repertory. Some instructors feel it is a motivational tool in the secondary piano curriculum, while others feel the objective is to become functional at the piano and not to acquire performance skills. Christensen (2003:3) confirms that the selections and standard of repertory used differs greatly amongst teachers, and that memorisation of piano pieces is normally not required. Stierschneider (1983:5) asks whether too much focus is not being put on playing standard piano repertory while the main objective of secondary piano study should be to equip the student with the ability to

accompany his future pupils on the piano. The piano lesson itself, and the time spent practicing the instrument, is so little that the aim of the instruction should be carefully selected.

Schwenzer (1977:26) is of the opinion that playing applicable repertory (accompaniments from the first instrument's beginner's material) should always be kept in the foreground. Neumann (1977:34) however recommends that, to experience the nature of the piano, solo piano repertory should also be played. She advises that the following issues should be taken into account when choosing solo piano repertory: simultaneous playing of melody and accompaniment, polyphonic playing (two-part and more), chord playing, and contra-rhythm (*Konflikt rhythm*). She proposes that although short piano pieces are often regarded as less worthwhile, they provide an excellent opportunity for maximum experience of the piano without overstraining the student's capabilities.

Wilhelms (1977:21-22) points out that the requirements for singing instructors are much greater than for any other instrumentalist. In his view, very few piano teachers are prepared to admit that the singer, after acquiring basic piano knowledge and skills, needs a total different approach and study repertory. Wilhelms observes a lack of knowledge amongst teachers about appropriate piano teaching material from the singing repertory. According to him, a good example is Telemann's *Sing-, Spiel-, und Generalbassübungen* that contains ideal support to the basic piano technique repertory. In his opinion, Telemann's material gives a very good analysis and introduction to general bass playing, provides pieces in different meters and keys with plenty opportunity for rhythmic development, and good singing interpretation exercises in all expression nuances and characters.

4.1.4 Technique

According to Neumann (1977:33), there are two common approaches to teaching secondary piano:

- 1) The first approach includes progressive repertory without much attention to technique. Teachers taking this approach often allow students to play piano pieces in slower tempos and without the appropriate dynamics because it is not their first instrument. In Neumann's opinion this kind of musical development does not assist the student.

2) The second approach regards the development of technique as the shortest and most effective route to piano repertory.

Stierschneider (1983:21-22) points out that the development of piano technique has always been included in piano instruction and that only the material used to acquire certain skills have changed over time. He is convinced that it is better to learn no technique at all, than to learn wrong technique. In Stierschneider's opinion, the development of technique prepares the student for the repertory he learns on a daily basis and provides the best opportunity to focus on correct hand, arm and body posture. It also shortens the time needed for studying new pieces because it exercises and repeats technical patterns found continuously in music as well as technical aspects more difficult than those found in the student's repertory. According to him, the level of difficulty the student can acquire in technical exercises serves as a good method of self-evaluation.

Schwenzer (1977:26) believes that the first year of secondary piano instruction can focus on easy technical exercises which develop the playing apparatus (fingers, hands and arms), and playing of triads in all keys to achieve as quickly as possible the skill of chord playing. He is convinced that only through basic technical training can students develop familiarity and the feeling of "being at home on the instrument" (Schwenzer 1977:26) which forms the foundation for playing general bass, sight-reading and accompaniments. Stierschneider (1983:22) recommends incorporating a variety of exercises to prevent the student from doing pure mechanical repetitions. Neumann (1977:34) suggests transcribing theory and aural exercises into technical exercises which can be transposed, varied, rhythmically organised and played in different manners by the student himself. Expecting this initiative from the student will develop his independence and pave the way for improvisational activities. Neumann states that while the student improvises on technical exercises the teacher can emphasise correct posture and technique.

Stierschneider (1983:23, 25-26) proposes incorporating basic performance elements into technical exercises to emphasise their different possibilities for expression. He also recommends transposing technical exercises. Stierschneider emphasises that during technical activities there should be a progressive focus on touch, rhythm and dynamics to ensure clear and rhythmical playing. He regards it as imperative that *études* are included in the technical training of secondary piano students and that they should be chosen and assigned individually to address each student's specific technical problems, repertory and taste in order to improve their motivation to practice.

Christensen (2003:2) points out that the present tendency in American colleges is to include all minor and major scales (in two or three octaves) in the secondary piano curriculum. Some teachers demand scales to be played hands together to better the students' technical coordination and discipline, and the independent functioning of the hands. Other piano instructors feel that practicing scales hands together is too time consuming, and rather insist on memorisation and correct fingering for music theory purposes. (Christensen does not explain how according to these instructors the memorisation and correct fingering of scales benefit music theory.) Christensen adds that all major and minor arpeggios are also generally included, from two to four octaves, hands separate or together. She finds that some teachers even incorporate dominant and diminished seventh arpeggios, as well as the playing of primary and secondary chords in keyboard style.

To develop the essential skill of independence between the hands, Kurzweil (1977:29) incorporates polyphonic playing. She emphasises however that other skills which are not developed through basic technical tuition cannot be made up for in polyphonic playing. To introduce her students to the beauty of polyphony, Kurzweil demonstrates a polyphonic piece on the piano and then instructs the students to choose a two-part invention which they can perform with a partner, each on his or her own instrument.

4.1.5 Improvisation

Christensen (2003:3) found that improvisation is often taught in secondary piano tuition but is not included in the proficiency examinations. In Paganini's (1977:69) opinion, the ancillary piano lesson should consist mostly of improvisational activities. He observes that most teachers regard improvisation as too time-consuming; however he is convinced that in reality it saves time and study material. He does however not explain how these 'savings' occur. According to him, the advantages of improvisation at the piano include being able to transfer improvisational skills to other instruments, developing a broader knowledge of harmony through a more extensive use of the piano, practically applying musical concepts, and learning to solve problems independently. Stierschneider (1983:9) describes the purpose of improvisation as being to develop the student's musicality while inspiring creativity and personal expression. Paganini (1977:69) believes that, if understood broadly, improvisation is the ideal tool to bridge the gap between the adult student's already acquired life experiences and skills, and his desire to express himself.

In Stierschneider's (1983:9) opinion, improvisation at beginner's level can effectively bridge this gap between the student and the instrument. Paganini (1977:69) believes that improvisational exercises can bring together the aural, sound, expressive, and technical aspects of piano playing. Stierschneider (1983:9) recommends free improvisational exercises in which students play glissandos, clusters, chords and tremolos. The aim is to create every possible combination of pitches on the piano in order to discover this joyous new world of sound. Rummenh ller (1977:52) states that the rich sound aspects of music are best experienced on the piano. In his opinion, acquiring a broad experience of sound enhances notational reading. Kurzweil (1977:28) strives to give the student this experience of sound in the first lesson through simple improvisational exercises. She, for example, asks the student to bring beginner's material from his first instrument to the first piano lesson which immediately creates curiosity and interest. Kurzweil then finds an appropriate meter from the student's material which can be played on the piano – usually a short melody in the bass or treble clef - and structures an improvisation exercise around it. To percussionists she teaches clusters which she then reduces to tonic and dominant chords. Kurzweil first improvises a melody to suit the tonic and dominant chords; afterwards, the student must suit the chords to the melody.

Stierschneider (1983:10, 12) explains how the first instrument can be even further incorporated in improvisational activities. The student can improvise on his own instrument while the teacher improvises on the piano, after which they can switch instruments. In Stierschneider's view, the ideal activity is free improvisation in a group setting where different instruments can be used. Improvisational activities can also be created by using poems or other written materials. In Stierschneider's opinion, all improvisational experiences are ideal for group instruction.

4.2 Curriculum design: course duration and outline

The current trend in North American colleges is that most non-piano music majors must complete four semesters of group secondary piano instruction. Vocal and choral majors are expected to do two additional semesters, making six semesters in total (Christensen 2003:2). Walter (1977:16) states that, to meet the minimum requirements regarding theoretical knowledge and the accompaniment of easy folk songs and beginner pieces, at least three to four years of piano study is necessary, and five to six years to acquire the skill of accompanying easy baroque and modern literature as well as art songs. Walter suggests the following guidelines for the curriculum design of secondary piano instruction:

- Intensive basic technical exercises to establish various skills and chord playing;
- Repertory material which includes *études* and various solo piano pieces;
- Cadences, accompaniment patterns (*Begleitformeln*) and easy sight-reading exercises;
- As soon as these skills are acquired, the playing of standard solo piano repertory (for example Bach's *Notenbüchlein*)¹¹ and accompaniments from the student's first instrument beginner's material.

Neumann (1977:35) mentions that in most institutions the duration of secondary piano lessons is only thirty minutes per week. Wilhelms (1977:22) asks whether all these goals of playing elementary repertory and accompaniments can be reached in a total of only seventy two to one hundred and eight hours of piano instruction, when the student begins with no piano playing experience at all. (An academic year generally consists of approximately thirty six weeks, which in most instances implies only eighteen hours of piano instruction per year). Neumann (1977:35) states that she has however witnessed great success with one hour lessons per week over six to eight semesters (three to four years). In the final examination, the students successfully perform an accompaniment from a vocal piece, do sight-reading and do a quick study.

Wilhelms (1977:23) suggests six years of piano instruction for singers with the following outline:

- Basic beginner's instruction;
- Studies (*Klavier-Übungsstücke*);
- Easy *lieder* from Telemann's *Sing-, Spiel-, und Generalbassübungen*;
- Recitative and general bass playing;
- Arias;
- The playing of piano reductions and orchestral scores if possible;
- Improvised accompaniments.

Stierschneider (1983:36-37) suggests that the singer can at a more advanced stage of piano instruction work toward the skills needed to become a *korrepetitor*. Wilhelms (1977:23) recommends dividing students in two categories after the elementary piano

¹¹ The author did not provide the full title of the work which is *A little notebook for Anna Magdalena Bach*.

instruction: a) piano students and b) repetitors (*korrepetitor*). He advises having two 30 to 45 minute lessons per week, or adapting the lesson time to the requirements of each year's programme. Wilhelms prefers to either appoint a *korrepetitor* as secondary piano instructor for singers or alternatively a teacher who is willing to familiarise himself with the voice repertory. In his opinion, course material which stimulates the enthusiasm of the adult should be used.

4.3 Method of teaching secondary piano: the keyboard laboratory

Rummenhöller (1977:53) is of the opinion that secondary piano should be instructed in groups. Dobler (1977:78) mentions that group piano instruction became popular in America due to the rising number of students and the cost of instruments, venues and teachers. Bastien (1977:315, 318) confirms that due to increased enrolments the trend in secondary piano instruction for beginners has shifted from individual to group instruction. He is of the opinion that group enthusiasm helps to improve a sometimes reluctant attitude toward compulsory piano instruction. Group secondary piano at colleges and universities is generally instructed in a keyboard laboratory. Bastien highlights several advantages of the electronic piano laboratory:

- Beginning and advanced students can practice at the same time without disturbing each other;
- Through the communications network, the teacher can address individual or multiple students simultaneously;
- Students can receive instruction personally or through tapes and recordings;
- Different activities can be carried out simultaneously by different students;
- Students can record themselves to keep track of their own progress;
- Ensemble music can be practiced with peers or with recordings.

According to Bastien (1977:317), the design and content of the piano laboratory depends on the budget; the size and shape of the classroom; teacher preferences; and other uses of the room. Ideally, the room should be able to house twelve conventional or electronic pianos, a blackboard, audio-visual material, and storage space for teaching material. He suggests improving the class atmosphere through proper lighting, soundproofing and appropriate décor. Bastien highlights the fact that electronic pianos take up less space and are less expensive than conventional pianos and are also ideal because their volume can be controlled. The keyboard laboratory enables effective use of time through multiple

teaching opportunities (teacher-student and student-student teaching), ensemble activities, and communications and audio-visual aids. Bastien states that despite these advantages, the conventional piano can never be replaced and that each classroom should have at least one. Dobler (1977:79) maintains that the switch from the keyboard to the piano will only be a problem initially and that it is not recommended to teach in this manner for more than two years.

Bastien (1977:322, 324) suggests arranging the electronic keyboards and conventional pianos either horizontally, with the students facing forward, or vertically with the pianos back to back. He prefers the vertical arrangement because the setup makes it easy for the teacher to see the students' hands in order to correct wrong hand positions, fingering and hand locations. Bastien warns that even though it seems economically efficient to teach as many students at a time as possible it is not pedagogically effective. In his opinion, smaller groups show better results than larger ones. He recommends a group size large enough to create a group atmosphere and small enough to provide for individual instruction.

In Bastien's (1977:324-325) opinion, secondary piano tuition should be instructed on a daily basis but he points out that this possibility is often restricted by the use of the venue, the number of students that have to be taught and available teaching time. In his view, an acceptable alternative is two classes per week of fifty minutes each. He proposes that the second class period be supervised by a student assistant capable of giving individual lessons where special help is needed. Piano minors are predominantly occupied with their first instrument and tend to lack motivation to practice piano. He therefore emphasises that formally scheduled classes will most probably be the secondary piano student's main source of practice opportunities.

Since secondary piano is instructed in groups at most American universities and colleges, as well as in Vocal Art (TUT), the effectiveness of this method of teaching functional piano playing skills will be further investigated in Chapter 5.

4.4 The challenges of secondary piano instruction

According to Korčák (1977:12) and Kurzweil (1977:27), the difficulties facing the singer and instrumentalist in compulsory piano instruction are many sided. These difficulties include aspects unique to piano playing such as the simultaneous reading of different clefs, two staves and vertical aural perception; piano technique; and in particular the

common unavailability of the instrument and therefore practice opportunities. Instrumentalists who have developed their knowledge and skills in their first instruments over many years can also be embarrassed and insecure about learning a new instrument. A bridge therefore needs to be built between the individual's dual identities as a 'skilled musician' and as 'a beginner' (Kurzweil 1977:27). The student's uncertainties and insecurities can manifest in a problematic attitude toward the subject.

The secondary piano teacher often has the opportunity to become acquainted and work with all the students in the music department (Tan 2001:3). The secondary piano instructor becomes familiar with the students separately from their first instrument and thus has the opportunity to identify additional talents and strengths which help them develop further and become better musicians. Beauchamp (1999:2) states that nevertheless teaching group piano to undergraduate music majors is a great challenge because teachers are expected to create functional pianists in a very short and limited time. The teacher has to accomplish with multiple students (ranging from five to twenty students or more) what most piano teachers achieve with one pupil at a time. According to Parente (2007:2), individual piano teachers often think that the only effective way to achieve this goal is through lower expectations and performance standards.

Another aspect which may incline secondary piano instructors to lower their expectations and standards is the fact that they constantly struggle with student motivation and success rate (Tollefson 2001:1). Music majors for whom piano instruction is compulsory often start with some form of eagerness, but soon resolve to meet only the minimum requirements for passing the examination and receiving their degree. Secondary piano students start their tuition unconvinced of, or unwilling to be convinced of, its purpose. From the start, they therefore have less interest in their secondary piano instruction than in their first instrument, and this results in superficial practice habits (Korčák's 1977:13; Kurzweil's 1977:27).

Price (1998:2) regards secondary piano students' lack of interest as resulting from their limited musical knowledge and experience. He agrees that piano minors do not understand the role of piano instruction in their music education and future careers. He emphasises that it is the teacher's responsibility to inform students of the importance of acquiring piano skills to the benefit of their musical development and future career in music, whether it is as performers or educators. To accomplish this, the teacher needs to be informed and enthusiastic about the student's chosen field of music study. Price suggests starting every semester with a discussion about the students' desired careers,

and how the secondary piano class can contribute to the future success and satisfaction of their personal goals.

Schmidt (1977:36) and Neumann (1977:32) emphasise that it is important to convince the student that compulsory piano is not only a supplementary subject but also a developmental tool toward total musicianship. This can, for example, be done by incorporating other subjects into the piano lesson on a weekly basis, and stressing the piano playing skills needed for each music profession such as becoming a performing artist, conductor, church musician, school musician, music educator, theorist or composer (Neumann 1977:31-32). The support of the student's first instrument teacher as well as his lecturer in the methodology of the first instrument is crucial to assist the secondary piano teacher in calling attention to how piano playing knowledge and skills will sustain and improve the student's future music career.

Tollefson (2001:2) believes that one of the main reasons for students' ignorance of the benefits of acquiring piano playing skills is that they do not observe lecturers and role models of their possible future careers using their keyboard skills regularly enough. Sisterhen (2007a:3) states that it is very important that all lecturers in the music department address piano playing skills across the curriculum in order to reinforce the usefulness and necessity of these functional skills. According to her, many teachers feel that secondary piano, ear-training and music theory should be taught in a more integrated manner, which will effectively illustrate the practical use of functional piano playing skills to students. Christensen (2003:3) mentions that many institutions correlate secondary piano and theory classes since they are so closely related. In Korčák's (1977:13) opinion, the first application of piano knowledge and skill should be in music theory. He believes that through applying practically the already acquired knowledge and skills in music theory exercises, the student's true progress and further needs can be easily recognised.

Bastien (1977:315-317) warns that although the secondary piano programme can also unify and strengthen other subjects in the music programme such as theory (through keyboard harmony) and history of music (through piano repertory), in some music departments these other subjects place extra demands on the basic piano programme to overlap with and reinforce their objectives. Bastien stresses that it is of the utmost importance to design a curriculum that will best serve the needs of the specific students. In his opinion, this can be achieved by establishing multiple objectives for compulsory piano study instead of focusing on one area of development such as repertory study. He feels that the programme should strive to create meaningful connections between all

areas of musicianship, and that this should be reflected in the syllabus and proficiency examinations. He believes that a solid piano minor programme can be created by combining the 'traditional' approach to teaching piano, which focuses more on repertory study and technique, with developing functional piano playing skills. Sisterhen (2007b:5) concludes that secondary piano instruction should focus on those piano playing skills which students will use daily in their future careers as professional musicians.

In addition to these challenges regarding student attitudes and curriculum design for secondary piano instruction, there is also the problem of finding an appropriate teacher. Accomplished pianists are most often not interested in teaching secondary piano. Bastien (1977:315) states that it is difficult to find teachers with the appropriate combination of proper training, creativity and imagination. Caramia (cited in Tan 2001:3) agrees that talented pianists are not necessarily good basic piano teachers. He states that talented music students are also not necessarily talented piano students, and that therefore excellent educators are vitally important.

Korčák (1977:14) warns that when performing artists become responsible for teaching compulsory piano the course often becomes a playground for "mini-piano instruction" which leads to the frustration of the lecturer and becomes an aimless unmotivated burden for the student. Competent pianists often feel that teaching secondary piano is an artistic frustration and that a lesser pianist would be better at it (Neumann 1977:32; Wilhelms 1977:21). Neumann (1977:32) emphasises that the contrary is true because the artistic level of the teacher improves the quality of the subject, while the teacher's abilities inspire the students. The secondary piano teacher often discovers and develops aspects in students which no other teachers can. Students therefore appreciate the pedagogical as well as artistic development they gain from their secondary piano instructors.

To ensure success, the piano teacher must be creative and flexible in meeting the needs of each student. It is therefore important for the compulsory piano teacher to acquire knowledge about every student's capabilities in, difficulties with, and requirements of their first instrument (Walter 1977:16; Neumann 1977:34; Kurzweil 1977:28, 30). According to Neumann (1977:34), the teacher must for example have knowledge of a string player's technique, as well as breathing techniques for singers and wind instrumentalists. Through this knowledge the teacher can provide quick and easy solutions to the piano instruction, establish a relationship between the two instruments, and understand and motivate the student to bear the practice of, for example, technique and cadences for the joy of playing. The secondary piano teacher might even accompany the student occasionally, in order to

contribute to his progress in piano playing (Stierschneider 1983:5-6; Walter 1977:16; Neumann 1977:32; Kurzweil 1977:29).

The secondary piano teacher's personality and power of persuasion is of vital importance. Schwenzer (1977:25) is convinced that the success of secondary piano tuition is highly dependent on the teacher's musicianship and his refusal to compromise on high standards. Of further importance is the teacher's flexibility, as well as the student's willingness to learn. Kurzweil (1977:30) states that the duty of the piano teacher is a very responsible one, and the more creative he can be to make the tuition enjoyable the more the student will experience a feeling of progress which will contribute to further musical development.

Since formal vocal training starts at a more mature age than other instrumental instruction, some singers start their music studies simultaneously with their voice studies at approximately 17 years of age and older. Wilhelms (1977:21) emphasises that, as a result, the difficulty of learning to play the piano is added to other difficult musical aspects such as ear-training and music theory. According to Stierschneider (1983:8), the ideal would be to develop a relationship with schools in order to provide piano instruction for potential voice students at an earlier stage. As a result, these students will experience the sounds and joy of piano playing much sooner.

Neumann (1977:31) states that through an entry test or auditions the prospective students' previous level of experience, knowledge and skills in piano playing can be established. Prospective secondary piano students can generally be divided into the following three groups:

- Students who have previous piano playing experience to such an extent that they can express themselves musically on the piano;
- Students who are late piano starters that can play, for example, a Bach minuet, pieces from Schumann's *Jugendalbum*¹², or a piece from *Mikrokosmos*¹³;
- Students who have minimal or no experience of piano playing in contrast with highly developed knowledge and skills in their first instrument. An exception in this category is singers who enter their studies with little or no previous music education.

¹² The author did not provide the full title of the work which is *Album für die Jugend, Op. 68*.

¹³ The author did not provide the composer of this work which is Bartok.

The challenge is to thoughtfully divide these students into groups so as to enhance their stimulation and challenge while diminishing unnecessary frustration. Bastien (1977:323) advises organising students into groups according to their previous piano playing experience and suggests teaching individually those students who do not fall into a group.

Neumann (1977:31-32) divides secondary piano students into four psychological groups:

- Those who look forward to progress in the previously neglected area of piano playing and make it easy for the teacher due to their willingness;
- Those who do not see the purpose of studying the piano and therefore do not attend classes or practice. Often these students' first instrument instructors unwittingly support this attitude to gain improvement in their own subjects. It is therefore important for the piano teacher to solve this problem through the cooperation of the first instrument teacher;
- Those who have fears about being a beginner again after they have already acquired advanced skills in their first instrument;
- Those few students who, despite their efforts, do not progress and are consequently embarrassed. These students should be kept positive and interested through the teacher's understanding, patience and imaginative instruction.

Beres and Johnson (cited in Sisterhen 2007b:4) further suggest involving students in curriculum planning. They seem to agree with the andragogical concept of student-direction when they state that students who are involved in establishing their own goals and keeping track of their progress are more motivated because they understand the significance of the instruction. Sisterhen points out that in Beres' class piano, 10% of each student's mark consists of class attendance, preparation and participation. The other 90% is based on the student's performance on a daily basis as well as a midterm and final examination. Beres and Johnson (cited in Sisterhen 2007b:5) emphasise that students should be made aware of the level of performance expected of them. In order to achieve this, the teacher can demonstrate the level of performance associated with for instance an A, B, or C grade. Students can also record and grade their own performance through a self-evaluation process. Christensen (2003:3) emphasises the importance of having a reliable and quantifiable grading system, because students are questioning their grades more often than before. She advises that recording assessments are an excellent way of being prepared for such a challenge of grades.

4.5 Summary

The main purpose of secondary piano instruction for music majors is to acquire functional piano playing skills which provide theoretical support to the student's first instrument, enhance his development toward complete musicianship and prepare him for his future career in music. Different instrumentalists require different piano playing skills and therefore each secondary piano curriculum should be designed with a specific target group in mind. Functional piano playing skills include:

- Technique
- Sight-reading
- Accompanying
- Harmonisation
- Transposing
- Repertory study
- Vocal score-reading and reduction
- Instrumental score reduction
- Improvisation
- Playing by ear
- Playing of folk songs
- Musicianship
- Critical listening
- Performance skills
- Chord playing
- Ensemble playing
- Realisation of figured bass
- Modulation
- Memorisation
- Music analysis
- Playing two or more parts from multiple staves
- Playing warm-up exercises
- Singing a vocal part while playing other parts
- Jazz piano playing.

The ability to sight-read and accompany (either through playing existing accompaniments, harmonising melodies, transposing or improvising) is commonly viewed as the most

important functional piano playing skills for all musicians. Although the importance of developing piano technique and playing solo piano repertory are often minimised by secondary piano teachers, they are regarded by others as imperative to the development of sight-reading and accompanying skills.

Accompanying skills are especially important for singers. Ideally, vocalists should be able to accompany themselves on the piano to the extent that they can develop their own musical interpretation of specific songs and arias. Since it is highly unlikely that this objective will be reached within three years of basic piano instruction, the alternative goals are the ability to play vocal exercises, learn the melody of a vocal piece, play easy song and aria accompaniments as well as harmonic reductions of more difficult accompaniments, play the general bass of recitatives and, since many vocalists become choir directors, play choir parts and easy accompaniments.

The importance of playing solo piano repertory is a controversial issue in secondary piano instruction. Some teachers feel that it is unnecessary because the main focus of the instruction should be on developing functional piano playing skills and playing accompaniments from the student's first instrument beginner's repertory. Those who disagree with this view are of the opinion that the student can only fully experience the value of the instrument through solo piano repertory and consequently develop greater motivation to acquire the necessary piano playing skills in order to perform well. Almost all commentators agree that the memorisation of piano pieces is unnecessary. The best solution seems to be a reduction in the quantity and standard of solo piano pieces in the curriculum while ensuring that an adequate amount of accompaniments from the first instrument repertory are included.

The development of piano playing technique is also not regarded as equally important by all secondary piano teachers. Once again the selection of material and amount of focus placed on technique may be the origin of conflicting feelings about the importance thereof. As previously suggested with the inclusion of solo piano repertory in the curriculum, it may benefit the teacher to decide on the amount of time he wants to devote to this aspect of piano playing and select material accordingly. Arguments in favour of developing proper piano playing technique stipulate that correct technique, as well as technical exercises, prepare the student for the repertory he has to play and enhances his practical musicianship. Technique could therefore be regarded as the most effective way to reach the main objectives of secondary piano instruction. The current tendency in America is to include all major and minor scales and arpeggios in the secondary piano curriculum and

perform those over two to four octaves, hands separate or together. Although playing with both hands simultaneously develops coordination, it can be very time consuming and might therefore be regarded as less important.

Improvisational activities are ideal for combining different skills and elements of piano playing, group activities, and for bridging the gap between the adult's broad life and learning experiences and this new field of study. They create opportunities to apply andragogical concepts such as acknowledging the older student's already acquired knowledge and skills as well as his desire toward self-directedness. Students can create and lead improvisational activities without much formally acquired piano playing skill and consequently develop a relationship with the instrument much sooner. Several secondary piano courses include improvisation in the lesson curriculum but not for examination requirements.

Most music majors at tertiary institutions are required to complete three years of basic piano instruction. The ideal instruction period for acquiring the skills to play for example vocal accompaniments would be six years, but music departments are unable to provide the opportunity for such extensive piano training. Great success can be reached with one hour lessons over three to four years and even more so if students can attend group classes more than once a week. Since the student's main focus is on his first instrument, more scheduled piano lessons provide greater practice opportunities. Consequently, group instruction has become the most popular method for teaching secondary piano due to the economical and logistical advantages thereof.

The challenges of secondary piano instruction are various. Firstly, the insecurities of students related to learning a new practical skill need to be addressed. Secondly, the teacher is under great pressure because multiple students have to simultaneously acquire a large amount of skills in a very short period. Thirdly, music majors are often not greatly motivated to acquire piano playing skills. The reasons for this are manifold but the most important factor is that students are not convinced of the importance thereof. Teachers and lecturers across the music course should constantly emphasise and often demonstrate the importance of acquiring functional piano playing skills for a successful career in music as well as the development of total musicianship. Another effective method for addressing the relevance of piano playing skills is to integrate it with other subjects in the course, for example music theory and ear-training.

These challenges are compounded by the fact that enthusiastic, accomplished and creative pianists who are willing and competent to teach secondary piano are not always readily available. An accomplished instructor is essential because the skills of the piano teacher as well as his expectations and standards for the course have a great influence on the motivation and success of the student. Secondary piano teachers must also be willing to acquire proper knowledge of students' first instruments in order to establish a relationship between the instruments and ensure that their piano instruction is applicable to their future careers in music. Lastly, the secondary piano teacher is confronted with students who have diverse previous experiences of piano playing. The solution seems to be group classes where students with similar levels of performance can be taught together, those with no prior experience can receive basic instruction simultaneously, and those who do not fall into a group can consequently receive individual instruction.

4.6 Guidelines for teaching basic piano to vocal art students at the Tshwane University of Technology

In developing a curriculum for the secondary piano instruction of vocal art students at TUT, the teacher needs to consider which functional piano playing skills are essential for singers to acquire. From the preceding investigation, the most important skills seem to be the ability to sight-read and play easy vocal accompaniments. The majority of the current student population has no prior piano playing experience and therefore they are randomly grouped together. Those few students who enter their vocal studies with any form of piano proficiency receive individual lessons. It is therefore necessary to select course material which, from the very start, focuses on developing appropriate sight-reading skills. The degree to which students are able to accompany an easy vocal piece during their proficiency examination at the end of their third year strongly depends on their commitment to the instruction and motivation to practice.

Currently, the curriculum includes easy technical exercises and the playing of all major and minor scales as well as some broken chords and arpeggios in one to two octaves. Since the development of proper coordination to play with both hands simultaneously has proven to be too time consuming, a decision has recently been made to require scales and technical exercises to be played separate hands only. Vocal art students at TUT receive only one hour of group piano instruction per week and practice very little independently. Therefore the available lesson time can rather be allocated to developing sight-reading skills and playing vocal repertory. This decision seems to correlate with the perceptions of the majority of secondary piano teachers who feel that, due to the limited

time available instruction should focus on the vital piano playing skills needed to function optimally as a singer and musician. It is very important for the singer to develop a sense of harmony on the piano. For this purpose as well as for accompaniment purposes, the playing of chords in all keys is very important and should be incorporated more functionally in the secondary piano curriculum for vocal art students at TUT.

To improve the relevance of the secondary piano instruction, the curriculum will consequently include the playing of vocal exercises and easy accompaniments. Previously, vocal art students were only required to perform the melody of a vocal piece during their proficiency examination. In future, students in their second year of instruction will be expected to also play a basic harmony note or chord in the left hand while third year students will have to demonstrate the ability to play an easy accompaniment from their relevant vocal repertory. Another functional piano playing skill which could be incorporated in the curriculum is improvisation. The author, who is also the present teacher, has previously identified the need for older students to experience and interact with the instrument sooner and in a more extensive way than the middle C approach¹⁴, currently being used, allows. Improvisational activities appear to be the ideal solution to create interest and motivation in learning to play the piano while slow technical and reading abilities are being developed through basic piano course material.

Secondary piano instruction is compulsory for vocal art students at TUT throughout their three year diploma course but not during their fourth year of study for a degree in performing arts. At present, the standard students achieve within three years of basic piano instruction is hardly equivalent to UNISA practical music examinations grade 1 and therefore they would greatly benefit from a fourth year of secondary piano instruction. Whether these students aim to become performers, educators or choir directors, greater piano playing abilities will definitely contribute to their future success as musicians. Vocal art students at TUT will also benefit from understanding and experiencing the importance of developing piano playing skills. The teacher can discuss the reasons for the instruction in the first lesson and subsequently reinforce the significance thereof through regular reminders and demonstrations of how they can apply the acquired skills in other areas of

¹⁴ The middle C approach is a method of teaching basic piano through which the pupil only plays five notes with each hand, from middle C to G in the treble clef (with the right hand) and from middle C to F in the bass clef (with the left hand), for a relatively long period of time before the hands start moving to and playing other keys on the keyboard. This method is regarded as musically and technically restrictive by some teachers but as a good method through which to teach proper five-finger technique and sight-reading skills by others.

their music education. It would also prove beneficial to coordinate the music theory, ear-training and piano curriculum to a larger extent than is presently the case.

Since group classes have become the most popular teaching method for secondary piano instruction, the particular advantages and factors contributing to the success thereof are investigated below.

5. GROUP PIANO INSTRUCTION

Music educators have different perceptions of group piano instruction and do not all agree on what it involves exactly (Uszler 1992:587-589). Group teaching can either imply the mere presence of more than one student reacting to the direction of a single teacher, or a specific group dynamic which occurs when multiple students interact with each other and the teacher, in the same music lesson. According to Uszler, group piano instruction is typically used for more general knowledge and skills which students can acquire simultaneously, such as learning new concepts or repertory, ensemble experiences, creative activities and improvisation. In addition to group classes, students may also receive individual or partner¹⁵ classes, to deal with the specific development of technique, performance skills, solo piano repertory and individual problems. Master classes, where an individual is taught in the presence of an audience, can also be considered a group class, provided the master interacts with the audience as well. Uszler provides a short summary of the history of group piano instruction.

5.1 A short history of group piano instruction

The earliest references to group piano instruction are found in literature on nineteenth century individual piano instructors and master classes.¹⁶ In the early twentieth century, group instruction was popularised by American educators as a functional teaching tool in general music education. Educators advocating class instruction used it as a means for learning practical skills such as harmonisation, improvisation and transposition rather than performance skills. New methods and materials were designed to meet the unique demands of group piano instruction. These methods challenged the time-tested strategies of teaching rhythm and reading through memorisation and repetition. Finding group piano instructors willing to use these new methods and materials proved a challenge.

Class instructors skilled in teaching groups were mostly amateur musicians who lacked the background, confidence and experience to teach practical piano playing skills. Piano instructors with the proper knowledge and experience of the instrument to teach functional skills were not trained and experienced in group instruction. Organising and presenting a series of functional musical concepts to a diverse group of students simultaneously was

¹⁵ Uszler does not explain what is meant by 'partner' classes, but the researcher's conclusion is that Uszler is referring to a lesson where two pupils are taught together.

¹⁶ Uszler refers here to Logier (1816), Burrowes (1818), Boissier (1927), Holland (1973), and Fay (1978).

unfamiliar ground which they were reluctant to tread on. Pioneers in classroom music spent much of the twentieth century trying to solve this problem by presenting lectures and demonstrations to established music organisations. In the 1920's and 1930's, the focus was primarily on group piano instruction in the elementary school. This broadened to incorporate music in the school classroom in general and later adult education in both the college setting and the workplace.

In the late 1950's, the electronic keyboard laboratory emerged.¹⁷ This method of teaching increased the accessibility of keyboard tuition at college level. The initial focus of class piano was on developing functional skills, mainly as an aid to theory instruction, but gradually the curriculum expanded to include repertory study, technical instruction, improvisation and ensemble experiences. These classes originally catered exclusively for the non-piano music major, but soon included non-music majors as well. Class piano was mostly taught by performing arts lecturers with little or no group teaching experience. Their skills in group instrumental instruction developed through intensive training programmes as well as personal experience. Consequently colleges started offering class piano teacher training (Uszler 1992:588-589).

5.2 The advantages of group instrumental instruction

The advantages of group instrumental instruction are manifold, and can primarily be divided into three categories:

- Economic;
- Musical;
- Social (McLachlan 1994:14).

These three advantages to group instruction will be further subdivided and discussed.

5.2.1 Economic advantages

The economic advantages of group instruction can be summarised as follows:

- Economy of instruction;
- Economy of time;

¹⁷ Uszler refers to Page (1968); Goltz, (1975); and Rhea (1972).

- Economy of expenses (Thompson 1983:198).

5.2.1.1 Economy of instruction

McLachlan (1994:14) states that in a group setting, greater numbers of students can be accommodated without influencing the quality of the tuition. Shorter practical lessons can focus on instrument-specific elements, whereas general concepts can be taught in the group. She recommends that specialists in the field give the shorter instrumental lessons while the groups can be taught by educators with appropriate knowledge and skills in music and group instruction. The group class educator can, for example teach note values, rhythmic patterns, key-signatures, aural concepts and skills, theory, and phrasing and interpretation through proper knowledge of musical structure, form and style.

Economy of instruction is especially convenient when teaching beginners because they all have to acquire the same basic knowledge and practical skills. When beginners are taught simultaneously, the teacher does not unnecessarily have to repeat the same instructions and exercises in multiple individual lessons. Thompson (1983:197-198)¹⁸ states that all the students in the group benefit from the instructions and advice given, regardless of whether the teacher is addressing an individual, or the whole class. In a group setting there are also automatically a greater variety of reactions to the tuition, which creates more diverse learning opportunities. Unnecessary writing is also eliminated in the group class because new information is essentially learned verbally and practically (McLachlan 1994:15).

5.2.1.2 Economy of time

Thompson (1983:197) states that group classes provide the opportunity of learning for more people because additional time and space become available. Whether in the private or college setting, valuable time can be saved by teaching several students simultaneously. When utilising group classes to teach basic or functional skills such as theory, harmonisation, improvisation, transposition, ear-training and sight-reading, individual lessons can focus on repertory study and personal problems. Implementing group classes also eases the timetable of college and university lecturers and teachers, enhancing their availability for additional classes and academic or administrative duties.

¹⁸ Thompson consistently refers to the specific teachers from whom he gathered information during personal interviews. For the purpose of this study these references are not considered vitally important and therefore the reader is referred to the original source in this regard.

5.2.1.3 Economy of expenses

In the private setting, students can be charged less for group instruction than for individual tuition. The teacher receives his fee per hour, while the parent or student saves (Thompson 1983:62, 137, 177). At colleges and universities, individual tuition is the most expensive form of education for both student and institution. By presenting group piano classes, the student saves on tuition fees, while the institution saves on teaching salaries. Because more students can be accommodated in the time-table, higher student numbers produce a higher income for the department.

5.2.2 Musical advantages

The musical advantages of group instruction include:

- The acquisition of a broad spectrum of skills;
- The development of critical faculties, listening skills and self-assessment skills;
- The development of performance skills;
- Ensemble activities and musicianship skills;
- The improvement of practice habits and progress;
- Rhythmic stability, improved intonation, memory training and notational reading.

5.2.2.1 The acquisition of a broad spectrum of skills

Group instrumental instruction creates the opportunity for teaching a broad spectrum of skills (Thompson 1983:218-219, 290, 352; Coertzen 1995:21-22). 'A broad spectrum of skills' refers both to a variety of practical skills as well as social and educational skills (discussed under 5.2.3) acquired through participating in group activities. Practical skills, such as harmonisation, improvisation, composition, ensemble playing, sight-reading, ear-training and music theory can be taught in the individual lesson as well, but more efficiently through group instruction.

Enoch (cited in Thompson 1983:218-219) strongly believes that group classes provide the opportunity to acquire a broader spectrum of skills than individual tuition. According to her, the focus of group lessons should be on developing musicians rather than instrumentalists. Thompson's (1983:219, 290) interviewees define 'the broader range of skills', as musicianship skills, such as critical faculties, heightened aural perception, broad

repertory knowledge and increased concentration. More specific advantages include improved notational reading and hand-eye coordination in keeping up with the steady pulse of the ensemble, the development of quick responses due to competition in the group and the improvement of performance skills by often playing for a critical audience (the group itself) as a soloist or ensemble member. Thompson also states that there are advantages to the processes of emulation and imitation which occur in group tuition. According to Bastien (1977:315), students taught in a group setting learn particularly well by imitating each other.

McLachlan (1994:14) describes the musical advantages of group instruction as “real music making”¹⁹, where interpretive skills and concepts, for example imitation between different voices or musical lines, accompanying, harmonising, variation, contrast and ensemble playing, are most successfully experienced and taught in the group setting. According to her, music theory is also taught less “theoretically” in the group class through the use of aural presentation and insight, and becomes less tiresome and more enjoyable for the student. McLachlan does not provide specific examples of how to teach theory successfully in the group class. Thompson (1983:284) gives an example of teaching theory more practically by assigning different notes of a chord to separate students when explaining major and minor harmonies. Crump (cited in Thompson 1983:219) uses improvisational exercises to help students discover harmonic concepts instead of teaching it ‘theoretically’ and directly.

It can therefore be concluded that all the musical advantages of group instruction can be categorised under ‘a broad spectrum of skills’. Some of these advantages will be discussed further.

5.2.2.2 The development of critical faculties, listening skills and self-assessment skills

Critical faculties develop naturally in the group setting (Thompson 1983:198). The mere presence of peers performing the same task simultaneously compels students to comparison. This often leads to competitiveness, which some teachers perceive as negative and others as positive (Stevens 1989:4). Bastien (1977:315) is of the opinion that the sense of competition which exists in the group setting is positive and causes learners

¹⁹ McLachlan gives no explanation for what is meant by ‘real music making’. It possibly refers to the actual music making experience where all knowledge and skills are incorporated in an activity, as opposed to learning and practicing certain skills in an isolated setting through repetitive exercises.

to prepare better and more conscientiously. Stevens (1989:7) states that the degree of competition within the group is mainly determined by the personality structure of the group. Therefore, some teachers feel that selecting a harmonious blend of personalities is more important than considering the students' standard of performance.

Thompson's (1983:210) study concluded that teachers should sensitively guide competitiveness toward positive attitudes of interest and the development of critical abilities. Positive attitudes of interest improve motivation to learn, while critical abilities develop listening skills. When a student can critically listen to and assess the playing of others, he also develops the capability to assess and improve his own playing. Healthy competitiveness is thus an important element of progress and self-evaluation. Through group activities, students have the opportunity to compare their skills and progress with their peers', and to learn from others' mistakes and successes (McLachlan 1994:15; Gray 2000:7).

When guided effectively, competitiveness grows into cooperation between students. Ultimately, the elements of cooperation and competition can co-exist effectively in the group setting (Thompson 1983:352).

5.2.2.3 The development of performance skills

Stevens (1989:7) states that members of a group class perform more easily in public than pupils who are individually taught, because they are playing regularly for their peers. Students become less nervous and insecure as the group gets to know one another and consequently develop improved performance skills and enhanced confidence (Thompson 1983:198). McLachlan (1994:15) and Kurzweil (1977:29) agree that group classes provide sufficient performance opportunities to rid non-ensemble instrumentalists, especially pianists, of their self-consciousness and nervousness. Kurzweil (1977:29) adds that, through performance exercises, students are also effectively confronted with their own progress.

5.2.2.4 Ensemble activities and musicianship skills

According to Thompson (1983:198, 352), group classes are advantageous because they create the opportunity for ensemble activities from the start. He states that students are introduced to the joy of playing with others much earlier and more readily in group classes than in individual tuition. Bastien (1977:315) agrees that the group setting creates better

opportunities for ensemble experiences than the individual lesson. Gray (2000:6) emphasises that these experiences as well as shared discoveries increase the fun in piano lessons.

Thompson (1983:189, 293, 352, 355) discovered that the amount of time contributed to learning certain musical elements is very similar in individual and group classes, with group students displaying superior notational and musicianship skills and similar and better musical knowledge, practical skills, imitation capabilities and commitment. Thompson concluded that although more time is not spent developing musicianship skills in group than in individual classes, it develops more naturally in the group setting due to ensemble activities which improve listening skills; musicianship skills are therefore more easily acquired. Thompson however emphasises that more time should be spent on developing musicianship skills in both individual and group tuition.

Other advantages of ensemble activities include the development of leadership skills and the ability to follow. McLachlan (1994:15) states that these two important characteristics can only really develop effectively through group activities. In order to keep up with the group, students stretch their attention span to constantly listen and look ahead in the music. They also learn to help each other and when necessary take the initiative to keep ensemble activities going.

5.2.2.5 The improvement of practice habits and progress

With reference to Enoch's study, Thompson (1983:217-218) points out that Enoch's group classes illustrate a learning curve that starts slowly, gains momentum toward rapid growth, and then slows down again. When the progress of her group students is compared with that of her individually taught students, it becomes clear that despite the slower stages, the group students generally equal the standard of the individually taught students by the end of their second year, and perform better than them in their third year of instruction. Thompson (1983:198) and Gray (2000:7) explain that group students progress faster through hearing each other play because it enhances their listening skills and subsequently increases their motivation to perform well. Multiple participants in an activity automatically produce a larger variety of responses through which additional educational situations occur (Thompson 1983:197).

Group students develop greater motivation to practice than individually taught students because they strive to meet the standards of their peers rather than that of their teachers

(Thompson 1983:197-198). Additionally, the individual's responsibility toward the group, the enjoyment of group activities, the factor of competition and the knowledge that they might be asked to perform motivates them to practice (Gray 2000:6-7; McLachlan 1994:15). McLachlan (1994:15) feels that practice material, which often includes a lot of monotonous repetition, becomes less tiresome and more interesting in the group setting. Gray (2000:6-7) suggests that technical exercises can be made more attractive by, for example, adding accompaniments.

Even though group students are more naturally motivated to practice due to group activities and responsibilities, they still need to be taught how to practice (Thompson 1983:352). Pearsall (1999:3) recommends that students should not only be taught how to practice but should also be encouraged to try assignments out in class. Enoch (cited in Thompson 1983:221) has experienced that, because practice opportunities are created during lesson times, group classes can be successful even when students do not own a piano. She stresses the fact that both group and individually taught students must be trained how to practice regularly and effectively. Kurzweil (1977:29) confirms that she consciously teaches her students exactly how to practice, and frequently emphasises the need for regular practice.

5.2.2.6 Rhythmic stability, improved intonation, memory training and notational reading

There is disagreement as to whether group work actually improves rhythmic sensitivity or not. Spencer (cited in Thompson 1983:221) states that group work is often more metronomic than rhythmic. Group students do however develop rhythmic stability and continuity in keeping up with the group. Certainly ensemble activities, in which the individual has to be aware of other musicians, develop rhythmic sensitivity. Gray (2000:6-7) states that playing together improves counting, sense of rhythm, sight-reading, concentration, comprehension of balance between the hands as well as articulation, different styles of phrasing and interpretation possibilities.

Some group instructors prefer to teach beginners by rote and memory. They believe that by eliminating the concentration needed to focus on notation, intonation and technique can be more easily mastered (Thompson 1983:209). Although Thompson (1983:292, 294) concluded that repetition is not done much more in group teaching than in individual classes, some form of repetition, which improves memory training and notational skills, does occur. Notational skills are also more effectively taught in group classes due to the

element of peer-learning. Reist (2002:36, 94) suggests that conceptual teaching is another effective strategy which contributes to the greater progress of group students. Conceptual teaching occurs when a basic theoretical, musical or technical concept is taught through a variety of different applications. This process offers students the opportunity to internalise and experience the concept through multiple activities without monotonous repetition. The student's knowledge is slowly broadened by sequential and spiral learning where every concept is related to previously acquired information.

5.2.3 Social advantages

The social advantages of group instruction include:

- Interaction and peer-learning;
- Motivation and encouragement;
- Discovery-learning and enjoyment;
- Involvement;
- The development of individuality and positive self-esteem.

5.2.3.1 Interaction and peer-learning

Stevens (1989:3) states that the greatest difference between individual and group teaching lies within this third category of advantages, the sociological factors. She regards the interaction that takes place between pupils in a group setting as the “hidden key to success in group piano teaching” (Stevens 1989:3). According to Stevens (1987)²⁰ (cited in Stevens 1989:3), most educators focus mainly on the physical and economical advantages of group instruction, as well as the development of functional piano playing skills, and neglect the sociological dynamics of group work which also positively influence learning. Thompson (1983:197-198) agrees that group instruction should not be defined as a method of teaching used mainly for economic advantages but rather as a process of learning that takes place through the interaction of a group of diverse individuals. Although these sociological advantages of group teaching cannot be measured through accomplishment-evaluations, as can be done with practical skills, they still have a considerable impact on learning and learning behaviours (Stevens 1989:3).

²⁰ This study by Stevens is unavailable.

In Reist's (2002:33, 35-36) opinion, the two main ingredients which make group classes unique and successful are peer interaction and group dynamics. Peer interaction can be described as "The combined or reciprocal actions of two or more individuals that have an effect on each other and work together" (Reist 2002:36). According to Reist, students learn from one another when they share ideas and strategies and applaud one another on achieved shared goals. She states that group dynamics exist where all participants are involved in the excitement of exploring and discovering, performing and being creative, learning and supporting each other.

Cooperation between the individuals in a group setting occurs especially when they have problems in common (Stevens 1989:4). The teachers in Stevens' (1989:7) study perceive peer-learning as more effective than teacher-directed learning, because students generally take more notice of each other than of adults. Thompson (1983:212, 351) observes the importance of quickly recognising and encouraging peer-learning when it occurs in the group setting. He however warns that, although peer-learning and cross-teaching are valuable advantages to group instruction, the teacher should guard against creating too much dependence amongst students. While it is important to create cohesiveness amongst the individuals of the group, the ultimate educational objective is to develop self-motivated students who can function independently from their teacher and co-students.

5.2.3.2 Motivation and encouragement

One of the most beneficial advantages of group instruction is that it naturally stimulates motivation (Thompson 1983:352). Student motivation is highly influenced by the pupil's need for social acceptance and peer communication. These needs can be more effectively met through group instruction than individual piano tuition (Stevens 1989:3). According to Thompson (1983:197-198, 218), group students receive essential support from each other and find it inspiring to spend time with 'like-minded' peers. Motivation, which is an essential aspect of any successful educational setting, is thus a natural outcome of group tuition due to the musical and moral support provided by the presence of co-students and group activities.

Bastien (1977:315) adds that motivation, which is especially important when learning basic skills, is remarkably improved by group spirit and dynamics. McLachlan (1994:15) points out that musicians spend a lot of time on their own and that many learners discontinue their piano lessons for this reason. Group classes offer an effective alternative

because the student's optimum learning potential can be achieved in an atmosphere of enjoyment and excitement (Reist 2002:36).

5.2.3.3 Discovery-learning and enjoyment

Group instrumental lessons are considered by most educators as more dynamic, pragmatic, musical and educative than individual lessons. Two of Thompson's (1983:199, 291) interviewees, Enoch and Van Barthold, especially prefer group instruction as it provides opportunity for discovery-learning. The teacher structures the educational experience in such a manner that the student discovers the solution to his problems on his own, rather than receiving the information directly from the teacher. Thompson thus concludes that group instruction focuses more on discovery-learning than on giving direct information.

Thompson (1983:198, 355) carried out a number of case studies comparing individual and group instrumental instruction and found that enjoyment was more often and more externally displayed in the latter situation. He also found that educators who teach both individual and group piano classes are generally more spontaneous, and encourage more enjoyment and discovery-learning in their group classes. Kurzweil (1977:29) places a high value on creating independent students and ensuring that they experience a sense of enjoyment during lessons. Still, the desired enjoyment and enthusiasm of the individual cannot be manifested without his active involvement in the process (Thompson 1983:222-223).

5.2.3.4 Involvement

According to Stevens (1989:7), structured and guided group criticism not only improves students' listening skills, but also keeps them involved and interested for the entire duration of the class. Reist (2002:35) defines a group lesson as "a learning environment where all participants are involved at all times and in all activities, where individuality is respected and cooperation is encouraged." Keeping the whole group actively involved during the entire lesson might seem an unlikely possibility, but Thompson's (1983:203, 351) research concluded that it is indeed possible. He states that all students can be involved in the group class, at all times, by promoting open debate and positive feedback. More specific guidelines for ensuring active student involvement are discussed under 5.4.3.

5.2.3.5 The development of individuality and positive self-esteem

Stevens (1989:4) emphasises that, in addition to creating enjoyment, group activities where the efforts of the individual are needed to achieve a common goal, also enhance the student's self-esteem. The 'room to fail', and especially the amount of time available to recover from mistakes (in contrast with the limited time offered in individual lessons), further contribute to developing and maintaining the student's positive self-image. Stevens (1989:4) and Thompson (1983:352) agree that the mere presence of other individuals in the group setting enhances the pupil's sense of individuality.

In Stevens' (1989:7) study, introverts progressed well in the group setting and showed greater personality development than they generally do in individual tuition. Thompson (1983:198) also found that shy students feel less exposed in group tuition than in individual classes. Pupils have the advantage of being involved at all times without being overwhelmed by the teacher. According to him, every student can only receive a certain amount of personal attention per session, and therefore they experience reduced stress in comparison with the pressures of an individual lesson.

Teachers also experience less stress in the group setting than with individual tuition. In group classes, the student develops more responsibility for his own progress through independent learning and self-motivation (McLachlan 1994:15). Since the group teacher cannot always give immediate personal attention, students very often need to solve their own problems and therefore become more self-reliant (Bastien 1977:315). Peer-learning and cross-teaching also contribute to the sharing of educational responsibilities, which reduces the teacher's stress regarding learning, progress and success.

Although the advantages of group instruction outweigh the disadvantages, Thompson (1983:198, 351) mentions two negative aspects of it:

- Not always being able to hear every student to identify and address their specific problems;
- Not being able to spend a lot of time with individuals in the group.

5.3 A comparison of group as opposed to individual instrumental instruction

In order to establish whether group instruction is more ideal than individual tuition in teaching functional piano playing skills to tertiary voice students, it is important to compare these two methods of teaching.

5.3.1 The objectives of group as opposed to individual instrumental instruction

Thompson's (1983:297, 351-352) research concludes that the aims of group instruction are more wide-ranging than the specific objectives of individual tuition. It seems that in group classes the emphasis is more on dynamics created through social and educational factors, than the development of music knowledge and practical skills. Individual instrumental instruction focuses primarily on the acquisition of pre-determined music knowledge and practical skills, for example theoretical concepts, technical exercises and repertory study. Thompson did however establish that, despite these differences in focus, the learning outcomes of group instruction regarding the acquisition of practical skill, knowledge and musicianship, equal those of individual tuition.

The social and educational dynamics of group instruction which Thompson (1983:196-197) refers to include:

- Combining the enjoyment of collective activities with instruction;
- Helping every student discover his individual abilities;
- Developing the complete person through interaction with his peers;
- Providing the opportunity of education for a larger population;
- Producing as excellent a standard of education as possible;
- Achieving similarity with the standards acquired in individual tuition.

5.3.2 The differences between group and individual instrumental instruction

Although educators, regardless of whether they teach individuals or groups, develop their own personal teaching approach, the following major aspects consistently differentiate group instruction from individual tuition:

- Group tuition requires more extensive and formalised organisation and pre-planning than individual instruction. Individual lessons are generally more

impromptu because the teacher is guided by the student's effort, practice habits and progress. In group classes, the need for order, guided creative activities and active participation and full concentration from every individual requires proper planning. Students can only be 'free' during experiential learning, improvisation and other creative activities if the teacher is organised and confident in facilitating these experiences. Impromptu teaching in the group setting can create insecurity amongst students and result in a fragmented class experience.

- The encouragement of response, interaction and full participation, which occurs constantly in the group setting, does not take place as readily in the individual lesson. Success in both individual and group classes can be improved by constantly drawing ideas from the pupil(s).
- Wider social and educational factors are taken into consideration when teaching groups as opposed to individuals. Elements such as interaction, group dynamics, peer-learning, cross-teaching, motivation and encouragement, discovery-learning, enjoyment, the development of individuality and positive self-esteem as well as active involvement does not often come into play in individual instruction.
- In the individual setting, the roles of teacher and pupil are more clear-cut as "giver and receiver" (Thompson 1983:283). The opportunity for peer-learning and discovery-learning, which occur readily in the group setting, diminishes the pressure on the teacher as the only source of knowledge. Therefore, the educator's role becomes one of consultant rather than authoritarian and students develop greater responsibility for their own learning.
- The types of assignments appropriate for success in individual and group classes differ. In the group lesson, multiple interactions are made possible between teacher and pupil(s), as well as pupil and pupil(s). These different possibilities for interaction lend themselves to more varied activities whereas interaction in the individual lesson is restricted to two-way communication between the teacher and pupil. Successful activities in the group class include demanding answers from the group, dividing tasks among the members of the group, and having students model for and imitate each other. In the group setting, it is vitally important to utilise the diversity of all the individuals in the group (Thompson 1983:213, 283-284).

Further points from Thompson's (1983:290-294) study that are worth mentioning include:

- Acculturation, where individuals adopt the values of the group, occurs in the group setting;
- The level of student commitment in group classes equals those in individual instruction;
- A wider range of skills are developed in the group class;
- Teachers are similar in their use of time and consistency in both individual and group classes;
- Although ensemble activities improve listening skills and therefore musicianship is acquired more easily in group classes, more time should be spent on developing musicianship skills in both group and individual tuition;
- In both educational settings, motivation is influenced by the appropriateness and attractiveness of the learning materials;
- Notational skills are more effectively taught in group classes, possibly because of more repetition and peer-learning.

Thompson (1983:224) concludes that “Highly individual, personal skills can be taught in groups, efficiently and pleasurably”.

5.3.3 The advantages of individual instrumental instruction

McLachlan (1994:14) argues that although group keyboard instruction provides advantages regarding the teacher's time, number of students that can be accommodated as well as pedagogical and musical development, the individual lesson cannot be replaced by group tuition for several reasons which relate to:

- Self-evaluative listening skills: The skill of listening to oneself is essential in the acquisition of finer and more developed interpretational skills. In the group setting the student is encouraged to listen to his peers in order to blend in with the group rather than stand out and therefore does not actively listen to himself.
- Individual expression: It is important for students to add their own interpretation to the music they perform in order to develop a personal style of expression and a sense of individualism in their music;
- Technical development: The individual monitoring of technique is important and might be difficult to maintain diligently in a group setting;

- Practice habits: Students practice in the manner in which they are taught and therefore personal attention is important. If precision, diligence and repetition are not demanded in class, neither will it be practiced at home.
- Tempo of development: each student must be able to develop according to his own tempo, without the frustration of being held back by others (McLachlan 1994:14).

5.4 General characteristics of successful group instruction

Success in group classes is more often measured and displayed in musical, social, and personal skills than in practical abilities. In group classes, more emphasis is placed on the attitude and enjoyment of the student than in individual tuition, and the development of performance skills becomes the secondary objective (Thompson 1983:222-223). Through case studies, Thompson (1983:281-282) identified fundamentals which contribute to the success of both individual and group classes. Lessons are generally affected by both the skill of the teacher and the attitude of the learner(s). More specifically, the following are requirements for successful lessons:

- Students should be both musically and verbally actively involved in the lesson;
- Teachers and pupils should listen intelligently and openly to each other;
- All dialogue in class should be interactive and not forceful;
- Opportunity for students to use their own inventiveness and learn through discovery should be created;
- Musicianship qualities such as phrasing and interpretation should be enthusiastically acknowledged by the teacher;
- The lesson should be recognised by multiple activities sequenced progressively;
- Information should be brought alive to students and not merely presented to them.

5.4.1 Group teacher training and characteristics

Thompson (1983:2, 27, 352) mentions the apparent restrictions in the training of potential group instrumental teachers. Music students generally focus on mastering instrumental skills, and the modest pedagogical training they receive often does either not include group teaching methods or devotes very little time to it. Few students anticipate teaching groups and most commonly presume that they will teach students individually. Thompson believes that existing training courses for group teaching is in need of improvement. He

strongly recommends that music students receive in-service training in group instrumental tuition.

According to Thompson's (1983:14, 350-352) study, the majority of established group educators have received no formal training in group instruction. Their diverse approaches have developed through their own experiences in group instruction as well as through observing other group educators. Almost all of them teach groups in addition to, and not instead of, individual classes. They strongly recommend that aspiring group teachers gain experience from experts in the field. The drawbacks to observing other teachers are firstly that it needs to be done over an adequate amount of time to gain true insight into the educator's method and approach, and secondly, observers run the risk of merely replicating the master instead of developing their own unique method. A more controversial way of gaining experience of group tuition is to enrol in a group class. In so doing, direct insight is gained into the world of a student embarking on the journey of acquiring a new practical skill.

Price (1998:2) describes the successful group secondary piano instructor's class production as one of "Broadway proportions". He states that several skills must be taught to students who are merely there to fulfil a requirement for their degree. The teacher has to guide the students to "think in the same way, at the same time, and in the same place on the keyboard" (Price 1998:2). Thompson (1983:353-354) states that successful group instructors are conscious of the special social dynamics to be found in the group setting, as well as the musical and educational opportunities it creates. In the class setting, these teachers purposefully capitalise on the variety of personalities in the group, and utilise unanticipated events to the benefit of the entire group. Reist (2002:94) emphasises that this type of teacher flexibility is very important when students unexpectedly develop the desire to dictate the lesson's direction and goals.

Another important factor in successful group classes is creating a pleasant learning environment. In Arrau's (cited in Betts 2003:2) study on the characteristic behaviours of exemplary group piano teachers, it was found that they frequently make use of humour. Pearsall (1999:4) agrees that the use of humour helps to create a comfortable learning environment. Sturm (cited in Betts 2003:2) also discovered that successful group teachers praise student performance twice as often as they criticise it, which contributes to a positive atmosphere. In Lyman's (1999:2) opinion, regular eye contact increases a positive psychological connection between teacher and pupil. Circulating among the students also lessens the teacher's psychological distance from the students (Lyman

1999:4; Betts 2003:1-3). Lyman (1999:4) recommends that the teacher memorises the lesson plan, if possible, in order to freely observe the students' expressions, body language and technique.

An effective group teacher not only needs to display the same characteristics as an effective individual tutor but should be more extrovert and dynamic in personality as well (Thompson 1983:13). At the same time, the group educator needs to consistently manage and control the group and ensure that every student's work is checked and tested on a weekly basis. McLachlan (1994:16) emphasises that pupils should never feel that they have prepared for a lesson in vain or that their efforts go unnoticed. She adds that the teacher should ensure that he accommodates the diversity of the individuals in the group. Different expectations can be established for different age groups and individuals, for example by having individuals play pieces and exercises at different speeds, allowing a different amount of mistakes, and simplifying the musical parts of an ensemble piece to create opportunity for everyone to play together.

Other characteristic behaviours of highly successful group instructors include enthusiasm and holding students to high standards of musicianship (Betts 2003:2). Pearsall (1999:2-4) states that student motivation is greatly influenced by high teacher standards and expectations, as well as a sincere interest in their progress. He regards students' opinions as important and sincerely listens to their comments on how the course and method of presentation can be improved. According to Pearsall, students are inspired by their teacher's growth and improvement, and therefore group instructors should constantly strive to improve their own skills and qualifications.

5.4.2 Developing a group teaching method

Successful group tuition starts with proper preparation (McLachlan 1994:15). In contrast with the more spontaneous approach of individual tuition, structuring progressive learning experiences for groups require proper and extensive planning on the teacher's part (Thompson 1983:199). Thorough long-term planning establishes broad objectives which enables the teacher to be flexible to adjust and improvise when student contributions propel the lesson in a different direction (Thompson 1983:13). Proper preparation also enhances the educator's confidence in his method of teaching. McLachlan (1994:15) states that the teacher needs to be enthusiastic and convinced of his method in order to insure every student's interest, attention and involvement at all times.

In order to create flexibility the teacher needs the security of proper lesson planning that includes both short- and long-term goals (Reist 2002:94). Reist emphasises the importance of comprehensive lessons, proper sequencing of material and effective time management during the class period, which can only be achieved through a structured lesson plan. She adds that students consequently feel secure within a consistent class routine because it eliminates confusion and creates familiarity. Sturm's (cited in Betts 2003:2) study confirmed that successful group teachers' classes are mostly well organised.

According to Coats (2000:2-4), each lesson plan can either focus on single or multiple musical concepts and objectives. Multiple concepts are often introduced simultaneously in order to prevent students from becoming bored. He advises that during these circumstances, the number of concepts should be limited to ensure proper focus on the material. Coats is of the opinion that contrasting concepts, such as *legato* and *staccato*, are most effectively taught when they are introduced together. He states that music symbols, for example *piano* or *forte*, should be taught in conjunction with ample opportunities to experience the related touch and sound sensations thereof. Coats further emphasises that already learned concepts should always be transferred to new objectives and experiences. In Reist's (2002:94) opinion, successful teaching is characterised by the regular reinforcement of learnt material. She adds that consistent review, to ensure that concepts have been successfully transferred, is of vital importance.

According to Lyman (1999:2-4), 'playing along' during ensemble activities is not an effective group teaching method because students are not able to distinguish the teacher's playing from that of their peers. He states that group teachers should observe and give directions rather than play along. Lyman however urges instructors to constantly keep the focus on hands-on activities and thus guard against excessive talking and consequent boredom. Visual aids, especially, help reduce the tendency to over-talk and explain, because "a picture speaks a thousand words" (Lyman (1999:3). In his opinion incorporating a variety of visual, kinaesthetic and aural activities is important because students have different learning styles. He also indicates that the teacher should regularly alternate the pace of activities in order to ensure student attention and adequate opportunity for comprehension.

Thompson (1983:37, 202-204, 351) recommends a group size that enables the teacher to give personal attention when needed, while not causing other students to feel inhibited. The size of the group is generally influenced by the age of the students, their standard of

performance, and the type of instrument that is being taught. Young beginners, as well as more advanced students, might need to be placed in smaller groups to provide for greater personal attention. Adults and string players can often successfully be accommodated in larger groups while smaller groups are better suited to pianists and brass players for physical and intonation reasons respectively. Ideally, pianists can be taught four at a time, since they can be simultaneously accommodated at one piano on a rotating basis. Although it is clear that a variety of possibilities for group sizes exist, Thompson indicates that the most common group size for effective teaching appears to be eight pupils. He consequently states that different group sizes are ideal in different circumstances, and that diverse instruments can also be taught together. Thompson concludes that it is best to organise group classes according to similar ages, except with adults.

According to Thompson's (1983:351-352) study, the duration of a group lesson is affected by several factors, such as the size of the group, the age of the students, the type of instrument(s) taught (certain instruments need additional time for proper tuning), the curriculum and the extent of individual contributions made. Young beginners can ideally be taught for thirty minutes at a time and older students for forty to forty-five minutes. Adults are able to manage a two-hour lesson as long as it includes a break. Thompson recommends that group classes should occur more than once a week in the beginning stages of tuition in order to ensure continuity and progress.

Reist (2002:36) suggests that group classes can meet weekly or less often and can either function as the only method of teaching, or be combined with individual or partner lessons. Her advice to teachers who want to add group classes to their existing individual teaching method is to 1) combine current private lessons into partnerships; 2) arrange summer projects focusing on a form of enrichment, for instance jazz or accompaniment; 3) overlap partner or private lessons to create interactive opportunities; 4) group new students according to age, background or interests; 5) consider the teacher's teaching space and instrument inventory. Gray (2000:6) suggests that individual lessons can overlap to accommodate theory and ear-training activities as well as opportunity for ensemble playing and performing.

In Reist's (2002:36) opinion, the piano studio can consist of one or more pianos or a combination of acoustic pianos and keyboards. Additional equipment can range from flash cards to sophisticated technology, which can be used to create additional opportunities for ensemble experiences and creative projects. Reist mentions that hardware is available which can enhance student performance and practice, communication between teacher,

student and parents, as well as improve the marketing of group classes. She does however not provide further specifics on which hardware she is referring to. Solomon (1989:1) states that with computers, printers and synthesisers the students can work on composing, arranging, sequencing, ear-training, music theory, listen to their repertory, and record their own performances for self-evaluation purposes.²¹

Thompson's (1983:205-206) study indicates that different opinions exist about the selection of appropriate teaching material. Some group teachers use and adapt existing individual piano teaching material, others combine various method books and a few teachers succeed in writing their own material. The most important aspects of material selection appear to be relevance to the needs of the particular group, as well as variety. Writing original material to cater for a group's unique combination of individuals and their abilities therefore seems to be the ideal. McLachlan (1994:15) states that appropriate teaching material should establish a systematic learning process, include technically easy ensemble material, not create too much homework, and always maintain a measure of challenge for those who develop with ease. Thompson (1983:351) suggests that unity of material can be more effectively established by working according to themes, for example choosing a specific composer, period or area of focus (whether theoretical, musical or technical). In his opinion shorter pieces are better suited to group instruction.

Lyman (1999:4) introduces new material properly before students play it for the first time. He creates the opportunity to experience the material first, for example through clapping the rhythm and playing the chord changes. Benson (2000:2) sequences the steps to learning a new skill in such a way that every student stays involved all the time. According to Sturm (cited in Betts 2003:2), the teaching sequence of effective group teachers (consisting of teacher-direction, pupil performance, teacher-direction and pupil performance again, followed by teacher questions) is often fast-paced and directions are kept short. Lyman (1999:3) suggests giving clear instructions in a logical order and in simple language. Benson (2000:4) states that giving too many instructions at once should be avoided and adds that teacher feedback should be given frequently, but kept specific and sincere.

Reist (2002:36) emphasises that a comprehensive curriculum should include all skills necessary to create a well developed musician, for example sight-reading, transposing,

²¹ The researcher takes note that there is exciting technology which can enhance the success of group piano tuition, but further attention will not be paid to this aspect in the current study. It might prove valuable to gain more information on available technology in a future study.

accompanying, harmonising, improvisation and playing by ear. Individual repertory study is a useful teaching tool for various activities such as analysing the music, discussing multiple interpretation possibilities, sharing practice ideas and strategies, providing multiple performance opportunities, critical listening exercises, effective evaluation opportunities, and ensures a balanced diet of musical styles and repertory knowledge.

Though it is difficult to control the progress of a group as a whole, the pace of presentation must adapt to the individuals. Often, the development of the group reaches plateaux where some students have opportunity to catch up. This may result in more repetition and a slower rate of presentation than in individual lessons but, as stated earlier, group students generally achieve the same standard of performance as individually taught students by the end of their second year of instruction (Thompson 1983:207). Individual performance opportunities are very important in order to develop confidence and satisfy the student's need 'to perform'. They also provide the opportunity for teacher-, peer-, and self- evaluation. Students learn to listen to each other, to appreciate each other's attempts but also to criticise in a positive manner (McLachlan 1994:16). Thompson (1983:352) is of the opinion that, since the specific needs of the individual are catered for in the group, assessments should be done individually.

5.4.3 Student involvement

Thompson (1983:352) states that in effective group classes every group member is kept involved and interested for the entire duration of the class. In order to keep students involved, they can be frequently asked to perform, or give comments and constructive suggestions when they are not performing (Benson 2000:3; Betts 2003:2). Sturm (cited in Betts 2003:2) established that successful group instructors repeatedly instruct, and expect students to perform different forms of information and skills simultaneously. Exemplary teachers direct their behaviour to the whole class over 90% of the time, and the whole class performs together more than two-thirds of the time. Lyman (1999:2) suggests that when the entire group is not instructed as a whole, the teacher can create small work groups or divide tasks among students. Students can also teach and evaluate each other and thus become better self-evaluators. Sturm (cited in Betts 2003:3) observes that an average group class can consist of more than fifty questions and student reactions.

Thompson (1983:203) states that student involvement can be bettered by using a variety of material and activities suited to all individuals in the group. Group teachers frequently utilise the following techniques to enhance student involvement:

- All the students play together, either in unison or in parts;
- Every pupil receives the opportunity to perform individually as well as alternately listen and observe the playing of others;
- Students are divided into sub-groups where they each have a turn to perform and actively listen to the other students perform;
- All standards of performance are simultaneously accommodated in the group by having students execute less and more advanced material together;
- Non-performing students are given specific instructions while other students perform, for example to show fingering, say note names, count beats and bow in the air;
- Students are expected to give guided critical responses to the performances of others which ensure that they actively listen while others are playing (Thompson 1983:286-287).

Dobler (1977:78-79) suggests the following forms of instruction to ensure active student involvement:

- One student receives a normal lesson while the others practice with headphones;
- The whole group is instructed together, for instance on an interesting technical matter;
- One student's homework is recorded after which the entire class listens to and discusses the performance;
- Two or more students are connected with headphones and practice their homework together;
- One student practices an accompaniment while the soloist's part is played over the headphones.

Dobler (1977:79) states that these possibilities can easily be expanded by the resourceful teacher to create a lively method which unlocks greater student potential and results.

Reist (2002:94) believes that the success of group instruction strongly depends on the amount of creative opportunities it provides. Benson (2000:3-4) suggests adding challenges to repetitive exercises to keep 'faster' students interested, for example by having the student improvise a counter melody, add an *ostinato* or walking bass line, or use a different accompanying style. He also recommends that students verbalise what

they are doing while they are playing because it develops coordination, keeps them physically as well as mentally involved, and shows whether they do indeed know what they are doing.

The challenges of group instrumental instruction include ensuring that all students are equally challenged at all times, organising groups according to matching personalities, learning styles and abilities, having a flexible schedule to allow for unpredicted student contributions, devoting equal time to students as well as proper planning and structure (Gray 2000:7).

5.5 Summary

Group instruction occurs when more than one student reacts to the directions of a single teacher. This method of tuition is most often used in piano instruction to teach basic concepts and functional skills such as music theory, ear-training, technique, improvisation, harmonisation, transposition, composition, sight-reading and ensemble playing. The advantages of group instrumental instruction include various economical, musical and social motivations. Since group instruction accommodates a larger number of students than individual instruction does, it results in economical savings and more efficient instruction. Especially in basic instrumental instruction, general music knowledge and skills can be taught to several students simultaneously without unnecessary repetition of directions and exercises.

The general opinion is that group instrumental instruction provides opportunity for teaching a greater variety of music knowledge and skills than individual lessons allow. Group activities force students to listen to one another which results in greater concentration, rhythmical playing, ensemble playing skills and, most importantly, critical listening skills. The ability to critically evaluate the playing of others improves the individual's self-evaluation skills which ultimately lead to greater motivation to practice and consequent musical development. Regular performance opportunities in the group setting also improve students' confidence and standard of performance. Structured ensemble activities not only increase the enjoyment of the instruction, but furthermore enhance general music knowledge and musicianship skills to a larger extent than individual instruction does.

Students who participate in group instrumental classes are often more motivated to practice because of their responsibility toward the other members of the group, the

element of competition within the group, and the fact that they have to perform more regularly and enjoy ensemble activities. This greater motivation to practice can only become a tool for greater progress when students are adequately taught 'how' to practice. Other musicianship skills which are enhanced through ensemble playing include greater rhythmic sensitivity, counting abilities, sight-reading, comprehension of balance, articulation, phrasing and interpretation. Notational reading is also improved through group activities due to repetition as well as the elements of peer-learning and cross-teaching.

The most important advantage of group instruction is also the most neglected area, namely sociological dynamics within the group which positively influence the learning process. Through the process of sharing the challenges and excitement of the specific learning environment, certain dynamics become a natural consequence of group instruction. These methodological dynamics, for example peer-learning, cross-teaching and discovery-learning, are effective because older students more easily pay attention to each other than to instructors and furthermore enjoy discovering new information together. Shared activities result in peer communication, support and ultimately social acceptance which are significant motivational factors for older students, especially in any form of basic instruction. In the group class setting, it is difficult for the teacher to pay adequate attention to every individual's musical and technical difficulties. Through encouraging peer-learning, cross-teaching and discovery-learning, the teacher experiences less stress because the student's educational independence and responsibilities are enhanced.

Since every individual's contribution to the group is necessary and therefore valued, improved self-esteem is another positive by-product of group instruction. Students in the group class are also less exposed and granted more time to recover from mistakes than in individual lessons. The only possible disadvantage of the sociological aspects of group instruction is interdependence. It is therefore important that students also develop independently from the group. Future self-directed learning is only possible when a student can function separately from his peers and instructor.

The biggest difference between group and individual instruction lies in the intention of the instruction. Individual lessons focus primarily on the acquisition of instrument specific technical skills and repertory study, whereas group classes generally centres around the development of functional skills as well as educational and social aspects of the tuition. Despite these differences, the conclusion can be drawn that the same standard of instruction and performance can be acquired through group instruction as through

individual tuition. Due to the presence of multiple students in the learning environment, group instruction needs to be more organised through structured learning experiences. In individual tuition the student's effort and progress determine the lesson's learning content and therefore it requires less extensive preparation than group instruction does. Proper planning and organisation of the group curriculum also ensure every student's full participation in the group activities which is of vital importance since the teacher is not regarded as the only source of information. The group setting in addition provides opportunity for more diverse activities due to the greater interactional possibilities.

The advantages of individual tuition can ultimately not be disregarded because it provides greater opportunities for the development of individual technique and interpretational skills. Individual students can pay full attention to their own playing and develop more personal listening skills as opposed to critical listening skills. Therefore group classes are challenged to include the focus and standard expected in individual instruction and additionally incorporate the advantages of group instruction to ensure ultimate success in the approach. Structure, open communication, active involvement and enjoyment through self-discovery are important elements of successful group instruction. The most important element of success is to clearly determine the objectives of the instruction and arrange progressive learning experiences accordingly. These objectives and desired learning experiences will determine the appropriate group size, lesson times, curriculum content and teaching material. Successful group teachers generally possess the same characteristics as individual teachers plus added enthusiasm, energy and proper knowledge of group dynamics.

Practical elements which contribute to success in group instruction include adequate repetition, reinforcement, transferral and revision of acquired knowledge and skills. Together with proper planning, the teacher needs to provide instructions that are easily comprehensible, coherent, and also offer regular feedback. Supportive feedback, regular eye-contact, the use of humour and circulating in class, all contribute to a constructive educational setting. Students also respect and positively react to a teacher's sincerity, expectations for high standards of performance, as well as the teacher's personal skills and knowledge. Teachers who want to incorporate group classes in their teaching approach can do so gradually through enrichment projects, partner lessons or individual lessons which overlap for activities such as ear-training.

5.6 Guidelines for teaching basic piano to vocal art students at the Tshwane University of Technology

The economic benefits of group instruction are a great advantage to TUT due to the resulting financial savings and greater number of students that can be accommodated. This would enable TUT to provide to a larger student population the unique opportunity of studying vocal art with no prior music education.

Ensemble activities are currently not utilised to their full capacity in secondary piano instruction at TUT. All students are actively involved during the entire lesson but primarily through playing in unison or practicing on their own with headphones. The advantages of ensemble activities and skills can greatly contribute to the success of the instruction through increasing enjoyment, concentration, rhythmical playing, critical listening skills and, most importantly, ensemble playing skills. These skills are very important because singers mostly perform with accompanists or orchestras and very often sing in ensembles and choirs. Since secondary piano is a compulsory subject, enjoyment plays a significant role in ensuring motivation, good practice habits and active participation in class activities. Only through dynamic involvement will students realise the complete benefits of acquiring piano playing skills for their future careers in music.

During instruction, it often becomes evident that even though the teacher has explained and most often also demonstrated the practice assignments, students do not realise exactly what they need to do until they are required to demonstrate it. Therefore it could prove beneficial to have individual students perform different parts of the homework assignments at the end of every class period. Often, when the teacher is busy with an individual student and cannot pay immediate attention to others, students help each other and consequently peer-learning and cross-teaching occur naturally. The teacher can however take greater advantage of these occurrences and also facilitate these types of learning through structured activities. Discovery-learning is a concept with which this teacher was not previously familiar. Knowing the characteristics of vocal art students, they would greatly benefit from and enjoy discovering new information on their own as well as together through guided activities. A regular problem for the secondary piano teacher is students who register late and join the class after the first few lessons have already been completed. Frustration caused by trying to have the newcomer catch up while other students continue to progress can be greatly diminished through the use of the educational dynamics of group instruction. The newcomer can be taught by other students

which ensure that they revise, repeat, integrate and synthesise their acquired knowledge and skills while they are being challenged and kept actively involved.

When certain individuals develop slower than the rest of the class, their self-esteem is immediately negatively influenced. It is important in such instances to clearly establish the value of the individual's contributions to the educational setting in order to build his confidence in the learning environment and piano playing. The current advantage of the group setting is that such students can be given time to practice specific aspects of the lesson with which they have difficulties while the teacher attends to other students. In future, the secondary piano teacher must ensure not to neglect these students but sporadically give attention to and check on their progress. This will ensure that the student feels supported and encouraged while the teacher sees to it that the work is practiced correctly. When specific problem areas are identified the whole class can be involved in solving the problems through either cross-teaching or ensemble activities.

The current curriculum and teaching material for secondary piano instruction at TUT is properly planned and structured. An element which can be improved is intentional design of activities which promotes active student involvement. Previously, the teacher (author of this study) took every student's participation in the learning experience for granted since acquiring a practical skill necessitates physical involvement. This does, however, not ensure intellectual and emotional involvement. Therefore, the teacher needs to implement methods through which students are at all times physically, mentally and emotionally involved and consequently excited about the learning process. Curriculum design and choice of material have been the most difficult part of designing a secondary piano course for vocal art students at TUT. As the teacher in this situation, the author was constantly torn between focusing on proper standards of performance skills and considering the primary functional skills which vocal art students must necessarily acquire. Through the current study it has become obvious that establishing the discipline-specific objectives of the instruction is the crucial contributing factor to success. Subsequently, the aims of the instruction should be critically reviewed and clearly stated in order to re-evaluate the teaching material and methods used.

Although the secondary piano teacher at TUT has an organised and sound methodological approach to teaching, personal characteristics which can be improved on are energy, enthusiasm and knowledge about group dynamics. This extra knowledge and necessary attitude changes will further enhance the success of the instruction, student excitement and involvement, as well as consequently improve practice habits and

progress. The use of humour and regular positive feedback occur regularly in the secondary class setting. In some instances instructions can be kept shorter and made more comprehensible by using simple language and giving different explanations of the same concept in order to accommodate students' individual learning styles. Acquired knowledge and skills are continuously repeated, reinforced and revised but can definitely be more appropriately transferred to significant material which will reinforce the relevance of the instruction. The majority of the literature on secondary piano instruction focuses on the future advantages of acquiring piano playing skills. Vocal art students at TUT often participate in concerts and productions from their first year of studies and therefore the teacher should use every opportunity to illustrate how piano playing skills can already contribute to the success of their 'current careers'. Vocal art students display great respect for their teacher's piano playing knowledge and skills and definitely admire her further efforts to improve on these.

This review of the literature on adult education, basic piano instruction for adults, secondary piano instruction and group tuition concludes with the conclusions and recommendations below.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of this study was to investigate existing relevant literature on secondary piano instruction for music majors in order to determine which functional piano playing skills vocal art students at TUT necessarily need to acquire and through which method of teaching this can be best achieved. In Chapter 1, the background and context of the study were described, highlighting the fact that the author of this study is also the secondary piano teacher for vocal art students at TUT. Thereafter, the aim and methodology of the research study were explained and an overview of the intended literature investigation was given.

Chapter 2 concerns the adult and college-age student. Attention was given to the different perceptions of the term adult as perceived and described by various adult educators. Specific characteristics of adult and college-age students which influence programme design and the learning process were studied. The debate regarding the difference between andragogy and pedagogy was discussed especially as it relates to the acquisition of a new practical skill such as piano playing. It was concluded that the assumptions and implications of both andragogy and pedagogy are applicable to various educational settings and that it is the responsibility of the teacher to determine how these methods of teaching can be best applied in the specific learning environment.

Basic piano tuition for the adult and college-age student was examined in Chapter 3. The characteristics of adult learners which positively and negatively influence basic piano instruction were compared with those of children and divided into physiological, psychological and logistical considerations. This comparison was necessary in order to provide specific guidelines and propose appropriate teaching approaches toward success in basic piano instruction for adult students. The vital importance of understanding and considering the influence of the older beginner's unique characteristics on the learning environment, as well as maintaining flexibility with regard to lesson times and content, became very clear during this investigation.

Chapter 4 focused on the curriculum and method of teaching secondary piano to music majors at tertiary institutions in South Africa and abroad. Essential functional piano playing skills which piano minors are currently being taught and which vocal art students at TUT should possibly acquire were identified and examined. The most important skills identified were the development of technique, sight-reading skills, accompanying skills, repertory

study and improvisation. Consequently, appropriate methods of teaching functional piano playing skills as well as challenges commonly associated with course design and its implementation were discussed. It was concluded that group tuition is generally considered the most effective manner in which to teach secondary piano but that finding appropriate teachers for this method of teaching is a great challenge. Another vitally important aspect which improves the success of the tuition is student motivation. This is often achieved through ensuring that the students understand and appreciate the purpose of acquiring piano playing skills for their future careers in music.

The importance of group classes was the focus of Chapter 5. Here attention was given to the economic, musical and social advantages of group instruction. An important comparison between the objectives, differences, advantages and disadvantages of group as opposed to individual instrumental instruction was made. The literature investigation revealed that both methods of teaching have valuable merits but emphasised that group tuition requires much more preparation and structure than individual tuition. Group instruction generally creates the opportunity for acquiring a broader range of musicianship skills and the sociological advantages which result from various group dynamics improve student learning, motivation, involvement, encouragement and self-esteem. Attention was also given to general characteristics of successful group instruction.

This study provided valuable information concerning secondary piano instruction for music majors. Firstly, it was established that specific student characteristics as well as the particular objectives of the learning environment have a great influence on the programme design and method of teaching adult and college-age students. Secondly, these influences have specific implications for acquiring basic piano playing skills in the tertiary setting. Many voids in the current teaching of secondary piano in South Africa were identified.

The information gathered in this study can be divided in two main categories:

- Information that applies to the problems concerning secondary piano tuition;
- Recommendations for effective training in secondary piano courses.

These problems and recommendations are closely linked and are discussed below.

The most important problem regarding basic piano instruction for older students seems to be the fact that no distinction is made between adults and pre-adults. Most teachers,

researchers and authors investigate and report on the specific characteristics of children as opposed to adults, or older piano students, and also do not extensively discuss the influences of these characteristic differences on the learning environment. The reason for this is possibly that most educators focus on the theoretical and physiological aspects of piano instruction, as opposed to social and psychological influences, and therefore expect children and adults to acquire basic piano playing skills in very much the same manner. In the literature on basic piano instruction for adults, the assumption is also made that all adults have the same social and psychological characteristics. No distinction is made between younger and older adults and the possibility that some individuals are for example more mature than others.

Research on general adult education has shown that adults prefer teacher-centred instruction while pre-adults prefer student-centred instruction and that older adults prefer being taught a practical skill in theoretical, logical and analytical terms while pre-adults prefer more aesthetic experiences. In the specific field of basic piano instruction for older students, research is needed to establish whether these findings are valid for this specific field of study as well. According to Myers' (1986:164-165) research, adults from the age of 22 can receive instruction through any method of teaching because it does not significantly influence the success of the learning process. His study did however not include students between the ages of 17 and 21 who are typically categorised as pre-adults.

It is important to note that articles on adult piano instruction describe teachers' perceptions of students in their individual studios. Very little formal research has been conducted and studies which do exist were mostly done by foreign researchers on specific target groups. Consequently, the results of these studies are not automatically applicable to the South African, and more specifically, the TUT educational environment. Prior experience with vocal art students at TUT has shown that the majority of the student group is barely proficient in English and do not display well developed learning skills (for example the ability to assimilate and summarise important information from a lecture or handbook) or the ability to retain sufficiently the essential information acquired. It becomes evident that the available literature on adult piano instruction provides valuable ideas but is not necessarily directly applicable to the Vocal Art (TUT) educational environment. This emphasises the need for proper research on the psychological, emotional and logistical factors which influence the success of South African adults enrolling for educational studies at local tertiary institutions.

In investigating the literature on basic piano instruction for adults, only one reference to andragogy was found. Either piano teachers are ignorant of its existence or they choose to avoid difficult terms and needless explanations and prefer to simply describe typical adult characteristics and suitable approaches toward their education. Another reason why literature on adult piano instruction ‘ignores’ andragogy may be the common perception that self-directed learning, which is the main focus of andragogy, is not suitable for the tuition of a previously unfamiliar practical skill such as playing the piano. The current study however shows the importance of realising that adults have the desire to be self-directed learners even though they may not be conscious of it. Because most adults have predominantly been exposed to teacher-directed tuition, they often do not indicate the need for student-centred instruction, but become frustrated with the learning environment over the long-term. Therefore it is important for teachers to be aware of the assumptions of andragogy and create the opportunity for students to become self-directed learners. It is the responsibility of the teacher to be pro-active and identify and answer the needs of the students before they become discouraged.

Andragogy thus starts with identifying the need to learn and then providing the required sources to facilitate self-directed learning. If the secondary piano teacher decides to introduce self-directed learning it should be done very delicately. Since most students have predominantly been exposed to pedagogical teaching approaches, the teacher needs to explain to adults and pre-adults what self-directed learning is and to provide sufficient opportunities through which they can experience it. Andragogy also describes this relevant element of student-directedness as a shift from teaching to learning. The secondary piano instructor should not be asking ‘what can I teach these adults’ but rather ‘how can I facilitate their learning’. The focus of the instruction should be on the student and facilitating self-directed learning as opposed to the lecturer and the effectiveness of his teaching approach. Self-conscious educators are often so absorbed in their own teaching process that they fail to notice the students’ needs and learning preferences.

The success of student-centred learning is largely due to the fact that students feel actively involved in the instruction. It is easy for the piano teacher to assume that students are active participants in the learning environment because they are being taught a practical skill, but it is not necessarily so. Students need to be consciously aware of their importance and contributions to the educational setting. Consequently, due to the current knowledge gained on the learner-centred approach, andragogical concepts can be combined with the current pedagogical approach to make the basic piano instruction of vocal art students at TUT more interesting, motivating and successful.

In this study, it was also found that the literature on adult piano instruction addresses other aspects of adult education such as teacher support and rapport, creating a positive learning environment as well as considering the learner's previous learning and life experiences, and how these either positively or negatively influence the learning process. Previously, the secondary piano teacher at TUT did not consider the differences between the learning preferences of pre-adults as opposed to adults or individual preferences. It might prove difficult to do so in future but because older students are easily discouraged when their previous experiences are challenged or disregarded, it is of vital importance that the teacher aims to involve the students' already acquired knowledge and skills in the current educational setting. As relevant literature and research indicate, utilising older students' previous experiences is also to the advantage of the younger learners because they are exposed to much more than they would be otherwise.

The influence of logistical factors, such as social and work responsibilities, is approached fairly similarly in literature on general adult education and adult piano instruction. Although adult piano education acknowledges the importance of climate setting and creating a social environment where adults can perceive others who share their frustrations and challenges, it fails to recognise that learners are conditioned to regard peers primarily as competitors. Adults must therefore firstly learn to acknowledge and utilise the information and support that peers bring to the educational setting. Also important to note is that student-student and student-teacher trust, which is generally considered to be present in adult education, firstly has to be earned by all relevant parties and is not a natural by-product of adult characteristics. The older student's desire to achieve success not only for himself, but also for the sake of family and friends, is reflected in the literature on basic piano tuition for adults as the influence of teacher and family expectations on the adult's instruction. Adults are sensitive to the expectations of other people and consequently influenced, either positively or negatively, by these expectations. Available research does, however, not indicate whether this particular aspect of expectations has the same influence on the instruction of pre-adults.

The literature reviewed in this study concluded that younger adults need more guidance and practical advice on how to approach the tertiary learning environment than older adults do. It is commonly assumed that older adults are more familiar with teaching approaches and study methods due to prior learning experiences. In South Africa, an exception is older adults who did not have previous study opportunities. The possibility therefore exists that these adults might require more help to manage their tertiary studies than younger students who recently concluded their secondary education. Older adults

who have been privileged to gain prior learning experiences might be capable of more self-study activities than traditional college-age students. In the formal tertiary learning environment it becomes difficult when educated adults prefer self-study as opposed to regular class attendance. Since class attendance is an official requirement of most tertiary institutions for fulltime studies, this attitude could create problems. If it becomes evident that certain adult students are capable of acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills through self-study, should they be penalised for poor class attendance or should the only method of evaluation be formal assessments?

Even though younger adults are more unfamiliar with the tertiary learning environment, their higher tolerance for dealing with complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty might give them an advantage in learning a new practical skill such as playing the piano. Since they have fewer other responsibilities than older adults, they have more time to study and adapt to the tertiary setting which would reduce their disadvantage in this regard. Literature on basic piano instruction for adults states that older students are more committed to the learning process than children because they enter the learning environment voluntarily. It is also stated that younger adults regard tertiary education as an extension of their secondary education and therefore feel that it is something that they 'have to do'. This implies that pre-adults may be less committed to their studies than older adults. Older students who take piano lessons for recreational purposes are apparently also more committed than music majors for whom piano instruction is compulsory. It would seem that the more compulsory the piano instruction, the less the motivation. It can therefore not be assumed that older vocal art students, for whom piano is a compulsory subject, would necessarily be more committed to the instruction than their younger counterparts.

As discussed previously adults and pre-adults should rather be categorised according to social and psychological characteristics than age. Their life experiences and social circumstances are a greater indicator of their individual level of independent thinking, learning and emotional maturity than their age alone. Adults also have to be observed in the specific educational environment because their levels of independence and commitment might differ from subject to subject depending on their experience of, and motivation toward the specific study field. Gaining knowledge about the differences between younger and older adults also creates the temptation to divide vocal art students into characteristic groups for secondary piano instruction in order to simplify the teaching process. It seems from the literature investigation that, according to certain assumptions of andragogy, younger and older adults should be taught together in order to facilitate

cross-teaching and peer-learning as well as exposure to a variety of teaching material and approaches. Research also seems to indicate that both teacher-directed and pupil-directed lessons are appropriate depending on the specific target group and curriculum content.

Teaching adults and pre-adults at a tertiary institution, as opposed to privately, results in greater demands because the needs of the institution must also constantly be considered. Most literature on adult education and piano instruction for the older student persistently stresses the importance of flexibility regarding learner characteristics and learning styles as well as learning rates and lesson times. Being flexible becomes extremely difficult in the formal tertiary educational setting because the rules of the institution are valid for all students and consistency must be maintained. For quality purposes tertiary institutions have certain academic rules and regulations which guide class times, activities and examinations, for example students are only allowed to make alternative arrangements for any form of evaluation when a valid doctor's letter can be produced. At TUT, experience has shown that some students do not go to general practitioners or commercial western doctors but prefer traditional or alternative therapies. Currently the institution does not acknowledge any letter other than that from a registered medical practitioner but could this not be regarded as discriminatory?

It therefore often becomes very difficult to take a consistent approach toward diverse students and the institutional rules. Prospective adult students should be made aware that if they choose to enter the formal educational setting they will be exposed to the same rules and regulations as college-age students. Adult students especially need to ensure that they have an adequate support structure in place to prevent social and family responsibilities from interfering with scheduled class and evaluation times. Frequently, making special arrangements for adults is unfair to other students.

Previously at TUT, prospective students undertook a form of pre-testing and these results were made available to the departments where these students intended to enrol. This process was cancelled because it is now regarded as providing potentially discriminatory information. Consequently, the process of audience analysis for vocal art students cannot be conducted prior to the formal instruction period. If such an analysis is desired in order to contribute to the curriculum development and teaching approach, the lecturer must find alternative ways to assess learner characteristics prior to instruction or otherwise conduct such an analysis during the first few lessons and consequently adapt the learning material and approach if needed. It is important to note that even after such a process the teacher

must maintain sensitivity during the entire teaching period toward students' individual problems and address them accordingly.

Individual learning rates and slower learning rates often associated with older learners are not easily accommodated in the formal tertiary educational setting because of official time constraints. When adult vocal art students develop slowly in the beginning stages of the instruction, the lecturer may consider temporarily reducing the workload and then gradually increasing it again until they are capable of fulfilling the final examination requirements. The current piano curriculum is structured in such a manner that the first semester of the first year progresses slowly with multiple repetition of material in order to establish a familiarity with the instrument and the unique practical learning process. This approach enhances the possibility for individual students to have equal opportunity to adapt to the new learning environment. The second semester curriculum moves at a slightly faster pace in order to achieve a satisfactory level of performance in the final examination. Another reason for the slower rate maintained during the first semester is that the students are also introduced to many other elements of music study for the first time, for example music theory and ear-training, history of music, singing technique, language studies, vocal pedagogy, acting and movement, physical development, body-voice integration, stagecraft and production and vocal performance literature. Therefore it is considered more advantageous to the general vocal art educational environment to maintain a slower teaching approach during the first semester of the first year.

The findings of studies on appropriate teaching approaches seem to indicate that the quality of instruction is more important than the method of teaching. Students are sensitive to sincerity and perceptive about the amount of effort that lecturers invest in the teaching process. Even though teachers convince themselves that less advanced students do not know the difference, these students are well aware of poor preparation and inadequate standards of performance and expectations. Students often display greater learner satisfaction when confronted with proper teaching and sufficient challenges than poor preparation and easier tasks. The current study on basic piano instruction for vocal art students at TUT was considered necessary in order to gain knowledge and confidence about the subject field and not because students were performing unsatisfactorily. In order to teach effectively the lecturer needs to be convinced that the curriculum, material and teaching approach utilised are the best according to her knowledge.

Secondary piano instruction for vocal art students at TUT is currently taught through the method of group tuition. The present literature investigation confirmed that group tuition is

the most common, and probably the most successful method through which basic piano playing skills are being taught to music majors. The primary purpose of group instruction correlates with both primary objectives of secondary piano instruction which is the acquisition of functional piano playing skills as well as support for the first instrument through relevant theoretical knowledge and the development of musicianship skills. Functional skills such as sight-reading, music theory, ear-training, technique, improvisation, harmonisation, transposition, composition and ensemble playing are constantly mentioned in literature on both group instrumental and secondary piano instruction.

The wide range of functional piano playing skills which can be taught to piano minors, combined with obvious time constraints highlighted the importance of establishing which specific piano playing skills vocal art student must necessarily acquire in order to support their future careers in music in the unique South African setting. This indicates the urgent need for research to determine which piano playing skills are regularly used by prior vocal art students in their current careers. The existing secondary piano curriculum for vocal art students at TUT will consequently be discussed with regard to the information gathered through the literature investigation on basic piano instruction for piano minors as well as successful group instruction.

Currently solo piano repertory is studied more extensively than the accompaniments of vocal repertory. Especially during basic piano instruction, these piano pieces are mostly played in unison or individually practiced to improve the student's notational reading and apply the technical skills already acquired. This practice does not provide adequate opportunity for developing ensemble playing skills or broadening students' knowledge on repertory and interpretational possibilities. It could therefore prove more beneficial to incorporate more vocal repertory and ensemble activities in the current secondary piano curriculum at TUT during which the advantages of group dynamics can be more effectively incorporated. The utilisation of vocal repertory could possibly create the opportunity to compose appropriate ensemble pieces.

One of the problems is that students are not fully aware of the importance of basic piano instruction. In accordance with the assumptions of andragogy it would seem appropriate in the specific educational setting of basic piano instruction for vocal art students at TUT to guide their discovery of the importance of acquiring piano playing skills. The instruction will be much more exciting, stimulating and successful for both students and teacher if the students do not constantly have to be convinced of the importance of the instruction. Once

the students are convinced of the purpose of the instruction it is imperative that they constantly observe that they are indeed learning the specific skills which are needed to fulfil their desire to become complete independent musicians. Appreciating the relevance of the instruction greatly improves motivation which is one of the biggest challenges in secondary piano instruction.

The adult's responsibility toward the group as well as enjoyment of group activities might be another motivating factor to make time amidst their social and other responsibilities to attend classes regularly and prepare properly. An additional effective means through which student motivation can be improved is work-related-learning (WIL). In the new curriculum for 2010 all departments of TUT are required to incorporate practical learning experiences for students in their relevant fields of study in the private sector. This will greatly improve student's knowledge of, and motivation for acquiring piano playing skills for the benefit of their future careers.

The sociological and educational aspects of group tuition correlate strongly with andragogical concepts. Facilitating peer-learning, cross-teaching and discovery-learning acknowledges and utilises student's prior life and learning experiences which makes them feel validated and indispensable within the educational environment. The group and adult students' self-esteem is improved through developing self-directed learning, increasing student involvement through active participation and performance opportunities which builds confidence. Older students very often feel exposed and insecure in the individual setting and remain unconvinced that they will be able to utilise their acquired knowledge and skills in the work place. Being constantly exposed to performing in and for the group will help build confidence for their future career. The risk exists that older students might become more dependent on the group than younger students. Therefore the teacher should provide creative methods with which to counter over dependence and ensure adults that they are capable of producing equal standards independently from the group. This confirms the need for individual assessments through which adults can realistically experience and evaluate their level of performance.

In both andragogy and group tuition, the teacher should rather act as catalyst than dictatorial as well as plan extensively in order to facilitate learning and remain flexible to the adult audience's contributions. Appropriate and attractive learning material is of vital importance in both adult education and group piano instruction and the success of the instruction is measured more in sociological and educational terms than the acquisition of practical knowledge and skills. Effective teaching is greatly influenced by teacher attitude

and a positive learning environment more so than by the methodological approach. In adult and group instruction the teacher is required to provide clear and comprehensible communication. The challenge of teacher training is also present in both educational settings which place the secondary piano instructor at a double disadvantage since the student population consists mostly of pre-adults and adults. This emphasises the urgent need for courses designed to equip the secondary piano teacher with skills both for adult education and group teaching.

In conclusion the following recommendations for future research are made:

- Determine the learner characteristics of pre-adult and adult students at tertiary institutions in South Africa and more specifically of vocal art students at TUT
- Determine the psychological, emotional and logistical factors which influence the success of adult students enrolled for tertiary studies in South Africa
- Determine the influence of different teaching methods, for example teacher-centred as opposed to learner-centred lessons, on the success of basic piano instruction for vocal art students at TUT
- Determine the functional skills used on a regular basis by former vocal art students in their respective professions.

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