Group Piano Pedagogy at the College of Basic Education, Kuwait

Mohammad Alosaimi

PhD

University of York

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Abstract

The study presents an exploration of students' and teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards group piano pedagogy at the College of Basic Education in Kuwait. A mixed-methods research design using observation, focus groups, semi-structured interviews and questionnaires gathered data which was analysed to develop understanding of group piano pedagogy at CBE. This was viewed in relation to international practice through comparison with piano pedagogy for group learners in UK education contexts. The findings from the UK context suggested potential ways in which the CBE pedagogy could be developed, and the overall findings reveal challenges for teachers and learners within group piano pedagogy relating to resources, curriculum content, learner engagement and institutional provision.

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Declaration

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I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Education is inherent to the direction and advancement of global societies (Elliott & Silverman, 2014). Within this, music education plays a key role and is described as a process driven by teachers' experiences as well as through a structured curriculum delivered in a purposeful and methodological manner (Elliott & Silverman, 2014; Mark & Madura, 2013). However, as Çilden (2003) argues, training in music requires careful planning and a consistently disciplined approach. Çilden contends that a structured learning programme supported by skilled teachers and positive attitudes plays a key role in students developing technique and musicianship. Additionally, Kilic (2016) reports that instrumental training is considered as fundamental for music instruction as it has various purposes including helping individuals play their instruments more effectively and improving their knowledge of music.

Piano instruction usually plays a key role in institutions that have a structured music programme focusing on Western classical music. In addition to being the prominent major instrumental study within university music departments and conservatoires, it is often found to be a minor or ancillary subject alongside many instrumental majors (Montparker, 1998). Piano instruction can support the development of note-reading and listening skills, awareness of musical form, theory and harmony (Eid, 2010). Piano courses within global programmes comprise elements ranging from technical exercises and studies, learning music by Western composers, global composers and region-specific composers, understanding piano literature and history, as well as piano teaching and learning techniques (Eid, 2010). Improving piano education is important as it can directly influence the career path of music majors after completion of their studies (Conway, 2008). As argued by Bennett and Stanberg (2008) and Bennett (2013), the concept of career development for music students is difficult since the sequence of the musician's life can be unclear. Since typical careers for musicians include work as professional performers, private music teachers, and school and university faculty

members, learning piano can be considered relevant as it is involved within many of these careers. It is also relevant to the portfolio careers of many musicians (Creech et al., 2008). In light of this, understanding piano pedagogy is important in the context of higher music education and its subsequent potential role in musicians' careers.

Piano pedagogy within tertiary education is aimed at enhancing musical knowledge, self-efficacy and the technique of the student (McKoy et al., 2010; Wristen, 2006). Prior research, however, has identified some challenges that can exist at tertiary level. These include motivating students to practise (Tsai, 2007); understanding the role of the teacher; teacher engagement (Skroch, 1991) and ensuring that the piano programme and pedagogy meets the needs of both teacher (Brophy, 2002) and student (Choi, 2013). Additionally, an examination of the quality of the student experience in piano lessons and an investigation of how teachers can influence these experiences could be beneficial to students and teachers (Fisher, 2010). As Young (2010) argues, university music students may wonder about the need for piano programmes, as well about as the effectiveness of the piano curriculum. Therefore, understanding the teacher and student experience and teacher-student interaction can help understand the factors which influence student engagement and performance, and research with students and teachers within higher education institutions can help understand the relevance of piano studies to future careers. Currently, the focus of much research on piano pedagogy has been within Western institutional contexts, which has created an imbalance in understanding piano pedagogy in other areas, particularly outside Western higher education. This research seeks to provide some understanding of the situation in Kuwait, at the College of Basic Education (CBE), a higher education institution. The thesis additionally draws on a small-scale study of piano pedagogy within selected UK institutions to enable critical reflection on the CBE programme and to inspire its potential development.

1.2 Research Contexts

1.2.1 Kuwait

Existing research acknowledges that learning classical and modern Western music in a Middle Eastern country such as Kuwait can be difficult. As Titon (2015) proposes, there are considerable differences between Middle Eastern and Western musics. In the Middle East, regional music is characterised by the use of Al Maqamat, whose scales are very different to those used in Western music (Alkoot, 2009). The primary difference between the music scales is the use of quartertones and microtones within Arabic modes in Middle Eastern music (Bartel, 2003), while Western music relies predominantly on scales comprising tones or semitones. Arabic music is melodically and rhythmically oriented and has unique characteristics, including its interval system. Additionally, musicians in Kuwait often learn by ear, with a rare focus on written music (Bartel, 2003). While it is increasingly possible to study Western music in Kuwait, there are still inherent cultural difficulties relating to this, which will be discussed later.

The focus of the current research is the nature of piano studies within the College of Basic Education, Kuwait (CBE) undergraduate music degree course. This programme emphasises practical work and engagement with different genres including Western music alongside regional music. The research explores the experience of individuals at the core of this environment: the students and CBE piano teachers. The student who takes the music major at CBE is required to complete practical and theoretical components, including history and technique-related elements, along with other ancillary subjects in order to gain a Bachelor's degree in Education with a specialisation in music. In this programme, learning piano is compulsory for all music students: they are required to study piano for six semesters, completing Piano modules 1-6. Piano lessons take place in group piano instruction classes, known as 'labs'. Each group usually contains between eight and twelve students. Most of the music students have never played the piano before the start of the programme as there is no piano education option in the public schools of Kuwait. The students are therefore asked to learn the piano at a tertiary level when they are

at a beginner stage on the instrument. Therefore, the associated pedagogy needs to be appropriate.

1.2.2 UK

Music education in the UK is far more advanced with greater curricular clarity when compared to the Middle East. UK funding for music education at the school level is gained from local authorities, which receive £82.5 million of annual funding from the Department for Education (Henley, 2011). Other programmes aid UK schools, based on their location and available sponsorship (Henley, 2011). There is also targeted provision of training for school music teachers to enhance their overall skills and capabilities (Henley, 2011) as well as for private teachers through organisations such as the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM). There are other opportunities to create support for instrumental learning: for instance, the Arts Council of England provides funding to specific music organisations (Henley, 2011), and funds are available to orchestras which further enhance opportunities for education in music (Henley, 2011). The government has taken efforts to enhance the importance and centrality of music. It has been argued that music and its integration into any theme add both depth and breadth to the learning experience of the student (Henley, 2011).

Piano studies are widely available in the context of UK tertiary education. Bachelor's and Master's programmes in piano studies have been developed for those who want to pursue their studies to a high level. In addition to studying the piano privately, individuals can also attend classes covering style, repertoire and history of piano as amateur learners through 'lifelong learning' programmes offered by various institutions such as Leeds College of Music, Goldsmiths College at the University of London, and many other institutions in the UK.

1.3 Cross-Cultural Music Education

1.3.1 Dominance of Western Pedagogy

The differences between opportunities for learning piano in Kuwait and in the UK are considerable. As noted above, students attending CBE in Kuwait commence their piano studies at tertiary level as beginners, whereas UK tertiary provision concentrates on higher levels of experience. The Kuwait context has little supporting infrastructure, whereas the UK has a strong and long-standing background of pedagogical support, both through programmes and resources. This study takes the Kuwait context as its focus and considers how UK developments could enhance future piano pedagogy within the CBE, Kuwait.

While Western classical music in Kuwait is a relatively recent phenomenon, other countries have long been associated with pedagogy stemming from Europe. Before the advent of electronic media associated with globalisation, musical cultural imperialism existed globally (Hallam, 2011). Despite the presence of traditional and classical indigenous music in many colonial countries, music pedagogy in these countries was dominated by Western classical music education. This was a common element present across many state schools (Cook & Pople, 2004) which led to formal education systems and pedagogies which were an extension of Western classical music. For example, the Associated Board of the Royal School of Music has centres around the world, especially in the former British colonies. They set curricula and evaluation criteria for music (Campbell, 1994), and there is evidence that school curricula and higher education courses are based on similar fundamental pedagogic principles focused on Western classical music and associated curricula and pedagogy (Urbain, 2015).

These situations are present around the world. For example, Feichas (2011) reported that Brazilian music schools were modelled on the French conservatoire. Similarly, Western-style educational provision was found to be present in other South American countries such as Peru (Oliveria, 2003). Evidence of the expansion of UK-based pedagogy has been evident in many Asian countries, including Vietnam and Thailand (Rosen, 1999), China (Law &

Ho, 2009), Taiwan (Ho & Law, 2002), and Hong Kong (Yeh, 1998). The pursuit of such an education was linked to reputation, where educational organisations and governments were found to integrate Western-based piano pedagogy to modernise their education system and also elevate their social status.

1.4 Pedagogy of Piano Learning

While much research in the 20th century has addressed the status of university piano pedagogy programmes as well as the challenges and development paths of these programmes in both Western and non-Western traditions, the complexities of university-level piano pedagogy, teacher challenges and student motivation have all been investigated independently (Slawsky, 2011). Indeed, these studies offered information regarding aspects that have/have not been achieved in piano pedagogy programme development and have presented various methods to resolve challenges (Slawsky, 2011). However, new studies are required to explore the status and characteristics of specific programmes or to offer possible future directions for these programmes and identify challenges that might arise in the establishment of new ones in the 21st century.

Within the piano pedagogy field, research on the induction experiences of beginning piano teachers (Slawsky, 2011) and comprehensive study of piano teachers' attitudes towards pedagogical training (Schons, 2005) are areas yet to be comprehensively developed. There is also scope to consider the challenges involved in the establishment of a piano pedagogy programme, and cultural issues relating to programmes which are outside Western educational institutions. Consequently, the aim of the current study is to explore the CBE group piano pedagogy and through drawing on data collected from piano teachers teaching on selected courses in the UK, to consider how this might be developed to enhance the learning and engagement of its students.

The first aspect that is considered is the need for a comprehensive review of this pedagogy. Chronister (2001), Elgersma (2012), Swinkin (2015), and Fu (2008) have highlighted the growth in piano pedagogy programmes at

graduate and undergraduate level, and Carey (2004) and Schons (2005) show that piano pedagogy coursework is also frequently included in the conventional performance curriculum for graduate and undergraduate students. However, the efficiency of these limited experiences in appropriately preparing students for varied roles beyond performing, such as piano teaching, has been questioned. Since the mid-1980s, piano pedagogy programmes have had established curricular guidelines. However, experts are further exploring suitable curricular content to improve programmes. This focus has been predominantly in a Western context, where students have continued to be exposed to certain styles of music and structured Western music learning, usually from childhood. According to Meyers (2014), understanding the challenges associated within existing piano pedagogies need to be addressed in order to develop piano programme goals. Other than the description of their orientation, another problematic issue is the future direction of these programmes, as university piano pedagogy programmes are growing rapidly.

Kuuskoski (2011) elucidates the objectives that future piano pedagogy programmes could have in the twenty-first century, and considers the significance of piano pedagogy programmes in society, especially through using the concept of entrepreneurial mentorship. This 'recognises the importance of leveraging the mentorship possibilities inherent in the teacher-student relationship to empower aspiring pianists to identify and achieve sustainable careers' (p.103), as the development of pianists' musical knowledge and technical, interpretational, and pedagogical standpoints starts within the teacher-student mentorship relationship. Additionally, this concept gives the opportunity for both mentor and mentee to 'cultivate a holistically-minded view of pedagogy – one that recognises the unique social value of this field and which has the potential for creating innovative projects, research, and career paths that meet the needs of 21st century society' (p.15). These are important concepts to consider within the present study.

According to Duke and Madsen (1991), the teaching of individualised music instruction has undergone significant changes, with a focus on personalised elements, systematic, descriptive investigations, and the role of digital

technology in improving piano pedagogy. As a result of these changes, consistent efforts have been taken to examine teachers' perspectives (Ivaldi, 2016), elements influencing student engagement and motivation (Pike, 2014), and elements of piano pedagogy, including instructional delivery methods (Swinkin, 2015). This has led to the need to revisit the sequential pattern of the teacher-presentation student-response teacher-feedback framework (Siebenaler, 1997) and understand the elements which influence this framework.

Elgersma (2012) mainly researched American pedagogy programmes and courses where piano pedagogy curricula have been included at graduate and undergraduate level. Elgersma recommends that giving more time to focus on quality of teaching rather than quantity of experience, and modelling learning tactics would positively affect the development of pedagogy. Johnson (2002) also focused on piano pedagogy and detailed course content at undergraduate levels in the USA. Johnson provides comprehensive recommendations for piano pedagogy concerning curricula, materials and teacher training. Comeau et al. (2015) examined piano teaching and learning from a cross-cultural perspective between China and North Americans for students aged 6 to 17 years old. Comeau found that students in China have a higher work ethic than North Americans students which reflected the Chinese cultural attitudes towards achievement beliefs. Additionally, there was a strong motivation by Chinese students to succeed in order to avoid making their teacher and parents upset.

Charoenwongse (1999) studied undergraduate pedagogy course content in Thailand. Charoenwongse emphasises the need for development in resources in Thailand such as funding support, piano pedagogy texts, translating piano learning materials from English to Thai language, teacher training, piano instruction and curriculum development. Similarly, Won (1999) conducted research in Korea and found that there was a need for development in improving teaching quality, undergraduate programmes and piano pedagogy in order to meet and suit the Korean students' needs.

Despite these studies, there is a lack of a comprehensive research which examines existing piano pedagogy practices and teaching structure in the context of Kuwait. This research aims to address this gap; the current study aims to identify piano teaching methodologies used by teachers at a specific tertiary music institution in Kuwait, comparing them to practices in the UK. The study also investigates the responses of students to their learning and considers whether their needs are met by current provision at CBE. Furthermore, the study offers recommendations for piano pedagogy that can be used as a means for developing piano pedagogy in Kuwait and beyond.

1.5 Student Attitude and Motivation

Hallam (2002) emphasises the importance of music student's motivation in order to practise and continue learning musical instruments. Hallam also explained the importance of teachers' and parents' understanding of the factors that affect student motivation. Miksza (2012) and Hallam et al. (2012) explored the development of learning strategies in young piano music beginners. The studies track student motivation and student attitude, as through understanding of students' self-reported practicing strategies and behaviour, teachers might be able to design an effective and suitable lesson structure and deploy appropriate and effective modelling.

McPherson (2009) reports that young students' learning attitudes could be influenced by the immediate environment, as the decisions of which musical instrument to learn, where to learn and how long to practise the instrument for are commonly discussed within the home environment. Additionally, Creech and Hallam (2011) state that the attitude towards and practice of the instrument and the school-aged students' involvement in a music programme are largely influenced by the parent and the teacher. While all of these studies looked at school level education, at university level, Parkes et al. (2015) and Purser (2005) report that instrumental music teaching and learning can be complex as there are various factors such as strategies, technique, experiences, individual development and the student-teacher relationship

which influence a student's attitude and practice. Additionally, Triantafyllaki (2005) emphasises the need to research the influence of specific institutional, social and cultural contexts on the student-teacher relationships in tertiary music education.

As mentioned above, one element which influences student motivation is the learning environment. Salomon (1994) considers the learning environment as 'a system of interrelated factors that jointly affect learning in interaction with (but separately from) relevant individual and cultural differences' (p.80). In music education this usually involves a teacher associated with a number of students, and these people interact and form a variety of relationships (ThienAn & Khuong, 2015). Newhouse et al. (2002) indicate that while students and teacher are focusing on specific content processes related to the curriculum, the curriculum is also considered to be an environmental element. However, students and teachers might have different associations with curriculum elements. In light of this, assessing the student learning environment is important. Therefore, the current research will explore issues concerned with student motivation and the learning environment both in Kuwait and in the UK, enabling discussion of comparative contexts which will stimulate considerations for potential developments to music education within Kuwait, specifically in higher music piano programmes.

1.6 Teacher Motivation and Views

Daniel and Bowden (2013) recognise several aspects of piano teaching that are undergoing change such as increased professionalism of teachers and the use of teaching activities in order to understand implications for the globalisation of music education. According to Yoshioka (2012) there is a shift in teaching philosophies from primarily emphasising technique and performance to including creative and functional skills such as improvisation, score reading, playing by ear, transposition, harmonisation and sight-reading. A growing number of teachers are embracing group piano teaching, which was previously mainly found in schools and universities. A new piano repertoire has

emerged which includes jazz and popular styles (Uszler, 2000), and teachers and students now have new technological teaching tools and instruments accessible to them (Berr, 2000).

Developments and transformations in music education are also associated with theoretical and philosophical changes. Cook (1998) notes that music is now perceived as placed in a historical sociocultural context that reflects and shapes its place and time. Additionally, it is also perceived as situated within new multidimensional contexts, where music is integrated with various other disciplines within humanities and social sciences. Cox and Pitts (2003) indicate that ethnomusicology, psychology and sociology of music now are connected through the learning process. McPherson and Welch (2012) determine that it is widely understood that if music education is to be advanced significantly it is vital for music teachers to expand their knowledge in order to gain more pedagogical understanding.

Crum (1998) focused on the attitude of piano teachers towards the instruction of students. Crum emphasises that despite developments in piano instruction and advocating comprehensive musicianship including performance, skill instruction and a range of available material, piano teachers generally choose to use traditional performance-focused instruction during their lessons. Therefore, it is useful to explore how teachers view their curriculum and teaching styles, particularly in a country such as Kuwait which has had limited access to resources and where pedagogical developments have been constrained by developments within the educational infrastructure of the country.

Another relevant aspect is teacher motivation and satisfaction. Bishay (1996) emphasises the importance of considering and enhancing teacher motivation, which directly affects student achievements. Teacher motivation promotes the ability for teachers to understand positive and negative factors that could affect the learning process (Sinclair, 2008). Atkinson (2000) indicates that a positive connection between student motivation and teacher motivation leads to a successful achievement of learning goals.

In the light of these views, understanding teaching experience, teacher motivation and attitude are important elements contributing to teaching, learning and the development of piano pedagogy. As there has to date been no research in this area in Kuwait, the current study explores views on motivation and attitudes to pedagogy at CBE in Kuwait.

1.7 Researcher Motivation

Rohan (2011) explores potential differences between Eastern and Western cultures that resulted in challenges associated with the learning of music at a higher education level. While teachers showed positive understanding and attitudes towards cultural variety, student responses indicated limited understanding of global variations of musical expression, which connects to wider issues of cultural diversity. Williams (2011) discusses the gap between structured music learning within and outside school, and suggested bridging this through offering opportunities outside school enabling lifelong learning development connecting to school music education. These points connect to my own personal struggle concerning my interest in pursuing music as my major in college. Due to the limited number of higher education music programmes that were available in Kuwait (only two music programmes were available: one at CBE: the Bachelor degree in Education majoring in Music; the other at The Higher Institution of Musical Arts (HIMA), a Bachelor degree in Musical Arts, which graduates performers and music teachers), I applied for the music programme at CBE. However, had I not gained a place on one of these two programmes I would not have been able to learn music in Kuwait.

As Allsup and Olson (2012) report, music educators have increasingly understood that global music programmes need to be acknowledged and celebrated. Though educators around the world understand the challenge of learning local music and integrating it as part of a curriculum which includes music from different cultures, limited efforts at CBE were made to understand the differences between Western and Eastern music, and teachers and students were not given support to understand the pedagogy of such music

education. This was an attribute that can be associated with my learning of music at university level.

At CBE, all music students at the college are required to complete 60 credits from music subjects/modules and gain 70 credits from other educational subjects/modules in another department in order to graduate. Piano is considered as a mandatory module for six semesters for all music students. The methodology of teaching piano is 'a group piano laboratory', known in the music department as 'piano lab', and the piano classes take place for two hours twice a week. When I was a student the piano curriculum contained sight-reading, scales, exercises (Hanon), and a small repertoire of music pieces for each module. The focus was on technique and precision with Western material forming the basis of learning and assessment. I found that there were limited efforts undertaken to integrate Western and traditional Arabic music learning practices.

Prior to higher education, public high school in Kuwait offers an optional music module to take for only one year: An hour and a half a week to learn a musical instrument (Arabic *oud* and *qanoon*, piano, violin, saxophone or clarinet). I experienced teaching piano in this context, giving small group piano classes for four to six students. While the music class room was a suitable atmosphere to teach piano with students who were ready to learn music, I faced challenges as students were not given the opportunity to hone their skills further by the school administration, and the parents gave limited importance to the teaching approach and pedagogy. Additionally, during my experience as a trainee teacher while I was in my final year of study at CBE, I had a placement at a state secondary school (where there is no opportunity for pupils to learn a musical instrument, as the music curriculum only focuses on general music education at primary and secondary stages; see section, 2.2.7 for more details on school music in Kuwait). However, I faced similar challenges during this placement. I also felt that there was limited focus on the materials used in the music education curriculum (which CBE graduates would be using when working as music teachers in state schools), as the same curriculum was replicated in successive years without any development or expansion.

Therefore, questions concerning curriculum and provision emerge. Now, in my work as a piano teacher at CBE, I believe that by focusing on the pedagogic background of existing group piano pedagogy practices and culture-specific elements, these and other challenges can be identified, and through discussion with relevant stakeholders and through knowledge of resources, positive developments can occur. An aim of my research has been to help improve my professional competencies while also providing CBE with information to improve their knowledge and practice.

This is the first study of group piano pedagogy at CBE. Research in this field in Kuwait has been difficult to achieve because of a lack of development in the Kuwait educational system and specifically in music education over the last 50 years (Al-Hassan, 2011). There has been little interest in learning Western music, which reflects commonly-held Kuwaiti cultural attitudes towards other cultures (especially in music), no opportunity for postgraduate study in music or piano within Kuwait, and limited funding for Kuwaiti nationals embarking on postgraduate study outside Kuwait. However, as I am a Kuwaiti piano teacher who has recently graduated from a Kuwaiti academic institution which offered music as a subject and which gave me the opportunity to continue my studies, I observe there is some interest in globalisation to enable development in Kuwait, and that other Kuwaiti piano teachers and I have a role to start conducting development in piano pedagogy and music education in general in Kuwait. Therefore, the current study aims to provide a starting point for piano pedagogy research related to Kuwait.

1.8 Research Aims

- To present documentation and background on existing group piano pedagogic practices at CBE in Kuwait.
- To discover students' views on their motivations, perceptions of teaching and pedagogic approach to learning group piano at CBE and to compare these with the views of students on similar programmes in the UK.

- To identify piano teachers' views on their motivation to teach group piano at CBE and compare these to the views of group piano teachers in the UK.

- To identify possible ways in which group piano pedagogy at CBE could be developed, as well as potential challenges within this process.

The research will make a unique contribution to knowledge through being the first study of piano pedagogy at CBE. In addition, this study is also expected to provide a foundation for subsequent research in the field of piano pedagogy at CBE. It will reflect on the development of piano pedagogy at CBE; it is hoped that it will also contribute to the development of pedagogy both within other institutions and more generally in Kuwait as well as to further debate concerning the internationalisation of the curriculum, teaching methods and support for teachers and learners.

1.9 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The current study explores piano pedagogy at CBE, a Kuwait tertiary institution which includes piano learning for undergraduate music students. The basis for the study is a literature review provided to contextualise current teaching practices in piano education in the Middle East in general and Kuwait specifically. Subsequently, this study presents the views of different stakeholders: students and piano teachers at CBE. However, it is important to acknowledge that information regarding other subjects undertaken by the students such as composition, theory, harmony, and music history has not been included. Therefore, the study only focuses on piano pedagogy, not on the entirety of students' learning at the CBE.

The information collected from teachers is believed to be reliable, as the teachers who were chosen for this research are those who have taught their students at CBE for at least two years. These teachers are familiar with the piano course structure and the general pedagogic approach within the organisation. Prior research indicates that there is an association between

teacher experience and their engagement (Bakker, 2005; Simones et al., 2015), and between student and teacher self-efficacy and motivation (Cathcart, 2013; Daniel & Bowden, 2013). The research deliberately chose student participants from the highest levels of piano modules (final year) in order that they could reliably describe their experiences (at least three years) of learning piano during the music undergraduate programme at CBE.

1.10 Content of Subsequent Chapters

The study is organised into fourteen chapters.

Chapter One has introduced the research area, the scope and limitations, the research rationale and the expected contributions of the study. The chapter introduced my motivation as the researcher in the study and outlined the research objectives.

Chapter Two presents contextual detail concerning the music learning system in Kuwait and the Middle East. It also introduces the music education programme at CBE, and a brief background on music education in the UK.

Chapters Three and Four present a detailed review of literature. Chapter Three examines theories linked to music education and music pedagogy, focusing on piano pedagogy and the role of technology in piano education. Chapter Four discusses teacher attitude, teacher views and student requirements in piano education.

Chapter Five presents the theoretical framework of the study, which identifies the different study hypotheses and assumptions. Chapter Six details the research methodology, research design and provides justification of the methods, validity, reliability and ethical considerations.

Chapter Seven presents the findings of the CBE students' views (questionnaire and focus group data) and the observation analysis. The chapter identifies the technical elements of the piano pedagogy process.

Chapter Eight details the findings from the CBE piano teachers (interview and focus group data).

Chapter Nine examines a sample of UK students' views (questionnaire data) on the current pedagogy, their motivation and self-efficacy.

Chapter Ten examines a sample of UK teachers' views (interview data) on the current pedagogy, their motivation and self-efficacy.

Chapter Eleven continues presenting findings from the UK teachers, focusing on challenges and satisfaction of the learning process.

Chapter Twelve provides a discussion of study data, which revisits the theoretical framework in order to address the relational context in which the student learns. This chapter situates the findings in the context of prior literature and the chapter ends with conclusions on the existing piano pedagogy.

Chapter Thirteen continues discussion of the overall findings relating to the teachers' perspectives towards the current situation in both the UK and Kuwait.

Chapter Fourteen revisits the research questions, presents recommendations for future research and details implications of the research for pedagogic practice. The chapter considers the study limitations and provides a reflective assessment which may influence the construction of further studies and enable future research findings.

Chapter 2: Contextualising the Research: Education and Music in Kuwait

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the background of music education and the role of music in Kuwait. The chapter first details the Kuwaiti context by focusing on the regulations and the laws which govern education with specific reference to arts and music. Following this, in order to facilitate informed development of provision at CBE, there is contextualisation of formal education with respect to music within the UK, along with a discussion of the music curriculum.

2.2 Kuwaiti Context

2.2.1 Education in Kuwait

Formal educational action in Kuwait began in 1936 with the establishing of the Council of Knowledge (Al-Rasheed, 1978), which was followed by a second comprehensive educational action in 1962 when the Council of Knowledge was replaced by the Ministry of Education with more responsibility for more schools in Kuwait (Al-Hassan, 2011). After the end of the British protection treaty in 1961 (Al-Hatem, 2004) and with increased oil benefits (El-Katiri et al., 2011), Kuwait commenced serious development plans for its future as an independent country and in 1962 established the constitution of Kuwait (Al-Hatem, 2004).

Every citizen in the State of Kuwait has the right to education, and education aims to prepare individuals to become thoughtful, active members of society in public and in their private lives (Al-Nakib, 2015). The focus of the development strategy of the State is on the role of educational institutions in supporting the growth of these qualities, along with the training of individuals to add skilled labour for the workforce. Education is perceived as the main tool for the

building of a high-performance society at social, economic, cultural and institutional levels (MOE, 2008).

Thus, education is considered significant in preparing students for practical life, preparing citizens to develop and engage with technological advancements, providing basic skills, striking a balance between the preparation of citizens to engage with regional and international changes in the country and safeguarding the cultural identity of the state (UNESCO, 2007; MOE, 2008). In the long term, formal education, including higher education in Kuwait is aimed at supporting curricula that comply with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) while advancing technical and scientific progress (MOE, 2008). Additionally, the focus of education in Kuwait involves the creation of stronger relations between society and school (Al-Awadi, 1957); keeping track of scientific progress in education (Godwin, 2006) and creating an inclusive classroom where cultural competencies and cultural differences are acknowledged (MOE, 2008). As Burnaford et al (2013) argue, the development of an inclusive classroom encourages students to understand and communicate with others and creates empathy with respect to individual needs. This helps understand the individual needs, skills and attributes of diverse individuals as part of the global society.

The Education Strategy 2005–2025 proposed certain strategic targets such as the enhancement of the basic requirements of the general education system's school curricula so that the principles and objectives of the state could be achieved (Al-Nakib, 2015). According to MOE (2008), the educational objectives of the GCC are also taken into consideration in the Strategy 2005–2025, such as teaching learners the skills of coexistence and tolerance with others and interaction with other cultures; enhancing learners' awareness of the significance of globalisation, information technology and modern means of communication and their maximisation for the benefit of society and individuals while protecting the values and identity of Kuwaiti society; developing lifelong learning, critical creative thinking skills and free scientific thinking; and building the right Islamic faith among people who are educated with the aim of making

the principles a method of thought and style, thereby creating loyalty to the Arab-Islamic identity and Arab-Islamic heritage (MOE, 2008; UNESCO, 2007).

Despite the acknowledgement of these strategies, there are many areas of challenge within the Kuwaiti education system. For instance, as Burney and Mohammed (2002) reported, systemic problems have been identified. These include a relatively low budget for arts and culture-related resources when compared to international standards. Additionally, as Hertog (2013) contends, the guarantee of a public sector job further demotivates the student body, with most individuals focusing on science and technology-related education and little provision to improve culture, music and arts. Faour and Muasher (2011) note that a new national curricular framework is in development at school level which helps address student outcomes with the aim of developing holistic wellbeing. However, these reforms are insufficient as they do not look at integrating arts and music-related pedagogies; instead they focus on STEM subjects.

2.2.2 Regulations Regarding Education

In 1979 the Amir issued a decree defining the objective of the Ministry of Education in the development of the society of Kuwait (MOE, 2008). The decree also defined the objective to raise children in an integrated physical, social, intellectual, moral, spiritual and scientific framework, taking into account the principles of the contemporary civilisation, Arab heritage and Islam. The general legal framework regarding the education of the country is laid out by the constitution of Kuwait (Baaklini, 1982). It is stipulated in Article 10 that the young shall be offered care by the State and shall be offered protection from spiritual, physical and moral neglect as well as from abuse. Article 13 identifies education as a basic component that the State needs to provide and supervise (Al-Nakib, 2015). According to Article 40, all citizens are to be given the right to education by the State and this provision needs to be in accordance with State ethics, the general system and the law.

Law No.1 (1965) states that all children in Kuwait are entitled to free mandatory education from the first grade of primary education (age 6) through subsequent preparatory and intermediate levels. It is mandatory for the State to provide teachers, books and school premises and all the other human and material requirements to make this compulsory education successful (UNESCO, 2010).

However, although efforts are being taken to reinforce the concepts of citizenship, loyalty and belonging for the Kuwaiti youth, there are challenges associated with enhancing higher education, despite the presence of various supportive government strategies (Al-Nakib, 2015). Al-Nakib identifies eight important issues faced by the country. These include the inability to effectively translate global traditions and pedagogies within the context of Kuwait while ensuring that there is no loss to national unity and identity. This is perhaps the greatest challenge to music education within the context of Kuwait, and will be further discussed later within this thesis.

2.2.3 Challenges Facing the Kuwaiti Higher Education System

Similar to other nations, the education system in the State of Kuwait faces various challenges, and those in charge are trying to accommodate variables relating to social and political realities (Tremblay et al., 2012). Therefore, education is deploying behavioural practices, curricula and political education to establish respect for regulations, laws and the constitution, as well as the principles of democracy. For instance, some articles of the constitution are taught through school courses. Additionally, political education is used to fortify concepts of national unity and strengthen the sense of belonging to the homeland while furthering the spirit of loyalty and citizenship (Al-Nakib, 2015). A key impact of these aims is prioritisation of the budget for various educational initiatives, with a greater focus on science, technology, mathematics and engineering subjects (UNESCO, 2007). However, as Jabr (2016) reports, the government in Kuwait has understood the importance of identifying the value of arts education in schools. This has been linked to

globalisation and to the growing interest amongst students to be more artistically expressive. Jabr's report (2016) identifies school administrators who acknowledge that, although the Kuwaiti education system supports a traditional Islamic system, it should include some provision to help engage students with the arts.

Another issue that needs to be acknowledged is the presence of economic challenges. The State of Kuwait relies on oil as its basic source of income; however, this is being constantly depleted and alternative income strands sought. Thus, it has been observed that a majority of the goods needed are imported by Kuwait: the local market is associated with global markets and is affected by them positively or negatively (UNESCO, 2008). In such conditions, the pursuit of diversification of potential income sources connects to various areas, such as tourism, where Kuwait has made increasing tourism-related investments (Ashiabi, 2014). Investment in culture and arts, particularly the unique traditions of painting, dance and music (Urkevich, 2014) has been a key area supporting the growth of tourism (Reisinger, 2015).

A final challenge which connects to higher education within the GCC is the presence of cultural challenges. According to Faraj (2000), a cultural challenge is associated with trends, values and thoughts. Because of globalisation and the growth in the number of students who are keen to study music and who may continue their postgraduate studies outside Kuwait, there is a need for curricula within Kuwait higher education which ensure consolidation of positive values and an upholding of national identity. This is required so that the State can continue to be part of the global world and at the same time maintain its identity. Hence, the Ministry of Education is engaging with this challenge so that its humanitarian and educational message can be achieved (Badry & Willoughby, 2015). This may lead to positive effects on culture and arts-related education, where provision of higher music education courses could enable development of learning for students in Kuwait.

2.2.4 Islam and Music: A Contested Tradition

Researchers such as Rasmussen, 2010 and Otterbeck, 2008 emphasise the ongoing debate on Islam and the tolerability of music. This section briefly recapitulates this wider discourse and introduces material concerning the views of Muslims on music in the context of Kuwait which has relevance for music education.

Although the broad subject of Islam and music has been covered in different ways, it should be noted that high Islam has influential discourses, which include political, scholastic and religious spheres of authority and power. However, it is also believed that these discourses overshadow local interpretation and practice, and this claim is resonant in Muslim minorities across the world (Rasmussen, 2010; Otterbeck, 2008). According to Shiloah (2001), these arguments can be found back to Ibn al-Dunya (823–894), a Muslim scholar who authored the first major justification of music. The basis of the discourse by Ibn al-Dunya places decency and morality at the core of this continuing debate. The majority of the references to music making, music and musical instruments are interconnected with statements regarding misbehaviour and other forbidden pleasures that are not compatible with the performance of moral conduct or religious duties and through which the perpetrators will be directed towards perdition (Shiloah, 2001). The notion that music has an inseparable link with sensuality and prohibited acts has been at the core of such critiques. However, Baig (2008) argues that the focus of arguments against music have mainly been on the linking of music with activities that are considered to be discordant with proper Islamic practice. The central drive of this discourse is still directed in the same way even today.

According to Otterbeck (2008), music is largely opposed by contemporary religious conservatives because it is alleged to be a problematic interference in religious practice: it is assumed to be competing with Allah for an individual's soul. Also, it is alleged to be an unavoidable instigator of sinful living. Otterbeck adds that moderates generally are more prudent and have the tendency to consider music on the basis of individual cases. However, if music listening is done to excess it is considered as *haram* (forbidden by Allah)

because Islam prohibits extremes. However, Otterbeck (2008) identifies a personal dimension to this issue, which implies that if an individual is not aroused by music and is able to maintain his spirituality, it is not a problem. This implies that there is no inherent connection between music and incompatible Islamic practices and this statement therefore justifies music on the grounds of moral or religious utility.

Although Otterbeck particularly refers to contemporary scholars from Arab countries including Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Egypt, such issues are crucial for ongoing debates in various locations including Kuwait. These religious debates are also concerned with alternative practices and teachings associated with Sufi mysticism, a mystical form of Islam which avoids materialism. The significance of music and sound in encouraging closeness to God and spirituality has long been emphasised by Sufism; this is particularly true when it is deployed through particular practices like *zikr* and *hadra* (dances and rituals) Thus, Shiloah (2001) argues that various sounds have been classified by Sufi scholars and have been placed into a spiritual hierarchy. The early Sufi mystic al-Makki referred to the act of sama (listening) and argued that when the singing voice is used as an instrument for carrying and communicating meaningful ideas, without any distraction from the melody, the sama is lawful (Shiloah, 2001). However, it is a diversion and should be banished when the content expresses simple futilities, simple desire and physical love. In general, Sufism has been shown to be essentially understanding of music and its significance in spiritual development; musical practice has been emphasised in traditional Sufi teachings.

Lewis (1994) argues that generally the Muslim musicians in the GCC fall under the sponsorship of Sufism, either consciously or through a hereditary Barelvi tradition; however, a central concern with the religious value of music continues, particularly within the deep historical currents of Islamic scholasticism. Besides concerns over the sonic nature of music or the semantic content of music, traditions and debates in Islam have further concerned themselves with the acceptance of various styles of music (Rasmussen, 2010). Shiloah (2001) summarises this contested debate, which

includes views ranging from full permission to complete negation of all musical means and forms including dance. Shiloah (2001) adds that all possible nuances can be found somewhere in the middle of these two extremes. For instance, a basic form of cantillation and morally appropriate functional song but forbidding all musical instruments may be acceptable, as may cantillation with the addition of a plain frame drum without cymbals. Thus, music and instrumentation are at the centre of diverse and complex traditions within Islam. This study supports the view that music is accepted within the context of Islam.

2.2.5 Music in Kuwaiti Traditional Life

The influence on Kuwait's population from other countries included the migration of people and ideas from Africa, India and the Middle East. Kuwaiti traditional music in the early twentieth century comprised two styles, the first relating to the desert environment and the second to the sea. Each style has different musical instruments and rhythms for special events, including songs for weddings, sailing, building, children, and travelling (Al-Dokhy, 1984; Al-Hassan, 2011). Music was used within the launching of a ship, with rhythmic accompaniment of clapping to encourage sailors to work hard, and during journeys sailors sang asking God for their safe passage back to Kuwait, and food and money (Touma & Touma 2003; Alderaiwaish, 2014). In the desert, music was used to help prepare soldiers for war and celebrating victory (Alderaiwaish, 2014).

Although music was accepted as part of traditional daily life during the first half of the twentieth century, since the establishing and merging of musical education in some public schools during and since the 1950s (Al-Hassan, 2011) some Kuwaitis decline to perform or listen to music as they believe that music is *haram* (forbidden) in Islam (Alderaiwaish, 2014). Alderaiwaish (2014) argues that most of these people are influenced by the ideas of the religious group Al-Salafya, but notes that, since there is no evidence from the Holy Quran or even direct clear evidence from Muhammad's sayings 'Al-Hadith'

forbidding music in Islam, Al-Salafya should not deny music. Aderaiwiash also proposed that Al-Salafya might not have good knowledge regarding music, as they may only see and judge music through low-quality commercial songs in Kuwait which sometimes contain offensive language or videos which are not acceptable in Islam or even in the common culture of Kuwaiti society. Finally, Aderaiwaish argued that Al-Salafya are holding back the development of music education in Kuwait without knowledge of how music education could be meaningful, as Al-Salafya are not aware of what Kuwaiti schools are teaching, or of the wide benefits offered by music education; Kuwait's school music curriculum has been developed to consider the individual needs of children at different school stages which affect their overall development and support their musical understanding, skills and knowledge (Alderaiwaish, 2014).

However, as discussed previously, music's role within education has not been universally acknowledged, or consistently supported by government, and its connotations with problematic practices connected to religion also cause issues for the development and acceptance of music programmes within Kuwait and to the extent to which learners of all ages are supported. This has implications for higher music education, particularly for the support given to students and teachers.

2.2.6 Current Situation of Music Education in Kuwait

Music education in Kuwait began officially in 1952 when the Council of Knowledge started to bring Egyptian music teachers to teach music in primary and middle schools (Al-Hassan, 2011). There was no specific music curriculum at that time; teaching depended on the individual experience of the Egyptian music teachers, which focused on various forms of Eastern and Western music (Al-Hassan, 2011). This was supported by technical mentors (supervisors) for school music and one head mentor in the music department at the Ministry of Education (Al-Sa'adoon, 2009). In 1972 the music department in the Ministry of Education began to explore how to develop the school music curriculum to enable it to be more active and to relate more to

Kuwaiti culture. Teachers began to include some traditional Kuwaiti rhythms with Arabic chants to teach the national Kuwaiti anthem and some traditional Kuwaiti songs (Al-Sa'adoon, 2009).

Since 1972, the development of music in schools has included the addition of more Arabic chants, the history of Kuwaiti composers along with more famous Western and Eastern composers, using more musical instruments, bringing more music teachers into schools (currently two per school), creating a music competition (music meeting) for school music teams, training women teachers as well as men, and creating curriculum materials for all school stages. In 2006, the Ministry of Education added music as a subject at high school level, and it was also offered as an optional subject for high school students for one year to learn an instrument (piano, *oud*, violin or *qanoon*). The Ministry of Education has since increased the number of music teachers to four in each high school music department and also published materials including a syllabus, indicating scales and repertoire for studying in each level for each instrument noted above (Ministry of Education, 2014).

2.2.7 Music in Public Schools

Currently, most Kuwaiti public schools are required to provide a music department. The general subject aims of music in Kuwaiti school curricula are defined by the Ministry of Education as follows.

1. To promote the feelings of belonging to the homeland and the Arab nation and the Islamic world through chants and other areas in the music curriculum.
2. To participate in the development of values advocated by the Islamic religion through the performance of religious melodies and to listen to the colours of the music, which refines the high emotions and transcends the self.
3. To deepen the sense of national identity by recognising some of the artistic outputs and folklore in the field of music.

4. To create pride in Arabic folk music and to link it with international folk and modern music.

5. To build an educated personality that aspires to acquire human knowledge and functional skills, by providing artistic culture to improve the general knowledge and understanding of the learner, as music is considered a life science which contributes to human civilisation.

6. To provide some tranquillity, reassurance and happiness to the student.

7. To develop artistic taste and sensory aesthetic senses so that the student can feel and enjoy the divine beauty and creativity around him.

8. To develop the ability for artistic expression through different sensations and feelings.

9. To discover those with a musical talent and support their development.

10. To train students to play a musical instrument to occupy their spare time, as by practising a good hobby they will not fall into harmful behaviour.

11. To stimulate the spirit of innovation and creativity among students by providing appropriate opportunities through various areas in the music curriculum.

12. To confirm a sense of belonging to the community by participating in collective actions in playing and singing which will help the student overcome feelings of shame and confusion in front of others and to contribute to confident speech and self-expression.

13. To achieve coherence and complementarity between different subjects through music education to achieve some of the objectives of these subjects (Ministry of Education, 2014).

In primary and middle schools, music is classified with subjects such as physical education and art as there are no examinations for these subjects. Each class has one 40-minute music lesson per week during the academic year, and in these lessons the students learn some basic music notation, a brief history of well-known Eastern and Western composers, sing some chants and sometimes play music.

In high school, the situation is different, as lessons just focus on learning a musical instrument (piano, *oud*, violin or *qanoon*). A student will choose which instrument he/she would like to learn for the two terms of the academic year and will participate in an hour and a half weekly group lesson. The number in each group can vary between three and eight students. In their work with a specialist music teacher, students learn about the history of the instrument, play small pieces of music, identify the most famous composers for their instrument and learn some Kuwaiti rhythms. There are three performance exams for music students, one at the end of the first term, the second at the halfway point of the second term and the third at the end of the second term. These usually take place in the school music department and students are examined individually in solo performance by the school's music teachers. Sometimes the music technical mentor for the school might be invited to attend these exams. Each solo performance must consist of one short music piece. For example, in the first and second exams for piano and violin instruments, the student has to play one simple classical music piece consisting of eight bars. *Oud* and *qanoon* students have also to play one simple classical Arabic song in the first and second exams. Additionally, all music students have to play one traditional Kuwaiti song in the third exam (Ministry of Education, 2014).

2.2.8 Music at University: CBE and HIMA

Although Kuwait University was established in 1963, and is the only public university in Kuwait, it still has no music department. However, there are two programmes for students interested in studying music in Kuwait: one offered by the College of Basic Education (CBE) and the other by the Higher Institution for Musical Arts (HIMA), which was established in 1976 and is focused on performance.

The College of Basic Education (CBE) has a music department offering a four-year programme to obtain a Bachelor's degree in education specialising in music, leading to graduation as a music teacher. The programme comprises

harmony, analysis, composition, theory, choral singing, piano, percussion studies, history, instruments and teaching music education, and provides a training term in a public school. CBE is controlled by the PAAET (The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training), was established in 1986, and is currently in the process of merging with the newly established Jaber Al-Ahmad University in Kuwait.

At CBE the student has to complete 60 credits from music subjects (for example, theory and harmony) and gain 70 credits from general educational subjects (e.g. introduction to psychology and adult learning) to graduate. However, at HIMA, the student has to complete 90 credits from music subjects and 40 credits in general educational subjects in a four-year undergraduate programme. HIMA also offers a specialist music programme at high-school level for those committed to studying on its subsequent degree programmes and offers a one-year foundation for those not following this pathway. These programmes are generally equivalent to an overseas undergraduate level. However, as there are no music programmes at postgraduate level in Kuwait, those interested in taking music beyond this level tend to study overseas.

Initially, both CBE and HIMA offered one-to-one lessons for piano, but from 2004 CBE has provided group piano lessons in order to accommodate the increasing number of students. The CBE piano curriculum has six compulsory piano modules for all music students. Table 1 below shows the current requirements for each module.

Table 1: Group Piano Curriculum at CBE, 2016 onwards

Piano Module	Scales	Sight-reading	Supplementary Materials	Repertoire
Module 1, term 1 Duration 12 weeks; two classes of two hours per week	C major, A minor, one octave, parallel and contrary motion. Natural and harmonic minors (minimum tempo, crotchet = 50, two notes per beat) Arpeggios in parallel and contrary motion (minimum tempo, dotted crotchet = 50, three notes per beat)	John Thompson's *Easiest Piano Course* part one	Two exercises from the first 16 exercises of Hanon, *The Virtuoso Pianist in Sixty Exercises for the Piano (Book 1) (Schirmer)* Paul Harris *'Improve your Sight-reading'* Grade one (Faber Music) (first half of the book for Module 1; second half of the book for Module 2)	One piece and one etude (at the same level as the sight-reading material)
Module 2, term 2 Duration 12 weeks, two classes of two hours per week	C major, A minor, two octaves parallel and contrary motion. Natural, harmonic and melodic minors (minimum tempo, crotchet = 55, two notes per beat) Arpeggios in parallel and contrary motion (minimum tempo, dotted crotchet = 55, three notes per beat)	John Thompson's *Easiest Piano Course* part two (first half)		
Module 3, term 3 Duration 12 weeks, two classes of two hours per week	G major, E minor, two octaves parallel and contrary motion. Natural, harmonic and melodic minors (minimum tempo, crotchet = 60, two notes per beat) Arpeggios in parallel and contrary motion (minimum tempo, dotted crotchet = 60, three notes per beat)	John Thompson's *Easiest Piano Course* part two (second half)	Two exercises from the first 16 exercises of Hanon, *The Virtuoso Pianist in Sixty Exercises for the Piano (Book 1) (Schirmer)* (for Modules 3 and 4)	

Module 4, term 4 Duration 12 weeks, two classes of two hours per week	F major, D minor, two octaves parallel and contrary motion. Natural, harmonic and melodic minors (minimum tempo, crotchet = 65, two notes per beat) Arpeggios in parallel and contrary motion (minimum tempo, dotted crotchet = 65, three notes per beat)	John Thompson's *Easiest Piano Course* part three (first half)	Paul Harris *'Improve your Sight-reading'* Grade Two (Faber Music) (first half of the book for Module 3; second half of the book for Module 4)	
Module 5, term 5 Duration 12 weeks, two classes of two hours per week	D major, B minor, two octaves parallel and contrary motion. Natural, harmonic and melodic minors (minimum tempo, crotchet = 70, two notes per beat) Arpeggios in parallel and contrary motion (minimum tempo, dotted crotchet = 70, three notes per beat)	John Thompson's *Easiest Piano Course* part three (second half)	The Kuwaiti national anthem (the first part with singing) (see Appendix 1	One music piece (at the same level as the sight-reading material)
Module 6, term 6 Duration 12 weeks, two classes of two hours per week	Bb major, G minor, two octaves parallel and contrary motion. Natural, harmonic and melodic minors (minimum tempo, crotchet = 75, two notes per beat) Arpeggios in parallel and contrary motion (minimum tempo, dotted crotchet = 75, three notes per beat)	John Thompson's *Easiest Piano Course* part four	The Kuwaiti national anthem (the full anthem with singing) (see Appendix 2	

The choice of repertoire (piece and etude) for each piano module depends on the piano teacher's sheet music resources and the ability of the student, and the decision to play a specific piece is usually agreed between teacher and student. The expected level of repertoire is based on the level of the group, but it is possible for a student who has taken private lessons and is therefore more advanced than the others in the class to choose more difficult repertoire. Repertoire can include etudes, inventions, minuet, a sonatina or sonata movement, a small piece or a simplified version of a classical Western music such as Beethoven's '*Moonlight'* sonata Op.27 no.1 (first movement) or Mozart's *Rondo alla Turca K.331* (third movement). If a student chooses more difficult repertoire for a module than is required, this does not automatically lead to a higher mark. All students are evaluated individually by two examiners (usually one piano teacher and one other music teacher) twice in each piano module. Students are required to perform all of the exam requirements from memory, except for the sight-reading.

Mid-term Exam:

    A. One of the required scales for each piano module as noted in Table 1 above.
    B. One exercise chosen by the student (modules 1-4).
    C. One music piece or study (etude) selected by agreement between the teacher and the student (modules 1-4).
    D. A section of the Kuwaiti national anthem without singing (modules 5-6).
    E. Sight-reading (unprepared test selected by the examiner).

Final Exam:

    A. The two required scales of the piano module.
    B. A new music piece (not played in the mid-term exam) or study selected by an agreement between the teacher and the student (modules 1-4).
    C. The required section of the Kuwaiti national anthem with singing (modules 5-6).
    D. Sight-reading (unprepared test selected by the examiner).

The marking scheme for the piano modules is as follows:

- 10% for participation in the class and progress during the term.
- 10% for absence (two points deducted for each absence; six absences lead to removal from the piano class and the student has to retake the module).
- 20% for the mid-term exam.
- 60% for the final exam.

The pass mark for each CBE module is 60%, and students are required to pass the final exam. The marks are usually released by the piano teacher in the lesson after the mid-term exam, or during the CBE results period (one to two weeks after the final exam). No feedback or comment forms are given to students; however, there is a short, informal discussion opportunity after the mid-term exam, in which the student and piano teacher discuss the result and consider what the student needs to focus on for the final exam or to pass the module. If a student fails in the final exam they are required to retake the module in the following term. More details on how the students are evaluated are given in Chapter Eight.

However, as there are no formal higher education opportunities for learning music in Kuwait apart from the HIMA and CBE courses, any students who have gained advanced level piano skill through private sector or one-to-one lessons have only these choices if they want to continue their music education. In particular, as there is only one music programme at CBE, any students already at an advanced level are required to take the same modules as those students who have never previously studied music, or who only have a small amount of knowledge about music or piano. If students with more advanced skills apply to study music at CBE, besides following the normal structure and requirements for each piano module, they have the opportunity to perform in concerts held in the music department throughout the academic year. These students are sometimes offered special access to the grand piano in order to practise or prepare for their concerts. CBE can sometimes offer additional one-to-one lessons which are non-credited, and this learning is not assessed, but

this depends on the availability and agreement of the piano teacher to accept the additional work.

2.2.9 Music in the Private Sector

There are now many private music teachers and around five music centres in Kuwait providing private music lessons (instrumental and vocal tuition and music theory lessons) for all people and ages. Currently, the number of music centres is increasing, which reflects an increasing interest in learning music in Kuwait. In addition, the British Council in Kuwait offers graded instrumental and singing exams six times a year, through the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM), with theory examinations twice a year in March and November and practical examinations three times a year in May, June, November-December (British Council in Kuwait, 2015).

2.3 Informing Group Piano Pedagogy in Kuwait through UK Practices

Although Kuwait currently has some external influence in the form of ABRSM piano exams taking place in the country, and there are some teachers at CBE who have had international training, piano pedagogy is still operating in relative isolation. There are issues of cultural acceptance, with some difficulties in music being accepted as a subject of study for the reasons presented earlier in this chapter. The provision for piano pedagogy resources and support has resulted in a situation where it is difficult for music teachers to access new information, as there are no music organisations for teachers, such as the Musicians' Union or Incorporated Society for Musicians which exist in the UK, and no provision for piano teachers to receive formal training as there are no professional development courses or qualifications offered for them. Therefore, it is difficult for programmes such as the one at CBE to develop in an informed manner. This research contributes to group piano pedagogy at CBE through investigating specific contexts for group teaching in the UK; comparison of the

provision and approaches taken by UK teachers informs understanding and development of the CBE programme.

This section aims to provide a brief understanding of the development of music education in the UK. This will be valuable for readers in Kuwait and provides more understanding of the environment of the UK group piano cases discussed later in the current study.

2.3.1 Music Education in the UK

According to Rainbow (1996), the history of music in schools in England dates back to the mid-twentieth century. The main activities of the teachers and pupils were playing the piano, understanding and singing music notation (Bentley, 1965). This conventional pedagogy was noted in the Plowden Report (1967), and due to its dependence on class instructions and the directions given to the students this approach was criticised. The report released by the British Schools Council in 1968 showed that music was considered to be one of the most boring subjects to be taught in school and students expressed their lack of interest in learning music as they felt it had almost no use in their future lives. This report noted that most class teachers lacked basic musical knowledge and emphasised the need to train them appropriately.

The Plowden report (1967) supported progressive ideas stated in earlier reports, promoting the importance of a child-based system in primary education and suggesting that children should learn music by engaging in music-related activities. Moreover, children should be guided to be active within lessons. A major concept of this report is the engagement of children through learning music constructively (Cox, 1994); children should be involved in exploratory and creative activities rather than merely focusing on theoretical learning. Swanwick (1988) additionally notes issues with teachers and music educators who perceived themselves as primarily musicians or performers, rather than as teachers, and the potential negative impact on learners.

This transition was clearly promoted at the secondary and tertiary level with the publication of *Sound and Silence*, a ground-breaking book which defined music as vital in children's education. Within their book, Paynter and Aston (1970) emphasise creative self-expression and demonstrate how this could be attained through music composition. They consider that by understanding the source of sound and how music is composed and developed, children would be actively involved, as children learn through personal experience. This knowledge results in children expressing their interest and encourages them to be highly creative in their musical engagement. However, according to Vulliamy (1977) the secondary level syllabus continued to consist of Western classical music which not all students were familiar with, and music teachers were considered to be authoritative, which affected the class discipline and learner motivation. The related issues, such as pupil boredom, restricted genres/styles only comprising Western music, limited musical literacy, limited knowledge of musical history and success being dependent on prior knowledge and skill are highlighted by Vulliamy.

Despite the work of Paynter and Aston, a national survey on primary schools by Her Majesty's Inspectors (DES, 1978) demonstrated that singing was students' most preferred activity in classrooms. However, only a small ratio of students had the opportunity to use recording devices or to be a part of a band. All children aged 7-10 years were given music education, mostly led by the class teacher, but peripatetic teachers were also employed for training children aged 11 years and above, giving instrumental one-to-one and small group teaching. Although children were exposed to specialised music training, only about 50% of classes had the chance to experience creative music activities. This indicated that most of the teachers who taught specialised music lessons still followed conservative methods.

These problems were considered in the 1980s within the Calouste Gulbenkian report (1982). The previous goal of music in the curriculum was mainly to encourage children to use sound as a medium to express and communicate music, in addition to experimenting with various instruments in Western and non-Western styles. The major stages in the development of artistic

competence include the exploration of material potential and the freedom for spontaneous expression (Gulbenkian, 1982). The Gulbenkian report indicates the lack of confidence of new teachers, and this was considered to be one of the most commonly observed challenges in teaching arts and music effectively. Two possible reasons for this were stated, namely the impact of teachers on music education in school and the content of teacher training courses. This report recommends three solutions to improve the quality of arts education, the primary one being that the arts needed to be incorporated as a mandatory subject in courses for trainee primary school teachers. The next recommendation concerned the specialist-generalist debate, a concept that was supported by the School Council report in 1981 (Gulbenkian, 1982). Kemp (1994) asserts that most school music teachers encourage the merging of music education with other subjects in the syllabus and music needs both to be incorporated within the entire curriculum and taught by teachers capable of assessing children's talents and skills. Therefore, general teachers of primary classes, when compared to music specialists, would be better skilled and equipped for this task. The final solution, as recommended in the Gulbenkian report, is to also appoint specialists who could share their experience and knowledge with the other staff in school. This was eventually developed through Better Schools (DES, 1985), which put forth a system of curriculum coordinators to take up the roles of semi-specialists, advisors or consultants.

Following this, major efforts developed over time to aid in improving the quality of music education at primary and secondary school levels. According to ABRSM (2014), the UK is the global leader of music education. Progress in funding schemes has aimed to ensure all pupils will have the chance to learn a musical instrument. The number of students who access such musical tuition has increased from about 438,700 in 2005 to about 1.1 million in 2012 (Finney, 2016). However, as Burke (2015) claims, the concept of music education is inconsistent across the nation and developments are required to ensure pupils have easy access to high quality music education.

To offer high quality music education to pupils, a National Plan was established in 2011. This focuses on the concept of equality and easy access to high quality music education for all pupils irrespective of their race, residence, their musical talents, gender, their income or family background. This base will enable pupils to explore further opportunities and progress to higher levels (UK Government, 2011). Teachers can exercise some freedom in how they implement music teaching in schools. In the National Curriculum, music education remains an integral element in primary and secondary classes providing music education for students aged 5-14. Each school can decide how it organises provision to satisfy the basic programme of music studies. School provision is also supported by an infrastructure of local music education hubs which focus on the provision of music services, aiming to enrich and support music education so that children will enjoy instrumental and vocal learning. The hubs can create exciting opportunities, such as musical ensembles including orchestras (UK Government, 2011).

However, issues which have begun to have an impact on the uptake of music at higher education include the perception of the value of music as a subject and changes of examination mode which have resulted in a 15% fall in the number of students taking GCSE music in 2018 compared with 2016 (Thraves, 2018). This may in due course have an effect on the numbers entering higher music education. Currently there are nine music conservatoires in the UK and a large number of universities offering music degrees. In the previous three decades, the numbers studying music within higher education in the UK have expanded (Burland & Pitts, 2007). Hewitt (2009) argues that this expansion of music education at university level is also indicated through diversity of aims and activity of the programmes on offer. Universities and conservatoires face challenges in ensuring that they can support new learning pathways and facilitate employable skills. Kokotsai and Hallam (2007) further question the ability of conservatoires to meet the changes identified through the rise in globalisation and the digitisation of music.

Creech et al. (2008) argue that higher education can play a crucial role in preparing musicians for the critical transition from music undergraduate study

to their professional career. However, '*The Funding Challenges for Universities*' Universities UK (2013) report indicates that there is a lack of financial independence for universities for long-term funding and there is a considerable risk to the UK's demand for higher education. Music education is also under pressure from political will and potential challenges to adapt to globalising needs (Tregear et al., 2016). According to Barr (2004), political changes in providing funding and access to higher education in the UK (including music education) have created challenges for individuals choosing a degree programme as their ideal goal for higher education. Issues with support for music in the school education system may result in fewer numbers studying music at conservatoire or university.

2.3.2 Private/Informal Learning Music Opportunities

In a collaborative research project conducted by ABRSM (2014) in the UK it is reported that 'An increasing number of people are making music; more people are learning an instrument; new technologies are encouraging greater engagement; and government interventions (designed to encourage more children to engage in musical activity) have had a positive effect' (ABRSM, 2014, p.4). Overall, in the UK, as the number of music learners are growing in number, this suggests the ratio of teachers and music institutes are also increasing, which is a positive indicator for the growth and awareness of music among students and overall in society. Clearly, the opportunity and availability of accessing learning music outside the formal institutions is much better than in Kuwait.

In addition to one-to-one lessons, several UK institutions include piano group (digital lab) provision, often offered as short courses for example in City Lit (London) and Leeds College of Music; these institutes are the focus of case studies in chapters Ten and Eleven. Group piano lessons offered in the UK are often for adult learners who want to play for pleasure, who may be starting as a new beginner or wanting to develop their existing skills. More detail on group piano classes will be given later in this study. Learners can also take individual

instrumental examinations; these are offered by several examination boards, of which ABRSM is the largest. This organisation provides graded instrumental and theory exams with substantial published resources available to support learners, and additionally offers events to support the professional development of music teachers.

The UK institutions mentioned above provide beginner group piano lessons for adults, and these can be used as a comparator for the classes in Kuwait. This research will explore the pedagogy within specific UK and Kuwait institutions; this can help develop understanding of how to conduct group piano classes, and can provide information on current international pedagogy with focus on learning materials, resources, curriculum content and teaching methodologies.

This section has provided brief details on the current environment and situation of the case studies investigated in this research. Awareness of the music education backgrounds in Kuwait and the UK provides a contextual foundation for understanding the findings of the subsequent case studies in this research.

2.4 Conclusion

The chapter began with a discussion on the nature of music education in the Middle East with a particular focus on the Kuwaiti situation. The chapter has discussed the influence of religion, culture and history on the Kuwaiti educational system which led to a unique environment for the teaching and learning of music. It is observed that in Kuwait the primary challenge facing the higher education scenario is the presence of political issues, and there remain challenges in balancing modernisation and traditional norms. Issues of budget and funding further complicate access to higher education in Kuwait. On the other hand, in the UK, much attention has been given to music education and serious efforts have made to support music education as a discipline. In the UK higher educational sector, challenges remain in sustaining funding and enhancing equity in access to higher education.

Analysis of the Kuwaiti scenario identifies that the value of the arts in Kuwait has been understood at school level education, with limited growth in the higher education context. In the UK, conservatoires and universities offer a range of higher education options in music though some institutions are finding it difficult to adapt to the changing needs of a graduate world with increasing focus on employable skills. However, in both countries, cultural challenges and the growth in the number of students who are keen to study music continue to be issues. In Kuwait, there is a need for higher education curricula which ensure the consolidation of positive values and an upholding of national identity. This is required so that the state can continue to be part of the global world and at the same time maintain its identity. There are some unique and common challenges in both situations, although formal music education is more advanced in the UK compared to Kuwait. However, there is a need for a comprehensive assessment of how context-specific findings can be developed in each scenario, particularly, at CBE, relating to the group piano curriculum and pedagogy.

This chapter has provided contextual information related to music education in two different settings. This helps to establish the background situation of music education and relevant status given to music as a discipline in both countries, which also contributes to understand the findings and recommendations of the current study. More specific details regarding piano pedagogy, curriculum and challenges in formal music education are addressed in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Group Piano Pedagogy

3.1 Evolution of Piano Pedagogy in Higher Education

Research studies have illustrated several factors that have resulted in the development of piano pedagogy while also revealing the challenges and the rapid growth in university piano programmes. According to James (1995), the traditional European style mainly dominated the style of piano pedagogy in the US during the late nineteenth century. This style was mainly performance-oriented and focused on technique and repertoire. Uszler and Larimer (1984) state that the normal mode of instruction was focused on teaching young students privately or in public schools. This later resulted in group piano pedagogy courses being offered to college pianists in universities, supported by teaching experiences, learning theories, methodologies and philosophies offered by publishers, pedagogues and music professors. Early research highlighted the importance of piano specific pedagogy assessment at tertiary level. Monsour (1959) conducted an investigation into the piano class movement between 1915 and 1930, and argued a need for a piano pedagogic programme at university level.

Monsour also considered relevant teaching issues including the management of the group piano class, the number of students in a class, piano classroom equipment, finance problems, the improvement of students through learning, and piano teacher training. Richards (1967) notes that most music programmes in colleges and universities across the USA offered group piano lessons. These programmes were designed so that all music students, regardless of their area of specialisation, received piano training as an important part of their music programme. Sturm et al. (2000) reflected on this perspective and concluded that such an approach was ideal, as the aim was to educate students on the fundamentals of playing instruments with a focus on sight-reading, harmonisation, transposition and score reading. Uszler and Larimer (1984) state that the increase in piano pedagogy programmes resulted in an increase in methods of structured instruction, and in materials. Humphrey (1995) argues that the appearance of a structured curriculum for piano

education could help students learn many styles and perspectives and this would contribute to players developing independent style and vision.

The increased rise of the middle class was another influencing factor, as they were able to afford music education and also support the interests of children who wanted to pursue tertiary education in music. Fonder (1989) reports that this increased interest for structured education in the USA can be linked to the efforts undertaken by the music industry to sponsor early local, state and national competitions for school instrumental groups. These were extended to college level education with several music industry players offering sponsorships (Humphrey, 1995). At this level, Hitchcock and Saide (1986) report that instrumental music teachers at undergraduate level in the USA were directed to deliver programmes with a structured approach to teaching music and music history, in which students should be informed about different pedagogical practices.

Clark (1992) reports that an increase in professionalism by piano teachers contributed to the development of USA university-level programmes. Clark indicates that the quality of musical experience in any university can be supported only when efforts are taken to increase the teaching and learning experience. This requires pedagogic training programmes to provide a high level learning experience in colleges and universities. This view is supported by Pike (2014), who reports that the professional development of the teacher plays an important role in improving the student learning experience. Pike notes that curricular considerations, teaching techniques and student engagement are important factors in building strong music knowledge and ability.

Richards (1967) illustrates that several of the piano pedagogy programme curricula today might have been constructed through the curriculum content that applied in schools which were part of the group class piano movement a century ago. Uszler and Larimer (1984) also note other factors in association with the development of the group piano class. For example, university provision was supported by professional organisations: initiatives of music associations such as the Music Educators National Conference (MENC) in

1934 and the Music Supervisors National Conference in 1907 resulted in instructional courses being offered to piano institutions and teachers. As well as providing information for the establishment of piano pedagogy programmes, the music associations also taught group piano methods to piano teachers so that they could deliver group piano classes. Uszler and Larimer (1984) note that these initiatives resulted in a more comprehensive and broader view of the development of the piano pedagogy programme in American universities.

Alongside these views and identified challenges that continue to exist in the twenty-first century, research also reveals that understanding the institutional requirements to enhance instrumental education is important. Jørgensen (2000) indicates that there is a change in the instrumental learning practices at higher education level, where the role of the institution needs to be addressed through institutional responsibility for students' learning. This point is considered to be strongly relevant to the investigation in this research, in order to understand the current group piano pedagogy at CBE and its development.

3.2 Curriculum Content and Pedagogic Structure

3.2.1 Curricular Content

Studying the development of piano methods is another approach in understanding the changes and trends in piano pedagogy programmes. Brubaker (1997) conducted a descriptive study and exploration of piano methods printed in the USA during the last two centuries, focusing on the teaching philosophy, context and content of piano teaching. Institutional, social and cultural values of different times were reflected in these piano methods. Uszler and Larimer (1984) present an assessment of five case studies from US universities. Their handbook for teachers recommends that the piano pedagogy programme should contain clear content elements, including an overview of learning theories and how these applied in piano teaching, and a review of literature, approaches and materials for piano pedagogy. Also included are an assessment of individual and group learning instructional

skills, lesson and curricular planning and guided student teaching for a period of one academic year.

Curricular content and structure are evaluated in the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) 2003–2004 Handbook (NASM, 2003). This handbook discusses several factors including group and ensemble participation, independent study, supportive courses in music, courses in pedagogy and comparative methodology, and general studies. The handbook recommends that other electives should be encouraged as a small percentage of the coursework and that major and supportive courses in music should comprise 65% of the curriculum.

3.2.2 Class Music Instructors: Piano Competence

Students who become piano teachers tend to follow and apply the teaching traditions learned from their previous teachers (Camp, 1992; James, 1995; Kowalchyk, 1988). The main priorities in piano lessons are usually the development of technique and performance of piano repertoire (Kasap, 1999; Schubert, 1992). However, class music teachers will need to develop keyboard skills that divide into many categories including transposition, sight-reading, improvisation, accompaniment, ensemble playing, score-reading, as well as the performance of repertoire (Graff, 1984; Johnson, 1987; Kasap, 1999). New teaching materials and diverse teaching approaches reflect the development and extension of teaching goals during the twenty-first century; previously the focus was limited to classical performance goals (Schubert, 1992; Uszler, 1992).

As previously discussed, learning piano has been recognised as an essential foundation in music teacher training (NASM, 1988; Robinson & Jarvis, 1967), and functional piano skills are regarded as valuable tools for general music instruction, as well as for general music school teachers and directors of performance groups. According to Kasap (1999), these skills are not often included in private piano lessons. Therefore, it will be relevant to investigate the focus of skills training in group piano learning at CBE.

3.2.3 Piano Instruction

Agay (2004) states that there are multiple lesson formats for teachers and students, which include private and group piano methods. As Daniel (2005) argues, the one-to-one method is not necessarily an ideal approach because the teacher is constantly repeating the same concepts to different students; teaching may be in some respects inefficient. Bastien (1977) reports that there is no statistical evidence supporting the advantages of individual teacher over group teaching contexts. Harris and Crozier (2000) reflect on this perspective and argue that teaching should be optimally distributed across different forms. This can help ensure that the needs of the individual can be met. Bjøntegaard (2015) demonstrates the benefits of a range of formats – group, one-to-one and masterclass, through which higher education music students can discover the value of different contexts and approaches.

Jacobson (2006) reflects on the advantages of individual piano instruction, concluding that this approach can increase the overall attention given by the teacher and enable a close teacher-student relationship. Jacobson also argues that this can help address individual technical queries and the personalised requirements of the student. Gaunt (2007) similarly argues that one-to-one lessons provide an opportunity for the development of a close and productive relationship which also has career-related impact.

However, evidence from Coats (2006) and Fisher (2010) indicates that group lessons can be more effective than one-to-one. This is attributed to an increase in performance opportunities, improvement in critical thinking and listening skills, developing musical understanding and communication, inspiration and motivation, and social playing skills develop through ensemble work, for example. Group piano instruction has existed for around 200 years. Hirokawa (1997) indicates that the earliest group instruction began in Europe around 1815, when a German musician, Johann Bernhard Logier, gave group piano lessons in Dublin, Ireland (Fisher, 2010). Logier found that group teaching provided an ideal setting for the introduction of 'musical theoretical concepts and subsequent application at the keyboard' (Fisher, 2010, p.3). The establishment of piano classes in other European countries and in America

followed, as Logier's students replicated the format (Hirokawa, 1997). In the USA, Calvin Cady of Teachers College, Columbia University began to develop group piano instruction around 1887 (Richards, 1962).

At the start of the twentieth century, while individual tuition continued, group instruction had increasing acceptance in schools, private studios, pre-colleges, and universities in the USA (Skroch, 1991; Richards, 1962). In the first half of the century, especially during the 1920s and 1930s, effort was directed towards establishing group piano in elementary schools. These classes were included in the USA elementary school curriculum in order to enhance cultural and artistic awareness (Fisher, 2010), as they were considered to be helpful in developing a student's creative skills (Lowder, 1973). The pioneers during that period also included classroom music teachers who were therefore experienced in working with groups (Fisher, 2010). Through demonstrations and lectures to professional music organisations they promoted the benefits of group instruction (Uszler, 1992). Subsequently, specific teacher-training courses were introduced at over 150 colleges and universities in the USA (Skroch, 1991; Richards, 1962). Group piano classes in colleges and universities also targeted beginners who were music education majors, non-music majors or adult hobby students (Arrau, 1983; Fisher, 2010; Pike, 2013).

In the 1930s and 1940s Raymond Burrows published several method books and texts that aided class piano instruction (Skroch, 1991). Robert Pace at Teachers College, Columbia University, developed a comprehensive group piano method that included piano repertoire, finger training, theory, transposition, improvisation, and ear training (Fisher, 2010). Pace believed that 'the purpose of piano instruction should be the development of comprehensive musicianship and well-balanced people' (Hirokawa, 1997, p.156). After the end of the Second World War and by the mid-twentieth century, expansion efforts in group piano instruction included workshops, publications and new technologies that supported its growth and reflected the increase in the acceptance of piano class as a respectable activity and appropriate context for learning (Fisher, 2010).

With the increase in the number of colleges and universities requiring undergraduate music majors to reach an acceptable level of ability at the keyboard, group piano instruction became common practice in higher education settings and was included in university programs from 1929 (Bartels, 1960). Bastien and Nagode (1988, p.217) emphasise that 'group piano courses are considered part of a core degree requirement within the undergraduate music curriculum'. As discussed previously, knowledge of piano skills is considered fundamental to music learning. The capability to sight-read, transpose, harmonise and improvise is of benefit to instrumental teachers, choir and class music teachers and can be enabled through group piano classes; these may connect to other parts of institutional study, such as relating keyboard harmony to theory, and piano literature to music history. Group instruction also acts as a laboratory where several components could influence each other, promoting in-depth musical understanding.

Pace (1978) defines class piano instruction as involving around six to 24 students, who regularly meet under the guidance of an instructor in order to learn and perform assigned repertoire, technique, and related materials. Solo repertoire is performed in ensemble because of the difficulty in covering the assignment with so many students. Each student may have an instrument, or in some cases some students may share either an acoustic or an electronic piano. Class piano sessions usually take place for one to two hours per week. Due to the focus on performing the specific assignment as directed by the instructor, in this setting the opportunity for the students to cooperate or evaluate each other is limited

Group piano instruction can also comprise a more exploratory learning situation that includes two or more students, led by a teacher who guides the learning dynamics. This situation offers a sense of personal connection and an environment in which each person in the group can contribute: each learner may share and perform different material, and peers, as well as the teacher, can provide constructive comments. This is the format used by Haddon (2017) for a series of group piano classes for lifelong learners. At an advanced level, these classes may be structured in a one to two-hour session per week, or it may be divided into a smaller session with two students for one hour. Shorter

periods may be more suitable for younger students (Pace, 1978). Burkett (1982, p.31) also mentions that group pedagogy 'allows the teacher to use varied teaching methods, cover a wider area of study, and use his or her time more efficiently'. These findings indicate a range of approaches.

3.2.3.1 Negative and Positive Viewpoints of Group Piano Instruction

Is one form of instruction 'better' than the other? Psychologists and educators have long seen the important of group instruction. Pressey et al. (1959, p.323) state that 'these socialised and responsible learning situations give children an opportunity to interact, to contribute to one another's knowledge and gain new motivation and insights'. However, Beres (1990) emphasises that the true basics of performance, comprehension and critical sensitivity can only be gained through individual lessons, suggesting that group piano teaching concepts have become another gimmick. Beres reveals that many music educators feel that this format is limited, believing that it can only be used to teach the fundamentals of music. Although other piano instructors may not feel as strongly as Beres, individual piano instructors may have misconceptions about group piano instruction.

Pace (1978) shows that individual piano instruction is the most widely used approach throughout the world and outlines some common misconceptions as follows: private lessons must be the logical way for teaching piano because they were used first; most of the best pianists come from the private lesson approach than from group instruction, and this means that private instruction is superior to group instruction; students do not like to be criticised by other students as they are paying for the teacher's feedback; private lessons provide a one-to-one relationship; only private lessons can provide an atmosphere where students can discuss their feelings. However, Duckworth (1968) states that:

> Studies in group dynamics show that problem solving and clarification are aided by a group setting. In contrast to private instruction, group instruction allows the teacher to evaluate each student's individual level

as he grasps for new insights among his peers. With a broader and more diverse means of expression in a class, a student's interactions generally take on purpose; there are other people with and against whom his thinking can be tested for its validity (pp.144-5).

Burkett (1982) demonstrates other advantages of group instruction such as introducing students to a wider range of piano literature. Stevens (1989) states that the most important difference between the two formats is that there can be a unique interaction among the group of learners. Shockley (1982) believes that musicianship develops naturally in a group setting. As students play, listen, and respond, they gain performing experience and develop critical listening ability. Ensemble playing and other group activities improve rhythmic accuracy and sensitivity to dynamics, balance and phrasing. Similarly, the group learning environment offers 'increased levels of interaction and subsequent learning experiences for the students' (Daniel, 2004, p.35). Kowalchyk and Lancaster (1997) also outline some of the advantages of group instruction: it encourages students to develop skills in solving their own problems, it aids in developing rhythmic security, provides opportunities for supervised practice and establishes a sense of group spirit and group dynamics that increases motivation.

Johnson (1981) also states advantages of group teaching including group dynamics, competitive incentives, and teaching effectiveness. Loris (1994) states that the most important aspect of group piano teaching is creating a motivating atmosphere. Gipson (2005) suggests that providing students with accountability for their progress, maintaining high expectations, and helping them develop independence at the keyboard creates a rich and rewarding musical experience that encourages students to assume ownership for their learning.

Research studies have compared group and individual instruction in music and other related fields. Rogers (1974) looked at group compared with individual instruction among elementary school students aged seven to nine years, and found that students who received group piano instruction did better on performance tests than those who received individual piano instruction. In

another experimental study, Gates (1975) compared individual piano instruction with dyadic instruction. Gates found no significant differences between the two groups, but significant economies such as teacher time, piano lab use, and student cost supported the use of group teaching.

Kostka (1984) identifies a lack of experimental studies on piano teaching, and provides a method of self-study for a piano teacher to use in improving teaching effectiveness in terms of regulation of class time. Jackson (1980) looked at group size on individual achievement in beginning piano classes, dividing pre-school to college age students into groups of two, four, six, and eight. Jackson found no significant difference in individual achievement within the piano classes of these varied sizes.

Recent studies have sought to discover undergraduate students' perspectives on group piano learning. Macchioni (2008) summarises the findings of a panel from the 2008 Group Piano Forum sponsored by the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA). Researchers collected students' opinions on secondary piano programmes. Those participating in group classes showed greater confidence in their technique, including navigating around the keyboard more freely and looking at their hands less often. The students wanted to know how to approach a new piece independently and thought skills explored in courses should be practical and specific to their individual degree programmes. However, students felt that quantity over quality was emphasised in the piano class, and that a stronger connection to music theory was needed. In this regard, students wished for more time to learn materials and increased support of new concepts and their theoretical foundations.

Therefore, group piano instruction is not always successful and there are questions regarding how it can be more effective and linked to other areas of the curriculum. Former undergraduate group piano students reported not enough preparation to use the piano as a functional tool, and other reports indicated that students who graduated from class piano did not feel competent in performing functionally at the keyboard (Graff, 1984). Vemazza (1967, p.45) shows that:

The usefulness and importance of the course have been recognised. Now, music educators need to establish new guidelines for how much can be taught in a reasonable length of time, where the emphases shall be and what must be the core of basic piano study.

These issues reveal the importance of the role of the instructor and his/her ability in selecting and using appropriate skills. The class piano teacher must know how to control group dynamics in order to ensure that students learn the functional skills that most relate to their future professional career (Vemazza, 1967). Roberson (1992) states that these type of classes need a specialist in this kind of instruction. The trained specialist in class piano teaching needs knowledge of the combination of group dynamics and functional keyboard skills in order to direct and teach learners (Roberson, 1992). Starkey (1970) explains that the success of a class piano instructor depends on pianistic and organisational ability, skill in conducting groups and the ability to present keyboard materials with confidence and enthusiasm. Starkey also outlines factors that lead to successful group instruction such as appropriate curriculum design, motivating music and materials, group interaction, and effective instructor communication. The teacher's effectiveness will be discussed later in Chapter Four.

3.2.4 Challenges in Curriculum and Functional Piano Playing Skills

Richards (1962) conducted a survey of secondary class piano curricula by providing two different groups of instructors (which included lecturers in music education and secondary school piano instructors) with a list of twenty functional piano playing skills. The instructors were asked to rate in terms of importance the following keyboard musicianship items: analysis (melody, harmony and form), memorisation, modulation, realisation of figured bass, ensemble playing, chord progressions, playing in front of others (performance skills), development of style concepts, critical listening, instrumental score reduction, playing of patriotic songs, harmonisation of melodies, accompanying, sight-reading, technical development, improvisation, vocal

score reduction, repertory study, playing by ear and transposition. The items that both groups of educators regarded as most important included improvisation, transposition, music analysis, chord progressions and playing by ear, while memorisation or playing figured bass were not considered to be very important. While repertory study was identified as important by secondary piano instructors, it was regarded as the least important factor by music instructors.

Tollefson (2001) conducted a survey of 893 state music instructors in terms of the method and frequency with which their piano playing skills were used in the classroom. The aim of this survey was to increase the practicality of secondary piano classes. The piano was found to be used in the classroom by 90% of the instructors, of whom 96% had completed a secondary piano course. Lowis (2002) conducted a survey on the use of piano playing skills by secondary choral music instructors. The study aimed to establish the piano skills that were regularly used in the class by instructors. In class, the piano activities of these instructors involved playing accompaniments and warm-up exercises, singing a vocal part while playing the other parts, and sight-reading vocal scores. There was rare use of improvisation, transposition and harmonisation. The exclusion of memorised piano repertory from the secondary piano curriculum was supported by most of the music instructors.

Christensen (2000) conducted a survey on the importance of different piano playing skills for studio instructors and performers. Of the total respondents, 19% were string players, 40% were wind players and 35% were vocalists teaching in elementary and secondary schools in the USA. With more than 50% of the rating, the skill of accompanying was given the most importance. The ratings for the other skills were much lower, with 11% for score-reading and 15% for chord progressions, while even lower scores were observed for solo piano repertory, playing by ear, harmonisation and technique. Piano playing skills were regarded as 'important' to 'very important' by more than 80% of the respondents, while the practice of daily sight-reading of accompaniments was regarded as important by 30.6% of the respondents and was carried out by 21.7% in their individual practice. It was concluded that every secondary piano lesson should involve sight-reading, since this forms

the building blocks of skill as an accompanist when combined with technique and chord progressions.

Another analysis of piano pedagogy and functional piano playing skills showed that overall functional skills are rated much higher than other elements such as memorisation and style (Laver & Heble, 2016). As Russell and Evans (2015) argue, improvisation, transposition and music knowledge of chord progression were considered to be most important (Kraus & Chandrasekaran, 2010). Moreover, Green (2002) reflects on curriculum content and argues that the focus on the technical and functional skills of the individual is important at the secondary level. Therefore, there is scope to consider the inclusion of different skills within group piano pedagogy from the perspective of skill-broadening, as well as the issues of career relevance discussed earlier, both of which will be considered within the current research study.

Skills which could have further consideration within group piano pedagogy include sight-reading, repertoire selection, improvisation and accompaniment. Zhukov (2014) reports that under-developed sight-reading skills can result from a lack of effective training materials; these skills can be developed through ensemble playing. Daniel and Bowden (2013) argue that there is a need for the music curriculum to consider not only classical music repertoire, but also to include popular music in order to increase student engagement. Kolneder and Pauly (1998) recommend that improvisational activities should be included; this enables the ability to transfer skills to other instruments, development of knowledge of harmony, the practical application of musical concepts and development of independent problem solving. Allen (2013) finds that improvisation could improve performance confidence and engagement. Improvisational accompaniment can increase abilities in listening, confidence in moving around the instrument, and in musical expression. Young (2013) also observes variance in the teaching of accompaniment; this is considered important by some faculty members and performers, but not always by private teachers, who may consider skills only in relation to the needs of isolated learners.

These studies have relevance to inform the present research through inviting comparison of practices with those at CBE in Kuwait, where the current study will investigate whether students at CBE encounter pedagogy which supports the development of multiple pianistic skills and if so, how this works in practice, whether students engage with different types of skills, what values these may be perceived to have by students and by their teachers, whether they are included in the curriculum and how they are taught.

3.3 Technology

There have been significant changes in the ways in which people participate in education, and although teaching the piano involves passing on traditions and keeping an art form alive, technology has been included by many pedagogues to educate students, as well as to develop their studio set-up and increase their income (Bello et al., 2015). The various technological aspects include use of the internet and web-pages, digital recording, group piano labs, interactive learning platforms and educational software (Bello et al., 2015). Various workshops and conferences have shown an increasing interest in technology, for instance, the Piano Pedagogy Conference, the GP3 National Group Piano and the MTNA Symposium (all in the US). Renfrow and Lancaster (1991) interviewed leading experts and formulated a series of 27 objectives for the education of graduate piano pedagogy students in using keyboard and computer technology. Through a questionnaire survey distributed to university piano pedagogy instructors, they found at that point that few piano pedagogy programmes and courses were addressing technology.

Through analysing the changes and developments in published piano methods, Brubaker (1997) observes that various trends and challenges influenced piano pedagogy programmes after the 1960s, including the business of piano teaching, piano pedagogy training, and new technological developments. Brubaker emphasises technological development through the computer or electronic technology that piano teachers needed to engage with in order to support the growing student population. Brubaker also identifies new technology being used in teaching piano at university level, where

different piano methods can be created through the use of new technology. Jacobson and Lancaster (2006) focus on the conventional aspects of piano teaching; however, technological developments such as digital pianos in the group teaching setting are only mentioned in passing, and Agay (2004) identifies the tape recorder as an essential teaching tool. Since then the range of resources now available to piano teachers has expanded considerably. Technological advances are comprehensively included in modern piano pedagogy texts such as *Creative Piano Teaching* by Lyke et al. (2011), *Piano Pedagogy* by Daniel and Bowden (2008), and *Practical Piano Pedagogy* by Baker-Jordan (2004).

Teachers cannot ignore the use of technology and its influence in music education. Johnson (2002) argues that traditional piano teaching methods are in contest with incorporating electronic equipment in learning facilities such as audio and video recording, electronic laboratories and computer software programmes. Brubaker (1997) argues that the use of technology-based curricular content can help increase teacher training as well as continued group level instruction and success. However, the degree of achievement of technology and its effect on the overall teaching approach in universities is still being debated. The use of technology thus presents another area of consideration which impacts on the teaching environment as well as curriculum development, and which will be discussed in relation to the pedagogical context at CBE.

3.4 Conclusion

As piano pedagogy has developed, efforts have been made to structure programmes relevant to student needs and their levels of education (Uszler & Larimer, 1984), and to bridge the knowledge that students gain at school or university level. An increase in structured knowledge provision (Clark, 1992; Fonder, 1989; Humphrey, 1995) led to the need to improve teacher knowledge and training. Pike (2014) and Richards (1967) reported that pedagogic training programmes were needed by teachers to provide a high level learning

experience in colleges and universities. These examples show that while some efforts have been taken to increase the awareness of the implications of research findings in piano teaching, and to develop electronic instruments and new technology as instructional tools, there is limited evidence of critical thinking and learning in piano training. This is an important concept to develop.

The above analysis also provides some interesting evidence of the overall role of curricular content and material, which is important to consider, particularly within the undergraduate level. It is seen that piano lessons have progressed significantly from early practices. As Daniel and Bowden (2008) report, curricula should be built from a mix of different elements, and various researchers (Uszler & Larimer 1984; Agay, 2004; Jacobson, 2006) have proposed that curricular content should be based on the needs of the student, and efforts should be made to enhance private, group and classroom level education.

The primary challenge faced in the curriculum appears to be the inclusion of functional skills. An analysis of skills shows that functional skills are rated much higher overall than other elements like memorisation and development of style concepts (Christensen, 2000; Lowis 2002). It is also seen that a focus on sight-reading and improvisation can enable improvement in performance. However, there is a need for further research evidence to support or offer teaching strategies which can target such improvements.

Finally, technology presents another challenge in curricular development. Johnson, 2002, and Brubaker 1997, report that the use of technology-based curricular content can help increase teacher training as well as sustained group level instruction and implementation. Additionally, while technology is considered to be a key element which contributes to functional skills like improvisation, independent learning and repertory study, its use in group piano classes merits further consideration particular in terms of the learner experience.

This chapter has provided detail on the evolution of piano pedagogy in higher education, analysis of curriculum content and pedagogic structure and the piano competence of class music instructors, and understanding of challenges

in curriculum and functional piano playing skills. These concepts are relevant to the current study at CBE, particularly to enable contextual understanding of factors underpinning group piano pedagogy within higher music education.

Chapter 4: Teachers' Attitudes and Beliefs Concerning Piano Pedagogy

4.1 Student Skills, Attitudes and Self-Belief

4.1.1 Understanding Adult Students' Needs

This section explores factors which may impact the attitude and skill development of music students. It outlines challenges linked to teaching adult students, identifies associated elements which help the physiological conditions of student performance, and concludes with views on student level performance factors. These are relevant to inform the discussion of group piano pedagogy for higher education students at CBE in Kuwait.

4.1.1.1 Theoretical Perspectives: Teaching Adult Students

Variations in the learning preferences and characteristics of adult and pre-adult students have been delineated in very few studies. The research discussed below is from general education literature, but the findings have relevance for instrumental music teaching.

Beder and Darkenwald (1982) investigated variations in the teaching of pre-adults and adults. They found that adults were more motivated and self-directed than pre-adults, and emphasised the importance of using approaches for adult learners which focused on learner-centred behaviours. McNeil et al. (2014) observe that instructor-centred training is generally preferred by adults, while student-centred instruction is preferred by pre-adults. In student-centred instruction priority is given to topics of student interest over the programme content; the lesson content comprises informal discussions rather than assignments or texts, and the collaboration of students is encouraged in relation to designing course content. Kasworm (1980) proposed that older students tend to prefer theoretical problems and the use of critical, analytical and logical problem-solving techniques. Zhang et al. (2013) support this view, arguing that adult students are more self-directed, pragmatic, psychologically mature, motivated and task-oriented than pre-adults and have clearer

educational goals and more positive attitudes toward education. According to Roelfs (1975), older students require more encouragement for higher aspirations, experience fewer academic problems and carry less academic load. She also further observed that compared to students under 22 years of age, students older than 30 generally spend more time studying and are six times more satisfied with their instruction. Therefore, there are some clear differences in the overall learning needs of adult and young learners which may relate to learning an instrument.

4.1.1.2 Physiological Considerations Impacting Technique Development

The development of technique is the greatest physiological consideration when it comes to teaching piano playing skills to adults, in contrast to children. According to Robilliard (1967), piano technique is developed more easily by children, as compared to adults they gain the essential skills over a longer period of time and at a more natural and slower pace. Robilliard advocates learning skills at the point when a student is interested in developing them. Therefore, motivation to play the piano should be an advantage in developing piano technique. However, according to Ozanian (1979), better finger-hand-arm organisation and a greater sense of pitch differentiation and rhythm are usually displayed by adult students. Ozanian (1979) further emphasises that physical organisation requires training, practice and time.

According to Johnson (1987), the fingers of some adult students may not be as flexible as children or other adults, and some adults attempt to play the piano despite having flexibility problems or arthritis in their hands. He emphasises patience for piano teachers in addition to keeping a slow pace and choosing suitable material that each student can control. Johnson (1987) identifies great variation in the teaching technique of piano teachers. Some teachers are more motivated towards using exercises associated with the challenges in a specific piano piece, whereas others assign various drills, regardless of their immediate meaning. According to Johnson (1987), Hanon exercises should be used, as it is easy to memorise them. He further identifies the advantages of playing these exercises from memory and playing them in various keys.

4.1.1.3 Psychological Considerations Impacting Attitude

According to Orlofsky and Smith (1997), when older keyboard beginners enter the educational setting they may already have negative psychological feelings resulting from previous learning experiences. Ozanian (1979) argues that the expectation of adults of the new educational setting varies compared to children, because of their previous life and learning experiences. Students' attitudes may include hesitation regarding their skills, or over-confidence in their abilities. Ozanian further observes that there is a certain level of enthusiasm in all learners of all ages when starting their piano lessons; however, a basic fear of failure is often present in adult students. These fears tend to be lacking among children as they have limited past experiences. Ozanian concludes that although adult students may face the difficulty of having fixed ideas about their skills, their commitment to learning is higher compared to children as they voluntarily entered the educational setting.

Graessle (2000) and Johnson (1987) state that the major psychological problems that adult beginners face include low self-esteem and lack of self-confidence. According to Johnson (1987), self-doubt and embarrassment are often displayed by older students, in addition to feelings of stupidity, particularly if they encounter proficient child pianists. According to Johnson (1987), adult classes should be organised separately from those for younger students. Graessle (2000) also notes that adults can have a fear of making mistakes and may doubt their ability to learn. According to Myers (1986) this leads to their disconnection from instruction and to discomfort when they experience a perceived lack of success.

Gerrish (1986) suggests that considerable courage is required to become an adult beginner and these internal challenges are often the reasons for stopping lessons, rather than external factors such as social responsibilities, money and time. Gerrish shows that teachers can facilitate adults in overcoming these internal difficulties by being perceptive of their feelings and through effective communication, comprehension and encouragement.

Taylor and Hallam (2008) conclude that it is essential that a sympathetic and patient approach be used by teachers, with awareness of psychological and

physiological factors that influence the older beginner. The confidence and self-esteem of students will improve with honest support from teachers.

4.1.1.4 Guidelines for Successful Basic Piano Instruction for Adult Students

According to Gay (1983), factors determining the rate of progress of adult piano students include clear goals, motivation, regular practice, commitment and talent. Gay stresses the importance of establishing realistic objectives in logical stages of achievement, in addition to offering rich and clear information. He also illustrates this with an example of how the process can be simplified through progressive accomplishment levels for students. The amount of time needed for completing the objectives is dependent on the specific student and level. Gay also emphasises that the student should be congratulated at the end of every step accomplished so that a continuous sense of achievement can be established.

Thompson (1982) suggests four guidelines that can help to make adult piano lessons successful. Firstly, if a logical and clear explanation is given, adults pay better attention. Secondly, the responsibility of effective practising is that of the student and can be enhanced through self-evaluation and concentration. Thirdly, encouragement should be given to adults to research the background of the music they are studying as it increases their involvement and interest in the instruction. Finally, a focus on slow technical development will include paying attention to musical aspects such as rhythm, ornamentation, articulation, phrasing and tone production. Thompson also argues that adults should recognise that adding to developing musicality, learning to play the piano also channels their concentration in a motivating manner.

Ozanian (1979) suggests that adult piano students should be treated as friends and colleagues; students should be allowed to select the repertoire according to their own preference; adults should be motivated to attend all scheduled lessons; lessons should be organised in groups and during the holiday seasons; time off should be scheduled, and it is essential to be

structured, as specific information and organised lessons are preferred by adult learners. Ozanian also adds that appropriate material should be selected which includes different music styles, deploying an even pace, following a clear theoretical framework, using material which is attractive in terms of presentation, providing plenty of practice pieces, with some fingering written in, and including additional material in addition to contemporary music and well-organised technical studies.

Graessle (2000) suggests that it is challenging to select suitable learning material for adult learners. She adds that although materials addressing the aesthetic and developmental needs of older students can be sourced, children's method books are used by most of the piano teachers in her study, which contain large print and pictures that older students may find offensive. A major challenge with older beginners can be their interest in playing versions of their favourite pieces which are too difficult for them. Graessle believes that the teacher should take responsibility for finding well-composed arrangements of these preferred pieces so that the aesthetic needs of the students can be met and technical problems can be avoided.

4.2 Teacher Motivation and Professional Development

4.2.1 Introduction

Uszler et al. (2000) argue that the piano lesson has developed significantly from its early days and practices. The inclusion of varied musical styles and diverse pedagogical methods have developed as research has highlighted the benefits or problems that relate to existing teaching practices. This section will explore some literature on the teacher's motivation and professional identity, goals and training as well as teacher skills and ability, thereby further exploring teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards piano pedagogy.

4.2.2 Teacher Motivation

Research studies have gradually focused on aspects of motivation among teachers. Chong and Low (2009) argue that young novice teachers as well as those who have been teaching for a long time can be highly motivated in their teaching. Gibbs (1993) and Pitts (2012) propose that the influence of instrumental teachers on the motivation of the student can be extensive. Welch et al. (2010) note that undergraduate music students feel that a motivated instrumental teacher had the most influence on their musical career overall.

McPherson et al. (2012) report that the teacher's attitude and positive motivation are important to improving student involvement. Furthermore, instrumental teachers who show interest and love for the subject are considered to be better at inspiring students. Federici and Skaalvik (2014) examined the student perception of emotional and instrumental teacher support. Their study indicates that teachers who provided greater support were able to reduce the level of anxiety of children. The study also shows that students preferred teachers who were found to show a positive attitude and love of the subject. These findings complement those of Sloboda and Howe (1991), who note that for teachers working with beginners, personal qualities including warmth and empathy were as important as musical ability.

Yang (2015) classifies the professional identities of Chinese early-career music teachers, finding that the psychological needs of relatedness, ability and autonomy were important basic factors which affected teacher attitude and approach. Another important outcome of the study was that music teachers who had greater inherent motivation were found to perform better when compared to music teachers who had more external motivation. These factors would also be relevant for piano teachers.

Studying piano teachers' background careers and training needs is an approach used for improving piano pedagogy programmes, allowing pedagogy educators to provide training best suited to the needs of piano teachers. In Camp's (1976) study on the piano pedagogy training of private piano teachers in music education, respondents indicated that the quality of independent piano teachers could be improved through advanced study, teaching

approaches, pedagogy degrees, professional organisations, workshops and certificate programmes. Camp emphasised the importance of education for the piano teacher, as the quality of teaching offered by private piano teachers is limited by their training and experience. Therefore, content knowledge, skills and professional knowledge are important aspects which need to be addressed in connection with teacher motivation and professional identity. These factors will be considered in relation to the participants in the research sample at CBE.

4.2.3 Teacher Goals

The objectives and goals of teachers have been examined by researchers in order to gain more understanding of teacher motivation. Such goals are always related to the objective of performance and achievement. Ames and Archer (1988) identify two such major goals: the first is the mastery goal that focuses on the learning of skills, and the second is the performance goal that shows ability in a competitive environment. According to Retelsdorf et al. (2010) the drive of teachers towards success in addition to respect for their job and certain specific behaviours represents the achievement of goals in the teaching process. Taylor and Hallam (2011) argue that the long-term goal of most piano teachers was to improve their professional competence and skills. Butler (2007) observes that teachers' support-seeking behaviour was positively influenced by the mastery goal, which additionally creates a strong connection of care and concern in the teacher-student relationship, and results in a better focus of teachers on their teaching technique. This leads to demonstration of a high level of concern or interest in teaching, and to a low level of teacher exhaustion (Retelsdorf et al., 2010).

Similar views can be linked to the need for professional development and competency among piano teachers. Shook (1993) evaluated the competencies and experiences of teachers who taught piano courses at undergraduate level. He concludes that teachers who aimed to be aware of different roles and responsibilities including administration, general knowledge, studio management and studio teaching, achieved better performance and their

goals. In his survey of American piano pedagogy instructors, Shook (1993) concludes that flexibility and self-efficacy are the most important qualities to promote in teacher training.

Nitsche et al. (2011) identify the need for a process for better understanding the goals of a teacher; from an achievement view, this should change when comparing new teachers, initial graduate trainees and experienced teachers. However, satisfaction can be missing from a music education perspective. Purves et al. (2005) examined teacher attitudes towards music education and found that teachers were motivated more towards professional performance than towards teaching. Their survey findings indicated that only 12% of the teachers were considering a career in a secondary school environment; many musicians considered teaching as the final option and this was in part largely dependent on the participants' own disappointing experiences of school music lessons. Therefore, while addressing professional goals and development, it is important to consider these from the perspective of a music teacher. This directly leads to a research question for the current study: how does the learning within the group piano classes at CBE relate to students' overall professional goals?

4.2.4 Piano Teacher Functional Skills, Competencies and Training

Kowalchyk (1989) attempted to obtain a detailed profile of piano pedagogy instructors at American colleges and universities. The findings indicate that instructors were specially trained in performance, with the highest degree at Master's level. The majority lacked preparation to teach piano pedagogy and were not interested in undertaking training for the purpose of teaching piano at undergraduate or postgraduate levels. While emphasis was given to pedagogy teaching responsibilities and training, the percentage of the teaching instructors who were interested in teaching piano pedagogy at a high level was 24% or less. Although few of the respondents held doctoral degrees, Kowalchyk felt that future piano pedagogy instructors in the college and university job market would be required to hold doctorates. Johnson (2002) observed that doctorates were held by over 70% of piano pedagogy instructors

in her study, and found that most of them were deeply involved in performance rather than teaching.

Shook (1993) focused on the development and evaluation of competencies and experiences to teach piano pedagogy courses. The responsibilities of American undergraduate pedagogy instructors included studio teaching, studio management, general knowledge and administration. In surveying expert teachers of piano pedagogy, Shook observed that in order to achieve competence in these areas, graduate study was considered to be the best experience; however, teaching experience was also observed to be an important factor, particularly in pre-college independent education and college class piano teaching.

Although previous studies have mainly focused on technique and repertoire, many more areas are now included in the training of qualified musicians. As discussed earlier, Uszler (2000) indicates that piano teachers who once believed that their job was to teach technique and pieces are now also teaching students to create, analyse, ornament, improvise, memorise, transpose and harmonise. The piano teacher is perceived as a music educator who has awareness of process and product, and who leads the students towards the combination of several skills. According to Kasap (1999) the group piano teaching context is associated with the trend of teaching functional skills to enable score-reading, ensemble playing, improvisation, transposition, harmonisation and sight-reading. Pace (1999) advocates group teaching for this purpose as the same information can be given to a number of students at the same time. Daniel (2004) also endorses group teaching for the same reason in relation to repertoire. However, undergraduate and graduate pedagogy programmes still emphasis performance, musicality, technique and reading skills (Johnson, 2002; Milliman, 1992).

In formulating a research agenda relating to this field, Colwell (2009) observes that the extant research relating to music education is primarily focused on the content of music, and the secondary focus is on pedagogical content knowledge. Music performance education has been perceived to highlight practising, which emphasises performance teaching and pays less attention to

music education theories. This suggests there is scope for more discussion of the content and direction of teacher training.

4.3 Theoretical Framework

In Chapter Three, different views on piano pedagogy and associated challenges in piano teaching in higher music education and teacher training were recognised. The literature review has identified the need for teaching methodologies which can help students learn from their past experiences and for critical pedagogic approaches which can support this process. However, discussion of piano programmes shows that while efforts have been made to increase provision, understanding piano pedagogy requires a detailed assessment of teaching and learning processes. Therefore, observation of the pedagogic process can reveal the structure of the programmes, types of instruction, and level of teacher and student engagement which can contribute to informed understanding of pedagogic elements associated with a teaching programme.

In Chapter Four, the literature review has discussed understanding of student's skills, attitudes and has focused on adult students' needs which can influence group piano pedagogy. The chapter further identified that teacher motivation and teacher training influence teaching effectiveness. The current research therefore attempts to understand elements which may influence teachers' ability to improve student learning and performance. As Sinclair (2008) argues, it is also important to understand that the level of professional satisfaction of teachers can be a key element influencing student learning and overall performance.

Parental attitudes (Zdzinski, 1996; Davidson et al., 1996), heavy schedule demands (Williamon, 2004), lack of practice time (Williamon & Valentine, 2000), unwillingness to practise (Hallam, 2001) and lack of determination and loss of interest (Rotgans & Schmidt, 2011) can influence students' performance. However, even if teachers are in close contact with their students, they may still not be aware of other personality, motivational, social

and environmental factors influencing the students' decision to continue or to stop lessons (Sichivitsa, 2007; Williams, 2002).

Professional and personal characteristics of teachers may also influence students, and a teacher's awareness of learning styles can be crucial. If a teacher persists in teaching using a style that does not suit the student, then the student may change teacher or give up (Beheshti, 2009). Characteristics of teachers should match learners' requirements as their level of music expertise increases. In the early stages, teachers should focus on establishing a friendly and relaxed rapport with their students (Davidson et al., 1998). While the personal dimension is still crucial at the later stages, it also becomes important for teachers to gain the respect of the students as performing musicians by emphasising the professional dimension (Davidson et al., 1998).

Teachers also need to understand learner motivation. Deci et al. (1999) clarified that intrinsic motivation motivates people to act for the pleasure of doing so, and extrinsic motivation motivates those people looking for external reactions to their behaviour. Although there is variance in the orientation and level of motivation, it has been observed that intrinsic motivation is positive and results in better student performance (Lin et al., 2003). Particularly in music, it is suggested that low engagement in lessons is more likely for students with extrinsic motivation when commencing lessons (Evans, 2015), as they learn in order to gain approval from others, and comments from others more or less determine their continuing motivation (Evans, 2015).

It has been observed that the possibility of suspending study, or ending it early is higher among students who have low self-confidence and self-perception as well as a low sense of self-efficacy (Colbeck, et al., 2001). Self-efficacy can be defined as the judgements of people regarding their own abilities in organising and performing the actions needed for reaching selected types of performance (Bandura, 1986). This refers to the belief of students that they are able to succeed during the learning process. Two aspects that influence students' sense of self-efficacy include past achievements and successful mastery. An identified way of strengthening self-efficacy in relation to instrumental learning is through competent, self-regulated practising, as it will be likely to result in

effective learning experiences (McPherson & McCormick, 2006). Gün and Yildiz (2014) argue that creating an effective piano performance is a complex task requiring complete addressing of technical and musical challenges. They propose that besides the technical and musical challenges, the aesthetic and technical mastery of an instrument is also influenced by self-efficacy beliefs and self-confidence. Furthermore, according to Bandura (1983), self-efficacy may influence the extent to which stress is experienced by individuals in response to learning challenges through their self-perceived ability of coping with the demands of the task. McPherson and McCormick (2006) also note that in music performance exams, self-efficacy is an important element for success. Therefore, understanding student level motivation and student self-efficacy and competence can help reflect students' ability to perform well (McPherson & McCormick, 2006); this contributes to effective teaching.

Therefore, it is important not only to address teachers' own competence, motivation and satisfaction, but also their views on student performance and student engagement. In light of this, two specific instruments are used in the present study to identify teacher and student views, including the semi-structured interview, which was used to investigate the teachers' personal characteristics, and focus group discussion, where students and teachers were invited to share their views on the factors which may influence students' ability to engage with a programme and improve their performance.

It can be observed that a complex network of variables affects instrumental learning. Some factors include the learner's personal dimensions, such as their attitudes towards practising, self-perception of competence, and the perceived value of music learning. These interact with several other external factors, such as the match between the characteristics of teachers and the needs of students, parental support, personal histories with music, parental attitudes towards music, and the family's socioeconomic level. Therefore, if the aim is to understand the different factors which influence the existing piano pedagogy at CBE, Kuwait, these complex factors need to be examined. Figure 1 identifies the theoretical framework of the current study.
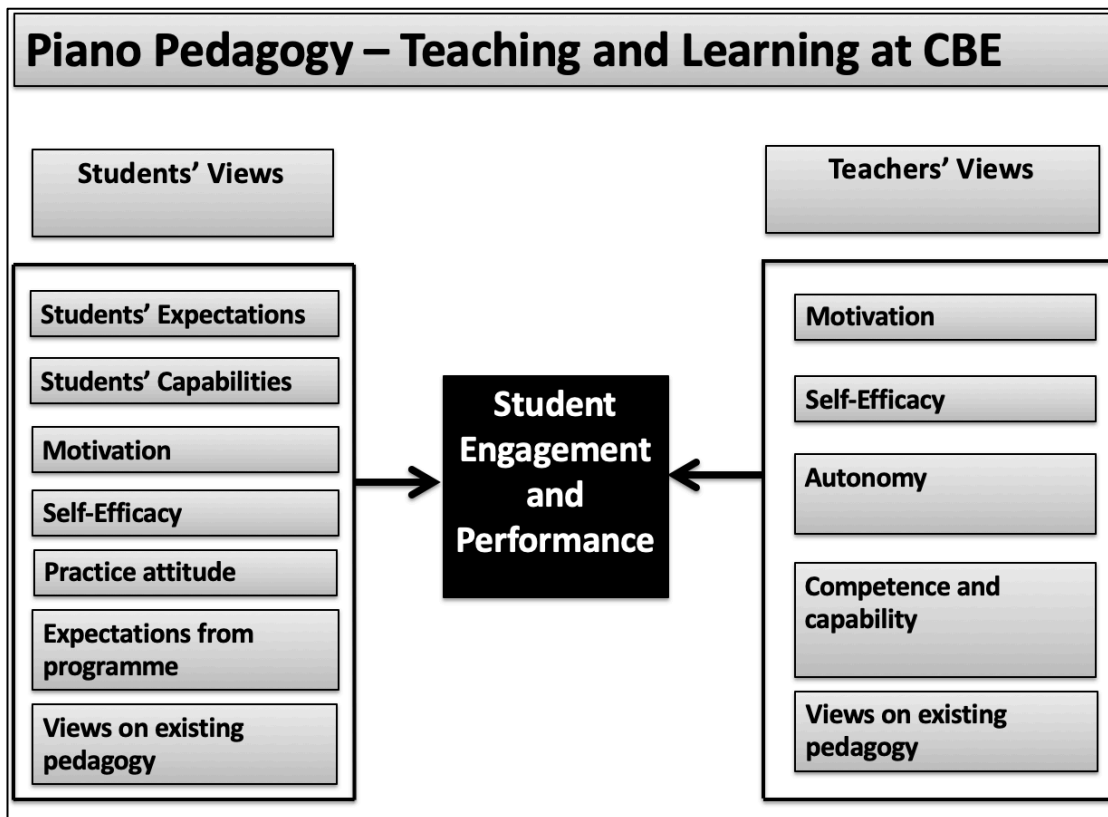
Figure 1: Theoretical Framework of the Study

4.4 Conclusion

Colwell (2009) observes that research on music education is primarily focused on the content of music, while the secondary focus is on pedagogical content knowledge. Traditionally, music education has been perceived as praxis, which highlights performance teaching and pays less attention to music education theories; however, piano teachers benefit from theoretical understanding.

Evidence from research indicates that teacher motivation has an impact on student learning. An effective teacher can act as a motivational force who influences the student's overall musical career (Gaunt, 2011). Improving the motivation of teachers is vital; however, despite evidence on improving teacher motivation and goals, limited efforts have been taken to assess the impact of independent elements such as relatedness, competency and autonomy on student performance. Additionally, understanding the degree of professional

satisfaction is important. Therefore, a valuable research area identified through this literature review is that teachers' pedagogic content knowledge and skills need to be supported by their overall motivation to teach.

An analysis of teacher goals is also considered as a contributing factor to student performance. Taylor and Hallam (2011) argue that the long-term goals of piano teachers should be to improve their professional competence while constantly identifying ways to improve the student-teacher relationship. However, there is still scope to explore how teacher goals are informed by student needs and extend beyond functional skills in piano pedagogy, particularly in relation to the group context.

Literature on piano teacher skills and piano teacher training shows that improving student performance is possible through individualised lessons; however, evidence shows considerable benefits of group teaching, although discussion of how a teacher can increase individual student performance within group settings is limited. This is an area of focus which can be linked to teacher motivation and teacher goals. Therefore, there is scope for this study to provide a contribution to expand knowledge of teacher and student attitudes towards group piano pedagogy. This will be achieved through investigating group piano curriculum and current pedagogic practices at CBE in Kuwait; exploring the views of Kuwaiti students on their motivations, perceptions of teaching and pedagogic approaches to learning piano in a group; investigating the views of piano teachers at CBE, and considering the possible challenges of the current pedagogy. The research will also consider how development of the CBE pedagogy could be informed through consideration of practice in group piano pedagogy taking place in the UK.

Chapter 5: Research Design

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the detailed research methodology adopted in the study. It begins with a discussion of the research design for the current study. This is followed by a discussion of validation, study analysis and, finally, ethical considerations.

5.2 Research Design

Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (2008) state that a research design is the connection between the evidence and the theory accompanying the research issue. The current research uses an exploratory research design, investigating the factors which underlie the learning and teaching of piano at undergraduate level at CBE, comparing these experiences with some at selected musical institutions in the UK. According to Bryman (2012) and Flick (2015), in addition to studying what has not been studied previously, exploratory research aims to identify new meanings, understandings, insights and knowledge, as well as exploring factors associated with the topic. Polit and Beck (2004) describe specific criteria associated with the use of an exploratory research design. According to Grove et al. (2014), it is not necessary that the exploratory study results can be generalised to a larger population, but it should offer a better comprehension of the sample under examination. The research forms an investigation of the existing pedagogy of piano teaching at two different locations, exploring the views of students and teachers concerning the curriculum, learning and teaching practices.

5.2.1 Research Philosophy

Thomas (2013) identifies the paradigm in social sciences as having two different approaches to knowledge. Positivism is the first approach, which is associated with the way knowledge is explored; interpretivism, on the other hand, is associated with the way knowledge can be handled.

The incidence of one true reality is asserted in positivism, which objective scholars realise through developing knowledge statements on the basis of experimentation. Lapan et al. (2011) contend that research carried out using this paradigm is focused on consideration of patterns and discovery of facts. During positivist research, researchers remain detached from the event under evaluation, especially when following cause and effect associations. Positivist research emphasises objectivity, given that the researcher shows no bias when presenting scientific fact. However, according to McNeill and Chapman (2005), in participant observation, the presence of the researcher may become obvious and have an effect on the performance under evaluation. The use of a positivist approach can be effective to help enhance the overall generalisation of the findings; as reported by McNeill and Chapman (2005), this approach is most effective for clear cause and effect findings.

The interpretative design holds an anti-positivist position, wherein the need for studying subjective experiences is emphasised. According to McNeill and Chapman (2005), assumptions or clarifications should be developed as the work proceeds. These authors propose that an interpretive paradigm can be defined as viewing reality and knowledge as communication and interaction as practice produces and develops.

However, Creswell and Clark (2011) propose that choosing between positivism or interpretivism is unrealistic in practice. The authors contend that the key determinant of position should be driven by the research question and potential research motivation. The adoption of a pragmatic research philosophy adopts the perspective that the research is external; either subjective or objective meanings can provide information for a given research question. Additionally, as Bryman (2012) contends, such an approach focuses on practical applications of specific issues where there is a merging of views to help interpret the relevant data. The current study made use of a pragmatic approach where subjective and objective reasoning will be combined through both qualitative and quantitative methods.

The pragmatic research philosophy is in line with the proposed comparative research methods. Bryman (2012) defines comparative research methodology

as a social sciences approach which aims to present comparisons of two or more attributes across various cultures and countries. In the context of this research, comparative research is essential in comparing student attitudes and teacher beliefs regarding the nature of piano pedagogy in the UK and Kuwait. This type of comparative analysis helps arrive at logical conclusions. Furthermore, as Dierkes et al. (1987) argue, comparative research takes into account both space and time. In the context of the current study, such space and time comparisons help in understanding the underlying elements of culture and its influence on the piano learning process and its effectiveness.

Creswell (2012) further reports that a pragmatic research approach is the most prominent paradigm which can support a mixed methods approach. This approach can help provide grounding to explore a complex phenomenon. The current research considers a pragmatic approach as the best process to help answer 'what', 'why' and 'how' research questions. This sets the foundation for a case study strategy.

5.2.2 Research Approach

The research approach of a study can be classified in terms of whether it is inductive or deductive (Saunders et al., 2012). The deductive approach is known as a top-down approach and involves testing theories, while the inductive approach is known as a bottom-up approach, involving the creation of theory. The current research adopts a pragmatic research philosophy, which supports the use of both qualitative and quantitative research. The relevance of these elements to the current research is discussed in this section of the study.

According to Bryman and Bell (2015) conducting observations and assessing the attitude of respondents to arrive at contributions to a given theory is required in an inductive approach. Punch (2013) further argues that the use of an inductive research approach involves the search for specific patterns which can contribute to existing theories. Also, Punch contends that the use of an inductive approach allows the researcher more flexibility towards changing elements of the data collection and the research instruments after the study

has begun. In the current study, observations, focus group interviews and semi-structured interviews can be flexible. Creswell (2012) also contends that in an inductive approach, observations are made with respect to abstract generalisations and ideas (i.e. views of teachers and students on the existing piano curriculum), and therefore these can help identify the determinants of an effective piano pedagogy. Using an inductive research method can help present an understanding of the teacher and student perspectives on the complexities of teacher and student beliefs. As argued in the literature review, the overall quality of the learning environment is critical to piano pedagogy. To assess the nature of this environment, understanding the views of teachers and students, the institution and the interactions that take place is essential.

The other research approach that can be adopted in the study is the deductive approach. According to Saunders et al. (2012), the deductive approach is also known as testing a theory, and can help identify cause-effect relationships. Additionally, the deductive approach can test whether existing predictions in research and theories can be verified in the given experimental conditions. The deductive approach can be useful in the current research to test views on the nature of piano pedagogy and arrive at potential areas for improvement.

5.2.3 Research Strategy

The research strategy deployed in the current research is the case study. According to Dul and Hak (2007), a case study strategy can be defined as an approach where a single case unit or a small number of case units are selected in a realistic life context and in-depth assessment of the nature of these cases is carried out. Additionally, Collis and Hussey (2009) contend that a case study research is effective for exploring a single phenomenon using a variety of methods to obtain in-depth knowledge. Yin (2011) also contends that case study research can help promote in-depth analysis through the use of both qualitative and quantitative data. Therefore, as Gerring (2007) argues, case study research can help obtain a rich mix of data.

The current study adopts a multiple case study research strategy. As Bryman (2012) argues, though there are major benefits of case studies, a common

challenge that is highlighted is that of generalising the findings. This has led to the evolution and growth of the multiple case study strategy, which can be effective in ensuring that there are various cases examined from similar objectives (Bryman, 2012). Multiple case study strategy enables the conclusions from a single case to be compared as a unit against the results of another study. Use of the multiple case study strategy will therefore be effective in comparing the views of students and teachers at CBE (Kuwait) with those observed in the UK.

Yin (2003) proposes that adopting a case study as a research strategy requires three conditions to be satisfied. These include the type of research question posed, the level of control that the researcher has over the behavioural events, and the level of focus on contemporary issues. Yin also contends that the use of a case study as a potential research strategy is effective in answering 'what', 'how', and 'why' research questions. In the current research, the aim is to document the piano learning processes and existing piano pedagogy at CBE. This answers the question of the purpose of the case study strategy. Following this, the research identifies the perspectives of students and teachers on the importance of student and teacher competencies and motivations, as well as factors determining student and teacher engagement in both the UK and the Kuwaiti learning context. This helps answer the question of how this particular case research is useful. Finally, this research presents a comparative analysis of the UK and the Kuwaiti learning context: this helps provide cross-national findings which can aid in understanding socio-cultural elements which underlie pedagogical processes.

Clearly, of all the research questions are 'what', 'how', and 'why' questions. Additionally, all the research questions address a contemporary issue (existing piano pedagogy at CBE). Furthermore, Yin (2003) reported that understanding the level of control that the researcher has over the behavioural events is important. Yin contends that the lower the control, the better the ability to observe events in the natural environment. In the current research, in both the case study environments—i.e. the UK and Kuwait—there is limited opportunity to moderate the behaviour of the employees or students. Despite having been

connected previously to the CBE, the period of study in the UK meant that for research purposes I was an outsider, and acted solely as an observer. In the context of the UK, there was no prior relationship with those who took part in the study. There were no conditions which supported manipulation of the student or teacher behaviours.

While there are potential positive aspects associated with the use of case study research, it is important to acknowledge the potential challenges. According to Potter et al. (2010), case study research has the potential for being too specific to the particular case to be able to generalise from it. The authors contend that the concept development, theory generation and specific suggestions are restricted to a given case and cannot be applied to the wider industry or environment. This is worth considering in the context of the current study. However, since the aim is to develop specific recommendations for a given programme in a specific institution (CBE) through comparisons with the UK settings, the generalisation disadvantages are limited in the current research. Another challenge highlighted by Yin (2011) is the perceived lack of rigour. This is largely attributed to the in-depth assessment of the phenomenon and the possible researcher-involvement in the case study. Therefore, it is important to maintain objectivity and detachment, thereby reducing potential bias.

5.3 Mixed Methods Research

Research can be carried out in three different ways: quantitative, qualitative and mixed. Halcomb and Hickman (2015) define mixed methods research as research wherein a qualitative research paradigm is used by the researcher in one phase of the study and a quantitative research paradigm in another, so that the research problem can be better understood. According to Watkins et al., (2015) qualitative and quantitative methods complement one another when they are used collectively in a study, and enable a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. The decision to use a single specific method or both methods in a study should be based on the research questions and the research problem (Creswell, 2012).

Generally, scientific inquiry or research warrants the use of a quantitative approach. Nevertheless, Singh (2006) emphasises the significance of a quantitative approach in the field of education, in addition to being utilised in historical and philosophical research. A quantitative approach involves the conversion of data such as conversations, media stories, actions and facial expressions into numbers, using measurements and statistics for the formation of mathematical models and expectations (Tracy, 2012). McNeill and Chapman (2005) identify quantitative research as ideal for the examination of the effect of a social structure. The use of a quantitative approach in the current research is aimed at understanding the independent views of students on the factors which motivate their learning of piano, as well as their views on the teacher level competencies which influence the learning process.

McNeill and Chapman (2005) contend that qualitative data are represented by words, not by numbers. Qualitative research refers to a subjective assessment of opinions, attitudes and behaviours. In such cases, research is determined by the insights and impressions of the investigators. Kothari (2004) contends that the findings of this approach are non-quantitative and cannot be achieved through quantitative analysis. The use of a qualitative approach is inherent to the current study, as the views of the teachers and the students can help develop understanding of the piano pedagogy involved in the study.

Several steps are involved in the design of a mixed methods study; the majority of these steps are the same as for conventional research methods. These include determination of the research purpose, the research questions and the type of data to be gathered. However, there are three additional steps involved in the mixed methods design. Creswell (2012) identifies these as the decision to use an explicit theoretical lens, identification of the data and the data collection procedures, and identification of the process of data analysis and data integration.

The appearance of these steps is more or less sequential, with one influencing and informing the rest. Crotty (1998) identifies the first step as the decision to use a clear theoretical lens (paradigm and philosophical basis) that motivates the study of the researcher as well as the consequent methodological choices.

Since different researchers add implicit theories and assumptions to their investigations, it is imperative for the researcher to decide at this initial stage if the study should be viewed from an advocacy-based lens like feminism or from a paradigm base, where the goal of social change is not necessarily involved. The current research adopts a paradigm base, where a pragmatist approach is adopted.

The second step involves a decision regarding the prioritisation or implementation of data collection. Creswell et al. (2003), and Morgan (2007) define implementation as the concurrent or subsequent order of the collection of qualitative and quantitative data, and priority is defined as the relative emphasis or weight (equal or unequal) given to the two types of data. The current study adopts a concurrent research approach where both quantitative and qualitative data will be collected and prioritised. The concurrent collection of data helps increase the overall sample size and the time available for data collection. Additionally, the relative emphasis or priority is found to be in favour of qualitative data. This is because the ultimate aim is to arrive at improvements to the existing piano pedagogy. To arrive at this improvement, understanding the subjective views of the students and the teachers is important. Therefore, though there is concurrent collection of quantitative and qualitative data, priority is given to the qualitative data.

The third step involves the decision regarding the point of occurrence of the analysis and integration. According to Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie (2003) and Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998), in mixed methods studies, data are separately analysed and then integrated. This is done by transforming the data or by making a connection between the analyses. For instance, the qualitative and quantitative data could be analysed separately by the researcher and the two sets of results then further compared and contrasted. Alternatively, themes emerging from the qualitative interview data could be converted into rating or counts and then a comparison can be drawn with the quantitative survey data. The current research conducted independent assessments of the qualitative and quantitative data and then identified contrasts and similarities between the different data sets.

5.4 Data Analysis and Interpretation in Mixed Methods Research

Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie (2003) present a seven-stage conceptualisation of data analysis which is incorporated in the mixed methods research process. These stages are discussed below.

Data reduction includes the reduction of the quantitative and qualitative data dimensionalities. For quantitative data this can be achieved through cluster analysis, exploratory factor analysis, and descriptive statistics; in the case of qualitative analysis, it can be done through exploratory thematic analysis. The current research data reduction is carried out independently for the quantitative and qualitative data. Data from the questionnaire was processed through descriptive statistics. Qualitative data was analysed through using exploratory thematic analysis. In data display, quantitative data are described in the form of graphs and tables, while qualitative data are described in writing.

Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) contend that this is followed by the data transformation stage, which involves the conversion of quantitative data into narrative data which can undergo qualitative analysis, or the conversion of qualitative data into numerical codes that can be statistically illustrated; in data correlation, the quantitative data and the quantified data are correlated. After this comes data merging which involves the mixture of qualitative and quantitative data for the creation of consolidated or new data sets or variables.

Data comparison is the next stage, wherein quantitative and qualitative data sources are compared. The final stage is data characterisation, involving the integration of qualitative and quantitative data into a clear whole data set or two different clear wholes. In the legitimating stage, the trustworthiness of the qualitative data and its subsequent interpretations are assessed.

5.4.1 Qualitative Data Analysis

Ideally, the analysis of qualitative data is carried out along with the collection of data in order to obtain an initial understanding pertaining to the investigation questions. According to DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) the continuous process of data collection and analysis ends at the point where it is not

possible to further identify more themes or categories, resulting in the conclusion of the data collected.

Qualitative research produces a large amount of data, which both experienced and new researchers may find overwhelming. Rabiee (2004) identifies the aim of the qualitative process as offering a sense of condition rather than fixating on facts as is done in quantitative research. Several approaches can be used to analyse qualitative data. Krueger (1994) presents the framework analysis which is most commonly used. This approach presents the advantage of recognisable steps that facilitate new researchers in easy management of the huge amount of data and the challenging nature of qualitative data. According to Rabiee (2004), this approach is appropriate for data from focus groups and individual interviews.

Ritchie et al. (1994) state that framework analysis can be defined as an analytical process that involves several diverse yet systematically interconnected stages. There are five phases in the framework: familiarisation, identifying a thematic analysis, indexing, charting, interpretation and mapping. Another crucial aspect of framework analysis is that it allows themes to occur based on the research questions and the participant's research descriptions, even though it is generally used in a thematic approach.

Krueger's (1994) framework advocates that the collection of data is the first step in data analysis, as interviews produce huge amounts of data, in addition to the completion of observations, interviewer notes and the transcription of information obtained during the interview. Data familiarisation is also included in this phase, as it can be carried out by the reading for the observational notes those taken during the interviews as well as those added later on, reading the transcriptions several times, and listening to the interview recordings. The aim of this phase is to engage in details and obtain a complete picture of the interview before the data is sorted into different parts. This is the process wherein the main theme starts to clarify.

The second phase of data analysis is the identification of a thematic framework. This can be done through notes that are taken in the form of short

expressions, concepts or ideas that arise from the texts and through this the researcher can begin to create categories. In this phase, descriptive statements are made, along with attaining an analysis of the data collected in the process of interview.

The third phase is indexing, which involves the filtering and sorting of data, highlighting relevant quotations and making associations within and between situations. The fourth phase is charting, which involves extracting quotations from their initial context and reorganising them within a new appropriate thematic context. The management and control of data is the last phase of data analysis. The data decrease that is found by associating and contrasting data, along with the collection of associated quotations, is an important aspect of this phase.

5.4.2 Triangulation

Triangulation refers to a confirmation process in which several approaches and viewpoints are combined in order to increase validity. In social sciences, it can be described as the use of more than two investigators, methods, data sources or theories in a single study of a phenomenon in order to arrive at a single construct (Bryman, 2012). Triangulation can be active either in qualitative and quantitative studies (Bryman, 2012).

According to Denzin (1970), triangulation is of four types. The first is data triangulation, which refers to the retrieval of data from several sources so that a single body of data can be formed; the second is the triangulation investigator, where single observer or multiple observers are used for the collection and interpretation of data. The third type is theoretical triangulation, where the data are interpreted using more than one theoretical position, while the fourth type is methodological triangulation, wherein more than one technique for data collection or more than one research method is used. Amongst these four types, the most common interpretation is methodological triangulation. The purpose of the study determines the type of triangulation

selected and a single study can use more than one triangulation. The current study adopted a methodological triangulation approach.

Triangulation enables various benefits to researchers. Firstly, it increases the confidence of the researchers in their results. It can also facilitate the creation of inventive methods and fresh ways of approaching a problem in order to balance the traditional methods of data collection (Punch, 2013). Additionally, it is possible to observe the various dimensions of a phenomenon, and it can act as a critical test for competing theories owing to its comprehensiveness (Creswell, 2013). The limitations of single-source research are minimised by triangulation. The impact of bias is reduced when sources are complemented and mutually verified.

The triangulation strategy is, however, not without some difficulties. Satisfactory outcomes cannot be obtained if the researcher lacks a clear conceptual or theoretical focus, and triangulation should not be used to validate a personally preferred dominant method (Watkins et al., 2015). Qualitative methods can be used in preliminary inquiries for a quantitative study, where qualitative methods are taken up as supplementary methods. Otherwise, a quantitative method can be used in preliminary inquiries for qualitative study, where quantitative methods are taken up as supplementary methods. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) contend that if the same research project uses both quantitative and qualitative methods, it is assumed that the researcher clearly understands the main epistemological and ontological position of the phenomenon. The core concept of these different notions is that rather than substituting methods, quantitative and qualitative methods should be complementary to each other. Qualitative methods can be used to understand the meaning of the numbers generated by quantitative methods. Quantitative methods facilitate obtaining testable and precise expression of qualitative ideas. Since both quantitative and qualitative methods have their strengths and weaknesses, it is best to use the between-method type and the within-method type of triangulation (Watkins et al., 2015). Thus, a combination of the two has been promoted in this study in order to maximise the benefits and minimise their drawbacks.

5.5 Research Validity and Reliability

5.5.1 Validity

According to Hammersley (1987) validity can be best described as an accurate representation of a phenomenon without any distortion of the facts or theories. Therefore, validity is dependent on two major issues: the accuracy of the research instruments used in the research process and whether the study/researcher measures exactly what needs to be measured (Winter, 2000). According to Winter (2000), Arksey and Knight (1999), validity divides into two types: the first is internal validity which confirms the relevance of the investigation; the second is external validity which is connected to the degree to which the research outcomes can be made applicable to a larger population.

The validity of the research findings can be improved if multiple avenues are used when it comes to examining the research phenomenon or attempting to find answers to the research questions. In the case of the current study, I tried to ensure a high level of validity by making use of multiple research instruments when gathering data and while analysing the research phenomenon. Semi-structured interviews and focus group were used to collect data from piano teachers, and focus groups and a questionnaire were used to collect information from students. The diverse range of research instruments used makes it more likely that the research findings will have high validity. Finally, all secondary sources of data such as observations were initially assessed to determine the validity of the information given.

5.5.2 Reliability

According to Ritchie and Lewis (2003), reliability can be described as the extent to which the research findings can be simulated when another study is carried out by different entities using similar methods. The authors also state that the reliability of the findings depends on the likely recurrence of the original data and the way they are interpreted. In qualitative studies it becomes very difficult to be able to replicate the findings, since qualitative information is unique and reflects the realities that are present at the time, for the particular

participants, at the point when the data were collected (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Therefore, expecting high reliability for qualitative studies is typically seen as being unrealistic. Therefore, Seale (1999) contends that the best way to ensure high reliability in such cases is for the researcher to provide an open account of the procedures that are used in any research study and how the conclusions are drawn. In the case of the current study, a number of measures were undertaken to ensure high reliability. For example, the interviews were recorded and information from the recordings was used during the analysis process. This helps remove any bias which may have been caused by the researcher or through, for example, trying to recollect the information from memory. Gray (2013) argues that taped conversations and information holds a higher degree of reliability than written field notes.

Furthermore, the questions were worded clearly and a natural tone of voice was used when conducting the focus groups and interviews. The respondents' queries were answered and questions repeated in order to ensure that the respondents did not have any doubt with regard to the meaning of the questions being asked. The respondents were also given ample opportunity to express their thoughts freely without any limits being placed on them, and were also given opportunity to add further comments and edit their transcripts from interviews subsequently. They were also informed that there were no advantages or disadvantages to them that would arise through participation or non-participation in the study. The study also clearly states the research methods used and the analysis process and how the research findings are derived in order to make it clear for further researchers on the same subject. This helped in attaining a high level of reliability for the research findings.

5.6 Ethical Considerations

De Leeuw et al. (2012) identify four significant groups whom researchers are associated with: the participants or respondents, the clients or sponsors, the public, and other researchers. The current study mostly dealt with participants or respondents, including students and their teachers. Therefore, the study was concerned with the ethical needs of these respondents.

The study respects the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants. Additionally, it is ensured that the willingness of participants was considered during their contribution in the current study. It is essential for the participants to be well-informed that their participation is completely voluntary and they can stop the survey, focus group or the interview at any time (Bryman, 2012). Following these ethical guidelines demonstrates the independent and fair nature of the current research.

Another ethical quality which needs to be reconsidered was ensuring the anonymity of the respondents. Creswell (2012) contends that anonymity is important to ensure lack of bias in responses. Participants need to have confidence that their personal views will not cause them any problems if mentioned as part of the research findings. Therefore, no personal information such as the participants' names or email addresses were sought during the focus group discussion, questionnaire and interview in the current study. Dimmock (2007) contends that this facilitates in maintaining anonymity, in addition to excluding all personal information from the study.

According to Rowley (2014), signed informed consent documents should be elicited from the respondents before the primary data collection is conducted. BERA (2011) contends that an informed consent form needs to confirm that the participants have the right to withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason. The informed consent also has to ensure that the participants read across the participation information sheet, where expectations are detailed. These guidelines were followed.

Finally, as DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) contend, there is a need to ensure that there is no harm to the respondents. This can be carried out by ensuring that there is reduction of risk to the participants by making sure that no questions harm the dignity of the respondents during the survey, and by enhancing the overall confidentiality of the research. The researcher ensures that the respondents' views as given in their completed paper questionnaire are stored under lock and key and that the physical copies will be destroyed one year after the completion of the study. All electronic records will be stored on a password-protected computer and no sharing of information via email will

be carried out. This reduces the risk of loss of personal information through hacking. Two important principles were followed in the current research:

- Principle of beneficence: According to Silverman (2013), freedom from exploitation and harm is incorporated in this principle. While the completing of the questionnaires would not cause any physical harm, the nature of some questions may cause psychological discomfort. The contact details of the researcher were provided in case any respondent felt the need to discuss any aspect. However, discomfort was not expressed or indicated by any respondents.

- Principle of respect for human dignity: According to Hungler and Polit (1999) this principle includes the right to full disclosure and to self-determination. The rights of respondents to self-determination were respected so that respondents can decide independently, without any pressure, to take part in the study. The participants were offered the right to withhold answers to any questions as well as the right to withhold personal information, and were encouraged to ask for clarification regarding any feature that might have caused uncertainty. The right to full disclosure was honoured as the nature of the study was fully described to the respondents, in addition to the rights of the respondent to voluntarily participate in the study being given in a letter to potential participants. A voluntarily signed consent form was obtained from each participant, which was folded and placed in a box before the questionnaire was completed. None of the signed consent forms could be linked to any particular questionnaire; this ensured that the anonymity of the respondents can be maintained. Since the research report does not disclose any names, confidentiality was maintained. If a participant wants to read the research, this is possible.

The following sections discuss the individual ethical considerations which were identified in each of the different research instruments.

Observation Ethics: consent was gained in advance from the administrators at CBE and Leeds College of Music (LCM) in order to get observational access to

piano lessons. Additionally, in advance of each observation, individual consent was gained from each teacher and the purpose of observation was discussed, with sensitivity to any concerns they might have. Each piano teacher was asked to introduce me very briefly to the pupils as a researcher who will be attending the lesson in order to learn more about piano lessons at CBE and LCM, making sure that the students were happy with that. These two things were asked in order to avoid any attention from students, so that my presence would cause as little disruption to their lesson as possible, both in terms of taking time from the teaching and also in terms of influencing the lesson through my presence. Therefore, the researcher sat at the back of the classroom to avoid attracting student's attention, aiming to be as unobtrusive as possible (Holloway, 2008).

Ethics in Focus Groups: The participants were asked for their consent, and reminded at the start of each focus group interview that they were free to withdraw at any time during the discussion.

Ethics in Questionnaire and Interviews: As the respondents of the questionnaire are subjects not objects in the research, it was vital to consider issues such as sensitive questions, the privacy of the respondents, and respect the time taken to complete the questionnaire (Cohen et al., 2011). In order to gain access to the survey samples ethics, participant information and consent forms were completed and approved by the Arts and Humanities Ethics Committee at the University of York; subsequently, permission forms were completed for the administration at CBE and LCM, and finally, verbal consent was obtained from the piano teachers and students in each group in order to conduct the questionnaire in both the UK and Kuwait.

It was made clear to the participants at CBE and LCM students, and CBE, LCM and City Lit piano teachers that they had the right to withdraw at any time or even not to complete each question in the questionnaire or answer any interview's questions. They were informed of the aim of the research and I stressed that the participants would have anonymity in the research. Ethical approval and consent form are provided within Appendix 3 and 4.

Chapter 6: Data Collection

6.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the collecting data methods used in the current study. Observation, focus group, survey and semi-structured interviews were the research instruments used to collect data.

6.2 Observation

Observation enables a researcher to gather live data in a social situation (Cohen et al., 2011), and involves looking carefully at a situation besides recording and noting details (Holloway, 2008). Observation provides the opportunity to develop an understanding of people's behaviours that cannot be obvious through other data collecting methods such as interview; for example, through language differences, or through behaviours that may be unapparent to an interviewee or that they may not wish to discuss (Morse & Richards, 2002).

The main purpose of using observation in this study is to gain a more informed awareness of what is currently happening during piano lessons at CBE, contributing to the exploratory stage of research and supporting subsequent data collection methods. Observations have provided the opportunity to check and enhance my understanding of the processes of learning piano at CBE. Furthermore, the use of observation has enabled reflection on practice and contributed to the preparation of an informed schedule of interview questions for the research participants. Observation of students and teachers at Leeds College of music (LCM) in the UK also gave insight into piano pedagogy in the UK.

6.2.1 Advantages and Disadvantages of Observation

Directness and immediacy are considered as the main advantage of observation as the researcher has the opportunity to listen and look at what is

happening without asking people about what they are doing (Robson, 2011). Additionally, it is useful for the researcher to notice and record facts, natural behaviours and non-verbal behaviours directly from the situation (Cohen et al., 2011). The other advantage of observation is the flexibility of the method.

However, there are two disadvantages to observation. The first is reactivity or the observer effect, as the presence of the observer in the situation could affect the behaviours of those who are being observed. Holloway (2008) revealed that some researchers attempt to use 'covert observation' in order to avoid or minimise the effect of this: 'Many social researchers use these covert methods because they think their presence as researchers might produce *reactivity*, namely the observer effect, and that they can minimise it through covert observation' (Holloway, 2008, p.167). The second disadvantage is that observation demands considerable time (Cohen et al., 2011).

6.2.2 Observation Types

The researcher can choose from two roles within observation:

Participant observer: In observation of this type, the researcher has the same experiences as the study subject members while observing them and keeping notes on the subject attributes so that the phenomenon under study can be directly experienced by the researcher (Bryman, 2012). With this approach, it is possible for the researcher to gain personal experience alongside the informants. This type of information is linked to covert investigations requiring sensitive information which maybe uncomfortable for informants to disclose (Bryman, 2012).

Non-participant observer: In this approach the researcher observes the subjects without actively participating in their experience. This approach is criticised at times as when people know they are being observed, they may alter their behaviour and this may result in invalidated data (Silverman, 2013).

Non-participant observation is used in the current research. The researcher sat on a chair at the back of the piano group classes to observe without speaking or participating. Unstructured observation gave the opportunity to develop

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understanding of the situation in terms of the student-teacher relationship, communication, teaching styles, teacher expectations of students during the lesson and of their individual practice, lesson delivery, pacing and content, students' attitudes towards learning and students' motivation during learning. Morrison (1993, p.80) explains that observation will enable the evaluator to gather data on:

> (1) The *physical setting* of schools and classrooms (e.g. layout of the school and classrooms, resource organisation, grouping of children and teachers).

> (2) The *human setting* of schools and classrooms (e.g. gender, racial, ability factors).

> (3) The *interactional setting* of schools and classrooms (e.g. the interactions—formal, unplanned and non-verbal—of children, teachers, support services, headteachers).

> (4) The *programme setting* of schools and classrooms (e.g. resources available, teaching and learning styles and their uses, curriculum content and organisation).

Additionally, unstructured observation gave me the opportunity to clarify my specific questions for the other data collection methods that would be subsequently used as 'unstructured observation will be hypothesis-generating rather than hypothesis-testing' (Cohen et al., 2011, p.457). Indeed, Bowling (2002, p.367) emphasises that the researcher will 'postpone definitions and structures until a pattern has been observed … and then continues with the fieldwork in order to elaborate these while the data are still available for access'. In the current research, observation enabled me to gain a more detailed understanding of piano lessons at CBE and LCM, which provided input into the questions for teachers and students and gave a more detailed awareness of the teaching context.

6.2.3 Observation: Samples and Location

The researcher carried out comprehensive observations of music students and piano teachers at CBE through accessing a sample of piano lab lessons, either in the male students' building or in the building for female students. Four piano lab groups were observed in total: two groups (one male and one female) from piano module 5, and two groups (one male and one female) from piano module 6. These involved four different piano teachers at CBE. In the UK, two group piano classes at LCM were observed; both of those were mixed gender.

Most of the piano lab rooms observed at CBE and LCM were set up with ten digital pianos for students organised in two parallel lines of five rows, plus one electric piano for the piano teacher located at the front, and each piano had a set of headphones. There is also a whiteboard behind the piano teacher (see Figure 2).

S = Student, T = Teacher, P = Piano and W/B = White Board
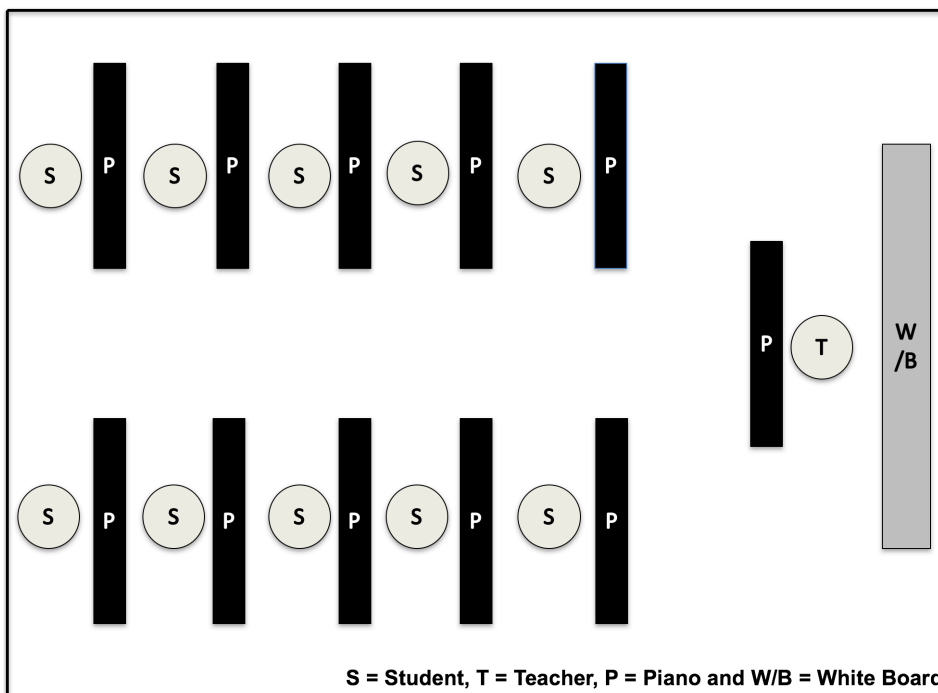
Figure 2: Piano Lab Room

Observations at CBE were conducted in May during the second term of the 2015–2016 academic year. Observations at LCM were conducted in May during the spring term of 2016-2017. All the observations were conducted during a two-hour lesson for each piano group lab, for a total of 12 hours. Observations required a total time of two weeks to access the piano lab lessons at CBE and one week for LCM.

6.2.4 Use of Field Notes and Data Collection

Using field notes can confirm, characterise or suggest three varieties of experience. Goodall Jr, (2000, p.98) states that these comprise:

- *Verbal exchanges* between or among persons.
- *Practices* within a physical world of persons and things.
- *Implied, inferred, or interpreted connections between and among them* that are owned and accounted for by the writer.

At the start of each observed lesson the researcher logged the number of students in the room, the name of the teacher, the time, date and day of the observation, the location and the room number. During the observation, attention was paid to the structure of the lesson in terms of how it started, progressed and ended. Freehand notes were made, indicating elements such as student-teacher interactions, communication, lesson content, students' response towards the learning method and students' motivation during learning. Ary et al. (2013, p.463) mention that field notes have two components:

(1) the descriptive part, which includes a complete description of the setting, the people and their reactions, and interpersonal relationships, and accounts of events (who, when and what was done).

(2) the reflective part, which includes the observer's personal feelings or impressions about the events, comments on the research method, decisions and problems, records of ethical issues, and speculations about data analysis.

At the end of each lesson, the researcher thanked the teacher and students again for enabling observation. Following Bell's recommendation to 'consider the event as a whole, as soon after the event as you can' (2010, p.202), the field notes were re-read, checked and expanded after each observation. Hatch (2002, p.84) states that 'as soon after leaving the field as possible, researchers should convert their raw field notes into research protocols, that is, expanded accounts of what was observed in that particular visit. This is the time to fill in the details that the researcher did not have time to record during the observation.' Therefore, after each observation, the notes were compared with the previous observations in terms of the general ideas and lesson content, matching over-arching ideas from previous observations, noting the repetition of student-teacher interactions, or any new behaviour during lessons. This was very useful, and by the end of the observations it enabled a big increase in my understanding and knowledge of the current piano pedagogy at CBE. This would also enable me to proceed more confidently in subsequent data collection in this research. Later on, observation at LCM enabled me to gain some understand of the current piano pedagogy specific to that context in order to develop suitable survey questions for students and interview questions for teachers in the UK.

6.3 Focus Group

Focus groups are a type of interview designed for small groups, conducted by a moderator who facilitates group discussion on particular topics (Barbour, 2008). Initially, focus group interviews were used by social researchers in the 1920s, and subsequently by market researchers in the 1950s to explore customers' views on products. Focus groups began to be used in academic social research in the 1980s (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008). The aim of using focus groups in research is to gain closer detail of participants' understandings and perspectives towards issues and topics (Brewerton & Millward, 2001). There are two aims of using focus groups in this research: to explore 'people's opinions, attitudes, beliefs, values, discourses and understandings of things, as valid in their own right' (Brewerton & Millward, 2001, p.81), and to

'triangulate with more traditional forms of interviewing, questionnaire, observation, etc.' (Cohen et al., 2011, p.436). Additionally, using focus groups as part of the preparation stage for a questionnaire enables the researcher to gather more in-depth information.

6.3.1 Advantages and Disadvantages of the Focus Group

There are many advantages and disadvantages of using a focus group as a data collection method. One advantage is the flexibility of preparing for the focus group in terms of the number in the group, type of group, costs, duration of the interview, offering control over these aspects for the researcher (Berg & Lune, 2011). The second advantage is that it offers the possibility to collect data from several people in a short period and at the same time (Robson, 2011). Thirdly, it gives the researcher the opportunity to discover and explore the interaction among the members of a group, and to see how they think about the topic or related subjects (Robson, 2011). The fourth advantage is that the group can comfortably and confidently share views on the same topic (Robson, 2011). Furthermore, focus groups provide an accessible opportunity for people who cannot read or write or who have special circumstances to participate. Therefore, focus groups can generate new information about the research topic (Berg & Lune, 2011).

On the other hand, there are also some disadvantages when using focus groups. The first disadvantage is that the data gathered from the focus group discussion may be based on the researcher's experience in terms of the moderating and conducting of the interview (Berg & Lune, 2011). The limited duration and the number of participants in a group can restrict the number of questions that can be used (Robson, 2011). Thirdly, the data collected from the interview are based only on the group, not on individual responses (Berg & Lune, 2011), and the researcher has to be careful not to generalise from the results, as they cannot be regarded as representative (Robson, 2011). Therefore, it was important to be aware of these disadvantages in order to prepare for and conduct a successful focus group interview.

6.3.2 Focus Group Sampling, Group Size and Number

The current research used purposive sampling (Kuzel, 1992) to select the participants for the focus group interviews. Brewerton and Millward (2001, p.82) emphasise that 'the sample should be chosen on theoretical grounds as reflecting those segments of the population who will provide the most meaningful information in terms of the project objectives'. Therefore, the current study chose to use three focus group interviews at CBE. The first was with a male student group; the second was with a female group, and the third focus group comprised two piano teachers (referred to as teachers C and D).

6.3.3 Preparing for Focus Group Interviews

The preparation stage for the focus group interviews began after conducting observations on piano classes at CBE. From these observations, topics and themes arose that were discussed in the focus groups.

One pilot focus group interview was conducted with five students who did not participate in the main focus group interviews. These students agreed to participate following my observation of their group lessons at CBE. The pilot focus group interview showed that the students in the group were stress-free when talking about themselves, the music department, the piano teachers and their learning, and they enjoyed having this experience. This pilot focus group interview helped me to plan the duration of subsequent focus groups, gave me experience in using probes and prompts, and improved my ability to focus on students' reactions, expressions, confidence and motivation, which helped me come closer to understanding the piano students and the environment of piano learning in the music department at CBE.

In preparation for the focus group interviews, the researcher considered Kandola's recommendations to inform participants about 'the purpose of the meeting; the outputs of the study; the reason why they have been chosen, and the practicalities and logistics of the session, e.g. where it is being held, timings, etc.' (Kandola, 2012, p.261). Therefore, as well as providing material for ethical compliance (participant information form and consent form) the

participants were briefed in advance on the reasons for using the focus group, how it would operate practically, and on the purpose of the research.

6.3.4 Focus Group: Conducting Stage

All of the focus group interviews were conducted in piano labs in the music department at CBE, and lasted for one to two hours, the recommended duration for a typical session with adults (Brewerton & Millward, 2001). Before the start of each interview, each participant was provided with pen and paper in order to enable them to be more active in the discussion. The best piano lab was chosen (this had the most modern equipment and the quietest location), as the environment and 'the room itself should be conducive to a smooth-flowing discussion and should, therefore, be comfortable' (Brewerton & Millward, 2001, p.83). Berg and Lune's (2011, p.179–82) moderator's guide for conducting the focus group interviews was followed:

- Introduction and introductory activities.
- Statement of the basic rules or guidelines for the interview.
- Short question and answer discussions.
- Special activities or exercises.
- Guidance for dealing with sensitive issues.

At the start of each focus group interview there was informal talk and introduction of each person in the group as an 'icebreaker' for the discussion. After that, the researcher gave some advice and guidance about conducting the interview in terms of giving the opportunity for all participants to talk, to enable views from everyone, and a reminder that the interview would be audio-recorded was given. It was explained how the focus group data would help the research, and the participants were thanked again for their time.

A short question and answer discussion was then used as a warm-up stage before the main discussion. Students were asked: 'When is your next piano exam?' 'What will you play in the exam?' 'Are you ready for it?'. Short questions for teachers were focused on an informal social conversation.

Subsequently, the discussion developed and led towards the following questions which were considered suitable for each focus group interview:

For students:

Could you explain to me what you feel about the current leaning piano process at CBE?

Can you explain why do you feel that?

Could you tell me what are the challenges that you face when you learn piano?

Can you tell me how many times you usually practise piano each week?

Do you feel that is enough? Why?

For teachers:

What are your beliefs about the current piano learning process at CBE?

How do you teach and which methods do you follow during your piano lessons?

How does this method affect the learning progress?

Why is piano part of the music curriculum at CBE?

What are the challenges that you face in teaching piano at CBE?

At the end of each focus group interview, I asked the participants if anyone wanted to ask or add anything, before thanking them again for their time and contributions.

6.3.5 Transcription

Data collected from the focus group interviews were transcribed by the researcher in full from the audio recording from Arabic language to English, and then checked by an expert Arabic to English translator. These transcriptions, along with my own notes, were used for analysis. The focus group interviews transcripts are provided in Appendices 5, 6 and 7.

6.4 Survey

The researcher also decided to use surveys to collect data. Surveys can be 'used to describe, compare, or explain individual and societal knowledge, feelings, values, preferences, and behavior' (Fink, 2005, p.1). In educational research, surveys are often used for measuring attitudes. While they are frequently used to gather data from a large number of respondents (Cohen et al., 2011), they are also effective in smaller scale research. Fink (2005) suggests that there are three basic reasons for surveys: the first is to inform policy or establish the needs of a programme. Secondly, they can be effective in trying to discover how people feel about changes that are implemented. Thirdly, they can discover background information which is useful when testing a hypothesis. Cohen et al. (2011) discuss four aims in using surveys: a) exploratory, in which no models are hypothesised; b) confirmatory, where a model or hypothesis is examined; c) descriptive; and d) analytic.

A survey was used to explore students' attitudes towards the current piano pedagogy at CBE in Kuwait and LCM in the UK, as surveys can provide data on attributes, behaviour, preferences, beliefs, attitudes and opinions (Aldridge & Levine, 2001). Furthermore 'most surveys attempt to give a ''snapshot'' of the situation in a particular point in time' (Robson, 2011, p.238), which can provide more understanding of learning piano at CBE. Fink (2005) states that self-administered questionnaires and interviews are the two main methods used in survey data collection.

The researcher decided to use an on-site self-administered questionnaire. Thomas (2013, p.207) shows that 'the questionnaire is a versatile tool and is used in a number of different kinds of research design. It can be tightly structured, but can also allow the opportunity for a more open and discursive response if required.' Therefore, in preparation, it was considered how using questionnaires might enable fuller, more detailed responses to my research questions; for example, through the particular kinds of questions used in order to discover the respondents' beliefs, values, attitudes and motivation to learning piano in Kuwaiti and UK musical institutions.

6.4.1 Advantages and Disadvantages of Questionnaires

Questionnaires can be straightforward to administer and to complete, enabling the researcher to 'collect information from quite a large number of people at one fell swoop' (Munn & Drever, 2004, p.2). Furthermore, Munn and Drever (2004) explain that the anonymity of the respondents when using questionnaires, particularly in educational settings, can enable student respondents to be open and honest, and to provide sensitive information, for example, about their teachers. Additionally, Robson (2011) emphasises that questionnaires can provide a high amount of data standardisation. Munn and Drever (2004, p.4) note that 'the advantage of the standardised question is that you are strictly controlling the stimulus presented to all respondents. Of course, you cannot control the way in which respondents interpret the question. However, you know that all respondents have been presented with the same questions in the same order.'

However, there are also some disadvantages or limitations in using questionnaires, as the information collected from them often tends to be more descriptive rather than explanatory. For example, participants' answers may be partial, or not as detailed as the researcher would hope. Additionally, respondents might misunderstand survey questions, and sometimes this cannot be easy for the researcher to detect (Robson, 2011). Similarly, the data collected by questionnaires are affected by the respondents' personality, motivation, experience and knowledge (Robson, 2011). Furthermore, responses can be superficial as 'respondents won't necessarily report their beliefs, attitudes, etc. accurately (e.g. there is likely to be a social desirability response bias—people responding in a way that shows them in a good light)' (Robson, 2011, p.240).

Therefore, the design of the questions is one of the elements crucial to the success of a questionnaire. Generally, closed questions are used for efficiently gathering data pertaining to background information like education, marital status or age. Closed questions could be also useful in assessing the opinions and attitudes of the participants through scale ratings. Brace (2008), demonstrates the different types of questions:

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- **Likert scale.** The format is useful when the researcher desires to identify the way participants feel concerning a particular problem. Typically, the scale ranges from 'strongly agree' to 'agree', 'neutral', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree', or 'extremely important' to 'important', 'neutral', 'not important and' extremely not important'. Likert scale questions are useful in the measurement of characteristics such as the opinions of people, feelings and attitudes, among others.

- **Multiple choices.** Questions of this type are appropriate when the researcher needs the participants to choose their preferred response.

- **Numerical.** Questions like these are useful when the possible responses are in numerical form—for instance, questions regarding the age of an individual.

- **Ordinal.** Questions like these are appropriate when a series of responses are to be ranked by participants.

- **Categorical.** Questions like these are useful when the researcher requires the respondents to specifically categories themselves, for instance, questions regarding gender.

As there was no possibility to conduct focus group interviews with students at LCM in the UK, the questionnaire for students at LCM was developed to include some open questions. These 'enable participants to write a free account in their own terms, to explain and qualify their responses and avoid the limitations of pre-set categories of response' (Cohen, 2011, p.382), and respondents are 'free to answer in a way that seems most appropriate to them' (Munn & Drever, 2004, p.24).

6.4.2 Questionnaire Sample

Sampling techniques are essential in a survey, as the potential participants need to be carefully considered, particularly when the research sample is not on a large scale. Using sampling techniques helps the researcher to focus on the characteristics of interest (Fink, 2003). In this case, the sample was provided by the number of students willing to participate in the current research at both locations. Here, as normal in case study research, a convenience sample was used for the survey.

Sampling in Kuwait: Most of the students in the music department (male and female) in CBE formed the group sample and the target population for this survey. The researcher aimed to gain representation from students in all of the piano lab groups, and gave the questionnaire to 47 students. Replies were received from 43 students (21 male and 22 female).

Sampling in the UK: Students at Leeds College of Music who took short-term or long-term courses in piano as 'lifelong learners' were targeted. The questionnaire was distributed by the researcher and the class teacher to 20 students, and replies were received by the teacher from 16 students.

6.4.3 Questionnaire Design

Preparing and constructing the questionnaire was demanding, as it required time for reading, designing, planning and exploratory piloting before distributing the final questionnaire. The process began by attempting to avoid using unfamiliar words, complicated wording, or imprecise words (Brewerton & Millward, 2001). It was also important to avoid double-barrelled questions, double-negatives, questions with hidden assumptions, leading questions and sensitive questions (Brewerton & Millward, 2001). Additionally, the number of questions and the length were as short and clear as possible in order for it to be easily understood by potential respondents.

The questionnaire design was considered an important stage of the procedure of survey, as 'the questions should be designed to help achieve the goals of the research and in particular to answer the research questions' (Robson,

2011, p.252). Most of the questions were developed from the literature review and data gathered from the observation stage. The questionnaire was divided into sections.

The questionnaire was designed to include a covering letter that gave information about the aims of the research, confidentiality and anonymity, in order to encourage the students to complete the questionnaire, and concerns of length, question order, spelling and grammar, font type and size, and leaving enough space for each answer were considered (Brewerton & Millward, 2001). The questionnaire cover sheet and form are provided in Appendices 8 and 9.

Additionally, the questionnaire was translated into Arabic in order for students to be able to understand the questions and writing the answers. The translation was undertaken by the researcher, as a native Arabic Kuwaiti person. Subsequently, the final Arabic questionnaire was checked by an expert translation center in Kuwait. The Arabic questionnaire form is provided in Appendix 10.

6.4.4 Piloting the Questionnaire

'All data-gathering instruments should be piloted to test how long it takes recipients to complete them, to check that all questions and instructions are clear and to enable you to remove any items which do not yield usable data' (Bell, 2010, p.147). The importance of piloting is that it gives the researcher the opportunity to correct any problems, and the researcher also has the opportunity to do some exploratory analysis (Oppenheim, 1992). Therefore, 'a pilot has several functions, principally to increase the reliability, validity and practicability of the questionnaire' (Cohen et al., 2011, p.341).

The questionnaire piloting stage in the current research took place in piano lab rooms in the music department at CBE with six volunteer students: three male and three female students. These students had already completed the six piano modules and were waiting to finish other modules to graduate.

We arranged one session for the male students and another for the female students in order to pilot the questionnaire. The session began by giving some information about the aims of the research and the need to pilot the questionnaire. The researcher stayed with the students during the session and answered some questions, and that was very useful to inform administering the main questionnaire. After they finished they were asked whether the instructions were clear, or if any questions were ambiguous and if so, why; whether the format was clear and attractive, and if they had any other comments. Additionally, the time spent to complete the questionnaire was noted. The piloting stage was very useful in order to ensure that the students would be able to complete the questionnaire during a 2-hour piano lab lesson. The order of the questions was logical. However, changes were made to some of the wording in order to be clearer. The piloting stage enabled confidence to conduct the final questionnaire.

6.4.5 Questionnaire Administration

Questionnaire completion in Kuwait took place in rooms in the music department at CBE during piano lab lessons time with consent from each piano teacher and students. The questionnaire survey was conducted in May in the second term of the 2015-2016 academic year. Administering the questionnaire took a total time of two weeks to access all the target sample. Questionnaire completion in the UK took place in piano labs at LCM during piano lessons. The questionnaire survey was conducted in May in the spring term of the academic year 2016-2017.

The piano teachers reminded the students that the researcher had already visited the class to observe their piano lesson, and then they introduced the questionnaire request to the students, saying that the researcher would like to conduct the questionnaire, and requesting their help. After that the researcher give an explanation about the general purpose of the questionnaire and the research, and thanked students in advance for their help. As with the pilot, the questionnaire was distributed to all students and I waited for them to finish. Normally the piano teachers did not stay in the room. There were some

questions from the students while they completed the questionnaire, for example; "what does this question exactly need?", or "can I put this answer here?", and it was possible to answer quietly without disturbing other students or influencing their responses. After each student finished, I collected their questionnaire, asked if they had any questions, checked they were happy with completing the questionnaire, and thanked them for their time. After that, the student could either practise the digital piano with headphones on, or he/she could leave the room.

At the end of each session, I thanked the students again and the piano teacher for their time and interest in my questionnaire. All of the piano teachers were very cooperative, even though they had lost some time from their lesson schedule. Although the questionnaire distribution took time, it was hoped that by doing it in this way the response rate would be increased and the process would enable responses from most of the piano students. However, the choice of taking the questionnaire form home and returning it later was available, and this was requested by some students.

6.5 Interview

A research interview is a conversation between interviewer and interviewee where the interviewer attempts to understand and collect information from the interviewee (Thomas, 2013). 'Both qualitative and quantitative researchers tend to rely on the interview as the basic method of data gathering, whether the purpose is to obtain a rich, in-depth experiential account of an event or episode in the life of the respondent' (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p.646). 'Interviews can explore areas of broad cultural consensus and people's more personal, private and special understandings' (Arksey & Knight, 1999, p.4). I chose to use interviews to enable me to discover the teachers' experiences of current piano pedagogy at CBE in Kuwait and the UK.

6.5.1 Advantages and Disadvantages of Interviews

Flexibility is the main advantage of using interviews. The format offers the researcher freedom to use his/her experience and knowledge to monitor and explore the interviewees' beliefs, reactions, motives and thoughts. In other methods, such as questionnaires, this flexibility cannot appear (Bell, 2010). On the other hand, there are three obvious disadvantages; the first is that each interview takes a long time to be achieved. This can lead to limiting the range of the researcher's samples (Bell, 2010). Robson (2011, p.281) states that:

> Anything under half an hour is unlikely to be valuable; anything going much over an hour may be making unreasonable demands on busy interviewees and could have the effect of reducing the number of persons willing to participate which may in turn lead to biases in the sample that you achieve.

The second point is that as the researcher is human there is usually a risk of bias in interviews (Bell, 2010). Preparing for interviews is the third point, as they need careful preparation in writing an interview schedule and for making practical arrangements such as getting consent before and after the interviews, scheduling and arrangements of meetings, travelling to the interview venue, preparing the recording instrument/s and the demands of the time needed to transcribe the data (Robson, 2011).

6.5.2 Interview Types

Thomas (2013) divided basic types of interview: semi-structured interview, unstructured interview and structured interview.

A structured interview usually involves asking a predetermined set of questions (Thomas, 2013). However, because this type of interview has 'very little scope for further follow-up … for pursuing an interesting comment from the interviewee' (Thomas, 2013, p.196) it does not demand a face-to-face discussion, and it could be replaced by a questionnaire (Thomas, 2013).

Unstructured interviews take the form of an informal conversation between two people on a focused topic. There is no checklist or scheduled set of questions to follow in this interview form. While the interviewee has the freedom to talk about many aspects of the topic, the researcher has to use his/her experience to conduct the conversation in terms of how to ask questions, when it is appropriate to use probes, how to guide the interviewee to discuss important points and how to conduct the interview time (Bell, 2010).

Semi-structured interviews use a list of questions, an 'interview schedule', which focuses on important points that the researcher wants to ensure are covered. The researcher has the freedom to use follow-up questions, probes and develop the conversation to gather in-depth information (Thomas, 2013).

Semi-structured interviews were used in the current study because they 'incorporate elements of both quantifiable fixed-choice responding and the facility to explore, and probe in more depth, certain areas of interest' (Brewerton & Millward, 2001, p.70). Semi-structured interviews allowed more understanding of my interviewees' views, feelings and beliefs towards piano pedagogy in Kuwait and the UK. Furthermore, they potentially helped to analyse, discover and classify some key points such as tradition and culture, and the motivations for learning piano. Semi-structured interviews helped to collect data that gave a better understanding of the teachers' perceptions towards the existing piano pedagogy in Kuwait and the UK.

6.5.3 Interview Preparation

After observations of group piano lessons, carrying out the focus group interviews, and administrating the questionnaire, preparing for interviews started with two practice interviews as 'pre-pilots' with friends, and they provided useful feedback. These helped test the main open-ended questions in terms of order, clarity, choosing suitable questions, the effectiveness of the questions and checking whether the main points were covered. These also provided the opportunity to practise how and when to use prompts, probes and follow-up questions, and developed listening skills and subtle note-making

skills, in addition to controlling the interview and using effective time-management (Gillham, 2000).

6.5.4 Invitations to Interview and Consent

The interviewees' consent forms for Kuwait interviews had to be handed personally to each participant, as email is still not in formal use. However, this meant that it was possible to give each prospective participant detailed, individual explanation of the purpose and objective of the study and why these subjects could make meaningful contributions as experts in the field. Interview consent forms for UK teachers were emailed. Bell (2010, p.156) states that:

> In any size of project, you will still have a responsibility to explain to respondents as fully as possible what the research is about, why you wish to interview them, what will be involved and what you will do with the information you obtain.

In addition, the potential participants were informed of the right to withdraw at any time before, during or after the interview or even after transcription (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008). Subsequently the time of the interviews was arranged for not less than two weeks from the date of completing the consent form to give the participants time to ask for a change of the interview time, date or even for them to withdraw: 'Better for participants to withdraw at the start rather than halfway through or after the interview' (Bell, 2010, p.157).

6.5.5 Participants and Locations

Interviews were conducted with two Kuwaiti assistant professors (referred to as teachers A and B), who teach piano in the music department at CBE. Interviews took place in the professors' offices. Interviews in the UK took place in various locations. Two teachers agreed to participate:

- Teacher E works at Leeds College of Music, teaching lifelong and short-term courses for students aged 18 to 70 in a group piano lab/setting in the evening (one two-hour lesson weekly).

- Teacher F works at the City Lit (City Literacy Institute, London), teaching group piano labs for lifelong courses.

Audio recording was used for the interviews, as it offers a good interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee in terms of concentration, interest, probing and reactions. It is also vital for transcription, and to note the tone of voice, another important aspect (Bell, 2010). The interviews took between 45 and 90 minutes.

The first two to three minutes in most of the interviews included thanking the participants for taking part, and also involved some informal conversation. Gillham (2000, p.37) emphasises that the interview should include the following steps: the introductory phase; the opening development of the interview; the central core of the interview; and bringing the interview to a close, both socially and in terms of content. In structuring the interview schedules the placement of the main questions, follow-up questions and probes were considered. Rubin and Rubin (2005, p.134) advise that 'To structure interviews that are on target, that elicit depth, detail, vividness, nuance, and richness, you create a mix of three kinds of questions: main, follow-up, and probes'.

The main questions were open-ended and focused on the primary concepts relating to the purpose and objectives of the research (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Open-ended questions were used to encourage and give the opportunity for the interviewees to provide information about their experiences, attitudes and perspectives. Robson (2011, p.283) underlines the advantages of using open-ended questions in research interviews as they are flexible; they allow the interviewer to go into more depth or clear up any misunderstandings; they enable testing of limits of a respondent's knowledge; they encourage cooperation and rapport; they allow the interviewer to make a truer assessment of what the respondent really believes, and can produce unexpected or unanticipated answers.

Main questions were followed by follow-up questions to elicit more depth and explore unanticipated important aspects that arose. For all question types the

researcher tried to avoid using long, double- or multiple-barrelled questions, questions involving jargon, leading questions and biased questions (Robson, 2011).

Probes were used in the interviews to encourage the interviewee to offer more information about a point. Thomas (2013, p.198) explains that:

> Probes are encouragements to interviewees to proceed with aspects of their answers; these may be verbal – for example 'go on … ' – or non-verbal, a tilt of the head or a nod or a raising of the eyebrows (but preferably not all three at once).

Probes were also used to clarify and explain some important points. The researcher tried to limit the numbers of probes to not interrupt the interviewee's focus (Rubin & Rubin, 2005), and also endeavoured to be sympathetic toward any interviewees' physical, interpersonal and cognitive actions during all the interviews. Cohen et al (2011, p.426) also suggest that 'interviewers have to be sensitive to their own effect on the interview'.

Kvale and Brinkmann (2008, p.128) suggest that:

> At the end of the interview there may be some tension or anxiety, as the subject has been open about personal and sometimes emotional experiences and may be wondering about the purpose and later use of the interview. They may perhaps also be feeling of emptiness; the subject has given much information about his or her life and may not have received anything in return.

Indeed, Gillham (2000, p.42) shows that 'there are two main elements to closure: pulling together the content (cognitive) and the more obvious ''social'' element'. Usually during the last few minutes the researcher attempted to use some suitable expressions to signify that the interview was going to finish, as a 'cool-off' and to indicate closure of the interview (Robson, 2011) before thanking interviewees for their participation.

6.5.6 Transcription

Interview transcription constitutes a written record of the interview (Arksey & Knight, 1999). Transcription helped organise my starting point for the process of data analysis. Holloway (2008, p.233) states that 'transcribing interviews gives the researcher an opportunity to get immersed in the data'. Transcribing was undertaken by the researcher and took place after each interview, during which process the memos and comments from the interview were saved and examined. Rubin and Rubin (2005, p.204) suggest that 'Transcribing the interviews yourself forces you to pay attention to what interviewees said and helps you prepare for the next interview'. Arabic transcripts were translated to English language by an expert translator. The interview transcripts are provided as Appendices 11, 12, 13 and 14.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the data collection methods used in the study, identifying the importance of each method and the processes taken into consideration when using them. This facilitated the collection of appropriate and meaningful data in a variety of contexts. The next chapter will demonstrate the findings from the students at CBE in Kuwait in the current study.

Chapter 7: Students' Perspectives on Piano Pedagogy at CBE

7.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present students' perceptions of their piano learning experience, including views on their teachers and on piano pedagogy. The chapter discusses the data gathered from two methods: firstly, from responses to a questionnaire distributed to 47 students studying piano modules 5 and 6, and secondly from two focus group interviews with 12 students studying piano module 6 at the College of Basic Education (CBE) in Kuwait. The findings are compared to other research.

7.2 Student Demographics

All of the students who participated in the focus group interviews were studying the final piano module 6 (six male students in one group and six female students in another group). Most of the students who participated in the focus group also participated in the questionnaire. The focus group interviews were carried out in order to gather in-depth information about piano pedagogy at CBE.

Most of the students who completed the questionnaire were aged 21–25 (83.7%) and were either in piano module 5 (46.5%) or piano module 6 (53.5%). Just four students were aged 18-20 and three were slightly older, aged 26-30. An almost equal representation of both genders was achieved (males 46.5%; females 53.5%). The presence of the older age group results from some students entering the programme following other studies. As identified in the introductory chapter, since it has become more socially acceptable to study music in Kuwait it is possible that some older students felt comfortable in deciding to change their course to study music. Given the roughly equal representation of men and women, this research suggests that the willingness to learn music and piano in Kuwait within these age groups is not gender-specific.

All of the participating students were in Years 3 or 4 of their four-year Bachelor of Education, majoring in Music Education at the CBE. These students were invited to participate as by this point they would have had considerable contact with different staff within the Music department as well as experience of having taken various piano-related practical and theory classes. Therefore, their views were likely to be representative of the experience of learning at the CBE. Where respondents are quoted below they are indicated as S1, S2 etc.

7.3 Piano Practice and Facilities

Questionnaire responses regarding practising time indicated that only 9.3% of students practised piano daily. 11.6% of the sample practised three times a week, while 39.5% practised twice a week and another 39.5% practised only once a week. Students in piano module 6 believed that they practised enough for that level: 'I am now in piano module 6, so definitely this time [three to four times a week] for practising piano is enough' (S1). Other students stated that as the level of difficulty increases during the six modules, some students practise more to develop their skills, and practice time could correspond to the difficulty of the music: 'it depends on how the music piece looks like (difficult, easy, long or small), when the music piece is difficult, I need more time to practise it' (S5).

The amount of practice was also influenced by external factors: 'there is a pressure from other subjects and modules outside the music department' (S2). S3 also felt that 'I do not have enough time to practise piano due to studying other subjects not in music, such as educational and psychology subjects in the college'. Although all of the students had to take the same number of other subjects for their programme, students appear to feel differently about their practice, as some manage to practise every day and others do not.

The findings showed that the level of practice was also affected by aspects of cultural attitudes towards music, which limited some students' motivation and ability to practise piano outside the college. S1 revealed: 'When I practise at home, my family are laughing and taunt me'. S12 also felt that 'My family do

not like me to play piano, they said you can play or learn piano just in the college, not at home'. And S1 identified that 'I cannot do that [practise and play piano] outside the college due to the weak level of culture in society'. Practicing piano was also found to be affected by socioeconomic issues; S9 observed that 'I cannot buy piano, [I do not have] enough money'.

However, most of the responses showed that students were happy with their practice, particularly in terms of how it connected to the requirements of their course. For example, S11 noted that: 'I usually finish the piano modules syllabus within this practising time'. S8 was also happy with practice time: 'I do what I want during this time [practice time], so I feel it is enough. I do not need more time to practise', and several students including S1 felt that at the highest level there was no need for daily practice: 'I am now in piano module 6, so definitely this time [3 to 4 times a week] for practising piano is enough'. S10 also felt 'that [practice 3 times a week is enough] what I need, and I usually finish the piano module curriculum within this practising time'. This suggests that the curriculum expectations are manageable for students.

Most students reported that they were satisfied with the practice facilities in the music department at CBE. However, other factors influenced some students' satisfaction. For instance, the connection between the practice facilities and exam location (hall) caused some frustration for S5: 'I want to practise in the piano hall on the grand piano, because the piano is a high quality and it is not electronic or digital piano … the problem is that the piano hall is considered as a lecture room, where usually it is busy with classes'. This suggests that the availability of quality instruments was constrained by other components of the programme; this may have an impact on piano exam performance.

7.3.1 Practice Strategies

Figure 3 below presents a comparison of various piano practice strategies. The choice of these strategies as categories for students to consider was based on different attributes which were recommended by the CBE piano teachers in either the observed lessons or in their interviews. In general, overall awareness and self-reported usage are high with respect to slow

practice, repetition and isolated sectional practice. Awareness was high for separate hand practice (n=32) and variation in tempo (n=27). The awareness of self-evaluation (n=12) and usage (n=5) of self-evaluation is lower. While they showed a high level of awareness of strategies directly relating to technical elements, there was less evidence of self-evaluation.

The focus group discussion students were also asked to give their views on how they practise. These students indicated that playing previously mastered elements were helpful to their practice process. For example, S1 stated: 'I start my practice with something I really know and have played before.' Some focus group students showed a structured attitude towards their practice: 'I start with finger exercises (Hanon), then continue practising the exercises and mark each one that I have finished' (S2). Further research is needed to probe the practice processes more deeply; however, the initial evidence suggests that practice could adopt a wider range of strategies and students could be encouraged to be more reflective within their work, additionally drawing on other sources of information to supplement the guidance from the teacher.
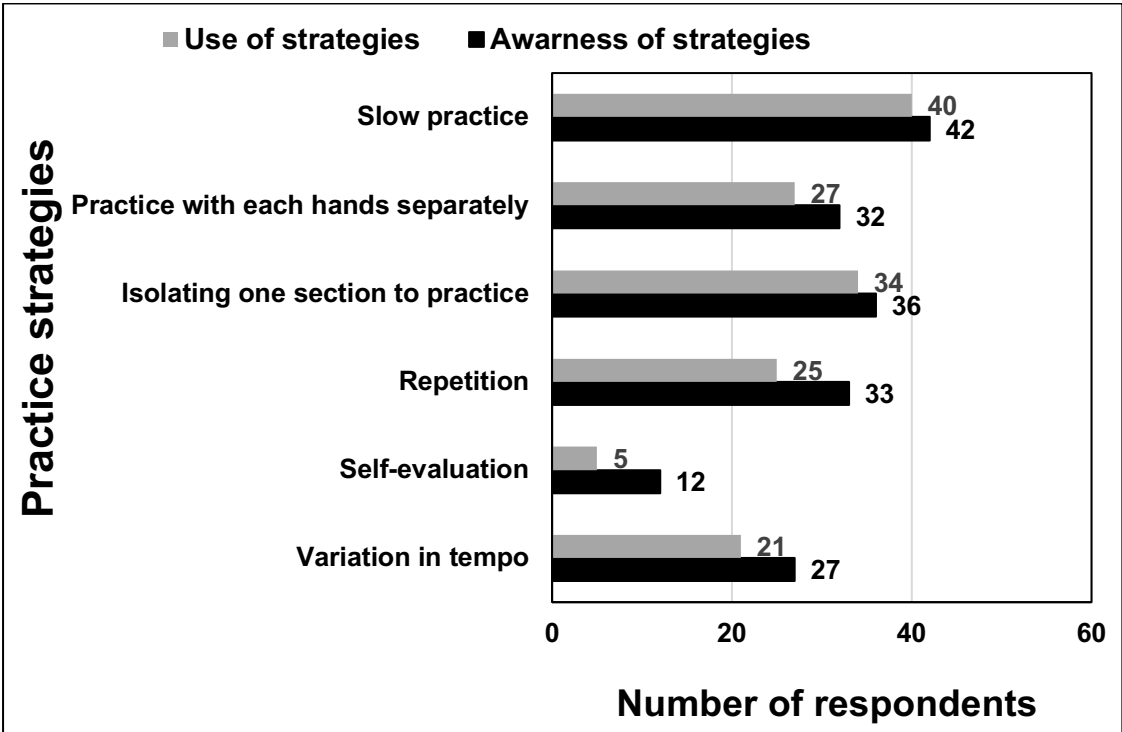
Figure 3: Students' Awareness and Usage of Specific Practice Strategies at CBE

Students were also asked about the level of experimentation within their piano practice. 25% indicated that they sometimes experimented in practice, but only 12% always experimented with a piece of music, and 63% never experimented with the piece. 100% of the sample indicated that they never asked themselves how the composer might have intended a work to be played rather than how their teachers taught them to play it. This suggested that the pedagogy deployed encourages students to learn the basics and focus on the prescribed syllabus, with limited effort and importance given to creativity or to considerations of historical performance practice. Limited experimentation could be due to the students' background and experience which reflects earlier learning stages and cultural factors; additionally, it might also be due to the teaching style that the students are receiving during piano classes at CBE.

The students were also asked about the level of additional research that they performed in relation to piano learning. Only 26% of respondents undertook additional independent research, while 74% never researched their repertoire. This may be associated with low levels of experimentation and innovation within their repertoire learning. The expectation from the teachers seems to be predominantly directed towards technical expertise and the performance of the syllabus repertoire rather than encouraging students' autonomy through independent research. This may contribute to limited willingness to create new interpretations of repertoire. However, this also could reflect the availability of musical resources in Kuwait, and the possibility that it may be difficult to access material in Arabic that gives historical background to composers or to access repertoire, particularly for Western classical music.

From the above analysis, some key elements can be further discussed. Firstly, the general level of practice is relatively low. Uszler et al. (2000) contend that the piano lesson has progressed significantly from its early days and practices, with changes in pedagogical approaches occurring as research has highlighted the benefits or problems associated with existing teaching practices. However, a key element that is highlighted across studies is the need to ensure that there is consistent practice. Klickstein (2009) emphasises the existence of the quality of practice, recommending techniques and

methods that increase the quality of practice, rather than focusing on the quantity of the practicing times. Hallam (1995) concluded that there can be inherent differences in the way musicians approach and undertake practice. Hallam contends that regularity in practice varies based on end-goals: while some musicians work towards a particular concert and practise more before events, others have a more regular practice schedule. The findings of this research support this perspective. Some students did not practise regularly; it is possible that most students can achieve all they need to in the classes so they do not undertake additional practice.

This dependency on the context of the class for development, as well as the teaching strategies utilised, may have contributed to the low levels of self-evaluation, as observed earlier in Figure 3. This may also be the result of a strong master-apprentice teaching style which has not emphasised the value of self-evaluation. The importance of student self-evaluation has been highlighted by Shook (1993), who concludes that undergraduate pedagogy instructors should include studio teaching, studio management, general knowledge and administration in their work with student teachers. Shook argued that self-assessment of musical performance helps the learner's overall awareness of the subject and their control over the learning process. Lee (1997) also contends that the focus on external assessment of performance needs to be balanced with self-reflection, recommending that the student audio- or video-records their playing which helps them engage critically. In the context of the study findings, it can be proposed that the students followed the set goals and lesson plans without evaluating their own capabilities.

Furthermore, the teacher interviews showed that the structure of teaching was inflexible, with only summative assessments. The lack of formative assessment could be another factor contributing to this limited presence of self-evaluation. Griffin (2017) notes the importance of the piano teacher's role through encouraging the use of metacognitive learning strategies. He concludes that existing teaching strategies were predominantly focused on technical skills development through structured analysis, where there was limited room for other learning strategies. This could also apply to the CBE

context, where a lack of metacognitive strategies deployed by teachers may lead to a lack of use of these strategies by students. Since the students show variable levels of engagement, increasing focus on a range of practice strategies and evaluative awareness of their effectiveness could be valuable to enable progress, particularly if time factors are an issue for many students.

As shown earlier, it is also evident that the level of innovation and experimentation is low and the students rarely experimented and did not consider the original composer's views alongside their own experiences. This could be attributed to low self-actualisation. Self-actualisation 'explains human creativity, our constant attempts to improve and change and our attempts to maintain and enhance our self-esteem. These self-developments are influenced strongly by environmental factors in the form of feedback given by others' (Hallam, 2002, p.226). 'Developing learning experiences that facilitate self-actualization and creativity is among the most important goals of our society in preparation for the future' (Burleson, 2005, p.1). Kiel (1999) explains the importance of enabling self-actualisation for adult learners through the educational environment.

The level of students' experimentation could also reflect the teaching structure; the class notes made during observation reveal that the group classes focus on one goal for the whole group, rather than individual goals. Austin and Vispoel (1992) advise music teachers to 'consider ways in which they might promote individualised progress goals for students' (p.18); this could help learner engagement, although this would need considerable thought to achieve effectively within group classes.

The low levels of student practice could also link to limited teacher awareness of varied approaches to pedagogy. Jonassen and Easter (2012) contend that there is an urgent need to adapt to newer teaching and learning models. It is possible that the lack of teacher training at CBE and available information in Kuwait on pedagogic innovation may be one reason for limited student engagement and involvement. Furthermore, the lack of student interest in regular practice could be linked to the level of repertoire used within the curriculum, and this could reflect the lack of complexity of the set pieces.

Conway (2002), in an assessment of music teaching and preparation, contends that motivation should be given to assist the student's development process through increasing complexity of the tasks set. Therefore, complexity of the task alongside innovative teaching could improve student engagement and could also increase student practice and creativity.

7.4 Student Motivation and Self-Efficacy

Table 2, below, identifies student motivation and self-efficacy with respect to learning and playing piano. The 43 respondents ranked statements across a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). It is evident that most of the respondents have high motivation and self-efficacy. Self-efficacy indicates to an individual's belief of a person own capacity to perform necessary actions to produce specific level of achievements (Bandura, 1997). McPherson and McCormick (2006) consider self-efficacy as a personal judgement concerning the ability to achieve a task in a specific condition. From this study at CBE it is seen that students believe that learning piano for some time leads to competency (Mean=4.65). It can be observed that most of the students are motivated and have confidence in their own skills and capabilities. These include the ability to manage piano learning activities (Mean=4.65), confidence in playing the piano (Mean=4.58) and confidence in excelling as a piano player (Mean=4.60).

Table 2 also shows that the respondents have given a high rating to the importance of their teacher's role in their performance. Most of the respondents stated that their teacher played a significant role in improving their performance (Mean=4.65) and that they try to do well in order to gain their teacher's appreciation (Mean=4.46). Prior evidence, discussed in Chapter Four, showed that students' support-seeking behaviour was influenced by mastery goals. Perhaps if care and concern is expressed by the teacher it can enhance the teacher-student relationship and contribute to mastery goals.

The respondents also felt that they were motivated to study as they believed that piano proficiency would greatly help them in advancing their career paths. For instance, they felt that their current undergraduate programme was their

best choice for their career (Mean=4.60) and they were also confident of securing good employment opportunities (Mean=4.60).

Table 2: Mean Analysis: Students' Motivation and Self-Efficacy at CBE

Identify your level of agreement with the following statements	Average of Likert scale responses (Mean)
After learning piano for a while, I feel pretty competent.	**4.65**
I am satisfied with my performance at piano playing.	**4.65**
The encouragement given by my teachers has helped me improve my performance.	**4.65**
I am confident that I will be able to achieve gainful employment in this field.	**4.60**
I am confident that I can excel in this field.	**4.60**
I am sure that this is the best undergraduate programme for my career and path.	**4.60**
I am quite confident in playing the piano.	**4.58**
It was important to me to do well at this task and get my teacher's appreciation.	**4.46**

The importance of understanding student motivation and attitude has been frequently acknowledged in literature. Miksza (2012) notes that the development of learning strategies in young piano music beginners requires the teacher to understand their self-efficacy and motivation. Roulston et al. (2015) emphasise the importance of understanding adult music learners' motivation and the factors that affect it, which can decrease the gap between

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the music teacher and student, and enable the teacher's and the learner's understanding of the learning process, aims and outcomes. In general, the level of motivation present amongst the CBE students is relatively high with respect to performance and confidence. Since the students have confidence in their overall performance and believe that this is a good foundation for their career, one can conclude that overall motivation is relatively high.

The students' satisfaction of their teachers and the encouragement the teachers provide are also rated very highly by the students. Evidence from other research supports this notion. McPherson (2009) reports that a young student's learning attitude can be influenced by the immediate environment, which includes peers, family and teachers. Therefore, teacher encouragement could have a positive impact on the attitude of the student.

Jørgensen (2000) emphasises the responsibility of the institution to keep up to date with educational and psychological theories, asserting that the institution should consider how to develop the independence and responsibility of the student in order to develop and improve the learning process and its outcomes. Therefore, institutions may have a responsibility to train teachers on motivational tactics and helping students to be engaged in a programme. Therefore, providing a motivating institutional environment is possible when the teachers and institution support this.

As Parkes et al. (2015) argue, instrumental music teaching and learning at the tertiary level can be complex, as there are various factors which influence the student's attitude and their practice. One such factor is the motivation of the student. The above mean analysis shows the perception of high levels of teacher support, and confidence in technique and performance, as well as in future career options. These factors can contribute to motivated students.

7.5 Student Skill Areas

Table 3, below, identifies the overall self-rating of the 43 students in various skill areas. They ranked themselves on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 5 (very good) to 1 (very bad). Overall, it is seen that despite their high levels of confidence and motivation, their ranking of individual areas and piano-related skills is very low.

Music reading and composition skills are moderate. The respondents rate themselves moderately when it comes to music reading (Mean=2.74), but their rating for other reading is relatively low. This includes sight-reading (Mean=1.16), score-reading (Mean=1.26) and accompanying (Mean=1.14). When it comes to compositional elements, the respondents rated themselves even lower. These included elements such as harmonisation (Mean=1.16), transposition (Mean=1.14), improvisation (Mean=1.14), and composition (Mean=1.14).

In addition, the study also probed the respondents' perceptions of their skills concerning interpretation. The replies were mixed for this aspect. For instance, students rated their abilities concerning style (Mean=3.65) and playing by ear (Mean=4.12) as moderate to good. Table 3 also provides the results for rhythm and technique elements. The respondents consider that they are confident about their rhythmic skills (Mean=3.67), technique (Mean=3.16) and memorisation (Mean=4.16). However, for tone production, the respondents rated themselves poorly (Mean=2.74).

Table 3: Mean Analysis: Students' Skills Areas at CBE

How do you rank yourself in the following skill areas?	Average of Likert scale responses (Mean)
Memorisation	**4.81**
Playing by ear	**4.12**
Rhythm	**3.67**
Style/Interpretation	**3.65**
Technique	**3.16**
Music reading	**2.74**
Tone production	**2.74**
Score-reading	**1.26**
Harmonisation	**1.16**
Sight-reading	**1.16**
Transposition	**1.14**
Improvisation	**1.14**
Composition	**1.14**
Accompanying	**1.14**

Further comments from the focus group illuminate the data. These suggest that some students lacked knowledge about reading music, and lacked understanding of how to improve their sight-reading and improvisation. Their aspirations can be seen from the following quotes. S3 stated that: 'I want to improve my sight-reading and play with both my hands very well'; S4 noted: 'I want to learn how to play improvisation very well and how to change among

music scales'; and S8: 'I want to learn how to sight-read a music piece at a good high level'. However, students seem to have had little confidence in their abilities in these areas. This suggests a possible gap between the teaching content and the students' learning aims.

Similarly, the students also believed that focusing on technique was important. However, despite this level of importance, the self-ranked skill set is relatively low, as seen in Table 3. This evidence needs to be examined in detail. As discussed previously, it was evident that the students had some positive feelings about their overall performance levels. However, when asked independently about their learning and their technique, this research finds alternative and conflicting evidence.

The students self-report a high skill level with respect to playing by ear and memorisation. Similarly, the students also report moderate levels of skill with respect to rhythm and technique. However, they report a low level of skill in accompaniment. The importance of these skills has been highlighted in research and is clearly relevant to future employment for these students. Neumann (1977) argues that contra-rhythm, chord playing, polyphonic playing (two-part and more) and the playing of melody and accompaniment are important skills to develop. Betts and Cassidy (2000) propose that sight-reading and harmonising are important skills for upcoming music teachers to use during the music class. The students at CBE report good awareness of rhythm and tempo but appear to have little confidence in their skills as accompanists. This needs to be considered. It is possible that the students may have few opportunities to accompany others, even within CBE. It is not part of the module content or assessments, and as most CBE students learn piano rather than other instruments or voice, there is perhaps low perception of the value of accompanying as there appears to be little need for it.

The importance of memorisation has been acknowledged in literature. Herrera and Cremades (2014) indicate the importance of teaching memorisation during piano lessons and focus on how to improve these skills through the learning process, which allows piano teachers to understand more about how students practise and improves students' practicing strategies. Hallam (1997) proposes

that teachers should encourage and improve students' memorisation skills and illustrates positive effects of performing from memory. Experimental evidence provides a context for the importance of memorisation as a key element which influences overall piano performance. Demorest et al. (2008) observed among Turkish conservatory students with broad training in Western art music that the memory level for Western music examples was not the same as for Turkish music examples. This was attributed to cross-cultural music cognition: music memory was used as a comparative measure for music comprehension for culturally familiar and unfamiliar music. The importance given to memorisation could help overcome this challenge. Table 3 above shows that the students rated themselves highly for memorising skills. The teacher interviews show that students are expected to play exam pieces from memory, further supporting the student data.

The overall student skills with respect to score- and sight-reading were low even though students rated their music reading skills as moderate. Sturm et al. (2000) contend that the fundamentals of playing instruments with a focus on sight-reading, harmonisation, transposition and score-reading are vital to improving overall skill level. A relatively low score in these elements amongst the CBE students is an aspect that needs to be considered by teaching staff.

The above evidence shows that the students do perceive that they have some level of skill with respect to memorisation, rhythm and playing by ear. All of these elements further support the traditional Western music playing approach. Russell and Evans (2015) indicate in their study on educational practices in pre-tertiary education in Australia that improvisation, transposition and music knowledge of chord progression were viewed as the most important elements. However, Kraus and Chandrasekaran (2010) identify that improvisation, transposition and music knowledge are possible only when enabled by more practice. Therefore, CBE staff could consider how best to support and encourage the development of these skills, as students appear to have little confidence in their abilities in these areas.

7.6 Student Attitudes Towards the Teacher

Table 4, below, identifies the overall ranking of the 43 students' attitudes towards their teachers. They rated agreement with various statements on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 5 (very good) to 1 (very bad). Overall, it is seen that students have a very high opinion of the role that their teachers play in improving their performance. The importance of teacher-student interaction and engagement has been highlighted in research. As Swinkin (2015) argues, growth in technology, increasing use of novel pedagogical methods, and increasing interaction between teacher and student have changed piano education. There needs to be a deliberate intention to enhance student learning as 'understanding more about what these students seek and value in their study can help educators offer instructional experiences designed to meet students' needs and optimise the benefits and rewards for both student and teacher' (Jutras, 2006, p.108).

The study results indicate that the students feel that the role of their teachers in improving their techniques is high (Mean=4.12) and that the teachers also test them regularly on their competence and knowledge (Mean=4.09). Furthermore, the respondents also have a positive attitude towards their teachers, who give them guidance even beyond classroom hours (Mean=4.12). The study also probed how the teachers encouraged and supported the students. The results indicate that students feel that their teachers have pushed them to think for themselves (Mean=4.12) and have encouraged the students to practise more (Mean=4.12).

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Table 4: Mean Analysis: Students' Views on Class Piano Teachers at CBE: Attitude and Satisfaction

Identify your level of agreement with the following statements	Average of Likert scale responses (Mean)
Instructors provide me with more information on how to improve my technique	4.12
Instructors encourage me to think for myself	4.12
Instructors change and provide tasks / explanations beyond the classroom	4.12
Instructors encourage me to read and practise more	4.12
Instructors test me on my technique as well as my competence and knowledge	4.09

The students' attitudes towards the teachers were considered in relation to two important elements. These include the technique and skill-set of the teacher and the encouragement and support given by the teacher. The students rated the technique and skill set of the teachers relatively highly. They believed that the teachers provided the necessary information, could correct technique and provided explanations whenever approached, even if outside class hours.

Some findings from the focus group interview further support this data. These students felt that the improvement in their piano skills and piano level was possible only through the motivation given by CBE staff. They believed that CBE staff had been instrumental in improving their knowledge and practical piano skills. They believed that while they did know some basics of playing piano, it was the CBE programme which contributed to overall improvement of their skills and gave them confidence to perform better. For example, S3 stated: 'Before study in the college, I did not know how to play piano well; then after study, I had learnt a lot such as reading a music score, knowing the music notes and places, and being confident with my playing'.

The importance of a positive attitude towards the teacher's technical expertise is acknowledged in literature. According to Yoshioka (2012), there is a shift in teaching philosophies from primarily emphasising technique and performance to including creative and functional skills, such as improvisation, score reading, playing by ear, transposition, harmonisation and sight reading. All of this requires the teacher to be technically sound and to provide the student with additional learning options. One such element which could be considered at CBE is one-to-one learning. As Jacobson (2006) concludes, individual attention can help increase the overall attention given by the teacher and focus on the competencies of the student. This would also be likely to encourage student motivation and ensure that students were given tasks relating to their individual competencies, needs and interests. This will be discussed in Chapter Eight.

The students' perception of encouragement and support given by the CBE teachers is also relatively high. There is a significant amount of literature which supports the importance of teacher engagement and involvement. For example, Stringham et al. (2015) contend that when teachers give additional support and encouragement, the student performance is better. Similarly, Sichivitsa (2007) reports that when teachers and students were more involved it led to improved self-concept amongst the students. This led to improved engagement with the music and greater student perception of its value. Therefore, the implications associated with teacher engagement and involvement show a positive situation at CBE.

7.7 Teacher Skills

Table 5, below, identifies the overall ranking of the 43 students' perceptions of their teachers' skills, using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 5 (very good) to 1 (very bad). Overall, it is seen that students have a generally low perception of how skilled their teachers are for aspects concerning theory and literature, curriculum and lesson planning, and ability to build motivation and self-efficacy.

In respect to theory and literature, the respondents believe that most of the teachers do not have sufficient skills. The respondents indicated that for selecting piano methods (Mean=3.33), learning theories (Mean=3.37) and philosophy of piano teaching (Mean=3.35), they think their teachers have adequate skills. However, concerning aspects such as selecting piano literature (Mean=1.23), referring to books on pedagogy (Mean=1.72), history of piano pedagogy (Mean=1.72) and purchase and maintenance of keyboard equipment (Mean=1.74), students rated their teachers as having low skills.

The results relating to curriculum and lesson planning indicate that the students feel that their teachers have an average skill set. In relation to establishing a curriculum (Mean=3.33) and lesson planning (Mean=3.37), students feel that their teachers are adequately skilled. In the case of a teacher's ability to build motivation and self-efficacy, the results are mixed. The students feel that when it comes to motivating piano students (Mean=3.40) and adjudication (Mean=3.05), the teachers have adequate average skills. However, when it comes to providing advice on performance anxiety (Mean=0.98), preparing students for recitals (Mean=0.98) and preparing students for further study (Mean=2.63), students rated the skills of their teachers much lower (see Table 5).

Table 5: Mean Analysis: Students' Views on their Class Piano Teacher at CBE: Instructor Competencies as Perceived by Students

How would you rank your instructors on the following piano teaching areas	Average of Likert scale responses (Mean)
Motivating piano students	**3.37**
Philosophy of piano teaching	**3.37**
Adjudication	**3.33**
Preparing students for further education	**3.05**
Giving information on the purchase, care, and maintenance of keyboard instrument	**2.63**
Referring students to books on pedagogy	**1.74**
Giving information on the history of piano pedagogy	**1.72**
Information on the history of keyboard technique	**1.72**
Selecting piano teaching literature	**1.23**
Providing advice on performance anxiety	**0.98**
Preparing students for recitals	**0.98**
Using games for students	**0.00**
Providing advice on medical problems of pianists	**0.00**

These views can be compared to those of students in the CBE focus group. Those who took part in the focus group discussion felt positively about the material that the teachers use, which indicated their curriculum and lesson

planning. This supports the teacher skills rating, which showed that students believe that there is adequate use of relevant material.

The students in the focus group discussion felt that the exercises that were given to them were suitable for that level. 'I see that the exercises are good and suitable for the level and ability of the current students. The teachers plan properly and give them to us' (S1). However, it is important to acknowledge that the teachers chose on most of repertoire and exercises, and the students were not directly involved in this process: 'Most the time it is my teacher [who chooses material], but sometimes I can ask my teacher if I can play some other music piece' (S4).

While students may be satisfied with the curriculum and methods, it seems that they were less satisfied with the piano teaching literature, and the findings show that there is no effort to include any games. As Kafai and Resnik (2011) argue, given the rise in digital learning technologies, games have become a key part of the learning process. Using games can effectively contribute to successful development of learning environments (Amory & Seagram, 2003). Additionally, games would be helpful and appropriate for any age of group (Gros, 2007), providing that four fundamental aspects are considered:

1. How the game is contextualised: does it forms a part of a daily activity; is it based on something extraordinary, as a reward, or as something without relation to usual practice, etc.?

2. The type of exercises carried out, and the development of the sessions.

3. The type of interaction between participants: the role of the teacher, competitive activity or co-operative activity.

4. The qualities of the critical and reflective elements of the game itself. (Gros, 2007, p.36).

Games are advocated by music educators in relation to instrumental learning, particularly as they promote learner engagement and motivation (Marshall & Stirling, 2017) and creativity. As creative focus appears lacking in the CBE curriculum, using some simple games could provide a useful starting point to then lead to more creative elements such as improvisation and composition.

The student attitude towards the teacher with respect to their skills was examined through three elements: theory and literature, curriculum and lesson planning, and general efforts to improve student motivation and self-efficacy. In general, the skills of the teacher with respect to theories, philosophies and piano methods were perceived by students to be relatively high. According to Uszler (2000), piano teachers who once thought their job was to teach technique and pieces are now additionally focusing on teaching students to create, analyse, ornament, improvise, memorise, transpose and harmonise. However, the level of importance given to elements like learning history and referring to additional material in the current study is relatively low.

As Ballantyne (2007) concludes, the practice and professional focus of teachers tends to be on the methods of teaching. The low level of importance to learning history and referring to additional material given by the teachers might contribute to some low levels of student engagement. Additionally, the lack of such additional material and focus may contribute to low ratings for the ability to improvise, as observed in the piano practice analysis. Johnson (2002) indicates that teaching techniques which can contribute to improvisation and creativity are not emphasised in undergraduate and graduate pedagogy programmes as much as the techniques associated with musicality, performance, reading and technical development. This is clearly reflected in the case of the CBE piano pedagogy programme.

The skill set with respect to curriculum and lesson planning is also rated moderately highly. This shows that CBE has addressed its basic challenges with respect to curricular planning. Nierman et al. (2002) argue that there is a considerable difference between teacher education in music and teacher preparation programmes in other disciplines: the emphasis of teacher education in music is on content knowledge, while the core of professional preparation in teacher preparation programmes includes philosophy courses, psychology, curriculum and methods. However, there is room for development, particularly in relation to the pedagogical priorities of the CBE teachers.

Considering the data relating to performance anxiety, it appears that students were given little advice on this. Nagel (2004), in an assessment of

performance anxiety amongst performers, concludes that medical challenges could lead to sub-optimal performance and this could be linked to both physical and mental health issues. Wesne et al. (1990, p.177) suggest that 'performance anxiety is an important problem that may in some instances warrant medical treatment'. In conjunction with this point, the fact that there was a zero score for the statement about teachers providing advice on medical problems of pianists suggests an information gap which may be negative for students. In the context of the Kuwaiti students, the lack of focus on these factors indicates a need to address teacher training as well as piano pedagogy.

7.8 Student Satisfaction with the Current Level of Teaching

Table 6, below, identifies the overall ranking of the 43 students' satisfaction with the current level of teaching, using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 5 (very good) to 1 (very bad). Overall, it is seen that students did not seem very satisfied with the current level of teaching.

The results indicate relatively low levels of student satisfaction with the teachers giving students the ability to synthesise and integrate knowledge of posture and hand position (mean=2.91) and instrumental technique into daily practice routine (mean=2.91). The teachers' ability to improve technical proficiency of piano through touch, phrasing and fingering was also rated low (mean=2.67). The teacher's conveyance of a wide variety of contemporary and traditional styles were both rated low (mean=2.40). The students were not very satisfied with the knowledge gained on reading conventional notation (mean=2.42) and chord-symbol (lead sheet) notation (mean=2.42). The students were dissatisfied with their confidence as they rated it with an average of playing alone (mean=2.40) and in ensembles of varying size (mean=2.40). The students felt that their ability to apply knowledge of musical styles and harmonic practices in improvisation was not developed very well (mean=2.33).

Table 6: Mean Analysis: Students' Views on Quality of Teaching at CBE

Rate your level of satisfaction with the current teaching provided with respect to the following aspects	Average of Likert scale responses (Mean)
The teaching has given me the ability to synthesise and integrate knowledge of posture and hand position.	2.91
The teaching has given me the understanding and knowledge of instrumental technique to apply in my practice routine.	2.91
The teaching has resulted in improvement of technical proficiency of piano through touch, phrasing and fingering.	2.67
Through teaching I have gained knowledge of chord-symbol (lead sheet) notation.	2.42
Through teaching I have gained knowledge of reading conventional notation.	2.42
Through teaching I have gained knowledge of a wide variety of traditional styles.	2.40
Through teaching I have gained knowledge of a wide variety of contemporary styles.	2.40
Through the teaching I am confident in playing alone.	2.40
Through the teaching I am confident in playing in ensembles of varying size.	2.40
Through the teaching I can apply knowledge of musical styles and harmonic practices in improvisation.	2.33

The assessment of student satisfaction with the teacher shows generally low scores. Focus group discussion showed that students felt that 'the piano teacher has to offer me all the learning tools and makes for me a good learning environment to make it easy for me to learn' [S7], 'the piano teacher has to explain for the student more about piano and how to be a pianist, and what shall I do in order to be a good pianist' [S8], and 'the piano teacher has to offer the student the confidence and support, and let the student believe that she can do more and get a good piano level, not just doing or finish the piano curriculum' [S9].

Overall, teachers are rated by the students as low with respect to specific elements including providing knowledge on daily practice elements, technical proficiency, knowledge of a wide variety of contemporary and traditional styles, and chord symbols and notation. The presence of such low levels of satisfaction shows that with respect to specific technical elements of learning, there may be gaps in teaching provision as well as in student engagement. As Newhouse et al. (2002) argues, students and teachers may have very different relationships with different components of the curriculum. Enabling teacher-student discussion of student needs and interests could be productive in developing the curriculum and in raising student satisfaction levels.

7.9 Perception of Support

Table 7, below, identifies the overall ranking and mean analysis of the 43 students' views on the use of different technologies in classes, using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 5 (very high) to 1 (very low). Overall, it is seen that there was a moderate frequency of technology use by students in their classes.

Table 7: Mean Analysis: Students' Views on the Use of Different Technologies at CBE

How would you rank the use of the following technologies at CBE in the group piano classes?	Average of Likert scale responses (Mean)
Electronic keyboards	**3.04**
Electronic keyboard labs	**2.69**
Internet resources	**2.65**
Computer software	**2.32**
Synthesisers	**2.20**
MIDI applications	**2.20**

The focus group participants were asked various questions relating to technology. In general, they believed that technology provided additional support for piano learning. S1 stated: 'Yes, ''Piano tiles 2'' application on my smartphone … helps me to learn the Eastern music'. S2 also agreed: 'Yes, there are many on my iPad … [they] help me to memorise some music pieces'. Other students also articulated the usefulness of the internet: [it] helps me to find the music score that I want to play'. [S11]. S10 also commented that 'on YouTube … I can watch and learn how other people play my favourite music pieces'. Additionally, the digital piano and headphones were thought to be 'very good' as their use gives the students options to practise in class, because students will 'not make any noise and disturb each other during the piano lesson, and you can make mistakes without being shy' [S1].

However, some students also identified that the use of digital pianos limited the student experience: 'the touch is not like the normal piano, as we have to play in the exam on the normal piano not on the digital one' [S6]. Therefore, the students were at a disadvantage in assessments as they lacked familiarity with the acoustic instrument. The importance of technology and its role in improving student education and engagement have been highlighted in

research. For example, Larsen (1997) argued that the environment has a key role to play in the production of sound and music, and teachers cannot ignore the use of technology and its impact in the music field. Similarly, Johnson (2002) argues that incorporating electronic equipment like computer software programs, electronic laboratories, and audio and video recording has challenged the traditional piano teaching approach. However, the degree of implementation of technology and its impact on the overall teaching approach in CBE needs further consideration, particularly where it might also impact on examination performance.

The students also believed that if CBE provided learning workshops and extra-curricular opportunities, they would be able to improve their overall skills. S5 stated that: 'I suggest establishing a learning workshop between all piano levels in order to exchange our knowledge about music or piano, with music doctor supervisor'. This suggests openness to new learning contexts and for enhanced peer and staff support as well as a desire for increased overall group learning. The use of a learning workshop could create an environment to improve practice elements, and to motivate those at lower levels through seeing more experienced learners play and discuss music with their teacher. As Jonassen and Easter (2012) argue, group learning can lead to greater collaboration between students, and students can learn from those with greater experience. Creating a group of learners with varying levels of experience could enable this type of peer-learning at CBE.

7.10 Views on Current Piano Pedagogy

Focus group participants were invited to share their views and feelings on piano pedagogy at CBE. In general, the students believed that the piano programme had improved their overall skills and their capabilities. S2 felt that: 'It is good and it is helping me to improve my skills'. While the first comment suggested student satisfaction, other comments supported the student perception of positive motivation, as reflected in the questionnaire analysis. The students believed that the programme was designed to improve their overall knowledge. The students also contend that these modules helped them

gain Western music education, and as 'learning piano is the basis of learning music' [S3] the piano modules would provide a starting point for this. Some students also felt that the programme not only encouraged the development of skills, but also created positive motivation: 'Learning and studying piano in my college makes me feel happy and glad' [S4], and S5: 'My feeling is a beautiful feeling which builds confidence between the student and the piano'.

Though music education in Kuwait has progressed, one student stated that the 'structure of learning in Kuwait is weak, and especially in the music education subject, all they need is just to play the national anthem and some other chants that focus on the love of the home and Kuwait' [S1]. The focus group questions regarding adding more Arabic music materials to the curriculum found positive responses; 'If I learn the Arabic music, definitely I will play it even if it is very difficult, because I really like it and like to play it' [S1], 'I do not know as we did not try before, but Arabic music will be easier as we know the melody already for some music piece' [S3]. However, 'learning Western music will give the student the ability to pass the basic things in piano' [S2].

Other comments may also hint towards thwarted potential, 'I am just learning basics and children's chants, and the music department does not ask me to do more than this' [S1], 'I want to learn sight-reading, with a more academic way' [S6], and 'I would like to learn how to play piano concerto' [S2]. These comments suggest that there is a gap between students' and teachers' views on the curriculum and content.

Furthermore, students also noted that the availability for the practice time on an acoustic piano in the music department was very limited and this affected their performance in the exams, as 'the touch [on the digital piano] is terrible' [S6]. This suggests that there is a need for more acoustic pianos to be available for the students at CBE.

7.11 Challenges for Piano Education and Potential Solutions

The focus group participants were also questioned on the challenges and difficulties that they associated with piano learning at CBE. They identified both infrastructure and technical issues.

Two students identified challenges associated with the location and the environment within the piano lab. The lack of support for practise outside the piano lab was also highlighted. For example, S1 stated that:

> The time of piano lab is not suitable … The environment in general in the college does not help and is not suitable … I just can play and practise piano in the college and specifically in the piano lab lesson, whereas I cannot do that outside the college due to the weak level of culture in society.

Students suggested that difficulties in practising the piano were linked to lack of infrastructure and lack of support and access to playing piano outside the piano lab at CBE; 'there is no respect from the other students from the other subjects and department at me and my friends too, as they consider music is prohibited' [S3]. In terms of music being prohibited, 'I see this is society culture which has to be more open minded and develop in order to see music from a different aspect, not just as a not important subject' [S3]. The difficulty of 'learning piano for the first time [at CBE], this can be avoided by having some music instruments in the school stages' [S3] which would also create more positive views of music.

The students also showed other challenges facing them within availability of further study opportunities to learn music or piano: 'we need open master's studies and PhD' [S9], 'I want to continue my study for music in US' [S2], 'if I have opportunity to travel and study my masters and PhD outside that is okay' [S1], 'I plan to take and study for PhD to be a piano professor' [S3]. However, there is no music postgraduate study available in Kuwait, and culture factors still affect and limit opportunity particularly for female Kuwaiti students: 'if I want to continue my study I will have to travel outside Kuwait, where this is

impossible for my family, they definitely will disagree and not let me travel'
[S9].

The importance of global exposure to music is, however, improving within Kuwait. As the British Council (2015) reports, the number of music centres is increasing, which reflects an increasing interest in learning music in Kuwaiti society. Therefore, creating more access options might have a positive effect on the perception of the value of learning music and could lead to fewer negative comments from others (as presented above) and to more practice, which would improve overall skills and competencies.

7.12 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to examine the views of students regarding the teaching and learning of piano. The student demographics showed that most students were in their third year of study and almost equal numbers of male and female students participated. Although the frequency of practice varies, regular practice appears to be moderately low, with 39.5% indicating that they only practise once a week and a further 39.5% only practising twice a week. The lack of practice is attributed to high workload, as well as to some difficulties accessing facilities, particularly outside the college, with some issues of attitudes towards music creating negative situations.

Student satisfaction with available facilities within CBE was generally high. Students believed that only by working with their teachers they would be able to improve their performance. Student motivation was greater when efforts were made by the teacher to understand the student challenges and their requirements: they were driven by the support and extra effort by the teacher to study more. The students felt that the improvement in their piano skills and piano level was possible only through consistent practice and the motivation given by CBE. They believed that CBE had been instrumental in improving their knowledge and practice of piano skills and piano learning programmes. Overall student confidence in CBE as an institution is relatively high.

The student assessment of their own skills and teacher skills shows mixed responses. Students show awareness of areas of challenge. Overall, the teachers were found to be linear in their approach as they only focused on the curricular material. The perceived level of skill with respect to preparing students for recitals as well as final examination is also low, possibly because students rarely perform in non-assessed recitals. The teachers were found to be good at addressing the basic needs of the curriculum. However, it appeared that some skills were lacking because the teachers do not extend students' knowledge and practical skills beyond the basic requirements. The student skill limitations with respect to practical skill development are also associated with limited involvement in decisions on repertoire choices. Significantly, the lack of inclusion of games and the lack of attention to performance anxiety and musicians' health suggest potential areas for pedagogical development, and the low ratings for instructor competencies in relation to sight-reading, score-reading, accompaniment, harmonisation, transposition, improvisation and composition also suggest further areas for institutional consideration.

Students believe that limited resource availability as well as limited number of teachers can act as inhibitors to learning. However, students also contend that the CBE learning programme encourages overall skills of the students while creating positive self-efficacy and motivation. A focus on Western classical music is also evident. While this is found to be positive, a lack of focus on Kuwaiti cultural elements, which only includes a few Arabic pieces such as the national anthem and some traditional songs, was indicated. The students hope that exercises, using technology and additional learning workshops could improve their skills.

The findings show that overall student engagement with the CBE piano programme is high. However, there are many challenges associated with student and teacher interaction and student perception of teacher skills. These are discussed in the following chapter from the perspective of data from teacher interviews and focus group discussions.

Chapter 8: Teachers' Perspectives on Piano Pedagogy at CBE

8.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a thematic analysis of data from one-to-one interviews with two piano teachers and from a focus group discussion conducted with two other piano teachers at CBE. The chapter highlights the views of the four teachers (referred to as TA, TB, TC and TD). It examines the teachers' expectations of the current piano learning pedagogy in the undergraduate music programme at CBE. The teachers' views are categorised according to the major themes which emerged: student-teacher engagement, resource availability, the techniques and tools used and the specific elements associated with piano pedagogy at CBE.

8.2 Teachers' Attitudes and Expectations Relating to Piano Pedagogy at CBE

The study found that the teachers were broadly satisfied with piano pedagogy at CBE and deemed it appropriate for the development of students. TC stated: 'I see the piano learning process at CBE is good and helps the students to learn piano in the right way'. TD also believed that the current pedagogy was on a path of improvement, stating that, 'I think the learning process is really good and is slightly developing, improving day by day'.

TC stated that the piano modules provided students with 'good basic information and background about piano and music in general'. Teachers viewed these modules as also affecting their students' 'thinking, minds, and may help them conduct their work in future in a professional manner' [TD]. The teachers were confident that the piano learning at CBE had vocational relevance; according to TD, 'it is also opening many future career aspects for the students'.

8.2.1 Developing a Supportive Learning Environment

The teachers believed that providing a supportive learning environment would enhance their students' learning capabilities. The interview data showed that teachers made an effort to provide appropriate support: 'during the lesson I try to benefit the student in whatever way I can' [TA].

The teachers also spent time beyond the piano lessons to support their students in whatever way they deemed would help their development. TB explained: 'Personally, I try to help the student even if they have finished all their piano lessons and modules at any time by giving them some more additional piano learning material and I check them in my spare time'. The focus group discussion teachers also believed that this approach was useful as it provided a positive environment, facilitated students gaining self-confidence and motivation for learning music, and increased their productivity. According to TC this supportive approach helps students 'to comprehend various aspects of learning skills while focusing on our piano curriculum'. The evidence shows that teachers are thinking about how to promote learner motivation. Glasser (1986) argues that cooperative learning environments could increase the levels of motivation. This is further discussed related to student-teacher interaction in section 8.5 of this chapter.

The teachers realised that for 'effective learning' they needed to adapt their teaching and curriculum content to students' abilities. They agreed that any method that is adopted should be at the student's level. They were aware of their students' abilities: 'we are teaching beginner level students in an undergraduate level' [TC] and strived to adapt to the level of their students: 'we always try to suit the level of the student and keep pushing the students to improve to the next level. Suitability of the music scores is also determined by the students' capability of playing' [TD]. The commitment of the teachers to adapt the curriculum content to their students' abilities is further explained by TC: 'we have changed some Arabic music chants, updated the harmonies of school level Arabic chants scores and made them easier to learn for CBE students'. TB also stated that there are 'three to four musical concerts each year, where the students have the opportunity to participate in these concerts'.

These comments show that the teachers realised the importance of meeting the needs of their students and developing a supportive learning environment.

8.2.2 Process

The teachers noted that most of the students followed the curriculum and only a few were particularly talented individuals who required special attention. TA explained that 'giving the same music scales or pieces to all the students is not fair to the excellent or talented students'. Therefore, the teachers made additional efforts to cater to the special needs of these talented students:

> We have a specific piano curriculum which is easy for most of the students. However, for example, if I find a smart or talented student in piano module 3, I have the choice to give them some exercises or music pieces from piano module 6 curriculum if they would like to improve their level of piano performance. [TA]

TB agreed with adapting the teaching level according to the students' ability:

> This depends on the student's level and response; for example, I have a student who is very clever and shows talent in the piano lab but his second musical instrument is cello. Therefore, to encourage him and not leave him feeling bored during the piano lab lessons I try to give him advanced level music pieces for practising during the lesson. That often happens during piano lab, and we usually call them a 'horse rider' – therefore you usually have to give them more work to finish during the piano lab to make sure they do not get bored with nothing to do, or they also can assist the piano teacher in the piano lab to help other students, which is also a good idea and commonly happens in the piano lab teaching method.

Therefore, these teachers adopted flexible approaches to meet individual students' needs based on their abilities and response.

Although the teachers were happy with the current piano pedagogy at CBE they were aware of the need for improvement. For instance, the piano curriculum 'is fixed by the head and administration of the music department. The piano teacher has the flexibility to add more [little] things to what is being taught' [TA]; however, the teachers 'cannot cut things out of the curriculum. For example, I find that there are some things that are very difficult for students but I cannot change them and vice versa [TA].

The focus group discussion teachers felt that it would be beneficial for CBE staff to develop the programme, not only by the focusing on the curriculum and teaching structure, as 'we [also] need to take a recurring look into the learning environment as it could affect the students' responses' [TD]. TD felt it was important for CBE to 'focus on the related wider student environment inside and outside the college. Subsequently we could offer the best solutions or choices in the piano curriculum, music subjects, or the music programme structure'. TC also stated that 'we need more development in the current learning process, which could focus on the piano curriculum for undergraduate level beginner students'. This connects to issues of responsibility for learning:

> I see that the responsibility does not lay on just two parties; rather I believe that there are three parties; the student, the piano teacher and either head of the music department or head of the piano department or whoever is supervising and approving the piano curriculum. [TA]

The curriculum, environment and the teacher's own attitude are key elements which influence successful engagement with students. Figure 4 highlights the key themes relating to teachers' attitudes towards the existing programme.
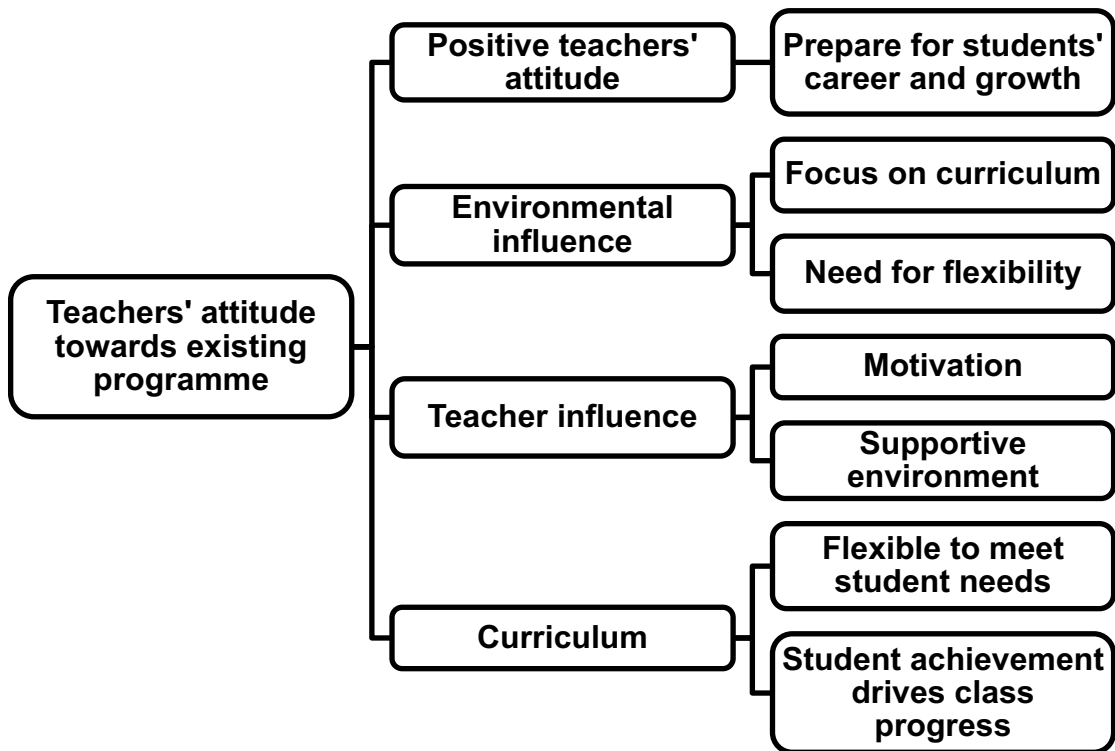
Figure 4: Thematic Analysis I: Key Themes and Contributing Elements

8.3 Perspective on Piano Examinations

Piano examinations at CBE are conducted twice per term (mid-term and at the end). There are three terms each academic year; two compulsory (beginning September and January), and an optional summer one. The requirements for the examination include the performance of various scales, piano exercises, sight-reading and music pieces. The examinations are conducted by exam committees made up of piano teachers and other CBE music teachers. Examiner assignment is random, based on the availability of exam committee members and sometimes also includes the teacher who led the module.

The particular elements evaluated depend on the Module level:

> For the mid-term exam sight-reading is required for all piano modules. Each module is different, playing one music scale is required for piano modules (1-6); one piano exercise and one piano etude music are

required for piano modules (1-4). Part of the Kuwaiti national anthem is also required for piano modules (5-6). [TC]

TD explained that in final exams the students were required to 'play all the music scales they had [learned] during the term, one music piece (etude or minuet) and a big part from the national anthem for modules (5-6) … while sight-reading is required for all piano modules'.

The evaluation of the student during the examination is based on technical skills:

> We usually focus on many aspects, such as sitting and hand positions, confidence of the student, the ability of playing and the ability of memorising a music piece or exercise, tempo, speed and sometimes we look at the main basic dynamics such as *piano* or *forte*, *crescendo* or *decrescendo*, accuracy of playing, and sight-reading. [TC]

For grading purposes the teachers identified that a student's ability to play, to recall a piece from memory, and to play at an appropriate and stable tempo were key areas. The focus of the curriculum was on ensuring that the student was able to replicate or memorise a piece of music. Therefore, students were assessed on their ability to memorise and play without error. The teachers were aware of challenges for the student during examination: 'definitely we are considerate of the student's performance anxiety and expect some mistakes such as a wrong note, or [for them] to stop playing and start again' [TD].

Teachers A and B agreed that curricular clarity was essential in relation to testing the students' progress. The decisions concerning the selection of test materials were predominantly based on the expected expertise level of the student. At every level, the piano curriculum had specific guidelines on testing the students and the students were fully aware of what they will be tested on. TA explained that, 'For music exercises, music pieces, or generally choosing student's curriculum, I strongly believe that these have to be in the student's level. We have created a specific curriculum for the students'. TB agreed with the views of TA and further explained that:

The piano exams for the music department are easy and suitable for all students and it is clear for the students from day first in the term what they are going to play in each piano exam. Therefore they have a long time to prepare for it and it is also not really difficult.

As the level of the student increased, there was flexibility for students to choose to add an individually-chosen extra piece for the exam:

In the exam, they have a choice to play only the requirements of the exam or they can play additional music pieces as well. This opportunity is provided to enhance their motivation for piano playing, even though the aim is not to graduate a professional or a high level piano player. [TA]

The option of replacing or adding an extra music piece in the test is controlled and negotiated by the teacher, and the examiners agree on which students may offer the extra material. This option could help a student to master additional skills, and such students are often identified as having potential for further development.

Kratus (1990) reported that to achieve an appropriate curricular structure, there is a need for flexibility in choice of piece as well as testing. The current research shows that the student's level of learning, the curricular expectations and the student's individual ability to cope with the examination influenced the overall assessment process. The selection of the exam material was largely dependent on the teacher, rather than imposed by individuals who were not directly involved in teaching the students. The teacher is given the discretion to choose test material which supports the individual situation of each learner; however, there are no extra marks awarded for playing extra pieces. The aim is to encourage the learner, and for the student to be able to demonstrate his/her ability to the examiner. Figure 5 highlights the key themes with respect to piano examination at CBE.
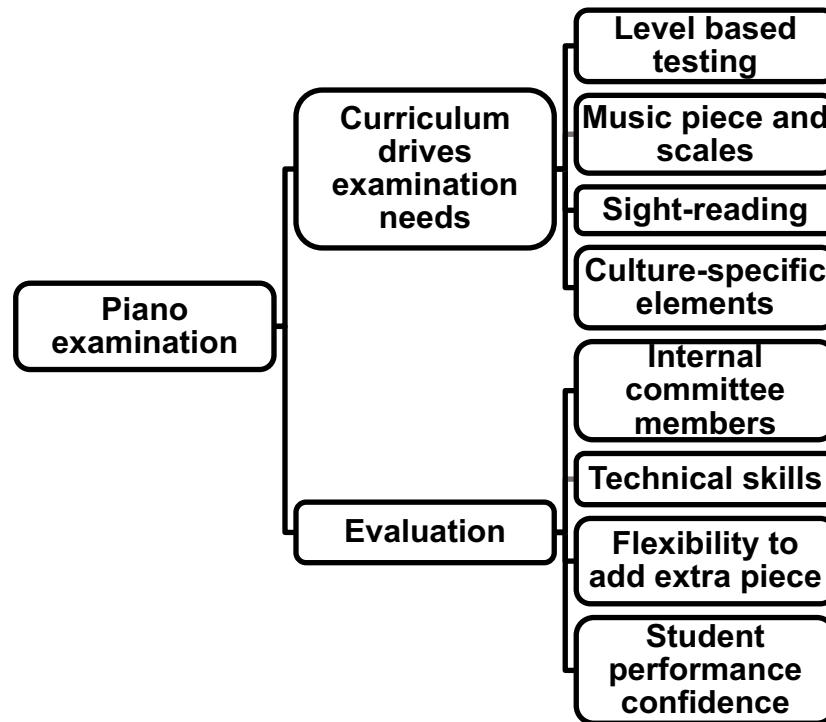
Figure 5: Thematic Analysis II: Key Themes and Contributing Elements

8.4 Teachers' Awareness of Students' Vocational Needs

The teachers were asked a series of questions with respect to their attitude towards the students' piano learning. They believed that learning piano is a key part of the music curriculum, and that this connects to being a professional: 'If you look anywhere in the world and not just the music department at CBE you will not find any music education teacher who is teaching music without using piano' [TB]. According to TD piano proficiency is a fundamental skill: 'Actually, learning piano is the start of learning music'. TA further added, 'We also use it to develop the basic musical skills, because 90% of the students are going to use piano in class during their future career (as a music teacher at a public school)'. TC felt that 'The most important thing is that we teach students the basic piano skills in order to help them for their professional career. TD also proposed that piano could help students prepare for 'postgraduate music studies abroad or other future plans in music industry'.

While piano learning could provide career-relevant skills, the teachers also noted that other subjects (outside the music department) were vital for developing students' skills as future teachers. As TA explained, 'they also take other modules such as psychology or education at the college, which prepares them for dealing with school students in their future careers'. The piano teachers focused on the broader educational context:

> The aim of learning at CBE is to graduate music teachers for public schools, therefore based upon our experience we try to inculcate the required abilities of basic music teacher skills in our students. Therefore, we teach them keyboard skills, music theory and music harmony. [TC]

The teachers acknowledged that understanding the potential career needs of the students required a focus on the development of students' ability in music in view of the practical needs of available music career paths. Therefore, the teachers believed that the skill to handle both Western and Arabic music elements was important within a school context in Kuwait.

Hogenes et al. (2014) propose that curriculum support material needs to consider both local and global music trends to ensure that there is professional development of the music student. The CBE teachers realised that while local cultural needs should be reflected as part of a teacher's knowledge and skills, it was also important that the teacher imparts a wide range of knowledge, including Western music to help students' development. The findings suggest that these teachers are following accepted trends in music pedagogy to prepare students for careers in music. TA explained the teaching practice at CBE:

> We are a College of Basic Education and our aim is different. We want to graduate teachers for education as the graduate certificate will be Education Certificate with Focus on Music and it is not a Musical Arts [i.e. performance] Certificate. We graduate an educational person with an ability of teaching music education and a responsibility of introducing

public school students to music culture. They are not required to teach [public school students] how to play or perform musical instruments.

This shows understanding of the local cultural context and helping enable students to develop the skills needed for employment as school music educators. The CBE teachers believed that the ultimate goal of the programme was to train students for this context; therefore, they needed to provide students with relevant skills. Figure 6 provides a thematic summary of the teachers' attitude towards the reasons for piano learning at CBE.
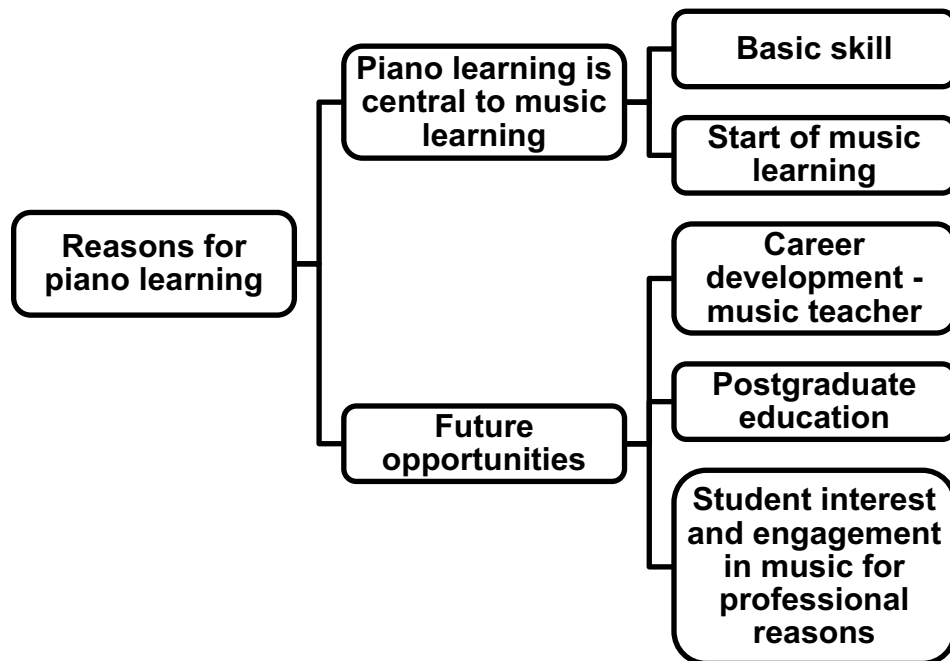
Figure 6: Thematic Analysis III: Key Themes and Contributing Elements

8.5 Student Engagement and Student-Teacher Interaction

According to Fitzpatrick (2014) the general engagement of the student can be improved if efforts are made to create an environment where the student is willing to approach the teacher for clarification and discussion. Understanding the mindset of the Kuwaiti student was seen to be vital by the CBE teachers. Students in their first year of study at CBE had just graduated from high school and often had a high level of dependence. Therefore, motivating the student and helping them adapt to a college level programme influenced the pedagogical approach of teachers: 'we understand the thought process of the Kuwaiti student and we realise that they have just finished high school and they still see themselves as school students without realising the responsibility about their own future'. [TB]

The teachers understood the importance of openness in student-teacher interaction and the need to provide a positive context. According to TD, staff 'want and need the student to learn with a highly motivated positive attitude in a pleasant environment'. TD also acknowledged that there are various 'factors that could affect the motivation, which could be something inside or outside the music department, personal problems, student's future plans or any other factors'. This suggests that the teachers were considerate towards students' needs and open to understanding and helping students with their problems in general. Furthermore, the teachers were aware that the student-teacher relationship could impact on the learning process. TD explained:

> I believe that the piano learning process at CBE really needs this relationship, as it is really helpful and builds a good learning environment for both the students and the teachers. Therefore, the teacher now has the responsibility to always be in a good mood with the students. In an effort to maintain and control this relationship the teacher has to be in a good mood even if the teacher is not available to help with something or is really busy with other work.

TC showed further awareness of the importance of the relationship:

Personally, I believe it [student-teacher relationship] is really helpful and has a greater positive effect than negative, as it increases the interest of the students, who are mostly aged between 18 to 25 years. The students really need this relationship to realise their potential and they need encouragement to do better.

The findings highlighted the need for effort to develop an environment for positive student-teacher interaction. The teachers were striving to support the students, recognising the importance of understanding individual students' capabilities and personalities. It was identified, however, that not all students were equally committed: 'some students take this relationship as a means of securing high grades or passing the piano exams without fulfilling the requirements [TC]. This suggests that some students see piano study as a means to other ends; additionally, TC noted the range of student attitudes:

There are many types of students. Sometimes the students show great effectiveness and are excited to learn more so they get their work done quickly. Other students are good but they are not bothered with learning; they just want to finish the requirements for the module. There are also other students who really need more time to practise as they are not capable of finishing the work quickly. Additionally, usually each academic year we have one or two talented students who set a good example for other students. Also there are some lazy students who do not like to practise more. However, we have got the experience to fulfil the aim of teaching piano at CBE dealing with all types of students.

Figure 7 presents a thematic summary of the teachers' understanding of the factors that could affect student engagement and student-teacher interaction which would enhance learning.
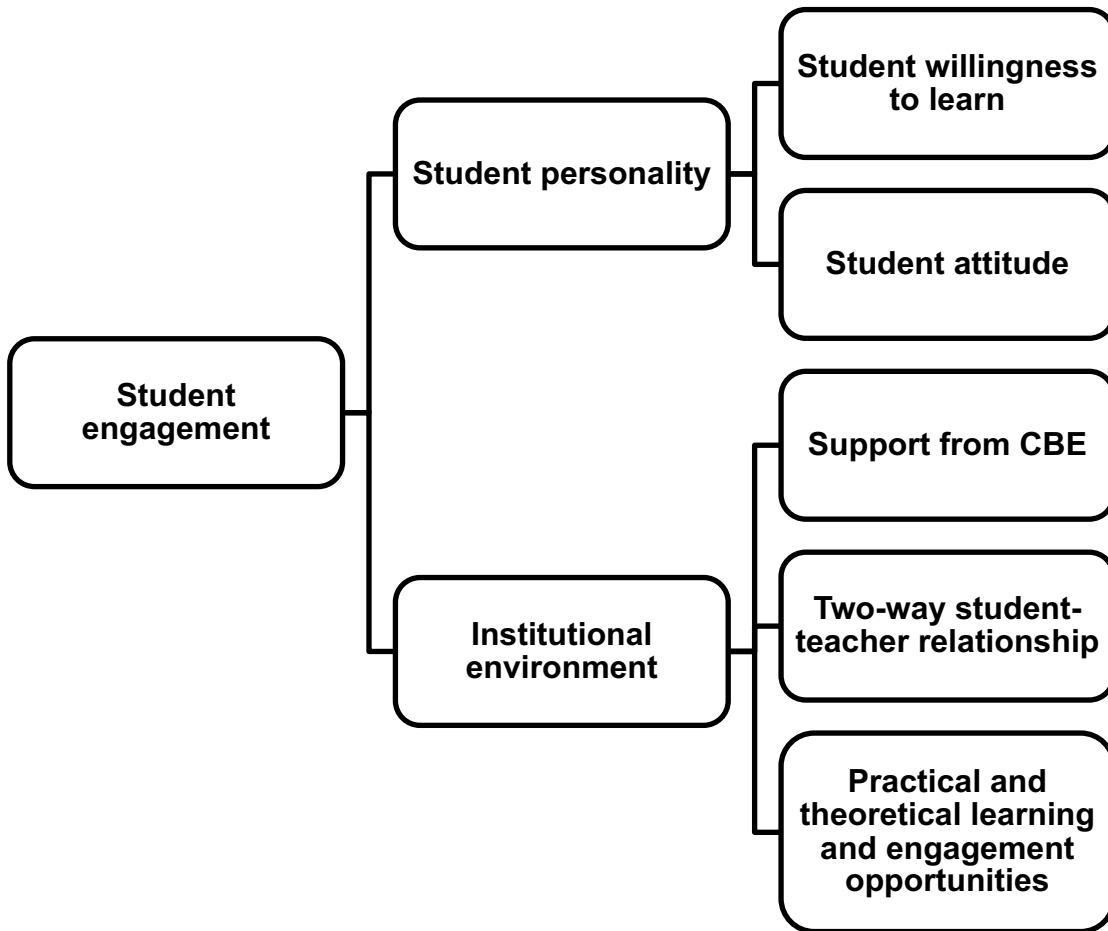
Figure 7: Thematic Analysis IV: Key Themes and Contributing Elements

8.6 Piano Learning – Resources

Teachers were asked about the tools and resources that they needed to teach piano effectively. The general attitude was positive, with respondents believing that existing resources positively contributed to student learning. Required resources can be classified into human resources (high quality piano teachers) and infrastructure (instruments, piano labs, practice rooms, headphones, 'many upright pianos, we have four small grand pianos and two large grand pianos' [TA] and concerts). The teachers were satisfied with the available resources at CBE, and the focus group discussion showed that the immediate resource needs for piano learning were met. TC explained that 'most of the

basic things are available here. The piano teacher is provided a separate office room. The room contains an upright piano, telephone, desktop computer and a printer. The teachers are also provided with a dedicated car parking space'. TD further mentioned that teachers strived to acquire any resources they deemed necessary but were not available, such as particular repertoire.

Though the teachers were happy with the quality of teaching staff they were not satisfied with the relationship between the number of classes and the information needed by students. Therefore, teachers had requested the provision of additional modules to include other aspects of music learning not directly related to piano:

> We asked the head of the music department many times to include other music modules in the programme as it could help us and the development of piano learning. This will save the piano lessons time spent on teaching and explaining other problems not really directly related to playing piano. We usually lose time on explaining theory, history, cultures and reading music. [TD]

As other modules had not been added, the teachers suggested that teaching assistants were a much-needed resource for ensuring high levels of student engagement. The teachers were dissatisfied that their request for teaching assistants was not entertained either. TD felt that a teaching assistant would help teachers focus on directly relevant pianistic issues. This would further support an effective learning process, as piano learning is currently affected by 'difficulties with overtime and the number of piano lessons' [TD]. TB further noted the potential benefits: 'it will be very useful for the students as we can leave the piano labs open for most of the time and the teaching assistants can help the students while they practise, and also help me, the piano teacher, during the lessons'.

The teachers were considerate of their colleagues' workload and commitments. They believed lack of planning to be the main reason for the unavailability of needed resources, and were aware that any resource would need approval from the head of the department and college administration,

who were usually pre-occupied with other issues. These issues impact on student learning. According to TA:

> Most of the time I have to cancel some lessons because the schedule of the many meetings we have to attend usually revolves around the availability of the head of the department. This affects the students' learning time and thus the learning process.

Therefore, the CBE administration appeared to have little concern for the needs of the music staff when arranging meetings.

The study found that certain resources were available at CBE such as video and audio-recorded materials, but their use depended on the teachers' preferences and teaching styles. For example, TA did not use recordings and preferred live demonstration instead, although he believed that providing additional material (including recommended videos or records) for viewing after class hours could be useful: 'my role is to enhance their [students'] musical knowledge even if it is by recommending some music records or books, but definitely these will not be used during my class' [TA].

A key resource challenge that the interviews highlighted was the lack of country- or culture-specific material. TA indicated that a wide repertoire for Western music could be accessed by CBE teachers; however, there was less Kuwait-specific material available, although the situation was improving. Teachers had modified the curriculum to improve its relevance to students through including Arabic music. Initially, the teachers filled the gap of Kuwait-specific material by modifying Arabic music chants: 'We have changed some Arabic music chants, updated the harmonies of school level Arabic chants scores and made them easier to learn for CBE students' [TC]. TA added that 'we have had problems with accessing and compiling Arabic Eastern music in the past, but now things have improved because new editions of most chants required at CBE are becoming available with added new harmonies and accompaniments' However, TA explained that:

> I would not prefer to teach Arabic music pieces for the piano curriculum. Because, Arabic music forms are not suitable as they are not composed

for piano playing and have different scales and harmony. Most Arabic music was composed to be played on Eastern Arabic instruments. But when we look at Beethoven's piano works, the pieces were already composed on piano for a specific form and level.

TA therefore thought that Arabic music 'is not suitable for the students', and even sometimes if students asked for different material such as a classical piano concerto, 'I cannot give students something they have no need for now or even in their career' [TA].

Teachers felt that there were further possibilities resources for providing enhanced learning opportunities, for example through 'offering more music concerts, offering financial support for these music concerts, media support for the talented music students' [TA]. This teacher felt that 'more respect [from other learners, teachers at CBE and society] for the music students would be helpful'.

Furthermore, even though the teachers were largely satisfied with the support offered by CBE, they identified the lack of support from the recently-changed Kuwaiti government as a challenge. TB noted that the level of engagement from the current Ministry of Education was considered to be inadequate: 'when the Minister of Education changes, things also change with the new Minister and they discontinue what [development of music industry resources plans] the previous one started'. TB explained that 'plans did not materialise due to the common culture of new governments scrapping projects initiated by their predecessors, and illustrated this with an example of the opera house:

> The idea of building the first Opera House and Kuwaiti orchestra in Kuwait was started in 1994, then we forgot it, then it came back again in 2000, then we forget it again, then back again in 2005, then forgotten again and then back again in 2012, and we hope they may be serious about it this time, as we can see there is a building built on the seaside for the Kuwaiti Opera House and soon it will be finished.

This suggests a lack of stability, cohesion and continuity which could have a negative impact on the work of teachers to promote musical experiences and engagement with music.

The findings show that while the teachers and students appear to manage with existing resources, pedagogy could be supported through further provision. The lack of financial support or financial accountability from the government was seen as an impediment in the path of developing music within the Kuwait culture.

Figure 8 presents a thematic breakdown of how the teachers perceived the resource needs for enhancing the piano learning process.
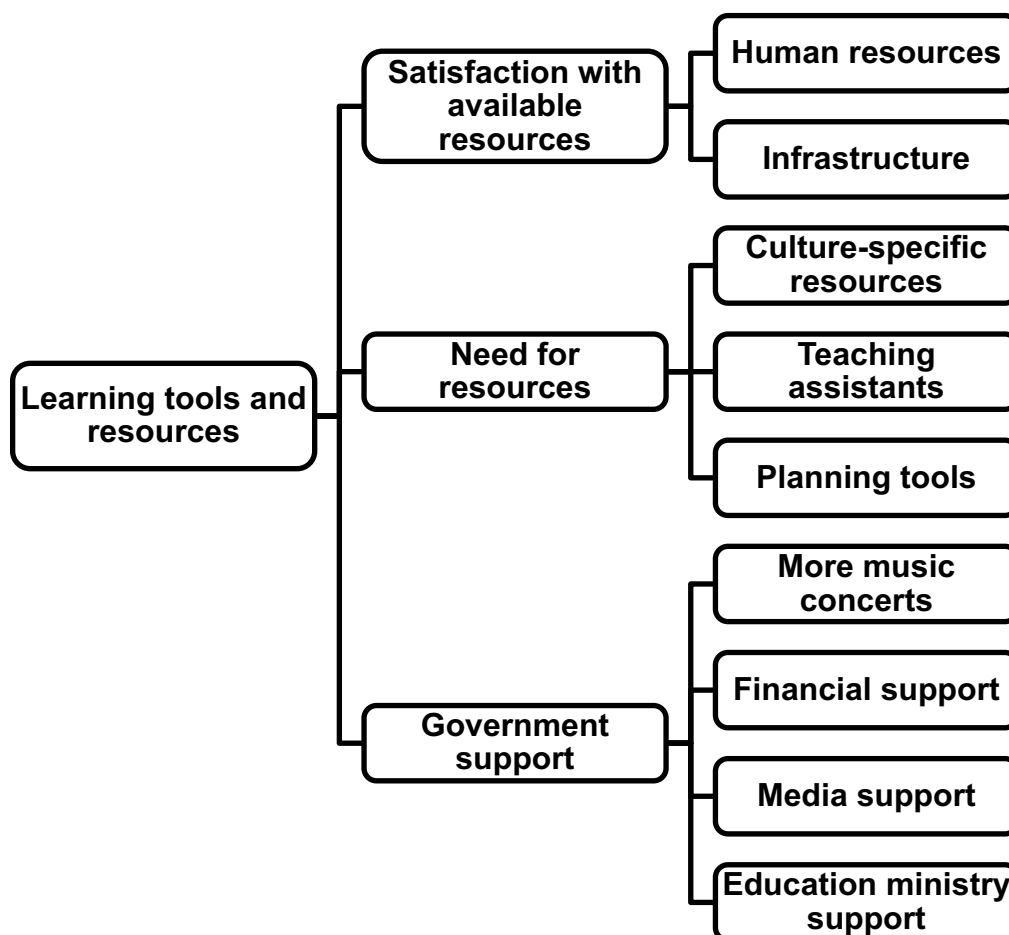
Figure 8: Thematic Analysis V: Key Themes and Contributing Elements

8.7 Teaching Methods: Sequence of Instruction, Demonstration

The study probed the teaching techniques prevalent at CBE. The teachers chose the kind of music to be learnt and the teaching techniques to be employed based on student engagement, module level and student ability. The methods employed by teachers were determined by the situational and student needs. According to TC, 'I use multiple teaching methods and my experience in an effort to cover any problems faced by the students'. TB further explained the flexibility in teaching methods adopted at CBE in relation to choice of material: 'we do not follow just one piano teaching school; we are applying many exercises from different styles such as Hanon, Longno and Czerny'. The teachers were aware of the need to adapt to students' requirements. The curriculum drove the choice of the learning content:

> I cannot, for example, give such a music piece that is including trills or difficult music shapes for piano modules 1 or 2. I have to be aware of the level that the student had in the music theory module's curriculum, but I also have the role of developing a student's reading ability during piano lessons. [TA]

The content and structure of each two-hour piano classes is decided by teachers, and their comments detail their approach:

> In piano lab, I am dealing with more than one student. Because of group teaching, first I explain how to play a music scale or an exercise to the students on a whiteboard. Afterwards I go around the class to individually check how each student is playing the music scale or exercise. [TA]

However, not all teachers followed this sequence:

> I usually start with checking the previous lesson notes and then start sight-reading for a while. Afterwards I start to explain the new information for the new lesson and then the students start to study this new lesson and practise it on their piano. Most of the time during the

lesson I am busy going around the class checking the students' work and helping them individually. [TB]

In contrast, TC used another approach:

I usually start my lesson by asking the students to do sight-reading for about 20 to 25 minutes. Then I carry on to explaining new information, followed by 10 to 15 minutes for piano exercises. Afterwards in the remaining time until the end of the lesson I check on the students around the class, listening to the music pieces from each student and spending some time with each student.

TD's approach was similar to that of TB:

I usually start my lesson with explanation of new information and checking the work from previous lessons. Then I start piano exercises followed by sight-reading for a while. Afterwards I start checking the music pieces for each student individually while the other students put on their headphones and practise their music pieces.

The variety of teaching sequences shows that teachers have the freedom to deliver the lesson content in whatever order they are comfortable with. TD also felt that the supportive approach not only gave the students opportunities to learn within a lively and challenging group environment but also provided them with the opportunities that they needed to practise during the lesson. This teacher believed that this process contributed to an improvement in attitude, as not only was there 'an opportunity to help each other' but also 'it gives the students an opportunity to showcase their playing abilities to other students which motivates the other students to practise more and be good at piano' [TD]. Therefore, teachers were aware of the importance of the social environment and of some benefits from peer learning. This could be enhanced through further variety: 'In order to encourage the students to work hard and finish their pieces I try to hold a small piano quiz every two weeks' [TB]. This may have also contributed to enhancing learner motivation as well as provide variety in the class structure.

The teachers also contended that practical demonstrations were important for engaging the students:

> I prefer to play before and as well as with the students when the student plays the music. This is because I like the students to hear the music or the exercises before they start playing and also because this can help in developing the student's listening ability. [TA]

TB also advocated demonstration, especially for the first piano modules:

> I play the music live for the student and sometimes can play a music video and I usually do this with piano modules 1 and 2, who really need to see how to touch and play the piano. They need to see how to sit and position the hands on a piano. [TB]

During observation of piano classes it was found that demonstration was usually given by the teacher to individual students, although it was sometimes used for the whole group. It could be used as a starting point for a teaching sequence as well as in response to a student's individual needs.

In summary, lesson content was driven by the CBE curriculum, while teachers showed flexibility in relation to the structure and consideration of material in relation to the students' future needs as music teachers. Figure 9 provides a thematic summary of the flexibility and constraints in the learning techniques employed for piano teaching at CBE.
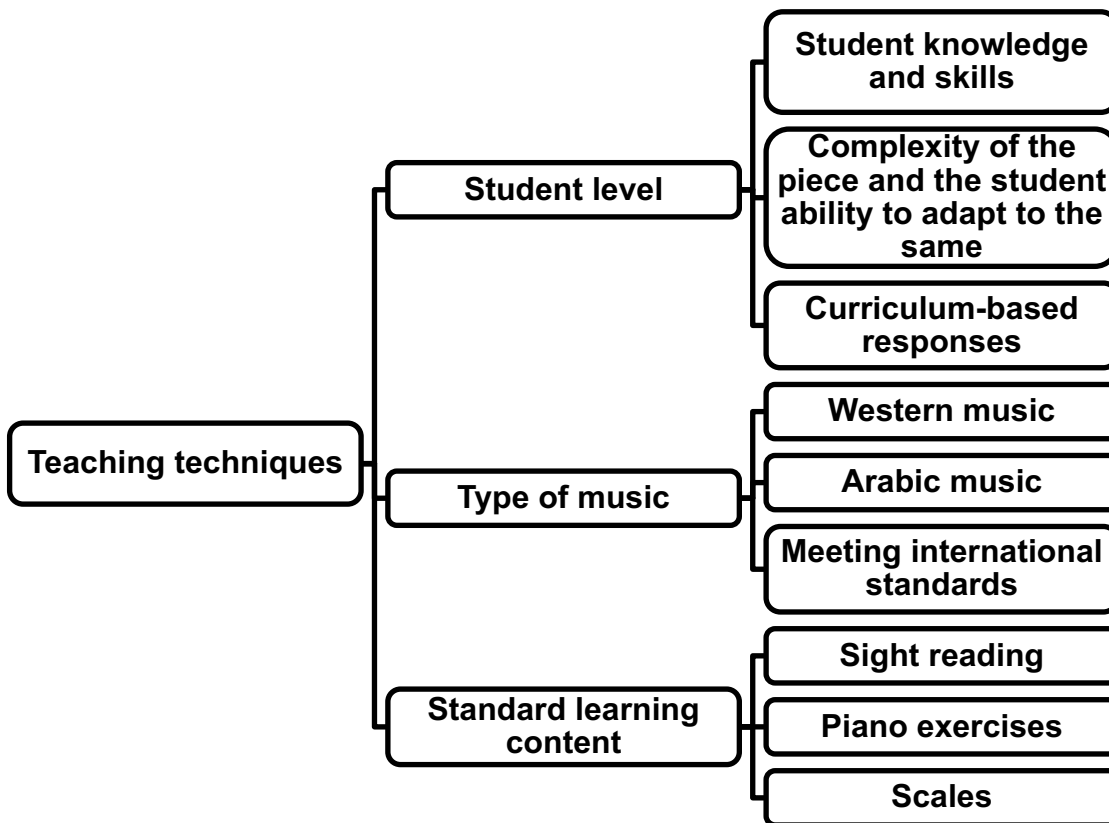
Figure 9: Thematic Analysis VI: Key Themes and Contributing Elements

8.8 Challenges for Piano Teaching and Learning

This research aimed to understand the challenges associated with piano pedagogy in Kuwait. Participating teachers from CBE explained that piano pedagogy in Kuwait was impacted by societal and cultural barriers in Kuwaiti institutions. The teachers believed that CBE students often had limited training when compared to undergraduate students who pursued piano education in other countries. TD felt this connected to the lack of provision at CBE:

> When the student learns piano abroad, the student has to take other music modules which can help them to become a good musician. Because of these other modules the students do not lose time to read music when sight-reading it or even practicing during piano lessons.

While here [at CBE] we have students who are generally learning music for the first time and even touching a piano for the first time.

Another key difference highlighted was that at CBE the concept of one-to-one learning was not explored. The reasons for this are explained by TA:

Since the aim of teaching piano in the College of Basic Education is to graduate music teachers for public schools we cannot follow the typical piano group lesson or anything else that is done in an international setting. Therefore, since we started to use piano group lessons we have been trying to find something suitable for our students.

The key challenge to piano pedagogy at college level in Kuwait was attributed by these teachers to the student knowledge level. TC concluded that this could change the nature of teaching within CBE, as most students who came to learn piano at undergraduate level were beginners. In such cases, it was believed that motivating the students and keeping them engaged was as challenging, as was helping them improve their knowledge and skills: 'The most difficult thing is that we are teaching beginner level students in an undergraduate level. Therefore, we need to be more careful in updating our teaching and curriculum each time or even from time to time'. [TC]

The teachers were asked about the methods that needed to be adopted to change the learning to meet international standards. One such approach was to provide students with some foundational basic education so that they were not at the beginner level:

There is an idea of offering a non-credit module or a short programme of two to four weeks for new music students before they start their actual course. This could be a basic or foundation course to introduce the students to the concept of music learning and prepare them for their degree programme. [TC]

TB indicated that in order to reach international standards and provide a more standardised curriculum CBE would need to collaborate with international institutions. This could involve a curriculum audit from a global organisation.

TB believed that the introduction of such a process could help address the challenges that CBE faced:

> Currently I am doing my best to meet the requirements for international academic approval for our music department by discussing the deficiencies in the requirements with the head of the music department and the college administration. Some global international organisations are responsible for such approval and they need to visit our department to evaluate our learning process, curriculum, facilities and teaching staff to approve our curriculum.

The importance of accreditation has been acknowledged in prior literature. According to Abrahams (2000), adopting global standards as part of national standards could improve music education. These findings suggest that the lack of such accreditation is a key challenge at CBE and needs to be acknowledged and rectified.

The current findings also indicated that another key factor influencing piano pedagogy in Kuwait was the culture. Teachers A and B concluded that pressures from Kuwaiti society could sometimes influence students to look for alternative vocations, as some families obviously know there is no good future career opportunities for their kids, as 'usually musicians are not considered for important roles in Kuwaiti society' [TA]. However, they also recognised a positive trend with many families supporting students. This will continue to influence future opportunities for Kuwait students. TA explained:

> In terms of the society and culture, the Kuwaiti society is made of various groups and families. There are some families who help and encourage students with studying music and there are others who do not. Supportive families encourage their kids towards studying music by offering financial support for purchase of musical instruments whereas unsupportive families lead the students to leave the music career and persuade them to study other subjects.

It was also found that the attitudes toward music learning were driven by the societal perceptions of music, which are affected by religious and societal norms. TB provided historic detail:

> Before, the Kuwaiti parents would put their child in some Islamic or religious centre to learn additional subjects and the parents were thinking this was the best place for their children to develop in their spare time. They wanted to keep their children away from bad influences during the teenage years.

The importance of religion as a key element influencing the teaching and learning of music in Kuwait is well understood (Alfaraj, 2017; Alyoser, 2016; Alderaiwaish, 2014). The CBE teachers agreed that understanding the unique religious and cultural needs of Kuwait could help understand the cultural perspective on music learning: 'Actually, the reasons could be linked to the culture of the society and the way the society perceives music learning: if it is important or not or may be prohibited by Islam or maybe music learning is viewed as a shameful act' [TA].

TA also faces this attitude even inside the college from other department professors; however, 'I am in a position to counter this attitude in the College through informative dialogue'. TA would 'really sympathise with music students while they are taking modules outside the music department in the College', because 'music students are usually not treated with respect by teachers outside the music department'. For example, some music students face:

> A difficult situation where they cannot argue or clarify their stance on music learning. Therefore, the music students just want to quickly finish these modules outside the music department and pass with a high grade avoiding any confrontation with the teachers because the students are aware that confrontation could create personal problems for them in the College. [TA]

One teacher remarked that the culture of Kuwait had changed with more influence of globalisation. These teachers believed that global influence has

resulted in an increase in engagement in music as a subject and a positive trend in societal attitudes towards music learning:

> Actually, this can go back to the start of music learning in Kuwait in the 1950s, then after the Iraq invasion of Kuwait in 1990, then also after 11/09/2001. I can see that the culture has considerably changed after each period and we can now see that music and arts have become a major part of the culture and music learning [in Kuwait] is more acceptable so therefore more people are interested in it. [TB]

Another teacher concluded that despite government-led efforts acceptance of music within society remained a key challenge for the development of music learning in Kuwait:

> Sometimes we have seen many Kuwait government-run music festivals and events inviting music performers from other countries, but actually this does not usually find support from the society or the media. Because of lack of societal interests usually the government cannot justify further financial support for regularly holding such musical events. [TA]

Therefore, this study concludes that helping people understand the benefits of learning music is important and this involves understanding the challenges that learners may face with respect to religion or culture. Indeed, understanding and tackling the overbearing effect of societal and cultural norms is a key to further development of music learning in the Kuwaiti society. The following figure summarises these aspects.
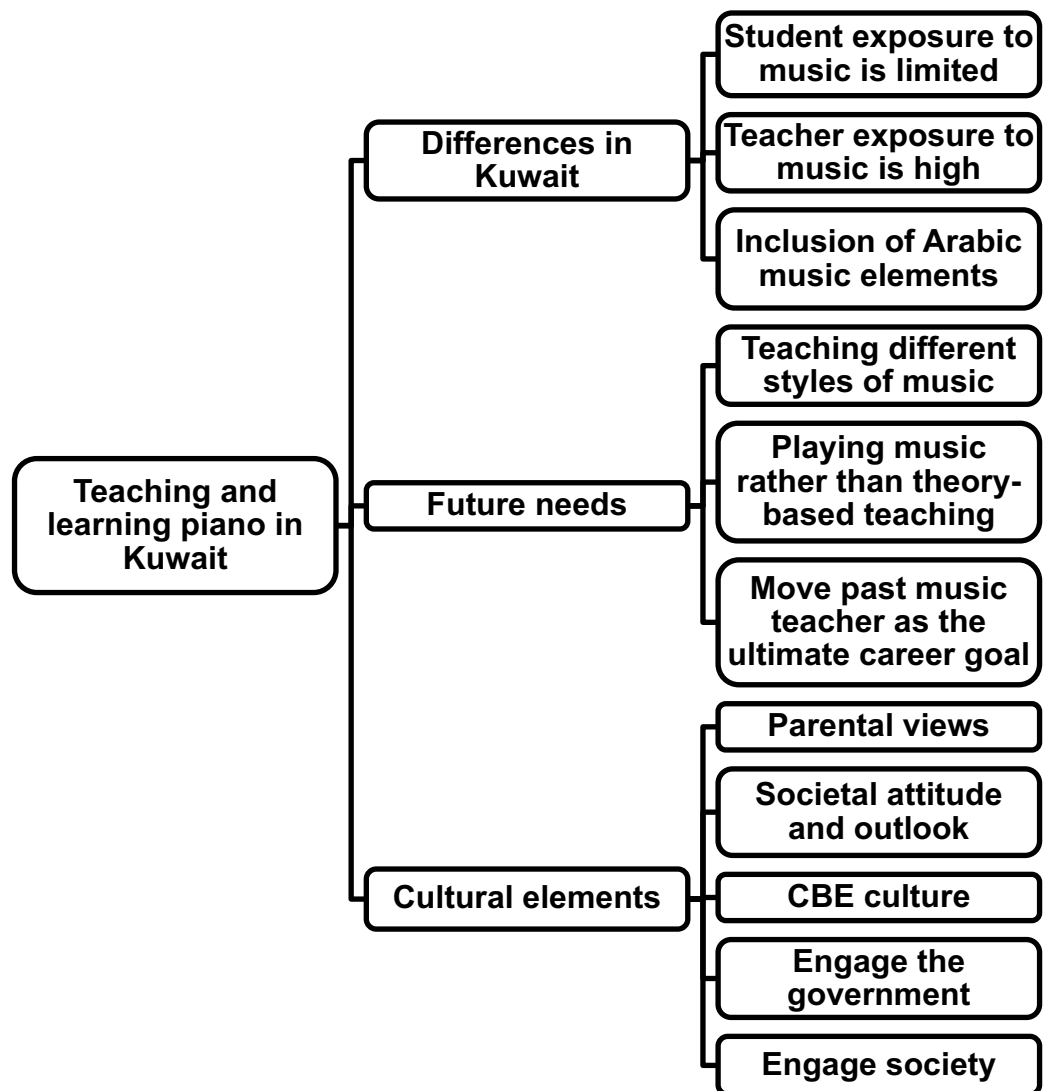
Figure 10: Thematic Analysis VII: Key Themes and Contributing Elements

8.9 Role of Technology

This research also aimed to discover the teachers' perspectives on the role of technology in piano pedagogy at CBE. The teachers realised the importance of technology as it helped them improve the management of group lessons. They identified difficulties they faced in class management resulting from the group lesson format: 'As you cannot conduct short one-to-one lessons in a piano group lesson, it is important to know how to manage the class and this is a difficulty that we face' [TB]. This teacher felt that 'the class is "management"

more than how to teach or teaching method but class management needs special experience'. In addition to feeling that using digital pianos and headphones 'makes the conducting of group piano lessons easier', teachers believed that digital tools had both technical and practical benefits: 'There are many advantages of using digital pianos during our piano lessons; firstly, it is very useful when students use their headphones [to practise] and do not make noise in the class' [TA].

The teachers also believed that the use of technology is effective in communicating with the group, particularly through one particular device:

> We have a piano lab system with a feature called 'conferencing system'; this device connects all the students' headphones in the class, where you can connect three students together so they can just hear themselves and practise piano exercises and they can also speak to each other.

Teachers also acknowledged that access to external material and information is possible using digital technology: 'students are able to access many musical libraries to read and download music scores. Also the students can watch how professional piano players play piano in YouTube videos' [TD]. The teachers realised that students were aware of the benefits technology could provide in improving their learning: 'Students showed me many applications and programmes on smartphones and tablets which could help the students to learn more about music in general' [TC]. The teachers also made use of 'educational programmes such as "blackboard" where you can share online, and the students and teachers can put comments on some subjects and discussion problems' [TB].

The teachers believed that student motivation was an important aspect of the learning process, and were aware of the potentially positive influence of technology on learner motivation:

> Some of these programmes or applications could affect the student's motivation and interest as learning new things in music or piano increases their curiosity. This leads the students to later on ask me

about what they find in these applications or programmes to understand things better or just to take my opinion. [TC]

Teachers also realised the efficacy of technology for self-assessment:

I think the most useful piece of technology is a video recorder. Students can use it to record themselves during their piano practice. Later on the students can then watch these videos to assess and refine their piano playing skills. This leads them to practise effectively and develop themselves faster. [TD]

However, a key challenge identified was that while technology was an effective tool which can help in improving overall student engagement, students need training in how to use it:

Watching either their own recorded practice or even YouTube videos sometimes has a negative effect because the students are not sure of what they are actually looking for in these videos. Therefore, watching videos can sometimes be a waste of time. [TD]

The teachers conclude that technology within the context of piano learning can provide straightforward tools enabling up-to-date information and learning opportunities. In the current global environment, becoming a professional player or a music teacher requires individuals to become more aware of available music instruments and global musical trends. The use of digital technology can help in bridging this gap by providing access to such material; however, there remains a role for the teacher:

We can use technologies such as electronic music sheet devices, digital pianos, headphones, data-show and electronic board (smart board). But personally, I see that we are not teaching a theory subject, rather we are teaching a practical subject which demands physical movement. I need to play a music piece for the students and I need to go around the class to check on the students and encourage them. [TA]

Analysis of the teachers' views has shown that there are both positives and negatives linked to the use of technology. The key challenge identified here is that technology is considered to be limited as an aid, as classical piano music is still driven by the use of the traditional keyboard instrument rather than digital instruments. The application of technology can still help facilitate music improvisation as well as enhance the ability of the teacher to showcase differences in music playing, notation reading and different styles supported by different piano schools (Mellor, 2007). However, the use of technology at CBE seems to create an environment where the goal is to enhance the teacher engagement in teaching 'how to play' rather than facilitating other kinds of exploratory and creative learning. Therefore, although there are benefits resulting from its use, there is nevertheless more potential available from the existing technology if considered creatively rather than just to support delivery of the existing curriculum.

The following figure presents a summary of the thematic elements which are associated with the use of technology and its role.
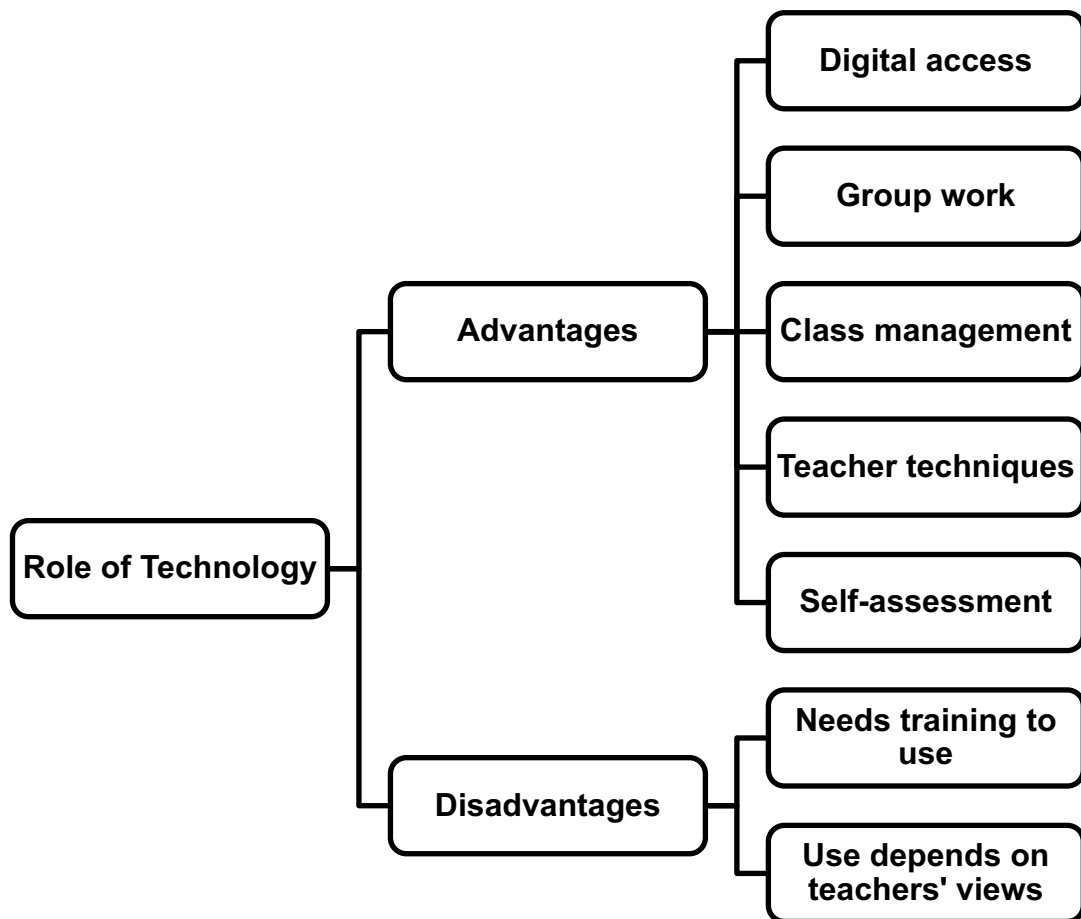
Figure 11: Thematic Analysis VIII: Key Themes and Contributing Elements

8.10 Teachers' Level of Satisfaction and Motivation

The purpose of this research was to understand piano pedagogy at CBE. According to Alexander (2001) pedagogy can be considered as both an act and a discourse. The actions which direct this include teacher's ideas, beliefs and attitude, as well as particular teaching practices (Alexander, 2001). Therefore, understanding CBE teachers' beliefs and attitudes would determine the level of their satisfaction with their current roles and the level of their motivation. Welch et al. (2010) report that undergraduate music students felt that a motivated instrumental teacher had the most influence on their overall musical career; therefore, it was important to understand the factors that drive teachers' motivation.

The study found that the teachers enjoyed working and were satisfied with their roles, as TC exclaimed: 'Really good work and enjoyable'. TD noted that 'our work is our career'. The findings suggest that the teachers attributed their job satisfaction to the performance of their students. They were gratified with the appreciation they received for the success and achievements of their students:

> I think the best thing to please a teacher is when your students are effective and have done a really good job. It really pleases me when my students have had a big development and other teachers commend me for that work. [TB]

The teachers were aware of the shift in societal perception about music learning and realised their role in moving society towards acceptance of music as a career. The teachers considered teaching and learning piano as the basis for any professional music player; one teacher stated: 'I think the learning of piano is unique and I want to be part of this process. I am proud of giving the students an opportunity to graduate from this field and by creating better job opportunities for them'. [TB]

The future aims of the teachers revolved around improving the course structure and subject focus at CBE. This further suggested that the teachers were committed to the programme and were looking for career development opportunities within CBE. According to TA, 'we are trying to reach a good high standard piano curriculum by offering some development and including more piano learning material to help make the piano learning easier for students'. Commitment of the teachers at CBE could primarily be attributed to the fact that CBE is a key provider of music education in Kuwait. Therefore, the teachers perceived CBE as a suitable platform for creating cultural awareness of music in Kuwaiti society.

However, the teachers at CBE identified various operational challenges. The teachers were not satisfied with the staffing levels; TD further clarified the reason for teachers' dissatisfaction with these issues:

There are difficulties with overtime and the number of piano lessons. Therefore we require more piano teachers and teacher's assistants to help us. Also we cannot find time to conduct research, as most of the time we are busy in the department with piano lessons, departmental meetings, welcoming visitors and preparing for other tasks such as music concerts or exams.

TB gave further reasons for this situation:

The number of the music students increases each year, as the head of the CBE is asking the music department to accept more students in the music department to solve the problem of accommodating the increasing number of students who apply to CBE and there is no space in the other departments. Therefore, the CBE administration wants the music department to accept more students. This leads to a shortfall in the number of music teachers available for the increasing student number.

TB also showed other needs from the CBE administration, as there is:

A slow response from the head of administration and as well as from the head of the music department here at CBE in regards to approving the procurement and installation of new resources such as piano labs and other musical equipment required for the development of music learning process at CBE. [TB]

Workload issues were also identified. TB explained that 'in a normal situation each teacher has to teach 12 hours weekly, whereas now we teach 22 hours weekly which is more than over overtime and we have to do this for free without additional fees or money'. CBE staff satisfaction levels could possibly be raised through offering incentives for overtime and allowing the teachers time for research and professional development. The presence of such overload of work and resource challenges may potentially cause a reduction in teacher commitment and therefore CBE needs to address these issues to maintain the high level of commitment shown by these teachers.

This research found that while curriculum adequacy was evident at CBE, there were no efforts aimed at improving teacher competencies. Teachers were dissatisfied with the level of development of the learning process achieved by CBE. They attributed this to the lack of available time for their personal development: 'We do not have enough time to conduct research which is important for the teacher to be up-to-date with the current learning processes inside and outside the country. Therefore, research is important to help us develop our learning processes' [TB]. TD also showed interest not only in teachers being able to conduct research, but also their need for more research from other interested people:

> As a researcher it is your role to help us find the factors that could affect the development of piano learning at CBE. The focus in identifying such factors should specially consider the requirements of our students. This will help us understand more about our deficiencies and we will be able to focus on the development of our learning processes.

Therefore this study argues that for CBE to progress pedagogy to international standards the teachers need to be supported in their research endeavours.

As mentioned previously, teachers identified issues with the stability of governmental support and suggested some improvements:

> The Kuwaiti government is doing the best thing for music learning in Kuwait by offering financial support for music learning in schools and colleges. The government is financially supporting music concerts and is keen on supporting all the aspects of music learning. The problem lies with the directors and leaders of the music learning in Kuwait. In order to make sure that the government's support and rules for music learning are effectively employed for the development of music learning processes in Kuwait we need a major restructuring in the departments responsible for delivery of funds as well as the departments responsible for planning the development of music learning in Kuwait. [TA]

Despite these issues this study concludes that overall the CBE teachers were satisfied with their roles in the development of music learning in Kuwait. The

teachers showed commitment to develop piano pedagogy. In order to maintain this commitment, the CBE administration needs to attend to the personal development of the teachers. Furthermore, in order to help the teachers achieve international levels of excellence in music pedagogy at CBE specifically and Kuwait in general the government needs to make sure that allotted funds are utilised effectively for the designated purpose.

Figure 12 presents a thematic summary of the factors affecting CBE teachers' level of satisfaction with their roles in the current piano learning environment at CBE.

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                                          ┌──────────────────────┐
                                          │   Student skill      │
                              ┌────────────┤   development        │
                ┌─────────────┤            └──────────────────────┘
                │ Satisfaction│            ┌──────────────────────┐
                └─────────────┤            │  Acknowledgement     │
                              └────────────┤  of student efforts  │
                                           └──────────────────────┘

                                           ┌──────────────────────┐
                                           │  Essential for any   │
                              ┌────────────┤  professional music  │
                ┌─────────────┤            │  player              │
                │  Pride in   │            └──────────────────────┘
                │  employment ├            ┌──────────────────────┐
                └─────────────┤            │  Changing culture    │
                              └────────────┤  in Kuwait is        │
                                           │  making this         │
                                           │  essential           │
                                           └──────────────────────┘
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Satisfaction

- Student skill development
- Acknowledgement of student efforts

Pride in employment

- Essential for any professional music player
- Changing culture in Kuwait is making this essential

Engagement at CBE

- Improving course structure
- Improving subject focus
- Providing better material

Challenges

- Resource challenge
- Available piano labs — Access to piano
- Increasing number of students
- Work overload

Future opportunities

- Limited
  - No option for research
  - No option to develop new pedagogies

Personal views

Figure 12: Thematic Analysis IX: Key Themes and Contributing Elements

8.11 Conclusion and Overall Teacher Perspective

This chapter has presented the findings relating to the views of teachers regarding piano pedagogy within CBE. The findings showed that due to the increasing focus on music as a legitimate learning subject in Kuwait, generally there was a positive attitude regarding piano learning and importance was given to the curriculum. The teachers realised the importance of motivation of both students and teachers to help student learning. The teachers identified a supportive environment to be a prerequisite for effective learning as it drives students' motivation and engagement. The need for flexibility in teaching approaches was also identified as a prerequisite for effective learning. In general, the approach to teaching within the context of CBE showed some positive aspects. Discussion of the piano examinations from the teachers' perspective showed that the focus was mainly on the playing techniques of the students through the syllabus requirements of scales, piano exercises and sight-reading. It was also found that student engagement with the curriculum was also a driving factor for examination repertoire choices, which could include additional student-selected material.

The teachers were aware of the importance of piano learning as part of the music curriculum at CBE, and of its importance in helping students become class music teachers and in a professional musical career, as piano was considered a fundamental skill for professional musicians. Therefore, the teachers stressed that piano learning should be a key focus, but this could be a challenge in an education college like CBE where the aim is to graduate class teachers for schools. Thus, the piano teachers concluded that only basic skills can be gained at CBE and further postgraduate education was required for specialisation in piano.

The students' role in piano learning and teaching was discussed. The teachers concluded that students' interest in learning is determined by their personality and by environmental elements. The overall time spent on practice is driven by students' motivation, attitude and ability to understand the programme content. While appreciating the increase in the number of students who took the music programme, the teachers believed that a high number of students took the

music course because they did not have the option to take other courses within the college. Therefore, the teachers concluded that the students' motivation, attitude and engagement were linked with issues within and outside CBE, and connected to the personal future plans the students had set to achieve through the music education programme. Furthermore, the student-teacher relationship was an important factor influencing student attitudes and engagement. The teachers were aware of the effect of this relationship on students' motivation, engagement and overall performance, and they therefore strived to develop a positive and supportive environment in which they could structure lesson content according to the piano curriculum, the needs of the students, and give faster learners additional material.

Technology was viewed as having both positive and negative effects on learning. A key challenge identified was that technology could aid in the learning process but was of limited help in learning classical music. However, it facilitated group teaching, and could enhance students' independent learning. Therefore, the use of technology could create enhanced student-teacher engagement and facilitate effective pedagogy.

An assessment of the challenges that these teachers faced revealed limited resources such as piano labs and teaching staff, some issues in finding music, difficulties in balancing practical and theoretical lessons and administrative activities detracting time from piano teaching. The teachers showed commitment to the programme; however, they also indicated that they were overworked without due rewards. The teachers further stressed that they did not have enough time for research and personal development, issues which could have a negative impact on their teaching. In due course these issues may influence their commitment to the programme.

This research further explored the teachers' perspectives on piano pedagogy in the context of a Kuwaiti college of education. The findings showed that the Kuwaiti cultural perspective on music had previously limited students' opportunity to learn music. However, changes in cultural norms due to global influence suggested a positive trend for acceptance of music: society no longer considered music learning a taboo, and potential career options for musicians

were emerging. These teachers acknowledged that continued support from the government and society were critical to the future of piano pedagogy at CBE.

Overall, this research concludes that these piano teachers were generally satisfied with the current piano pedagogy. However, they felt that the pedagogical process at CBE still has to overcome challenges to attain global accreditation.

Chapter 9: Students' Perspectives on Piano Pedagogy at Leeds College of Music, UK

9.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide detail on perspectives of piano pedagogy in the UK which may enable comparison with piano learning in Kuwait at CBE in order to inform development of pedagogy and provision in Kuwait. The chapter presents an analysis of responses to a questionnaire distributed to lifelong learners studying piano at Leeds College of Music (LCM), detailing students' views and their experiences of learning in group piano classes at the conservatoire.

Unfortunately, discussions with the LCM course leader indicated that there was no opportunity to conduct a focus group with the students because most of them were working part-time and it would have been difficult to find a suitable time for them all. The students only attended LCM for the evening group piano classes and were not available at other times, which also meant that undertaking one-to-one interviews would have been difficult. Observation of two group piano classes for four hours at LCM enabled some understanding of the current piano pedagogy specific to that context in order to develop suitable survey questions for students, and observation also informed the interview questions for UK group piano teachers (presented in Chapter Ten).

The questionnaire for LCM students was developed to include some open questions, in order to offer participants freedom to write and explain their own opinions. The questionnaire also contained multiple choice, ordinal, Likert scales, numerical and categorical questions (see Appendix 15). Where responses are quoted below, students are referred to as S1, S2, etc.

9.2 Demographics

The participants were students at Leeds College of Music (LCM) on the Lifelong Learning group piano programme '*Introduction to Piano'*. This group piano course is for complete beginners who are adults (18 years old and above). This course is divided into two parts; each part consists of a weekly evening group piano class for 15 weeks. The classroom setting is designed as a digital piano lab system for around 10 learners in each class, which is a typical learning setting comparable to the one at CBE in Kuwait. The LCM group piano class was focused on learning music notation, music listening skills, awareness of pitch and rhythmic values. Table 8 below identifies the learning outcomes for Parts 1 and 2:

Table 8: Aims and Outcomes of Group Piano Classes '*Introduction to Piano*' (Lifelong Course) at LCM

Aims and Outcomes of Group Piano Classes (Lifelong course) at LCM	
Part 1	- Have a basic understanding of chords and harmony. - Identify notes on the stave in both treble and bass clef. - Play through some of the repertoire taught throughout the course. - Easily find and name keys on the keyboard. - Have a good overall understanding of the piano as an instrument, and its place within different musical styles. - Understand basic rhythmic symbols and realise simple rhythmic patterns. - Play through various scales and arpeggios. - Have an aural awareness of pitch. - Be able to read and play a short tune in either bass or treble clef. - Co-ordinate playing a piece with both hands. - Understand the importance of practice.

	• Be inspired to continue playing the piano. (Leeds College of Music, 2018)
Part 2	• Play the keyboard fluently inside the five finger position. • Co-ordinate hands together using single notes and simple chords in the left hand. • Understand how to use the piano pedals. • Play pieces from various musical genres. • Have a basic knowledge of time signatures, key signatures and cadences. • Play various pieces from the course repertoire. • Understand the importance of practice. • Be inspired to continue playing the piano. (Leeds College of Music, 2018)

25 students on the programme (Part 2 during the 2017 Spring term) were invited to take part in the study. This sample was selected to collect data from students with more experience of this course and at LCM; 16 students subsequently completed a questionnaire. More detail about the processes for administering this survey was explained in section 6.4 (Survey) in Chapter Six.

This section presents a demographic analysis of the 16 participants. Figure 13 shows their age distribution: the majority (38%) were in the age group 26–30 years, followed by 31% aged 31–50 years. The smallest number of respondents belonged to the 18–20 and 21–25 age groups (6% each). The 69% of respondents were male; 31% were female.
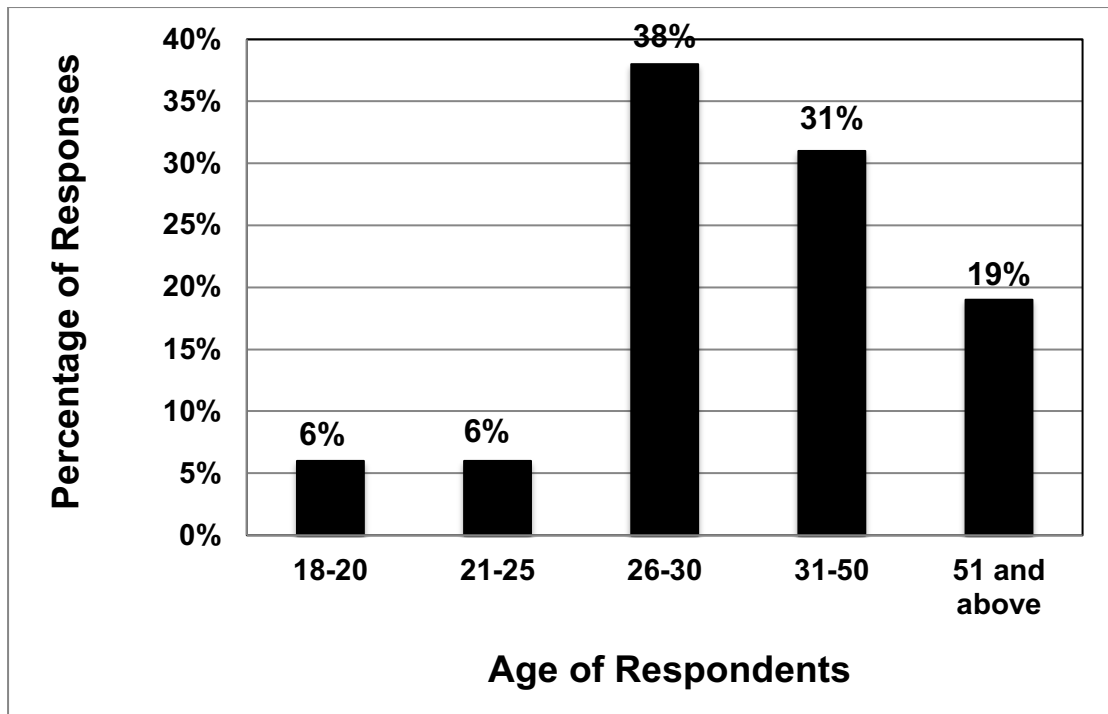
Figure 13: '*Introduction to Piano*' Students at LCM: Age Demographics

Figure 14, below, shows the responses to the open question, 'how long have you been learning piano for?'. The answers have been grouped into categories to represent the respondents' answers. The majority of respondents have been learning piano/keyboard for about 3–6 months (50%); 25% have been learning for 1–2 years, and 13% have been learning for 3–5 years. The smallest number of respondents had been learning for 6–12 months or 2–3 years (six per cent each).
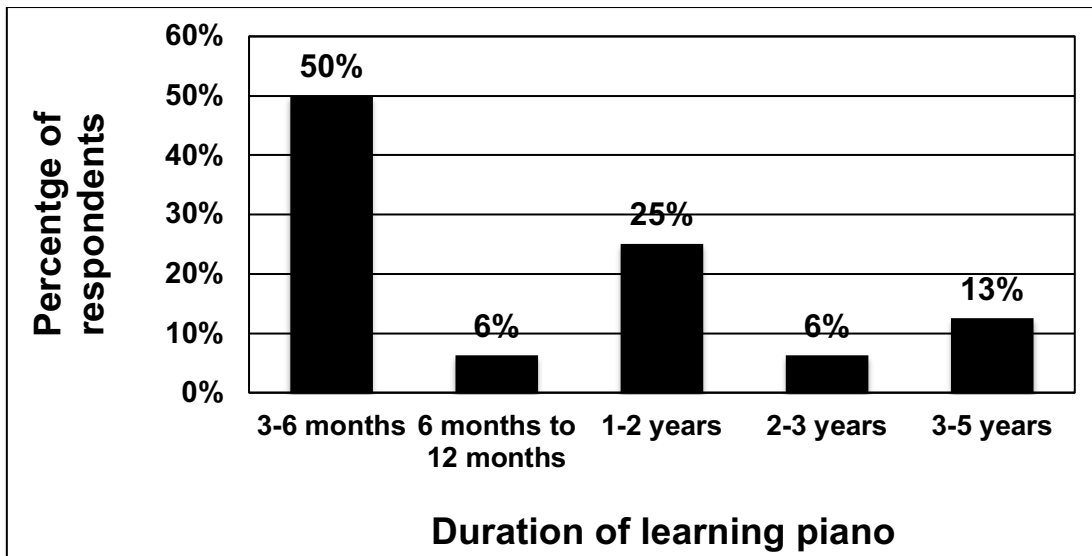
Figure 14: '*Introduction to Piano*' Students at LCM: Duration of Learning Piano

One surprising finding was that 13% had been learning piano for 3-5 years but were attending these classes for beginners. Examination of these participants' responses showed that both participants were in the age group 51 and above. Their responses to the open question, 'why have you chosen to attend these classes?' showed that the reasons were connected to finance and quality of tuition: 'I can't afford a one-to-one teacher, and this course is affordable' [S14]; 'Because I make lots of errors at home and I cannot find a good teacher in private tuition' [S7]. This indicates that they were both trying to find an appropriate learning environment to develop their piano skills. Investigating the needs of students in specific age groups such as those over 50 could be a useful further research area.

Responses to the open question regarding the reasons for attending group piano classes showed that most attended classes to learn the instrument (n=7), and four respondents wanted to learn to compose songs and music. The smallest number of respondents preferred to learn music in classes than at home (n=1), wanted to 'learn piano chords' [S11] (n=1) and stated that the affordability of group classes (n=1) motivated their participation. The overall motivation for student learning was linked to functional goals: 'I want to learn

piano properly, learn to compose songs and accompany, confidence with playing' [S16], and 'I want to be able to read music and play songs using the correct fingers by the end of the course.' [S16]. Creative goals were also a focus: 'I want to learn how to play piano properly and write my own music' [S12]. The choice of the institute and its reputation was also important: 'The course outlines and aims match my own; the college has an excellent reputation; and the education fits my requirements' [S13].

According to Mackworth-Young (1990), understanding the inherent motivation of piano learning is essential as it can help in creating appropriate piano teaching pedagogy. Since most of the participants looked to learn piano as an opportunity to learn an instrument, their motivation was not driven towards a professional career. The goal of these students was to be a capable player and enhance their musical creativity. It is essential for educators to consider the age of the participants and their motives for learning, as prior research has shown some negative implications. For instance, Orlofsky and Smith (1997) conclude that when older keyboard beginners enter the educational setting they may already have negative psychological feelings resulting from previous learning experiences. Similarly, Ozanian (1979) reports that the enthusiasm of the learner of piano could be linked to their expectations of potential failure. Given that the students who took this programme could have faced such negative experiences as a child, teachers need to consider the potential implications of students' previous experience and to align the focus of the class and their teaching style appropriately; in this case the divergent levels of prior experience may have created a challenging context for the teacher.

Figure 15 shows a content analysis relating to the open question about participant enjoyment of classes. The figure shows reasons suggested by the participants concerning why they enjoy group piano classes. The highest number of respondents stated that they love group piano classes as they enable them to learn different music genres (n=5), followed by three who enjoyed them because they felt the pace of teaching matched their speed of learning. Some of the respondents felt that it was good to attend these music classes as they provided exposure to different music genres: 'I feel there are

lots of different genres covered (classical, blues, pop)' [S8]. However, other respondents stated that they enjoyed their group piano classes because the teacher understood their needs: 'The classes are paced to fit the needs of every student …There is also a lot of variety' [S7], and because the teacher helped them: 'We are being taught and guided through concepts well' [S5].
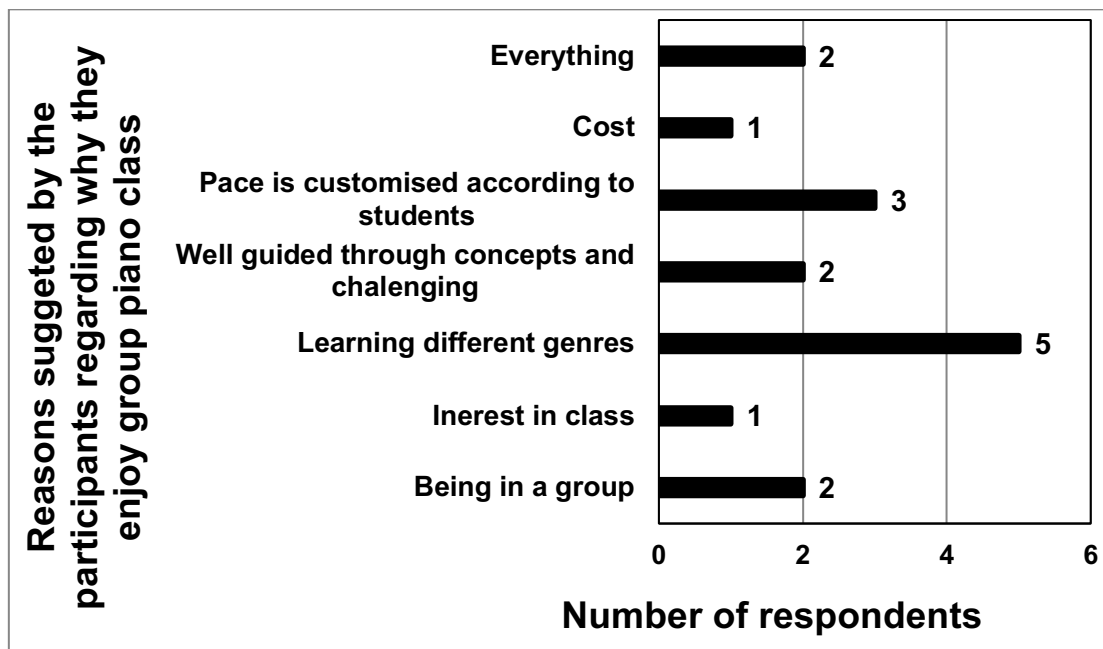
Figure 15: '*Introduction to Piano*' Students at LCM: Enjoyment Factors relating to Group Piano Classes

Participants were also asked an open question about whether there were any elements of the classes that they disliked. It is observed that 11 respondents stated there was nothing at all they disliked about their group piano classes, while four stated that the pace at which classes were being conducted was either too fast or slow for their speed of learning. For instance: 'sometimes it can feel rushed or too slow' [S16], or 'I feel there is a pressure to keep up with the rest of the class, and sometimes it is difficult because there is not much time for one-to-one tuition' [S15]. One respondent mentioned that the scheduling was not ideal: 'I feel the class timings are quite late in the evening (from 7.35 to 9.15 pm)' [S14]. However, the majority found nothing to dislike.

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Analysis of the responses shows that challenges could be linked to functional aspects, including timing of the class and the potential pace of instruction. Johnson (2002) concludes that piano learning success requires the student and teacher to understand the progress and structure of the programme. This would be especially relevant for adult learners. The above findings show that most participants were satisfied with the piano learning programme and their interest was largely based on obtaining exposure to various genres of music and learning how to play the piano.

9.3 Student Practice

The majority of the respondents (n=15) practised at home, while only one respondent practised at both home and college. Most practised every day or twice a week (31% each), followed by 19% who practised three days per week. However, the fewest respondents (6%) practised only once a week.

The students were asked to answer multiple choice questions regarding to their awareness of different effectiveness practice strategies which have been defined in literature as essential to learning the piano, such as repetition (Maynard, 2006), slow practice (Bruser, 2013), isolation of one section (Pedrick, 1998), practicing hands separately (Miklaszewski, 1989), variation in tempo (Hanberry, 2004) and self-evaluation (Miksza, 2007). All respondents were aware of slow practice (n=16) and of practicing with each hand separately (n=16), isolation of one section (n-16) and repetition (n=16). Nine also identified awareness of variation in tempo and eight were aware of self-evaluation. (See Figure 16)
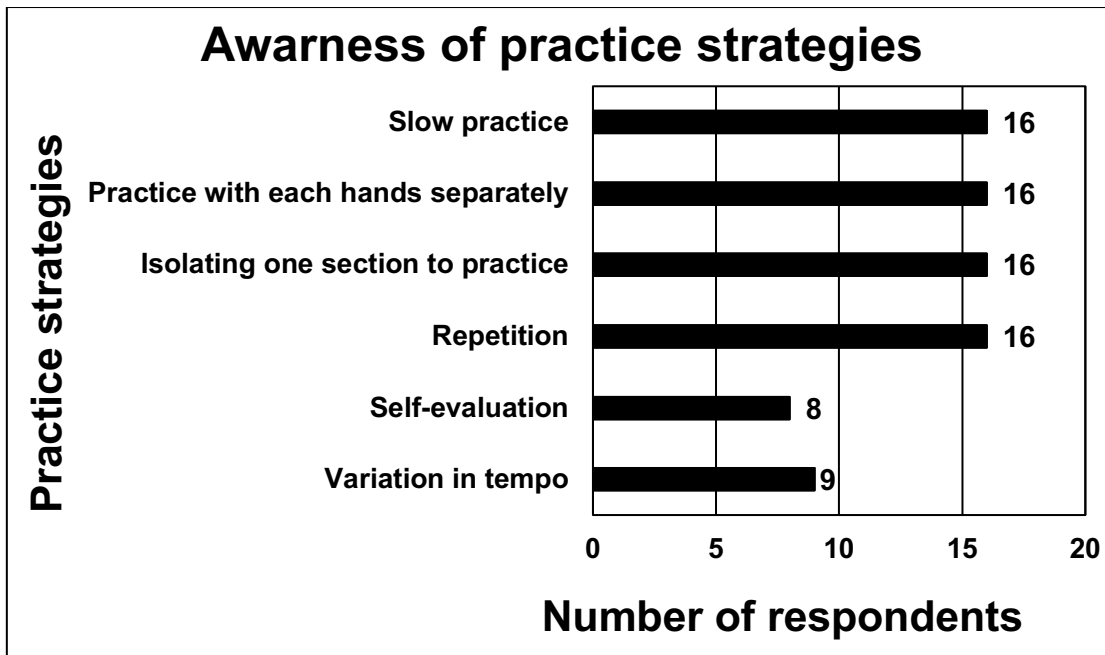
Figure 16: '*Introduction to Piano*' Students at LCM: Awareness of Practice Strategies

The students were asked to respond to another multiple choice question: 'Which of the following practice elements do you use?' and tick boxes for their actual use of these strategies. While participants showed awareness of various practice strategies, their self-reported actual usage differed. All respondents used slow practice, 14 practised with each hand separately and 13 used repetition. The strategy of isolating sections while practising was used by 11, which suggests that perhaps the other five participants would prefer to play through a whole piece rather than practising it in smaller sections, and only nine used variation in tempo while practising. Furthermore, only six of the eight who were aware of self-evaluation reported using it (see Figure 17, below). The lack of self-evaluation is concerning. Prior research on this subject has highlighted the need for more comprehensive self-evaluation. Sparks (1990, p.3) suggests that the 'use of some form of self-evaluation may increase learning and enhance attitudes of students involved in wind instrumental [group] classes'. Moreover, Brändström (1995) emphasises the importance of using self-evaluation when piano students set their own musical goals such as developing their piano skills.

Use of practice strategies

Practice strategies	Number of respondents
Slow practice	16
Practice with each hands separately	14
Isolating one section to practice	11
Repetition	13
Self-evaluation	6
Variation in tempo	9
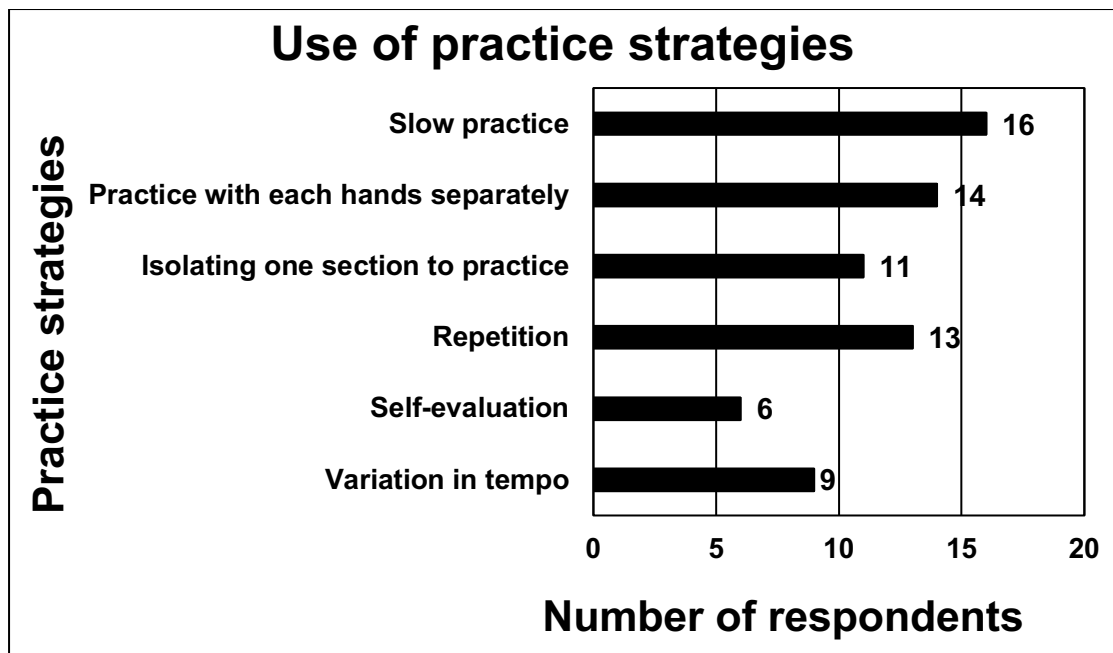
Figure 17: '*Introduction to Piano*' Students at LCM: Use of Practice Strategies

Further multiple choice questions were used to discover how often the respondents undertook research about the music compositions or repertoire they played in class. The majority of the respondents (69%) researched the music compositions only sometimes, and 25% never researched their pieces. However, six per cent do investigate the repertoire they are learning. This may suggest a passive approach to this aspect of learning, perhaps relying on the teacher for information.

The findings also show the responses obtained when the respondents were asked whether they had a practice routine (indicating 'yes' or 'no' to the statement presented). The majority of the respondents (n=11) (69%) claimed that they do not have a routine. Tollefson (2001) identifies the need to develop a set practicing routine as it can help improve the constructive use of time and help develop better routines for effective practice.

A follow-up question was used to probe practice in more detail, inviting participants to respond to an open question to explain the sequence of practice routine that they used. Four respondents had a routine consisting of scales

and then exercises, and one provided more detail on a more varied routine: 'I do finger exercises first to warm up, then practise a scale, then a song [piece], then improvise' [S6]. Most of the respondents claimed that they religiously followed a routine order on the advice of the teacher, in detail, e.g.: 'I begin exercises and scales before playing my pieces. The teacher handed out a document recommending a practice as 1: scales, five minutes; 2: pieces; 3: exercises, Hanon and Schmitt' [S3]. Another participant stated that:

> I always open and close my practice session with scales/exercises. We are currently looking at Hanon and Schmitt which helps me to warm up for practise. I look at a new piece with hands separately and play hands together at a later date, maybe in the second week. [S15]

These findings show that although there are variations in the type of routine followed by these pianists the general content is similar. However, following a practice routine seems to be variable: while the majority of the participants identify potential use of routines, some do not seem to follow one. Chang (2008, p.48) considers practice with a routine as 'the minimum set of instructions you need to get started', and Weaver indicates that 'students who practise with an organised routine will likely be more successful than those who practise without a routine, and the routine will likely be more successful if organised by the teacher' (2005, p.4). This suggests that routines are linked to the role and responsibility of the piano teacher. However, Kostka (2002, p.152) notes that 'it seems that many teachers and students do not discuss the establishment of a practice plan, nor do they evaluate whether such a plan is effectively meeting the needs of the student'. Therefore, students may not practise as effectively as they might do. It may be the case here that 'lifelong learners' have to fit in their practice around work and other commitments, and it is possible that they may receive little support from others for their individual practice (an area which could be usefully explored in future research).

The students responded to further multiple choice questions about their opinions and agreement with teachers on how pieces are played. The majority of the respondents sometimes differ on opinion with their teacher (56%); six per cent apparently feel they always differ from their teacher's opinion, and

38% never have differences of opinion with their teacher. Again, further research could usefully explore the reasons for divergence of opinion and whether this is articulated by students within the group context.

The final multiple choice question asked whether the respondents attempt to incorporate new experiments and variations in music while practising. It is seen that the highest number of respondents (n=8) sometimes try applying new experiments (new practice ideas), followed by five students who never attempt to experiment (for example, always playing an exercise or scale exactly as they used to do or as they learnt it from the class piano teacher). Only three students report always experimenting.

The purpose of the above section was to present an analysis of the practice strategies of participants. The findings show that the frequency was mostly regular, with 31% reporting daily practice. Gay (1983) reports that amongst the factors that determine the rate of progress of adult piano students were clear goals, motivation, regular practice, commitment and talent. Gay also concludes that regular practice was guided by commitment to learning and the inherent motivation of the student. The high frequency of practice suggests high motivation and commitment amongst students.

The findings also showed that most participants had knowledge of some of these strategies, including slow practising, work with individual hands separately and repetition. The lack of tempo variation and self-evaluation is noted. Rogers et al. (2014) contend that slow learning progress could be linked to a lack of knowledge of suitable learning techniques. Therefore, ensuring that students are aware of appropriate strategies is important; probing how this is communicated by a teacher in the group context would be another useful area for future research.

It is also observed that students had differences in their expectations of learning. It is evident that some of the participants had some differences in whether they always followed their teacher's opinion. The results indicated that this belief could support students' interest in their music and connect to their interpretation of the piece of music.

9.4 Factors that Impact on Motivation and Self-Efficacy

This section identifies the level of agreement of respondents with respect to factors that motivate them and the self-efficacy factors that influence their music learning. The respondents were asked to mark their level of agreement on a five-point Likert scale, analysed to arrive at inferences. Any response below a score of 2.5 refers to a low level of agreement, a response between 2.5 and 3.5 indicates a moderate score, and a score of more than 3.5 indicates a high level of agreement with the given statements.

Table 9 below shows the mean analysis of the 16 respondents' views on the various factors that impact on their motivation and self-efficacy while learning music. The salient factors here are drawn from previous research identifying their relevance to instrumental learning, and comprise: competence (Elliot & Dweck, 2005), satisfaction with learning process (Costa-Giomi, 2004), teacher encouragement (Cooper, 1996), doing well and obtaining teacher appreciation (West, 2013), confidence with playing (McPherson & McCormick, 2000), choice of course or programme (Rickels et al., 2010), and confidence in excelling in the future career and achievements (Gillespie & Hamann, 1999).

As Gun et al. (2014) argue, the technical and musical challenges required for the aesthetic and technical mastery of an instrument are influenced by self-efficacy beliefs and the self-confidence of students regarding the playing of the instrument. In this research it appears that there are positive levels of motivation and self-efficacy contributing to student learning shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Mean Analysis: Students' Motivation and Self-Efficacy at LCM

Identify your level of agreement with the following statements	Average of Likert scale responses (Mean)
I am confident that I will be able to achieve gainful employment in this field.	**4.12**
I am sure that this is the best course or programme for my career or path.	**4.12**
I am quite confident in playing the piano.	**3.81**
I am confident that I can excel in this field.	**3.52**
I am satisfied with my performance at piano playing.	**3.50**
The encouragement given by my teacher has helped me improve my performance.	**3.37**
After learning piano for a while, I feel pretty competent.	**3.25**
It was important to me to do well at this task and get my teacher's appreciation.	**3.12**

The purpose of this section was to explore student perceptions of their ability in relation to key factors that have been recommended in literature relating to motivation and self-efficacy. Overall, student perception of competence and performance efficiency is high. Prior findings on student motivation and performance have shown that students' perception of self-efficacy is high when they have positive views on their individual performance (Radel et al., 2010). Wild et al. (1992) conclude that teacher belief and teacher-student interaction can improve overall student self-efficacy. These findings are supported in the context of the current study.

The students' self-confidence is also high, along with their expectation that piano learning can help in gaining further employment; a finding which is surprising seeing as these participants are mostly beginner level adult students learning for pleasure. Wristen (2006) contends that setting future goals and expectations can drive student motivation and learning. The students at LCM believed that the classes are relevant to their career needs; this finding is also surprising seeing as the older students in particular are unlikely to be starting careers using the piano; however, they may have focused on the 'path' part of the question, viewing this programme as the most suitable for their current development.

Table 10 below shows the mean analysis of the 16 respondents' level of agreement with their skill strengths within various of important musical skills which have been suggested in literature as fundamental for musicianship skills, including: music reading (Kim, 2001), tone production and style/Interpretation (Patterson, 2013), rhythm, technique, composition, accompanying, harmonisation and improvisation (Christensen, 2000), transposition, memorisation, sight reading, score reading and playing by ear (Hannan, 2006). The findings of this research shown in Table 10 show that the overall student self-rating of various skills is high. It is important to acknowledge that the rating of their skills is largely linked to self-perception.

Table 10: Mean Analysis: Students' Skills Areas at LCM

How do you rank yourself in the following skill areas?	Average of Likert scale responses (Mean)
Score reading	4.37
Transposition	4.12
Sight-reading	4.12
Harmonisation	4.06
Style/Interpretation	4.00
Accompanying	4.00
Playing by ear	4.00
Composition	4.00
Tone production	3.93
Improvisation	3.93
Technique	3.56
Memorisation	3.50
Rhythm	3.43
Music reading	3.25

Overall, the mean self-assessment shows a high score with respect to various attributes, particularly for harmonisation, improvisation, score reading, playing by ear and sight-reading. It seems surprising that these adult students rated themselves higher on these skills areas especially when they were largely at a beginner level. Finding a reason for this necessitated revisiting the data. When looking at the student demographic data and the data presented in Table 10 individually for each student, no conclusive reasons emerged for this; most of the students who rated themselves high in 'score reading' had differences in terms of age group, gender and duration of learning.

However, revisiting the student data showed that reasons for attending the course, enjoyment of the class and individual practice were factors which might have connected to the answers for the questions relating to musicianship. One aim was: 'I want to be able to read music and play songs using the correct fingers by the end of the course' [S16]; another student had 'Interest in learn piano chords' [S11], and a third wanted 'to learn how to play piano properly and write my own music' [S12]. It was also noted that: 'The course outline and aims match my own [aims]; the college has an excellent reputation' [S13]. Other students wanted to: 'Learn piano properly, learn compose songs and accompany, confidence with playing' [S6]; improvising was also mentioned: 'I start by improvising to loosen up my fingers and then I play my pieces' [S12], 'Do finger exercises first to warm up, then practise a scale, then song, and then improvise' [S6], and it was noted that the course focus areas were motivating: 'There are lots of games and quizzes that keep theory fun and easy' [S12]; another student enjoyed 'Everything! (Approach, theory, practise… etc!!)' [S13]; 'It [the class] covers technique and playing with many different genres' [S3], and 'We are leaning lots of music and there is a lot of emphasis on technique' [S10].

Within these responses it seems apparent that the content focus of the classes is tailored to improve these musical skills. However, even though these musical skills were at a beginner level, the students were motivated and appreciated how they could learn in this context: 'LCM Are The Professionals' [S1], 'They allow me to continue learning with other like-minded pianists' [S14]. The positive views on the course suggest that the teacher is skilled in considering what students need from this programme, and is capable of delivering relevant tuition. This is the focus of the next section.

9.5 Student Views on the Attributes of the Class Piano Teacher

Table 11 below shows the views of the 16 students on the attributes of the teacher. Respondents to a five-point Likert scale question (based on prior observation of piano classes) display moderate levels of agreement with statements relating to teacher attributes.

Table 11: Mean Analysis: Students' Views on their Class Piano Teacher at LCM: Attitude and Satisfaction

Identify your level of agreement with the following statements	Average of Likert scale responses (Mean)
The instructor encourages me to think for myself	**3.37**
The instructor changes and provides tasks/explanations beyond the classroom	**3.18**
The instructor tests me on my technique as well as my competence and knowledge	**3.12**
The instructor encourages me to read and practise more	**3.12**
The instructor provides me with more information on how to improve my technique	**3.12**

Table 12, below, shows the mean analysis of a set of five-point Likert scale questions designed to capture the views of the 16 students on their instructor's piano teaching competencies. The choice of categories was informed by research and comprises using games to engage students, preparing students for recitals, referring students to books on pedagogy, adjudication (giving feedback) and giving instructions on the purchase and care of the keyboard (Jacobson & Lancaster, 2006), preparing students for college, selection of piano teaching pieces, selection of methods, learning theories, philosophy of piano teaching, curriculum design, lesson planning, discussing the history of the instrument and giving information on the history of piano pedagogy. (Aguilar, 2010), offering advice on medical problems in pianists (Rickert et al., 2015), and advice on performance anxiety (Daniel, 2004). Again, moderate levels of agreement with statements are found.

Table 12: Mean Analysis: Students' Views on their Class Piano Teacher at LCM: Instructor Competencies as Perceived by Students

How would you rank your instructor on the following piano teaching areas	Average of Likert scale responses (Mean)
Preparing students for recitals or solo piano playing during the session	3.81
Referring students to books on pedagogy	3.81
Adjudication (giving feedback)	3.75
Providing advice on performance anxiety	3.68
Giving information on the history of piano pedagogy	3.68
Using games for students	3.43
Establishing a curriculum	3.37
Motivating piano students	3.25
Lesson planning	3.25
Providing advice on medical problems of pianists	3.25
Giving information on the history of keyboard technique	3.25
Preparing students for college or further education	3.12
Philosophy of piano teaching	3.12
Learning theories	3.12
Selecting piano methods	3.12
Selecting piano teaching literature	3.12
Giving information on the purchase, care, and maintenance of keyboard instrument	3.12

The purpose of this section was to present an analysis of the student views on their group piano teacher. The findings show that the students rated their teacher high for pedagogical and performance aspects. Therefore, the focus of these two aspects during group piano classes appears to be well supported at LCM. Elmas and Yildiz (2014) argue that creating an effective piano performance is a complex task requiring complete addressing of technical and musical challenges. Similarly, Nierman et al. (2002) conclude that the teacher's attitude with respect to providing constructive feedback could be essential to improve student engagement in a music programme. These students consider their teacher to be someone who encourages their learning process and who provides feedback. The presence of both these factors could account for the students' commitment to practise.

The findings of this section also show that the teacher was found to provide both technical and emotional support. For technical support, the teacher selected the appropriate piano curriculum, teaching methods and theories. According to Chappell (1996) effective piano teaching begins with understanding the competency of the student and providing the necessary training. This is clear in the context of this research. The findings also show that the teacher also has other support functions, including providing advice on performance anxiety, preparing students for performance and enhancing students' overall motivation. Radel et al. (2010) conclude that peer engagement can reinforce the motivational orientation of students, and any teacher who wants to improve the technical skills of students should also focus on providing emotional support and help students deal with non-technical knowledge-based attributes such as satisfy with teaching an activity and openly expressing interest. Clearly, such support is evident in the context of these LCM classes.

Within the findings, there may also be some limitations due to the categories presented for ranking with the Likert scale. Asking students about learning theories and philosophy of piano teaching may have been confusing; these could have been expanded for clarification. Additionally, students may have been confused about what the teaching approach referred to.

9.5.1 Teaching Practices

Table 13 shows the mean analysis of the students' views on the teaching practices in group piano classes based on five-point Likert scale questions drawn from important aspects in music education which have been emphasised in literature such as: helping students understand hand position and posture while playing, providing knowledge to understand instrumental techniques while practising, improvement in technical proficiency, knowledge of various contemporary styles and knowledge of traditional styles (Lo, 2010), knowledge of reading conventional notation, knowledge of chord-symbol notation, confidence to play alone, confidence in playing in different ensembles of varying small size, and ability to apply knowledge of different music styles (Coats, 2006)

From the information presented below in Table 13 it appears that students are generally satisfied with the quality of teaching they are receiving in their piano group class at the LCM.

Table 13: Mean Analysis: Students' Views on Quality of Teaching of their Class Piano Group at LCM

Rate your level of satisfaction with the current teaching provided with respect to the following aspects	Average of Likert scale responses (Mean)
Through the teaching I can apply knowledge of musical styles and harmonic practices in improvisation.	**3.81**
Through the teaching I am confident in playing in ensembles of varying small size.	**3.68**
Through teaching I have gained knowledge of chord-symbol (lead sheet) notation.	**3.35**
The teaching has resulted in improvement of technical proficiency of piano through touch, phrasing and fingering.	**3.25**
Through teaching I have gained knowledge of a wide variety of traditional styles.	**3.25**
Through teaching I have gained knowledge of reading conventional notation.	**3.25**
Through the teaching I am confident in playing alone.	**3.17**
The teaching has given me the understanding and knowledge of instrumental technique to apply in my practice routine.	**3.12**
Through teaching I have gained knowledge of a wide variety of contemporary styles.	**3.12**
The teaching has given me the ability to synthesise and integrate knowledge of posture and hand position.	**3.12**

Findings from this section also may have some limitations due to the potential for respondents' misunderstanding of some of the presented statements in the Likert scale table; for example, what is meant by 'traditional style'? Participants may have thought it referred to standard classical repertoire, or could have interpreted this as relating to traditional folk music arranged for piano. This question could have been improved through gaining feedback on a pilot version of the questionnaire, and thinking more carefully about the implications of the phrasing of the questions.

9.6 Using Supportive Technologies

This section investigates the use of technology. Table 14, below, shows the mean analysis of a five-point Likert scale question which examined the views of respondents on the utilisation of different musical technologies in classes. These are examined in literature and include electronic keyboards, electronic keyboard labs, MIDI applications, synthesisers, computer software and internet resources (Price & Pan, 2002).

Table 14: Mean Analysis: Students' Views on the Use of Different Technologies at LCM

How would you rank the use of the following technologies at LCM in the group piano classes	Average of Likert scale responses (Mean)
MIDI applications	**4.06**
Synthesisers	**4.06**
Computer software	**3.93**
Internet resources	**3.37**
Electronic keyboards labs	**3.31**
Electronic keyboard	**3.12**

It is observed that there is variation in the extent to which technology of different types is used. However, the questions were limited in that they did not probe how the participants felt about technology being used; how their teacher used it; how they used it; or how the use of technology in the classes may have connected to home usage. The use of these technologies could increase students' knowledge and offer students an easy and different way to learn specific elements: 'I also spend time learning notes by using 'Flashnote Derby' on my ipad' [S7]. Nevertheless, these findings indicate that there is a high level of use for these supportive technologies in the context of the group piano class at the LCM, and the use of supportive technologies could also be considered for application to the Kuwaiti context.

9.7 General Student Comments

The final section shows the content analysis of the responses to an open question relating to participants' comments and views on the classes and the piano learning experiences at LCM on this programme, presented in Figure 18. Most of the respondents did not comment further on their experience (n=11). However, two respondents mentioned the teacher's advice to practise harder and to improvise more often, and another mentioned the advice they received for reading music notation: 'My teacher told me that I need to play by ear less and work harder to read music properly' [S3]. Finally, a comment from one respondent summed up the value of the class:

> My tutor is excellent at teaching across the subjects I believed to be difficult and the class is very enjoyable, easy to follow … excellent group tools that enable learning! I feel very lucky to be studying with my tutor, as my previous tutor told me that it is too late to learn piano, you will not get a very good playing level in piano, but now I believe that I can be a good piano player with my new tutor and practise more. [S6]

As a whole, the students' views support the need for educators to accept and integrate technology and also to be aware of student needs. This is in contrast

to the perspectives identified in the Kuwaiti learning environment, and these differences will be discussed further in Chapter Twelve.
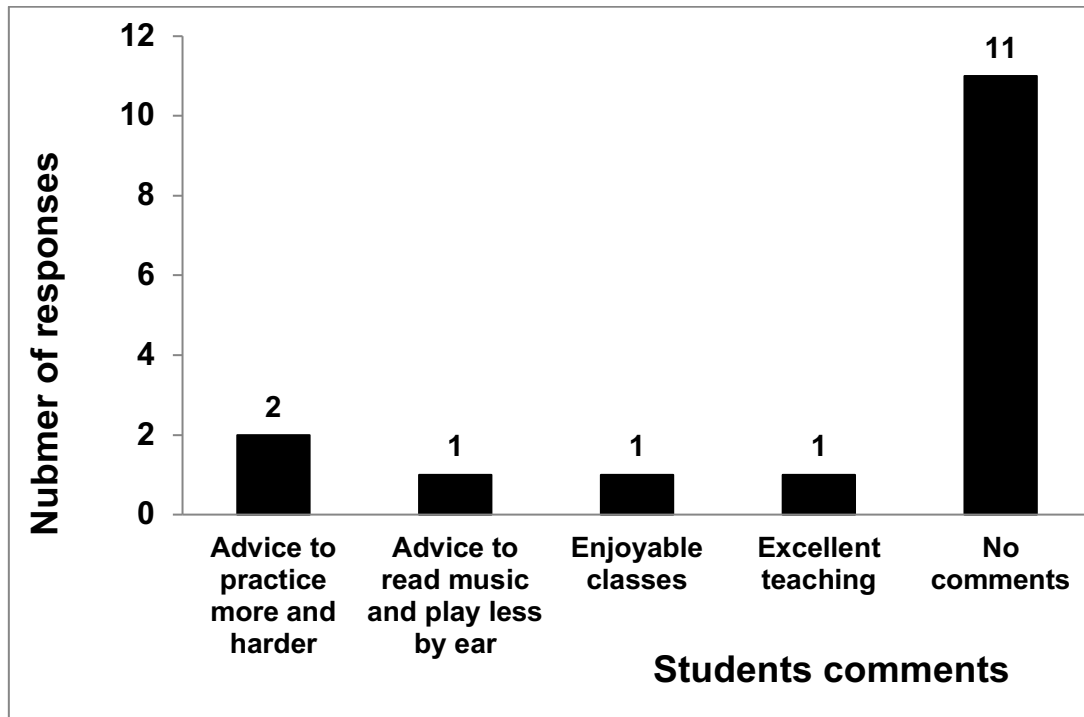
Figure 18: Content Analysis of '*Introduction to Piano*' Students at LCM: Student Views on Group Piano Classes and Piano Learning

9.8 Conclusion

This chapter has provided detail on student perspectives of piano pedagogy in the UK which may enable comparison with piano learning in Kuwait at CBE in order to inform development of pedagogy and provision in Kuwait. This chapter presented an analysis of responses to a questionnaire distributed to students on the group piano programme '*Introduction to Piano'* at LCM. Questionnaire responses were received from 16 of the 25 students, aged 18 to 51 years old, with experience of learning piano from three months to five years.

Findings from this small sample show that exposure to various genres of music was valued by the students. Students revealed that they mostly follow a

routine order of practising piano on the advice of their teacher. The overall students' self-rating of various skills is high. The students consider their teacher to be someone who encourages their learning process and provides feedback. The teacher's attitude with respect to providing constructive feedback is valuable to improve student engagement, and the teacher also provides technical and emotional support to the students.

The analysis presented in this chapter also has shown some limitations that suggested the possibility of respondents' misunderstanding and different interpretations of some statements used in the Likert scale tables. The research failed to investigate the area of using technology in more depth, and could have included more questions on how the students used particular technology, what the benefits were, and how they used technology at home, as well as more detail on how their teacher presented and used technology during the class. However, there was a high frequency use of those technologies during the group piano class at LCM. There was also a further limitation within the method used. Although observations of two group piano classes were undertaken, these did not use an observation schedule, and the observed sessions may not have been typical classes, so there is the possibility that the questionnaire design could have been more robustly constructed to align with pedagogical practices within the classes. Despite these limitations, the research has revealed some useful information about the participants, teacher and lesson content, and the study of the group piano class students reveals that they are generally satisfied with the quality of teaching in these classes at LCM.

Chapter 10: Teachers' Perspectives on Group Piano Pedagogy in the UK (Part 1)

10.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on UK teachers' views on group piano pedagogy and analyses data gathered through semi-structured interviews with teachers experienced in delivering group piano lessons for adults within higher education contexts in the UK. This enabled more in-depth understanding about current group piano teaching practices which could enhance understanding of the Kuwait group piano teaching practices. Snowball sampling was adopted to recruit the participants; unfortunately, only two piano teachers who are currently teaching adult group piano classes using the piano lab system (as used at CBE, Kuwait) agreed to participate in an interview for this study. To maintain their anonymity, they are presented below as teachers E and F (TE) and (TF), and their interviews are available in Appendices 11 and 12.

The thematic analysis presents the teacher's expectations of piano learning from their perspective as leaders of short-term adult piano learning courses for life-long learners at different programme levels in the UK. This chapter also discusses the teachers' views on several aspects such as their attitudes to group piano classes, assessment and education in this context, student engagement and student-teacher interaction, teaching approaches, learning materials and the role of technology in group piano teaching. Ethical approval and the data collection processes for conducting these interviews were detailed in Chapter Five (section 5.7 Ethical Approval) and Chapter Six (section 6.5.5 Participants and Location).

The data collected through the two one-to-one interviews was analysed to understand the themes which emerged in the literature review (Chapters 3 and 4) and in earlier analysis of teachers' perspectives of piano pedagogy at CBE, Kuwait (Chapter Eight). Relevant words or concepts were discovered through content analysis, through iteratively reading and coding the interview transcriptions to find themes and concepts. Finally, as discussed earlier (in

Chapter Five, section 5.5.1), the data was analysed manually to identify the existing trends in piano pedagogy.

10.2 Demographics

Both participants were teachers of group adult beginners. TE had five years of teaching experience at Leeds College of Music (LCM) including two years teaching group piano classes. LCM is a conservatoire offering degree qualifications in performance and lifelong learning for amateur musicians. TE achieved a bachelor's degree in classical music (piano) and piano Grade 8 performance. TE leads short-course group piano classes: '*Introduction to Piano*' parts 1 and 2, focusing on learning foundational music theory, music listening skills, awareness of pitch and rhythmic values (see Chapter Nine, section 9.1 for more details on the classes). TE was considering extending the course to provide a 15-week set of workshops in which students select pieces from a list made by TE and he works individually with each student, sharing ideas in the group possibly giving lectures on specific pieces.

In contrast, TF is a more experienced group piano teacher based in London with 15 years' experience of teaching piano in different colleges, and five years teaching group piano classes at City Lit. City Lit is a provider of short courses for adults at various levels, but it does not offer degree programmes in Music, though it provides foundational courses helping students access subsequent music degrees at other institutions. TF achieved a bachelor's degree in music, diplomas in performance and teaching, a master's degree and a PhD. TF is Head of music performance programmes at City Lit, and runs an adult beginners' group piano course: '*Piano/Keyboards*'. The course runs for two hours weekly for 12 weeks in a piano lab with a maximum of 12 learners per class. The classes are offered at different levels, from foundation to advanced, and each one lasts for one term, so a learner can take three modules per year. After the end of the six modules learners are expected to be able to:

- Play and recognise basic chords I, IV and V chords.

- Play a major scale hands separately.

- Recognise forte and piano dynamics

- Play with basic finger staccato

- Play melodic lines with basic legato technique

- Play rhythms with quavers

- Play three major and one minor scale and arpeggios, one octave

- Play melodic lines with reliable legato technique

- Play simple tunes hands together with reliable co-ordination and fluency

- Perform at least three pieces on the piano from the class repertoire

- Be able to use gradual dynamics

- Play using staccato in one hand and legato in the other

- Develop technical exercises to deal with a number of technical problems (City Lit, 2018)

After these modules there are other piano courses called '*Piano Workshops*' (modules 1, 2 and 3). These Piano workshops are also in a group setting, not held in a piano lab but taking pace as group masterclasses on an acoustic grand piano, supporting learners working towards ABRSM grades and related music repertoire. TF emphasised the availability of the big range of beginner group piano courses at City Lit which are relevant both for new learners and for those 'returning to playing after a break of many years'.

10.3 Teachers' Attitudes to Group Piano Classes

The analysis reveals that these two teachers view learning piano as an essential pathway to developing general musical skills for beginners. Learner aims can vary: 'every year we get lots and lots of people, up to 40 people, wanting to do these classes (*Introduction for Piano*) for a wide range of purposes. There are some who focus on career needs, others for other purposes' [TE]. In the context of City Lit, TF observed that learning piano is an essential skill for music students and could connect to learners' career needs,

noting that: 'A lot of people, when it works towards their career, they're maybe learning piano because they're looking to going to university as adults later [TF]. Additionally, the classes could support students giving recitals and would develop their confidence [TF]. Therefore, these courses could act as a stepping-stone to further study: 'A lot of people come and do a year or so of piano with us because they are learning some other parts of [the] music programme and we want them to have some keyboard skills' [TF]. These might help students develop 'keyboard harmony skills and music reading skills' [TF]. Therefore, these courses can support access to further education, and may be integrated with other existing provision. The participants appear to have a positive attitude towards the group piano learning programmes, stating that piano learning is considered an essential part of learning music and showing positive attitudes to the varying needs of different students.

10.4 Perspectives on Piano Examinations and Piano Learning

Chapter Eight, section 8.3, established that exams at differentiated levels are an essential part of the assessment for piano students at CBE. Consequently, this research aimed to discover the views of these UK teachers on examinations. In order to help tutors understand the needs of the students, 'initial assessments' [TF] are used: 'I need to work out who already reads some music – we have a system, we have a little questionnaire, and then they prepare me a little piece or something like that, talk about their previous musical background, introduce themselves to the class' [TF].

Although these two courses do not have a formal pass or fail exam, the courses do enable preparation for exams: following the foundation year at City Lit the Level 1 programme corresponds to around Grade 1 ABRSM; Level 2 corresponds to Grade 2 ABRSM: 'A lot of our students sit the ABSRM piano exams and theory exams. And our classes work at the same level as those exams if they want to do both' [TF]. This was supported by the choice of teaching material: 'we use the Alfred Adult tutor series as a standard textbook or the ABRSM exam pieces' [TF].

TE stated that 'some students only learn piano to achieve success in exams', and explained that he would 'plan lessons that include general music theory studies, scales that some of the students can use in exams'. The teachers use a range of techniques for conducting group lessons and for evaluating the learning process. TF stated that: 'we record them a lot, we have "zoom players" [computer software player], and Dropbox them their recordings after class, so they can hear how they did when they were nervous under pressure'. This feedback helps students understand their own skill level and reflects their performance through the piano group classes. The teachers also believed that a range of approaches help improve the overall quality of students' technical and musical expertise: 'we can look at informal feedback, listening to a student's recorded pieces, trading feedback in class as part of the collaboration. All of this helps' [TE].

TF also involved students in collaborative leaning processes, asking students to 'provide chords I, IV and V to a melody, so some in a class are playing the melody and some providing the chords they prepared'. They might also 'work on individual pieces, either by playing bits together or volunteers playing to the class'.

These findings show that focusing on different processes and different kinds of evaluation throughout the piano group courses help develop student learning. From a constructivist perspective, the literature review in Chapter Three has shown that learning and assessment of music should be holistic. These findings show that instead of a one-directional focus on learning towards assessment, testing knowledge through interactions and informal feedback given in the class is deployed by the teachers. Educators in favour of constructivism claim that students assess new information in association with the social interactions in their contemporary world and the knowledge that they tend to apply to situations (Welch et al., 2004). Welch et al. (2004) observe that learners do not generally obtain information in a passive way from their teachers; instead they are learning through actively interacting with teachers and peers. The constructivist way of teaching requires a strong emphasis on student-focused approaches to learning.

Literature reviews in Chapters 3 and 4 have noted the importance of the unidirectional teaching and learning process. However, when it comes to assessment, there are efforts to use different techniques to address piano skills and theory as 'it is important to focus on other types of feedback (exam feedback, record feedback or peer feedback) and engagement' [TE]. Therefore, the use of evaluating techniques for piano group classes needs further consideration in relation to application to CBE.

10.5 Student Engagement and Student-Teacher Interaction

Teachers were asked to share their views on student engagement and student-teacher interaction. The data suggests that efforts are taken to understand learner motivation and build positive student-teacher relationships. This relationship is viewed by teachers as a critical element: 'I try to provide students with a positive environment, with options to interact with the members of the group as well as one-on-one with me to truly understand and provide comparative information' [TE].

This teacher also agreed that keeping a professional relationship with the students requires a person-centred approach in the class. For instance:

> I like to have a friendly relationship – it doesn't extend from beyond the building, but before lessons start, for example, I like to ask … how is your week going, and get to know them a little bit, because I don't like or I don't want a relationship where I am the qualified person - I don't want to be worshipped or anything like that … I really enjoy teaching and music and I like to be able to share it in a very inclusive way. [TE]

Teacher F expanded on the relationship with students:

> I am really lucky – they [students] are really good. If you like people and you like piano, the relationships always work. Now and again there'll be a difficult relationship; that's usually because somebody is nervous, or they're embarrassed, because they feel they should be on a better level, a higher level than they're on, or they haven't done any practice –

> as long as you don't take it personally, you have to remember there's 15 people here, and I don't know what's going in their lives, I only know about them in piano, so if they're having a difficult week, it's not personal. Then the relationships stays fine, I don't take that baggage with it. But there are times when I leave feeling quite personally upset, you know, I don't understand why they've been rude or something. But that happens – that's teaching. [TF]

The teachers also believe that understanding the motivation for learning is essential to improve the student learning experience. Teachers aim to keep learners engaged, and are sensitive to the needs of the group:

> It is my responsibility to keep it fun, interesting, and to make sure I chose the right thing not just the next thing for that group. I normally change the type of interaction as per group, to make it the right thing for the right moment, and that is the teacher's responsibility. [TF]

The programme is structured to respond to students' learning needs, which create goals for each session. As TE remarked, by sharing the lesson expectations, in a group environment, it is possible to improve student interaction and engagement: 'I approach every lesson in a very structured way, so every lesson has a clear plan' [TE]. Teachers acknowledge learner aims: 'they're maybe learning piano because they're looking to going to university as adults later' [TF]; furthermore, 'piano learning should focus on the student learning and career growth, but it should be seen as part of the curriculum rather than something that is independent of the curriculum' [TE].

The initial objective of this section was to identify the participants' views on engagement and interaction between the student and teacher in their piano group classes. The findings show that student engagement and interaction between teacher and students is viewed by these teachers as important in developing a positive learning environment. The findings also reveal that understanding individual student needs in terms of engagement is viewed as essential.

10.6 Teaching Approaches and Sequence of Instruction

This section focuses on the primary teaching methods used by the two teachers. In terms of teaching strategies, the teachers showed some different priorities. TE stated: 'I approach every lesson in a very structured way, so every lesson has a clear plan', in order for students 'to understand something new about music technique, theory, finger strengthening and things like that'. Moreover, TE stated that 'I use a lot of exercises … brand new beginners don't even know what the correct posture is or the correct hand shape, so I spend a lot of time focusing on teaching technique before teaching'. TE also connected different musical concepts: 'I usually pick an element of theory and find a piece that fits with that, usually' and also emphasised flexibility of the lesson plan in order to meet the students' needs: 'I try to keep the lessons as open as possible because what you tend to find in a group class is that everybody has an individual want or desire for the lessons' [TE].

In terms of lesson sequences, TE stated that 'generally I open the lesson with some kind of small exercise which normally takes 20 to 30 minutes, finger exercises'. After that TE might give 'normally about a 20-minute lecture where I talk to them about what we are going to do: usually a new topic of music theory'. Then 'we apply that theory by using a piece', or it is 'then applied in some practical way' [TE]. TE was also aware of student's needs and would give the students a short break in the two-hour group lesson to help students' engagement and concentration. TF used a warm up routine to start the group piano lesson:

> The lesson always starts with whatever the homework was, I've always asked them to prepare a piece or something, so they come in, they start playing and warm up, and I can listen to them individually with the headphones to each player, so I leave them alone for 20 minutes and I just listen individually and give them little bits of individual advice, then as soon as everybody is relaxed and playing, then we all play together. [TF]

The lesson sequences for TF continue with a variety of activities which sometimes vary between 'group playing to the group, playing as a group and

playing individually on the keyboards with headphones on'. After that TF might 'go around, listening to them individually, so half the lesson is like that, and then they all play together at the same time, we're talking about playing in the time, or we're doing rounds or something like that'. Additionally, TF later focuses on the theory as 'then we'll work on individual pieces, either by playing bits together or volunteers playing to the class for teacher demonstrating, and there is usually a theory work sheet they're working on at the same time' [TF]. Furthermore, TF aimed to 'use as much differentiation as possible' so TF would try to provide strategies 'that means everybody can work on the same activity'.

TF would also give some opportunities for solo piano playing during the group lesson in a masterclass format:

> …they're presenting the piece and you're giving them notes, and that has a strict timetable each week, everybody knows who is playing each week, they have to tell the class … what they're going to play, so the other people will bring the music to follow, and then I'll ask … people who are listening to answer questions about the piece; so they'll play it and I'll ask the class like what key is it in? Did you hear the *legato* in the left hand, and they'll have to answer these questions and they'll give notes to the student. [TF]

10.6.1 Demonstration

The findings show that demonstration is used by these teachers: 'I normally play it to them' [TE]. Another strategy would be to 'play two different music examples and then ask the students "can anyone tell the difference?"' [TF]. TF gave a further strategy:

> When they're learning to read music, I often play pieces that they're not learning because I just want them to follow the score, then I'll stop and they have to say what bar I stopped, or I'll play a deliberate wrong note, and they have to identify the wrong note, or something like that, there's a lot of listening, aural skills. [TF]

TF observed that 'sometimes it's me first [play or demonstrate], sometimes it's them first'. For instance:

> If it has a new concept in it, quite often the teacher demonstrates it first, they might be recording me playing on a phone to listen to later, particularly if they're learning trills or something, that isn't written out in that way, I'll record it first. [TF]

However:

> If it's a piece that already contains things they know, I often ask them to prepare the right hand for homework, and then they'll present it first and then will decide if we think it's correct, and then I will play the correct version afterwards'. [TF]

TE showed the importance of considering how to promote learner independence:

> What I like to do now, though, is get them to do it themselves. I wait five minutes and I come around to everybody individually, and then I play it to them because I want them to feel confident that they can do it without being shown how to do it then, you know, I try not to treat them as if it's a you know a monkey copying, they should feel the confidence to do it themselves. [TE]

Therefore, the teachers include different teaching techniques as appropriate. These could advance the effectiveness of group piano learning.

10.7 Learning Materials

10.7.1 Music Pieces

The teachers agreed that the main focus of the music pieces in group piano lessons is usually classical music, as 'there's lots to get out of classical music' [TE]. However, other styles could be helpful for many reasons; for example, to encourage and motivate learners: 'I normally begin the course by using pop songs because everybody knows them' [TE], or using other kinds of repertoire to explain theory: 'I begin with 'Let It Be' by *The Beatles* because it's a simple

chord sequence … and it's easy to show them that, and we can begin by talking about chords' [TE].

Moreover, choice of material would link to students' preferences: 'we also look at blues music' [TE], as well as jazz and 'a lot of Folk songs, pop song arrangements' [TF]. Student prior knowledge was considered: 'sometimes students request a certain song, not too often, but sometimes they request a certain song and if I can find a way for it to fit into the course I will make every effort to do so' [TE]. Teachers might use pieces they were very familiar with: 'some of [the pieces] are ones that I learned when I was a child or when I started learning' [TE]; they might also use repertoire 'recommended by the person who used to teach this course' [TE]. Furthermore, repertoire was considered in relation to exam demands: 'we're always working on exam repertoire, but it's always only one of several pieces available, so they don't feel their lives are controlled by an exam' [TF].

Additionally, TF stated factors linking to technical objectives: 'I'm choosing something because we're studying G major, or because we're learning *legato* left hand, with the tune in the left hand, so I choose pieces because I actually need them to learn something, *staccato* technique or wrist *staccato* or something' [TF]. TF also used studies: 'I'm working through Czerny or Cramer or Burgmüller … books that are actually meant to be about piano technique rather than about music'. The choice of material linked to repertoire: 'we're spending the term looking at classical sonatas or Debussy piano works' [TF]. Including varied music styles in group piano classes is needed in order to introduce learners to varied repertoire and to enable them to 'do it to their own level' [TF].

10.7.2 Music Exercises

The teachers both use many exercises, specifically 'Aloys Schmitt and Hanon, those are two piano finger exercise books that I use' [TE], and 'arpeggios and scales … from the ABRSM grade 1 syllabus; there're just great ways of getting them to move the fingers' [TE]. The reason for using for these exercises is that 'it allows me to watch them do a basic technique and spot if they're doing

anything wrong – if the hand is the wrong shape, or if the posture's bad and I can fix that before it's too late' [TE]. TF also used 'a mixture of Hanon and Cramer technical exercises'.

These exercises were viewed by the teachers as useful 'because a lot of people just have terrible technique when they start' [TE] and 'brand new beginners don't even know what the correct posture is or the correct hand shape, so I spend a lot of time focusing on technique before playing' [TE]. TE believed that 'I think that they can practise more efficiently if they have good technique, I think the better the technique the more confident they feel in playing as well'. Further exercises such as Czerny [TF] studies could also be used.

Exercises connected to learning other aspects such as notation: 'I think it is really great there is a strong focus on reading music' [TF]. This was viewed as essential because 'nobody has piano classes without also learning staff notation, everything is done from notation … that is a really useful skill to have and to feel fluent with' [TF]. TF also identified that students are also 'using a mixture of improvisations or they're playing with figured bass or something, so that they are playing around with notation, they're not stuck with it'.

Therefore, using several kinds of strategies and material to develop technical skills is seen by these teachers as essential, as it gives the opportunity for learners to gain technical skills and increases their overall musicianship.

10.7.3 Music Theory

The findings show that music theory was a focus of these teachers, and could be a challenge: 'It's the theory that is the real roadblock for development, I find, because it's a totally new language for them' [TE]. This teacher felt that 'the biggest issue I find is that people don't practise music theory at home and they still can't read it … so I have a huge emphasis on music theory' [TE]. TF stated that:

> We used to have notation from lesson number one, when we just learn where the middle C is, there is never a moment where they're playing

piano with just letters, they're always looking at staff notation right from the beginning, and it comes in incrementally all the way through, there are no shortcuts, no solfege or anything like that, it's straight staff notation all the way down. And even when they're doing improvisation, they're always looking at a chord sheet or have to write down their improvisation.

TF also stated that 'the theory we follow is roughly the same as the ABRSM theory grades', and this was connected through teaching materials: 'I use the Alfred adult book, that's how we start. Because it has worksheets and it has pieces' [TF]. Teachers were also creative; if students found it difficult to learn a concept, technology might be used: 'if they are struggling with F sharp, I just make something on Sibelius with a lot of F sharps on it. And just give it to them. There's lots of supplementary stuff going on as well' [TF].

TF observed that 'I spend a lot of time with the beginners giving them worksheets on theory about note names, I ask them to write things out, or transpose things to a different clef, to try and add finger numbers'. TE stated that:

> We've got the whiteboard here and it's got two staves … I like to draw a short three-bar piece and deliberately make mistakes: I can put the stem the opposite way round, I'll add one too many notes into the piece, I'll forget to put in the bass clef … I ask everybody to gather around and fix what I've done wrong and that's really good way of them beginning to spot errors in music and be confident that they can read it properly. [TE]

Therefore, these teachers recognise the challenges in helping learners understand music theory and find creative ways of including it in their teaching.

10.8 Role of Technology in Group Piano Teaching

Both teachers agreed that technology plays a supportive role in learning piano in groups, this starts through establishing the class lab setting with a digital piano and headphones for each student, usually using Roland digital pianos at LCM or Yamaha Clavinovas at City Lit. Teachers were positive about the technology: TF was appreciated the 'flexibility' of the digital keyboards. TE also added that:

> I think it's good because they can only hear themselves, and I can come around and plug-in and listen with them, or I can just watch them because I can hear when they're pressing the key silently what it should sound like and I can see if they've pressing the right keys. [TE]

Through the *Haines Music Laboratory Control Unit* (the conference device or control unit) the teacher can 'patch-in and listen to everybody's keyboards' [TE], and by using this device 'you can mute people and you can patch-in and listen to one person and I can speak to them' [TE]. Technology could also 'support people with literacy difficulties or learning difficulties' [TF], especially as that 'students can record the lessons, they're not trying to take notes at the same time, or hear a piece again, that's really powerful for them' [TF]. Moreover, also if a 'pianist doesn't already play another instrument, they can have extra support by listening to the piece again at home, because they're new to the notation as well as the piano, so recording is the key, that's what's so useful' [TF]. Recording could be 'video or audio' [TF]; as previously mentioned, students sometimes 'give us their phone and I'll hold it while they are playing, so they can see their fingers. But we don't tend to video students [too much], they tend to video themselves with their own equipment' [TF].

Recording could be also useful for enhancing students' self-evaluation, for example, the tutor might make video recordings on students' phones 'so they can see their fingers' [TF]. This also helps students' self-assessment as 'they can hear how they did when they were nervous under pressure' [TF], and also 'they can see themselves perform' [TF].

Working with electronic metronomes is another strategy used in group piano learning: 'we listen to it, and then we stop it and try to continue playing at the

same sort of speed; we do a lot of group work like that' [TF]. Teachers also use 'an online service where [students] can download PDF files and my PowerPoints after lessons' [TE], this is really helpful for the students especially 'if they are ill and they miss a lesson, they can download them' [TE].

One 'disadvantage of the technology is that many of the iPad applications are for individual learning … not good for group lessons' [TF]. For example: 'some of our students went and did a trial for TIDO … a start-up piano tutorial system on the iPad … I think that's useful if you're studying alone, but it doesn't quite fit what I need to do in the class' [TF]. TE used the app 'Flashnote Derby' for note reading as an example: 'I have shown it to my pupils but obviously because it's one iPad in a big room it doesn't work'. The app 'flashes up with a note on the stave and you have to play the note on the keyboard within 10 seconds and it trains your ability to sight-read single notes'. While TE is in favour of it he noted that 'with 10 pupils, it's hard to find something that means everybody can be involved at once'.

The use of technology in the group piano classroom depends upon the teacher's perspective. For example, on using the conference system in group piano learning, TE stated:

> I didn't like it because I don't like to be reliant on technology, and I think it's very inhumane for me to sit at the front and "keyboard number four play this differently", I prefer to be a human and come round and talk and show them things, so I try not to use them, actually, but they are applications that we have here, that staff have used in the past, but I don't like it, and it's covered in dust which probably suggests that none of the other teachers like it either, so I think they should sell it. [TE]

Overusing electronic equipment could affect the student-teacher relationship in group piano learning. TE explained that 'I think it makes lessons robotic – and it takes away the personal nature, and for me the most important part about teaching, it's being personal with students, and that is a massive barrier'.

Another obstacle to using of some types of technology could be the high price of equipment. TE found that 'there's an app that I discovered a couple of

months ago - I wish we could have iPads in here and a bit more interactive technology, it's very expensive'.

Furthermore, to get the full benefit from using technology type may be difficult if it requires permission from other people. TF stated that the students 'are told they could bring a phone or Dictaphone or recording device if they want to record part of a lesson'; however, 'they're not allowed to record the other students, only their own playing, they must have permission from the student if they want to record someone'.

The teacher also identified another disadvantage through learning from online technology such as YouTube, as students could develop poor technique. Therefore, technology required careful consideration. The teachers both felt that the use of some types of technology such as digital piano and headphones, conference system, and recording equipment is very useful to improve some musicianship skills in group piano learning. However, using other technology such as iPad and YouTube videos may not always be advantageous for learners; therefore, choosing a specific technology to make the learning process easier, improve learning outcomes and engagement in group piano learning is needed.

10.9 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the teachers' perspectives on their experiences of group piano teaching in lab system settings in the UK. The teachers gave interesting and detailed views on their attitudes towards their group piano classes. The findings also show that there is some infrastructure in these UK institutions which supports the courses.

Sequentially, this chapter examined the perspectives on piano examination and piano learning. The findings showed that there were no formal exams conducted for both courses apart from exams for the placement of new students. However, the courses supported learners working towards ABRSM exams through using relevant materials and focusing on appropriate curricular content, and teachers gave feedback in order to support skill development.

Student and teacher interaction were considered as important in order to advance the students' engagement in group piano learning, and teachers aim to understand students' needs and motivations in order to engage and support students. Flexible teaching methodologies with a variety of strategies including different uses of demonstration seem to be used to advance student engagement while keeping track of curriculum. The findings also show variety of lesson content including music pieces, piano exercises and music theory, and these could be supported by additional use of technology which had both positive and negative aspects. Further findings from interviews with these teachers are discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 11: Teachers' Perspectives on Group Piano Pedagogy in the UK (Part 2)

11.1 Introduction

This chapter continues to examine more findings from teachers E and F regarding group piano learning in the UK, focusing on the challenges faced in this context, as well as the teachers' satisfactions and motivations.

11.2 Group Piano Learning Challenges and Resource Availability

The questions relating to this section were constructed to understand some challenges in group piano learning and availability of institutional resources to support the work of these teachers. The teachers were asked to share their views on underlying challenges for teachers and for students, resources and facilities, financial and government support, cultural factors and students' responses to learning challenges.

11.2.1 Teachers' Challenges

Teachers identified challenges relating to the focus of their attention in the group context. TE suggested that the biggest challenge is balancing the attention on all of the students: 'it could be very easy to spend half an hour with one person who is really struggling on one bit, and then miss everybody else out'. In addition, this challenge relates to the teacher's capability to engage students in group piano learning, for example, TE stated that a main concern is whether 'all students [are] going to enjoy the lesson, is everybody going to understand the lesson. Therefore, I try to think of three different ways to explain something'. TF felt that the challenge is 'getting the group to understand that everybody needs equal attention'.

TF stated other factors which related to individuals: 'the biggest challenges are personal, actually … and not everybody is having a great week, so if

somebody turns up and they are upset, or they haven't done the homework, it's the other students who get frustrated first, not [only] the teacher' [TF]. Therefore, TF observed that to 'help them, you have to always have activities that they can get on with, while you go and deal with someone who's got a problem, if that's going to happen'. This also influenced the teacher's personal approach: 'you have just to keep giving out friendliness the whole time … because they love to argue with each other' [TF].

TF also explained his concern to avoid making students in the group 'switch off' or think 'they don't feel valued'. Therefore, TF believed that 'if you get it wrong, and you choose the wrong music, you've patronised your audience and they stop learning'. This meant that the teacher needed to be careful in talking to the students: 'if you get it wrong, and if you accidentally patronise them, [you might] make them feel like they're children or that they're not clever' [TF].

TE showed there is a difficulty in teaching group piano classes due to the variety of students' musical backgrounds and experiences: 'it takes a few weeks to test out all the skills and level the playing field; it's really difficult' [TE]. For example, 'I will have somebody who has finished Part 1 and is familiar with my teaching style' and in the same class 'somebody who learnt when they were a child so they don't need the very basic understanding … I also had somebody who played violin and could read treble clef perfectly' [TE]. As a result, 'to have all three of those people in one class is very, very difficult' [TE].

TE explained how to deal with this challenge: 'I'm testing can they read music, how good they are being fluid with the finger patterns, and do they know what chords are and things like that'. To test these he would 'give them a general task to do, such as working out what the chord is, giving them a simple melody and trying to work out what the best finger pattern is' [TE], and then 'when I know where the weaknesses are and where the strengths are, I can plan the rest of the course' [TE]. To begin with, TE would 'try and keep things as easy as I can' [TE], because 'I don't want to give them something very hard if a handful of them would struggle' [TE], and 'I don't want to give them something easy if they're all very good' [TE]. This may promote learner confidence at an early stage while enabling the teacher to plan for future classes.

These findings indicate that these piano teachers are sensitive to the individual as well as group needs, and therefore need to have approaches to help meet these needs.

11.2.2 Students' Challenges as Perceived by Teachers

The teachers agreed that 'the biggest challenge is concentration. Because in the beginning everything is new and it's exhausting … so concentration is the biggest challenge, I think' [TF]. Similarly, TE also stated that 'I think the one of the biggest challenges is that they've got to concentrate'; additionally, 'the biggest pressure that they have is that they have got to keep up with the rest of the group, and not get too far ahead as well' [TE].

The teachers also agreed that the duration of group piano lessons could be a factor affecting the students' concentration: 'It's an hour-and-a-half lesson so there's a stamina involved as well, they've got to be able to concentrate for a long period of time' [TE]. TF also stated that in 'an hour and half of playing … there is a lot of listening', and 'it's like being on a long haul flight, you're sort of sat there for two hours' [TF].

The increasing number of students in group piano classes is also challenging as this affects 'making use out of the very little time that they have with me in a one-to-one environment as I come around' [TE]. For example, 'if the class is full, I only get about four, five minutes of one-to-one tuition with each of them as I go around the room' [TE].

Teachers also felt that the group could be challenging for students 'because some people may have anxiety issues or confidence issues' [TE], and group piano learning 'doesn't develop their confidence in performing in front of each other' [TE]. In order to avoid putting some students whose have anxiety problems in awkward or uncomfortable positions, TE chose to 'do absolutely no performance technique with them in front of other people … I tried it once; it didn't go well'.

Students also sometimes face challenge with institutional management for the group piano classes. For example, when 'the numbers become too small in a

class in a year, people leave for various reasons or have babies or whatever, and then a class can't continue' [TF]. Subsequently, the students whose want to continue in the group 'will have to change the time they come to join one of the other classes in the right level' [TF].

Therefore, considering the students' capabilities needs to be undertaken as their needs could positively or negatively affect the overall outcome or even the continuation of the group piano classes.

11.2.3 Resources and Facilities Challenges

The teachers were essentially happy with the resources and facilities that supported them in order to conduct their group piano classes. In the piano lab 'we have got the whiteboard; sometimes we use PowerPoints … we have also got another whiteboard which has got two staves on it. We have one digital piano with a pair of headphones for each of them' [TE].

Outside the piano lab 'we've got practice rooms they can book – it's a quite cheap, it's £5 an hour as long as they are a student enrolled in a music course' [TF], and 'we've got two open access keyboards in the waiting room so you can just warm up before a lesson' [TF]; additionally, 'we have a piano in the canteen, in the café coffee shop downstairs, so they can book a 10-minute slot and just play something, nobody listens, everybody chats, it's very informal' [TF]. Despite the availability of practice keyboards, TF noted that 'the big thing we struggle with in facilities: we only have one digital piano room' [TF].

Teachers were also aware that access to practice rooms 'can be quite tricky to get, because everybody wants them at seven o'clock at night, nobody wants to come in the morning' [TF]. Additionally, TE also stated that students could find it difficult to access practice rooms because 'all of the practice rooms are taken up by the undergraduate students [at LCM], whereas many of the people on this course [group piano] just come from outside of the college' [TE].

TF revealed a need for more piano rooms: 'If I had two piano rooms, I could always have two parallel classes … so I guess I just want more facilities' [TF]. TE also suggested that 'I would like to think that eventually we might be able to

start recording my lessons next year'; this will be helpful because 'if they are ill, they can watch them so that they do not feel like that they've missed out' [TE]. However, TE was uncertain about this: 'I don't know whether there'd be much benefit from watching a piano lesson at the computer at home. It might change the dynamic of how I teach, but I am not sure yet'.

Therefore, while teachers were aware of recourses and facilities, they were also considering how this could affect the group piano course delivery.

11.2.4 Financial and Government Challenges

The teachers acknowledge that music is considered a part of arts education. Although some institutions are government-funded, TE felt that there 'needs to be more focus' on funding for arts education. Due to funding cuts, there is a growing danger of arts education being unable to meet goals of music pedagogy, through inability to buy new resources that enhance music learning as 'there isn't a consistent approach to how to fund the arts' [TF]. TF felt 'when the previous Labour government funded the Southbank regeneration, suddenly business followed and we have a vibrant area built around some concert halls. And then they cut the arts funding again' [TF]. This 'swing relationship' showed that 'the government has a changeable view to the arts' [TF]; TF believed that the government's attitude indicates that funding for arts in not considered as one of the government's budget priorities: 'in austerity the first reaction is to cut the arts … it's seen as non-essential'; 'arts funding works in pockets of short-term plan, rather than an ongoing commitment' [TF], because 'when people fund the arts, they tend to fund it with a short term view; they feel they're boosting it, because there will be this point when it pays for itself in the future' [TF].

TE agreed: 'I don't think that the arts in general is funded enough in this country'. TE emphasised the importance of funding for music learning: 'I think it's really important that it's in schools for children, because if you don't learn then, you won't learn now, or there's less opportunities to learn now'. The importance of learning music at early stage was noted: 'I think that music

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should remain an essential part of learning, particularly as a child because most of your basic understanding of music; singing, rhythm and hearing pitch - comes from when you're very young' [TF]. TF felt that 'schools can always do with more money' for music; it is a 'shame that there's not enough money going round to make sure that everything is as in good nick [for music]' [TE]. For example, 'I remember in school a lot of damaged equipment … it's expensive to repair' [TE].

TF observed that 'we are having a lot of education funding cuts at the moment, and music is disappearing in schools' [TF]. For example, 'when I first started teaching young adults, there was stuff that I knew they knew, because I knew what sort of basic music education they had' [TF]. So 'there were … songs that I knew they knew already … and I knew that they will have a basic [understanding]' [TF]. But, 'I don't see that now' as 'the focus is on too many topics at once; music technology, music notation – we're all vying for the same small bit of attention, I think, from a small part of curriculum' [TF].

This lack of support is seen by these teachers as affecting the understanding of music and decreasing future opportunities for engaging with music. TF thought that people 'don't make the connections between music they enjoy in a film soundtrack' and classical music 'because they don't live in environment…where they see people playing pianos, or violins, or anything else, or even opera' [TF]. This was because now 'the activity of making music in an acoustic fashion is not normalised' [TF]; 'it's not a normal part of everyday lived experience, or people in a school environment' [TF]. As a result, TF suggested that children need to be introduced to music in order to 'have a better idea of what options are available to them' and then might 'enjoy discovering it for themselves'.

The teachers therefore felt that the government 'should be far more involved than it is' [TE] in arts education funding: 'music in general I think should always be one of the priorities' [TE], that is important 'because it's about self-expression, it's about creativity and those are things I fear many jobs don't encourage … unless you're working specifically in arts' [TE]. Therefore, 'music should go back into the curriculum, it doesn't have to be piano', 'and then

people will find their instrument' [TF]: 'music should be more available, more time for it, so that it's there to find it if they want to' [TF].

Consistent government support is emphasised by these teachers in order to give opportunities for people to learn different kinds of music. Variability of prior musical experience has an impact on the work of the teachers as learners have different musical knowledge and understanding as a result of school music provision.

11.2.5 Cultural Challenges

The findings show that cultural aspects could affect piano teachers' approaches. These include the need to be able to understand varying student requirements and could involve addressing challenges faced in terms of language, as 'in some cases there's a bit of a language barrier' [TE]. This could connect to music terminology which could be affected by learners' cultural backgrounds: 'I like to be consistent in my lessons [so] I have had to kind of retrain them' as 'I have had pupils that have already learnt a bit about music theory that know the American terminology – like G-clef instead of a treble clef, staff instead of stave, quarter note instead of crotchet' [TE]. TE believed that 'if you speak clearly, explain things and give out enough handouts for them to take home and read and links to websites that they can read further then it's not too much of a trouble'.

As the 'respect for Western culture is a problem' [TF] for some students 'because a lot of the piano repertoire is Western classical music' [TF], the teachers also faced challenges in terms of musical material. TF chooses carefully and avoids 'any beginners piano music that's fake Eastern'; TE also avoids material 'like Disney's Aladdin tunes that are just patronising, or embarrassing little attempts to sound like a Japanese song' because 'I don't approve of any of that' and 'I'd rather just either stick to Western or to do more pop music' [TF]. While TE noted a student request for '*Bollywood … I have no clue if there's anything on piano that relates to that, and because it was a specific request from one student I couldn't really do it*' [TE], TF highlighted the

group need in relation to repertoire choice: TF would explain: 'I'm sorry about this, just at the moment it's going to be a diet of German music, because I really do need you to learn Alberti bass, we just have to do a lot of Mozart at the moment' [TF]. Religious music also presented a cultural challenge. TF would 'avoid Christmas carols on principle. You don't have to play anybody else's religious music, I think. There is plenty of good music to choose', as 'Christmas is not Christmas for everybody' [TF].

The findings revealed some negative attitudes towards music learning, such as perceptions that pianists would only achieve if they began learning early: 'one of my students said before that she doesn't like her last teacher who said unless you learn at seven, you'll never learn now, you'll never be very good' [TE]. TE stated that 'I don't believe that "you have to be a child to start learning piano"', which is why these group piano classes are offered. Additionally, TE felt from his students that '"I've got to a certain age" "I've always wanted to learn, now is the time"'. TE emphasised that it is only 'about having free time, the motivation, the right piano … a teacher that has got all the relevant materials that you need and keeps it engaging' and 'the teacher that can adapt as well' [TE]. Therefore, cultural and society background factors, attitudes and challenges could directly affect how teachers considered their teaching.

11.2.6 Students' Responses: Challenges for Teachers

The findings showed some challenges for teachers following the student's responses within the group piano classes. TE explained that there is a challenge in offering musicianship skills such as memorising or aural skills during the group piano classes due to the lack of practice by the students: 'I've tried, I've really tried' and 'I would love to do them' [TE], but 'we don't get time to go on to things like sight-reading and aural skills' [TE]. That is because 'they're beginners … many of them have full-time jobs and don't get to practise much' [TE]; additionally, 'the 15 weeks or the 30 weeks (part 1 and 2) if they do both courses, there just isn't enough time to cover all those things. In terms of priority, 'I tend to spend a lot of time recovering basic bits of theory' [TE].

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This leads to another challenge, the pacing and delivery of group piano classes: 'I have to tailor the lessons to the person who struggles the most usually, so that they don't feel like I'm leaving them behind' [TE], and mixed ability levels despite the grouping of students to the level of the class: 'some people [students] can do it [learning more musical skills] but most can't' [TE]. Furthermore, TE recognised that although 'most of them are quite quick to repeat what I do, some of them aren't'. Sometimes 'I try to get them to do it themselves by reading the music' [TE], not just 'I show them what to do, [and] they'll watch' [TE]. For example, with some piano exercises 'I don't tell them what to do; I give them the sheet and then I say work it out, and they're much slower than if I go [first]' [TE], but 'if I show them, they do it straight away' [TE].

The teachers recognised that 'ability isn't related to age', and 'ability is sort of the wrong word, because often it's to do with concentration span' [TF]. For example, 'sometimes the most able people are just really tired'; 'they're just exhausted, and they're just getting it wrong' but 'you know they're totally going to get it right at home on the weekend when they do some practise' [TF]. This teacher said it was important to show understanding that students were having a bad day, 'to be very friendly with people' and to let them know: 'it's okay, you are an adult, I just get you're having a crappy evening, I'm not going be on your case about it, we'll pick it up next week"' [TF].

Teachers also identified variation in the students, with some who are 'limited in ability' [TF], some who 'haven't met music before and they don't listen to it – they don't really know what they want it to sound like' [TF]. However, 'there is a big difference between people that enjoy classical music or jazz or something' [TF], as they 'have a sort of natural concentration span for it, [and] that helps some practise' [TF]. Additionally, there are also some students who are 'just doing it because they fancy it' [TF], and also a few who seemed 'not interested in music, and they don't listen to it particularly' [TF]. However, TF understood these differences and believed that 'they might learn more slowly than other people … it's not an ability issue, it's just not a part of their everyday life, so every concept is new to them' [TF]. Furthermore, TE observed that 'people's [students] attention spans are shorter now … it takes a long time to pick it up'.

Therefore, TF identified that 'there is a huge drop off rate at the beginning. That's not piano related, that's with all courses. Because they suddenly realise actually it's really hard'. TF explained that is because 'you spend all day at work and you come at 7:30 at night and you're tired and it's expensive … so a lot of people realise they don't have time to keep doing it; it takes more time then they realise' [TF].

TE also suggested that the student has to realise the importance of practicing, as 'a lot of people, when they sign up for this course don't realise how much work they need to do each week and some of them are too busy'. This increases the challenge for the teacher and also the learning process: 'I don't tell people off if they don't work, but there comes a point where I can't spend more time with them because it's not fair on everybody else' [TE].

These teachers also agree that it is essential for the students to understand how they learn and the need for practice by encouraging students to practise during lessons. For example; 'with the group you can say "right, okay put the headphones on and practise that for 10 minutes and get used to it, and then we will play it together in a minute"' [TF]. TE also stated that 'I wait five minutes [while students practise in the piano lab class] and I come around to everybody individually'.

However, after 'they've [gone] through a few terms, and they've established a routine' [TF] the 'progress is usually really good, really impressive, because they tend to have friends in the class, it becomes social' [TF]. This challenge also decreases particularly in the later piano classes when the 'quality of what they're playing is really interesting, it's not beginners' music any more, then they start doing lots of practice, because it's enjoyable … they're playing real Mozart sonatas … they just do lots of practice' [TF].

This awareness led to teachers recognising the importance of students' engagement at early stage: 'I have a lot of sympathy for them at that stage, we're trying to keep it as interesting as possible, and while they're playing it, I play some funky left-hand chords to cheer it up' [TF]. However, TE argued that even if attractive music pieces are offered at an early stage it was important to make them accessible: 'we're looking at Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata" today

and we are looking at the reduction of the score which takes out a lot of the octaves and a lot of the double finger playing' [TE]. Therefore, 'we can look at the principle of broken chords, then I play the piece in its original state because it's just too hard' [TE]. However, TE was aware that it could be 'too much information at once for a beginner'.

The teachers also gave further examples of the difficulty of students' engagement through the group piano leaning. TF tried to add some more activities and optional choices: if the students were in the first lesson and playing 'Middle Cs, Ds and Es, and they're counting to four-count notes, two-count notes and one-count notes … I play interesting chords underneath'. This teacher would also use playing in rounds: 'I'm trying to keep it interesting and not patronising, and not repetitive' [TF], and 'they always get options in the classroom … limited options, but options' [TF]. For example, 'I almost always have two pieces on the go that we're swapping between, because they can only do half an hour on one thing, then they must change activity and they've got theory and worksheets in front of them' [TF]: 'you've got to keep moving with them' [TF]. Nevertheless, teachers were aware that sometimes the timing or sequencing of particular music materials might not be in the right order: 'if I introduce a new piece at the end of the lesson when I see everybody has tired faces, I realise I've picked something a bit too difficult - which does happen sometimes' [TE].

TE was concerned about trying to spend 'more time with the people that struggle during the early weeks to make sure that they're progressing' [TE]; however, the teacher has to 'try to not do that too much because then people who are doing well are not getting any attention' [TE]: 'I haven't actually worked out a solution to that' [TE]. TE detailed that 'what tends to happen is that really good pupils quit because the classes they feel are beneath them, and they quit about lesson six out of 15', and 'then in lesson seven the people who really struggling and were holding them back, they quit [too]': 'I'm left with the middle people who are very steady. That's just something that I've accepted happens and there's not a lot that I can do' [TE].

These challenges were discussed with awareness of students' preferences, as the teacher has 'to balance their [students'] enthusiasm with what they need' [TF]. for example, 'I'd like to spend more time on musicianship, which is difficult to do in a piano class' [TF], and 'I would like to spend more time away from the piano working with theory, working with rhythm, clapping at rhythms and little bits of singing, which is really hard to get them to do' [TF]. But 'it's always a battle to persuade people at the beginning that's important, because they just want to get on the piano the whole time' [TF].

Students learning preferences included views on music: 'Every now and again I get one or two students that really don't want to learn Chopin or really don't want to learn Coldplay; they came here to learn Beethoven, but generally everybody loves it' [TE], therefore, 'I tend to find as long as you teach with a sense of humour they'll enjoy anything, and as long as it's not too difficult and you teach in a relaxed environment like this then it's fine' [TE]. However, it is difficult to predict students' response: 'the piece that we're going to be looking at … is a piece from the *Jurassic Park* soundtrack, a beautiful piece of music - but I'm not sure if they're going to find it too difficult' [TE].

This section focused on identifying the challenges that teachers had to consider in delivering group piano classes, which included resources and facilities, financial, cultural and students' responses that could directly affect piano pedagogy in this context. The findings showed that the teachers were trying to do their best by using their experience and knowledge in order to meet students' needs and provide successful piano teaching.

11.3 Teachers' Satisfaction and Motivation for Group Piano Teaching

This section identifies the teachers' satisfaction and motivation to teach group piano classes. The findings show that the overall level satisfaction and motivation is high. The literature review in Chapter One (section 1.6), Chapter Four (section 4.2.2) and Chapter Eight (section 8.10) suggests that these aspects connect to resources, student's learning, engagement, improvement in piano learning pedagogy and future opportunities for students. The literature

also establishes that the teacher's beliefs and attitude towards learning and teaching could determine the expected level of satisfaction and motivation.

The findings showed that the teachers were generally satisfied with the resources available in their institutions as seen earlier in this chapter (section 11.2.3). Moreover, adopting and successfully implementing different techniques and methodologies for group piano teaching also contributes to or reflects the teacher's motivation, for example, 'If you sort of try and work at the detailed technical problems first of all … the overall structure comes eventually ... I try to find more details about some problems and solve them' [TF]. The teachers were also aware of the flexibility of teaching: we have a variety of activities between group playing to the group [dividing the class into group-work], playing as a group and playing individually on the keyboards with headphones on' [TF].

The findings identify that the teachers' satisfaction relates to the learners' skill development, acknowledgement of the student's effort, and improved course content subject focus. Teachers are aware that 'it's important for the teacher to provide the right resources, to make sure that what they're learning is an appropriate technical level' [TE].

The findings also showed that teachers felt very happy with their role to help and give opportunity to those people who would like to learn piano at a later stage or as an adult, whatever their aims, and were aware that other people cannot get this opportunity: 'some of the students, unfortunately, stop playing the piano after leaving the school; that is because of lack of resources' [TE]. TF believed in offering a variety of piano skills in group piano classes as 'many individuals focus on piano learning and piano teaching so that they can have an additional skill' [TF]. This helps meet the students' requirements: 'as we're in adult education we're not always preparing [students] for work or a career so more than half of my students are retired people' [TF]. Therefore, flexibility and variety of teaching approaches for group piano leaning is needed in order to help reach students' goals.

Teachers were also aware of learners' financial situations (mentioned earlier in this chapter, section 11.2.4) which influence participation: 'I think it's sad that it's still means tested ... we're cheap, we're a partially funded adult education college, and we have bursaries available for people on very low incomes, and student charity funds' [TF]; still, 'I couldn't afford to do a class here and I'm head of department … it [costs] too much for people living in London', and 'we just can't make it cheap enough' [TF]. TF felt that 'it's still sad that the arts, well, most forms of education once you pass the age of 18, are limited' and only accessible 'to either very clever people who get scholarships who usually had a private school education in order to become very clever in the first place, or people that can afford it' [TF]. Actually, 'we talk the talk … I talk about accessibility' but 'the bottom line is if they don't have £159, they can't come, so that's difficult' [TF].

The teachers' motivation can also be seen through their help for their students: 'I try my best to give them lots and lots of resources that they can practise independently, and help them find a teacher' [TE]. That is because 'once they've finished the Part 1 course and the Part 2 course there's nothing … here for them to continue their studies unless they did a bachelor's degree' [TE]. So 'at the moment everybody just leaves the college, and some of them unfortunately stop playing because they can't find a teacher' [TE].

TF showed further support through providing performance opportunities: 'every Thursday lunchtime, there is a lunchtime recital, so any class can put together a recital programme to be in it', and 'at the end of each term, each class does a little concert, just inside the class' [TF]; therefore, if the student does not want play in public or the student is a beginner, they can 'play a piece just at least just to other people in the class, and often they'll just invite their friends, and so it's a very small number of people' [TF]; 'those first concerts are actually the most valuable inside the class' [TF].

TF believed that 'in group piano lessons students often have a much better sense of performance, because right from the beginning they will play the music piece to the class' [TF], and when the students get more advanced, 'they just find it really easy to play in front of other people without panicking'

[TF]. Through this, students find it is 'really easy to talk to each other about music respectfully', to 'say what they like and what they don't like about a performance and they have opinions' [TF].

Finally, in terms of their own careers, these teachers seemed confident: 'it's a very popular course and the college supports it a lot', so therefore 'it's a very stable source of income for us, and it's also a very stable learning process; pianists go in lot of directions to other musical activities as well' [TF]. The teachers enjoy working in this context: 'I love teaching groups because I can point to things on the board and get excited about it and make jokes, and the students themselves joke between each other usually as well' [TE]. TF felt that 'teaching is fun, if you like people and you like your subject, teaching beginners is great, because you're just introducing them to all this great music, and I think that's pleasure, and it's stress-free for me, it's nice'. TE also showed administrative support: 'Occasionally my lessons are observed as part of the procedure for assessing the quality of teachers here, and if I ever find that I am struggling', for example; 'if I've got an idea that I want to teach and I don't know how, I can have a consultation with them and meet a member of staff to help me through that' [TE].

This section has shown teachers' satisfactions and motivations towards the group piano teaching. Although challenges are identified such as resources, class size, different levels and different interests within the group, and student engagement, these teachers seem satisfied and motivated, confident and aware of their important role in enabling student learning.

11.4 Conclusion

This chapter identified teachers' perspectives on teaching group piano. It showed challenges which directly and indirectly could affect group piano learning. The teachers suggested that a decrease in government funding has led to limited opportunities for group piano learning, and the need for further investment in the provision of opportunity and resources. Learners have varied backgrounds, levels of musical knowledge, ability, practice time, concentration and interest and these present challenges for the teachers.

Student engagement requires different methodologies to teach and build relationships with students. Student engagement is also related to the infrastructure and the availability of group-learning specific resources and equipment which is dependent on support from the institution and financial support from various sources.

The teachers acknowledged that group piano teaching is directed towards improving the skills of the students. The teachers believed that teaching group piano and basic knowledge of piano is important, and opportunity should not just be given to those wanting to be music professionals.

The chapter also identified factors contributing to the satisfaction and motivation of the teachers; applying different teaching techniques and methodologies in group piano learning seems to contribute to teacher motivation and student achievement. The next chapter will provide an overall discussion and conclusion of the findings from the students in this study.

Chapter 12: Students: Discussion and Conclusion

12.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the findings related to students from this study, critically discussing the current existing piano pedagogic practices at CBE in Kuwait and at LCM in the UK. In addition, the findings from the literature review and student focus group data analysis are revisited for comparative analysis to identify similarities and differences in the findings.

Initially, this research acknowledges that learning classical and modern Western music in a Middle Eastern country such as Kuwait can be difficult. The research context in Chapter One (section 1.2.1) and literature review in Chapter Two suggests that there are some differences between the Middle East music and Western music; primarily the use of quartertones in Middle Eastern music, while Western music relies predominantly on scales comprising tones or semitones.

In Chapters Two and Three this study presented background information on piano pedagogic practices at CBE in Kuwait. In Chapter Seven the student views on their motivations, perceptions of teaching and pedagogic approach to learning piano at CBE were examined; Chapter Nine presented the views of students in similar group piano lab settings in the UK.

This chapter focuses on the research objective set in Chapter One (section 1.8): To discover student views on their motivations, perceptions of teaching and pedagogic approach to piano pedagogy at CBE and to compare these with the views of students learning within similar settings in the UK.

12.2 Students' Perspectives

Eid (2010) argued that piano courses and pedagogies across global programmes have various elements, and understanding the nature of piano education requires an assessment of student needs. Beeching (2010) also argues that music as a career can be challenging for music students, as they face uncertainty regarding their end goals. Some of the career possibilities

include working as professional performers, as private music teachers, or school and university faculty members. In all these contexts, understanding the importance of piano education can be essential as it is considered by employers to be a basic skill. Through survey participation (in the UK and Kuwait) and the focus group (Kuwait) it was possible to gain better understanding of students' reasons for learning piano, their approaches to learning, their motivation, and their views on their teachers. This chapter will discuss these findings.

12.3 Student Profile

In Kuwait, most of the students who participated in the study were in the age group 21–25 (83.7%) and were studying piano modules 5 or 6. Just four students were in the 18–20 age range and three in the 26–30 age range. On the other hand, in the UK, the majority of the respondents (38%) were in the age group 26–30 years, followed by 31% who were in the age group 31–50 years. However, the smallest number of respondents belonged to the 18–20 and 21–25 age groups (six per cent each). Clearly, the students from Kuwait were predominantly younger and may have different expectations of learning. Hallam et al. (2011) concluded that interactionist models of learning propose that the construction and internalisation of learning are influenced not only by culture but also by the individual's characteristics. Therefore, learners' age and prior experiences with learning can influence their expectations.

This could perhaps be a reason for differences in view with respect to the underlying reasons for learning piano. The students from CBE show that their choice of the programme was determined by their love for music, and by relevance to enabling opportunities for a career in the field. The LCM students presumably also loved music, as they were paying for a course to enable them to study piano; however, they may have been more interested in other aspects such as developing good technique or learning a range of repertoire, and they were not focused on music as a career. Perhaps the differences in age could contribute to this difference in end goals set by the students. The expectations of the students from Kuwait are more technical and goal-oriented to support

their future music careers, while LCM students enjoyed learning and personal benefit-related aspects. Differences in expectations from a learning programme can result in differences in teaching needs and modes of instruction as 'instruction that recognises and helps satisfy the aesthetic needs of older adults will empower them for continued participation in learning' (Myers, 1992, p.26). As Jones (2007) argues, critical pedagogy in music education is related to the connection of students with their realities. Therefore, the different expectations between students and teachers, as well as the learning needs of students need to be addressed.

An analysis of student self-reported expertise further involves an assessment of their independent skill areas. When compared to Kuwait, the UK students show higher scores with respect to music reading, sight-reading, rhythm, technique, interpretation and score reading. The only element where the Kuwaiti students self-identified higher skill levels was for memorisation.

As noted earlier, students in Kuwait are aspiring towards careers as school music teachers. The low ratings for sight-reading and music reading could be attributed to cultural challenges. Musicians in Kuwait often learn by ear, with a rare focus on written music (Bartel, 2003). Furthermore, since the traditional major/minor scale in Western education is replaced by Arabic modes which contain micro-tonality, it may be difficult for students to balance learning Arabic music and Western music tonal systems when playing the piano. Additionally, an assessment of skills in the student focus group discussion showed that a lack of individual student attention from the teacher and primary focus on completing allocated pieces by memorisation are some of the key factors involved in these challenges. Some research has shown that memorisation is not as important as other skills. Richards (1962) notes that improvisation, transposition, music analysis, chord progressions and playing by ear are the most important skills, while memorisation or playing figured bass were not considered to be that important. Tollefson (2001) also argues that piano playing skills such as reading, practise, accompaniment and composition need to be balanced by the player's ability. The UK students show moderately higher self-reported scores in these elements. In considering these findings, it is essential to acknowledge that self-reporting may not be as ideal as actual

testing. As seen in the Kuwaiti context with respect to student motivation (Chapter Seven), this could demonstrate student confidence rather than actual skills. This needs to be better addressed in further research.

12.4 Piano Practice

The third element discussed as part of the student profile and general views is their dedication and the time input for practise. The findings from Kuwait show mixed results. Focus group discussions show that students take efforts to practise at least three times a week. However, the questionnaire analysis found that piano practice daily (9.3%) or three times a week (11.6%) in total was limited (20.9%). Most of the students practised twice a week (39.5%) or once a week (39.5%). On the other hand, an assessment of UK learning practices shows that the majority of respondents practised the piano every day or twice a week (31% each), followed by 19% who practised three days a week. However, the fewest respondents (6%) practised only once a week. These are interesting findings. Given that most of the students in the UK are at a beginner level when compared to those in Kuwait, while the LCM students have other demands on their time and have limited access to practise, the expectation was that the Kuwaiti students would practise more as this is connected to their future career, even if these Kuwaiti students have homework from the other parts of their course, or also have limited access to pianos due to cultural reasons.

An analysis of prior literature has shown that frequency of practice is essential to improve the overall quality of learning (Klickstein, 2009; Hallam, 1997). Therefore, the potential reasons behind the relatively low presence of practice in Kuwait merits further attention from the piano staff. However, from the focus group discussion findings (Chapter Seven), students contend that frequency and focus on practise increases only before examinations, and time is allocated during class for practise. Also, given that there are more classes for the Kuwaiti students and more opportunities to practise in class, there may be fewer set learning needs outside the classroom. Therefore, teachers need to emphasise the value of practice, as 'both quantity and quality of practice are

critical to musical achievement' (Klickstein, 2009, p.13). As Hallam (1997) argues, the inherent differences in the way musicians address music practice is largely based on end goals. The focus group clearly showed that before a performance or a test, practise frequency increased to twice or three times a week in Kuwait. This supports Hallam's proposition that goals could result in variation in frequency of practice.

Apart from frequency of practice, it is also essential to address the quality of practice. Another aspect that can be compared in this context is cultural differences in instruction. Alkoot (2009), in an assessment of teaching practices in GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] countries, argues that there is a lot of unidirectional learning and one-way communication in higher education. The student encouragement to carry out independent learning is low (Alyoser, 2016). This could be a contributory factor to the relatively low amount of practice. Other aspects include cultural elements. The Kuwaiti students believe that practise at home can be challenging due to lack of access to the piano and cultural constraints against the acceptance of piano playing. On the other hand, as Lennon (1996) reports, playing the piano in Western countries is considered as a sign of achievement and often adds to the profile of learning. These elements could further highlight variations in learning needs. In Kuwait, most of the students reported satisfaction with existing practice facilities within the music department in the college, which enabled them to practise sufficiently within the institution in order to complete the module requirements. In the UK, practice within the educational environment was low, which could be linked to the fact that most of the students are older adults who take one or two classes in the institution and do not have time to complete practice in this location, and also due to the fact that at LCM the resources are prioritised for use by the full-time undergraduate and postgraduate students.

12.5 Piano Practice Skills

An analysis of the type of piano learning practice skills shows that in Kuwait, overall awareness and self-reported usage are high with respect to slow practice, repetition and isolated sectional practice. Additionally, awareness is

high for separate hand practice (n=32) and variation in tempo (n=27). The awareness (n=12) and self-reported usage (n=5) of the students is low with respect to self-evaluation. An analysis of the same trend in the UK shows that the highest number of respondents used the slow practice technique (n=16), followed by 14 who followed practise with each hand and 13 who followed the repetition technique. However, the smallest number of people (n=6) followed the self-evaluation strategy. The findings in the UK and in Kuwait show similar learning processes, with importance ascribed to slow practice and practise with isolated sections and separate hands. Bangert and Altenmüller (2003), in their assessment of piano learning strategies, conclude that slow practice can be effective in memorising a piece and can aid in performance without additional support. As Thompson (1982) argues, practising can be improved if students are encouraged to use slow practice and follow specific routines. However, Thompson also argued that student knowledge can be enhanced through self-evaluation and concentration. The lack of such self-evaluation in both locations shows some challenges in learning, and better assessment of these self-evaluation needs is required for future performance goals.

Zimmerman (2002), in an assessment of self-evaluation, contends that self-regulation can improve goal setting, strategy use and improvement in overall knowledge of instruction. Nielsen (2001) also argues that solving instrumental learning challenges requires self-regulation and reflection, where assessment of prior performance is key to overall playing effectiveness. Boyle and Radocy (1987) state that evaluation involves 'making some judgement or decision regarding the worth, quality, or value of experiences, procedures, activities, or individual or group performances as they relate to some educational endeavor' (p.7). The lack of self-evaluation of students in this study could be linked to limited opportunities within the instructional process. In the interviews reported in Chapter Eight, the Kuwaiti teachers contend that lack of time to increase reflective learning is largely because of limited time given to piano education as part of the music education curriculum. In both locations, there is a need for more focus on the potential factors which contribute to self-regulation and self-evaluation.

12.6 Further Musical Skills

The UK data show that the majority of respondents (69%) sometimes research the music compositions. On the other hand, the findings from the focus group discussion in Chapter Seven highlight that no such research is performed by CBE students. The students are often informed about the piece that they are going to practise during the week and no advance information is given. According to Wright and Kanellopoulos (2010), music learning can improve a great deal if opportunities are available for students to inform themselves about the piece. This could also be related to class size. A comparison of class size between the UK and Kuwaiti groups show that more individual learning opportunities to focus on other musical skills are available to LCM students in the UK than to CBE students in Kuwait. As Daniel (2005) argues, while the one-to-one method was the most ideal approach to studio-based teaching, this is not necessarily an ideal approach in institutional higher music education, because the teacher is constantly repeating the same concepts to different students, and therefore the mode of teaching is inefficient. This can lead to the use of group learning; however, while group learning can enhance the overall range of learning opportunities, there are disadvantages linked to the time available for individualised attention. Therefore, as seen in the UK context, it would be beneficial if the Kuwaiti students were able to expand on their learning opportunities through structured research on music pieces as part of their assignments and also offering more developments in the class size to give more teacher availability for individual attention.

Similarly, a comparison of the views of students regarding musical interpretation shows interesting perspectives. From the UK perspective, it is evident that the respondents have opinions and discussions with teachers on how pieces are performed. It is seen that the majority of the UK respondents will sometimes argue with their teachers (56%), although 38% never have differences of opinion with their teacher. On the other hand, in Kuwait, 63% never experiment with the piece. Additionally, 100% of the sample indicated that they never asked themselves how the composer may have intended a work to be played rather than how their teacher told them to play it. These

differences show that there is a lack of engagement with the piece and potential opportunities for experimentation in expression.

Green (2009) argues that using improvisation within the classroom and allowing pupils to address their interpretation of a piece can be essential to improve their understanding of music. Green (2002) also states that this approach enhances the ability of music learners to choose the music that they learn themselves and this can help them listen to and interpret the music rather than simply reading notation without taking efforts to understand the composer's motivation. Green (2009) also argues that by using improvisation it is possible for learners to improve their engagement with the piece, and creative capabilities can be improved; such an approach can help change the pedagogic focus of music learning, involving:

> Teaching in a responsive, rather than directive way; metaphorically taking the learner by the hand, getting inside their head and asking, "What do they want to achieve now, this minute, and what is the main thing they need to achieve it?''. In this way, the teacher sits alongside the learner and is to a large extent a learner themselves (Green, 2009, p.34).

An appraisal of the UK student views shows that engagement with the teacher relating to the piece creates appreciation of the music and helps develop musical skills. This is an area that needs to be explored in the Kuwaiti scenario, where students seemed to not to be encouraged to improvise and appear more passive in their learning.

12.7 Music Learning and Curriculum-Based Approach to Piano Learning and Teaching

The comparison of music learning and experience shows that most of the UK adult learners have had less exposure to piano learning and can be classified as 'beginners' when compared to those in Kuwait; however, the UK students may still have a broader awareness of the piano through UK culture, whereas the Kuwaiti ones are unlikely to. This may relate to potential differences in the

expectations of students and may contribute to other aspects discussed through the course of this chapter.

The findings from Chapter Seven, as previously mentioned, show that the primary motivation of the students in Kuwait with respect to learning music is to achieve a career in the field. The CBE students find that there has been a shift in acceptance towards music as a career and want to be engaged in music learning for the purpose of teaching or performance. On the other hand, the findings from Chapter Nine show that the UK students attend music lessons solely for the purpose of learning music.

These UK students were undertaking a 'lifelong learner' (non-qualification) course at LCM; nevertheless, in this formal setting) they might also use 'informal learning process' (Rogers & Horrocks, 2010, p.142). As 'adults engage in their own purposeful learning episodes, they choose their sites of learning which they feel are most appropriate to their intentions, and they choose those processes with which they are most comfortable' (ibid.). Findings from studies such as Jaffurs (2004) suggest that informal learning of music for the purpose of music appreciation, as a hobby and as a relaxation, as well as to gain the benefits of improvement in critical thinking and analytical skills, has led to both young and adult learners being aware of using different types of learning, both formal and informal, and using informal practices within formal settings. The use of informal learning in music education can contribute to an improvement in both student and teacher capabilities. Wright and Kanellopoulos (2010) conclude that the development of musical skills through this approach can enable students to work intensively and effectively and can contribute to improvements in their ensemble skills, instrumental skills and compositional skills. Therefore, understanding these differences between students in the UK and Kuwait is essential.

Since the teachers perceive that piano learning is an integral part of students overall music learning at CBE, the piano curriculum was designed for all music students, regardless of student's needs or level of piano skills. In Chapter Eight, the teachers at CBE seemed happy to cover the basic needs of the learners. However, it appeared that some skills were lacking because the

teachers do not extend students' knowledge and practical skills beyond the basic requirements. The CBE student skill limitations with respect to practical skill development are also associated with limited involvement in decisions on repertoire choices. Significantly, the low ratings for instructor competencies in relation to sight-reading, score reading, accompaniment, harmonisation, transposition, improvisation and composition also suggest further areas for institutional consideration.

12.8 Students' Motivations and Self-Efficacy

The next element discussed is the assessment of motivation and self-efficacy. As researchers (McKoy et al., 2010; Wristen, 2006) argue, piano learning and piano instruction at a tertiary education level are aimed at enhancing musical knowledge, self-efficacy and the technique of the student. In this context, understanding student self-efficacy and student motivation is very important.

From the Kuwaiti assessment, it is seen that most of the respondents are motivated and have confidence in their own skills and capabilities. These include the ability to manage piano learning activities (Mean=4.65), confidence in playing the piano (Mean=4.58) and confidence in excelling as a piano player (Mean=4.60). At the same time, in the UK sample, such competency (Mean=3.25) and confidence (Mean=3.5) are lower. Furthermore, confidence in excellence in the field is also found to be higher in Kuwait when compared to the UK. It seems likely that UK learners might have greater prior knowledge and therefore they possibly have a more realistic understanding of what it might mean to excel at the piano. The literature review in Chapter Three on student motivation and student involvement has shown that adult music learner motivations can be significant in improving the overall effectiveness of learning and the overall student achievement. Therefore, the student motivation in learning piano, as reflected by Miksza (2012), is an attribute which can help better understand student expectations and the level of student engagement in the classroom. Interestingly, Chapter Eight shows some alternative findings. Most teachers are of the belief that while students do show improvements and are willing to work towards achieving their goals, their level

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of competence improvement continues to be slow. In the UK, the teachers and the students agree that while the student motivation and commitment towards learning remain high, there is a need for improvement in competence through better structured learning, improved practice and better one-on-one instruction and practice. This difference in the perception of student motivation and actual performance is an area worth further investigation.

Asmus (1986), in an assessment of student belief, concludes that the higher the student expectation and motivation for success, the higher the performance. In this context, it can be argued that the motivation of the students in Kuwait is better than that of the students in UK. Furthermore, Amrein and Berliner (2003) conclude that student motivation can help identify areas of student interest and disinterest. Asmus and Harrison (1990) argue that the characteristics of motivation for music and the musical aptitude of undergraduate students show that student motivation should not be confused with overconfidence and efforts need to be taken to ensure that personal commitment and personal competencies match. These findings showcase the need for better communication between the teachers and the students in Kuwait. Furthermore, while 'lifelong musical experience, expectations and understanding profoundly affect adult motivation for learning a musical instrument' (Taylor & Hallam, 2008, p.285), an assessment of the UK situation shows that the level of student competency and motivation is low. As Covington (1983) states, music student dropout is linked to the inability of teachers to inspire confidence in performance and competence. These findings showcase that even though the LCM teacher was doing a great deal to consider learner motivation, there is still the need for more understanding of student needs.

The literature review suggests that the development of learning strategies in young piano music beginners requires the teacher to understand their self-efficacy and motivation. It also suggests that understanding the student's motivation and the factors that affect motivation can decrease the gap between the teacher and the student. However, there is a need for more literature on adult beginners. Students at LCM believe that limited resource availability can act as inhibitors to learning. However, students at CBE contend that the

programme encourages the overall skills of the students while creating positive self-efficacy and motivation.

Gün and Yildiz (2014) contend that lower self-efficacy leads to performance weakening or performance lower than the current performer's ability. Welch and Ockelford (2009) suggest that in addition to task mastery and experience, performance anxiety, self-efficacy beliefs and self-perception affect self-efficacy. The current study identified that there are various factors such as resource availability, future plans, the reasons for learning piano, and personal problems, that affect student motivation. The overall findings of this study suggest that there is a need for effort to develop an environment for positive student-teacher interaction. Student-teacher interaction boosts the student's motivation and self-efficacy. This study finds that the teachers in both countries strive to support their students, recognising their capabilities and personalities. However, advancing the student's motivation to learn piano and boosting self-efficacy also requires student's commitment to the curriculum and motivation towards performing in exams. Based on the findings it is understandable that not all students are equally committed to piano learning.

12.9 Students' Attitudes Towards the Teachers

The student views regarding the role of the teacher and their impact on student learning and engagement is another area of focus. The assessment of Kuwaiti student views shows that teachers encouraged and supported the students. The results clearly indicate that students feel that their teachers have pushed them to think for themselves (Mean=4.12) and have encouraged the students to practise more (Mean=4.12). On the other hand, in the UK context, the students' views on teacher encouragement (Mean=3.12) and teacher support (Mean=3.18) show that there is a relatively low level of perceived teacher engagement. Prior research discussed in Chapter Three has supported the need for student engagement and overall student involvement. For example, Huan et al. (2012) conclude that to create positive teacher-student relationships requires instructors who remain engaged beyond the classroom. Sichivitsa (2007) also reports that when teachers and students were more

involved it led to better self-concept amongst the students. This led to better engagement with the music and greater student perception of its value.

Positive teacher-student relationships are evident in Kuwait, as supported by the focus group discussion findings. The findings show that student perception of encouragement and support could be linked to their overall confidence and their willingness to improve their competence. The focus group discussion identified that many of the CBE students wanted to become professional music teachers and believed that structured learning guided by teacher support and encouragement helped in this achievement. However, LCM students were not aiming to become professional music teachers; nevertheless, some of them also felt supported by their teachers.

An assessment of teacher skills across both countries shows that teacher skills in the UK were rated higher when compared to those in Kuwait. Though the following section will address this in more depth, from Chapter Eight it is seen that teacher self-efficacy and motivation are relatively low. The lack of teaching time and resource issues, including budget, are factors that need to be highlighted. Also, as some students in Kuwait identify in the focus group discussion, there is little clear goal-setting by the teachers. According to Retelsdorf et al. (2010), the drive of teachers towards success, in addition to respect for their job and certain specific behaviours, represents the achievement of goals in the teaching process. This could perhaps account for the low rating from students for their perception of teaching skills.

The teachers in the UK, on the other hand, are considered to have better professional skills and are considered to be good at technical skill provision by the students. Perhaps this difference in teaching capabilities can be linked to general structure and to the pedagogic differences across both countries. For example, Shook (1993) reports that teachers who aimed to be aware of different roles and responsibilities, including administration, general knowledge, studio management and studio teaching, achieved better performance and achieved their goals. As previously mentioned, Uszler (2000) identifies that piano teachers who once thought their job was to teach technique and pieces are now additionally focusing on teaching students to

create, analyse, ornament, improvise, memorise, transpose and harmonise. This finding reveals that there is a gap in a professional development for the CBE teachers who might find it difficult to access training or new materials. As argued in prior sections of this chapter, there is evidence of a communication gap between the teacher and the student in Kuwait. This could be a further aspect relating to the low rating of teacher skills. Additionally, the level of importance given to elements like learning history and referring to additional material is relatively low. The lack of such comprehensive learning content could also be a factor determining the low rating of teacher skills and teaching competencies. Therefore, this suggests that there could be improvements made in both countries if student-teacher communication was enhanced.

12.10 Challenges for Piano Education and Potential Solutions

The literature review in Chapters Three and Four suggested that piano pedagogy is transforming from primarily one-to-one teaching to include group contexts. This brings several challenges for students and teachers. Likewise, the literature review in Chapters Three and Four and the data analysis in Chapters Eight to Eleven also identifies that the group piano teaching is demanding. This study also proposes that student engagement is an essential element for group piano teaching. However, there are several challenges that discourage student engagement and learning piano in group lessons. Those challenges are the availability of resources (funding and facilities), use of appropriate technology, different level of students and a variety of interest for piano learning.

The findings in Chapters Three and Four show that overall student engagement with the piano programme is essential. However, there are many challenges associated with student and teacher interaction at CBE. The students reveal that the learning environment at the music lab and the facilities for piano learning are less than ideal. Learning piano outside the lab is also challenging. The most common element in the current study was the need for a positive environment combined with students' willingness to practise. However, failure to actually practise piano was identified as linked to a lack of

infrastructure and lack of support and access to playing piano outside the piano lab at CBE.

The data relating to the UK students in Chapter Eleven reveals challenges as the students come from different backgrounds and have different prior experience and different musical preferences and interest in piano learning. Moreover, even though the students have access to the state of art music labs and the piano learning facilities, the time-bound curriculum and practice is a challenge. Nevertheless, practising outside the facilities is also challenging due to the commitment to other work and sometimes the lack of support from family or friends.

12.11 Conclusion

The literature review and data analysis demonstrate that piano learning is an essential skill for music students. The main findings of this research are illustrated in Figure 19 below, which shows that group piano learning relies on the availability of resources such as technology and modern facilities and equipment availability for each student. Piano learning needs practice within and outside the classroom. However, the literature review and data analysis also suggest that the curriculum-based approach to piano learning and for preparation for exams is valuable in certain contexts. The curriculum-based approach is always time-bound, as a student will need to learn material within a specific timeframe to succeed in an exam. The current study also highlights that learners need self-efficacy and motivation. This study also finds that the teachers at CBE and LCM give support to their piano students, which connects to recognising the students' capabilities and personalities. However, this study also proposes that advancing the student's motivation to learn piano and boosting their self-efficacy also requires student's commitment to the curriculum and motivation towards performing in the exams or course aims.

There are a number of challenges that hinder the motivation and self-efficacy of the students towards the curriculum-based approach. These arise because of the varied levels of the students, their different attributes and different needs. Learners in groups may struggle to follow a curriculum-based approach

even if the resources and support were available from the teachers and the institution. As discussed earlier in Chapters Two, Three and Four, piano pedagogy may differ in both countries, and a significant challenge faced by all students is the support for practising the piano within and outside the musical institution.
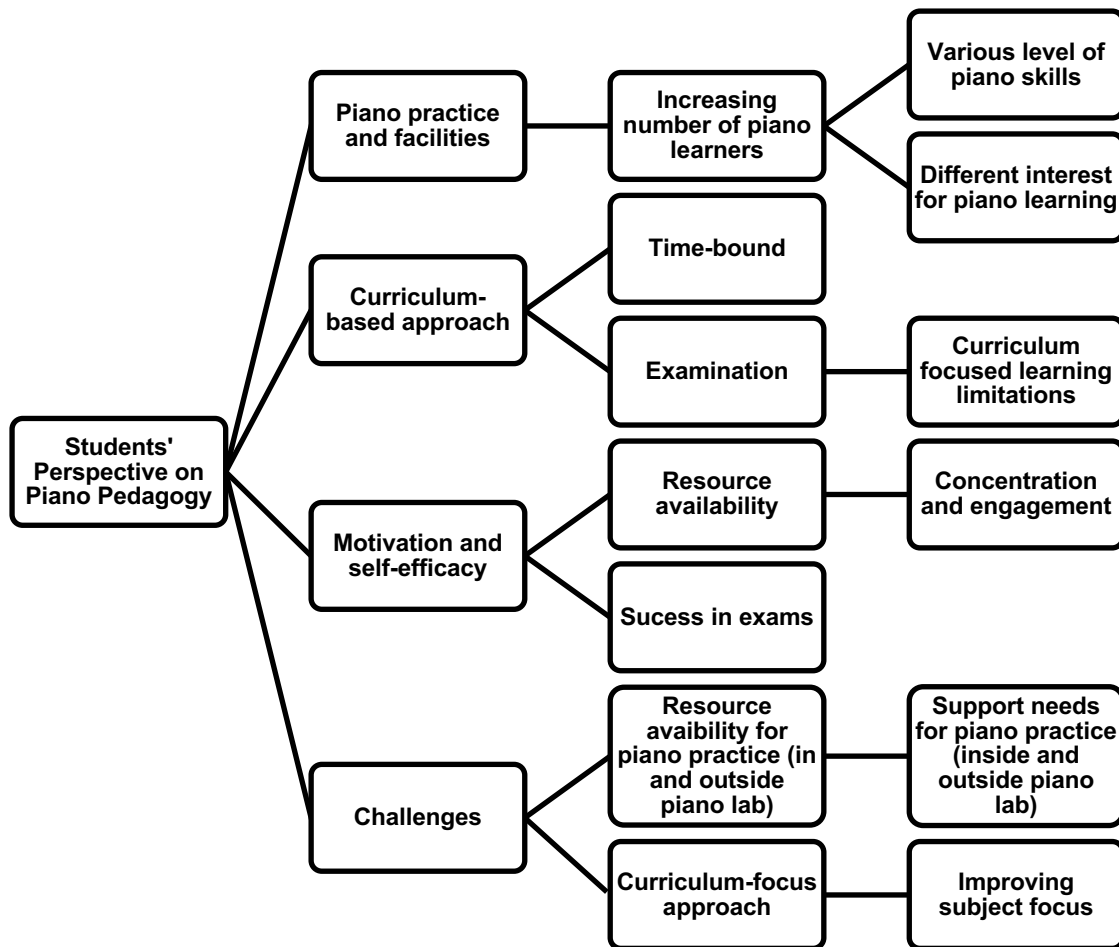
Figure 19: Students' Perspectives on Piano Pedagogy

Figure 19 above also illustrates that the overall pedagogy for piano learning in a group requires modern piano learning facilities for practising the piano. Practising the piano is essential within and outside the institutional facilities. However, modern facilities are needed to accommodate the need of increasing

number of learners. In addition, the facilities should be able to address the needs of various levels of learners.

Another finding from this study is that a curriculum-based approach to piano learning that is time-bound does not address the need of all students who have different interests in piano learning. That is because the curriculum-based learning in institutions is focused on the pre-set theories and methodologies that fulfil the examination or course aims. The focus on examination or specific aims does not fulfil needs arising from the different interests of the students. To succeed in exams, students need to practise. A lack of resources and support from the institutions leads some students to lose concentration on learning and practising.

In addition, the motivation and self-efficacy of the students relies on the resource availability in the institutions to accommodate students' practising, recording and learning needs. The students were concerned that the resource availability for piano learning was limited and was sometimes not available after the piano lessons. Therefore, there are issues for institutions to address.

Overall, the students face two main challenges, a) resource availability for piano learning and practice, and b) the curriculum-based and time-bound approach to piano learning. Some students highlighted that the time-bound curriculum-focused approach would not be a concern if the resources are available to practise piano outside the piano lessons. The data also show that there is a gap particularly in the difference of teacher approach in both countries, which can be seen through choice of inclusion of some musical skills such as sight-reading, the extent of research on music repertoire and interpretation in the UK, and this also reflects another gap in the training and accessibility of music for the piano teachers in Kuwait. Therefore, this study suggests that support for piano learning within and outside the institution is essential for group piano teaching and learning.

Chapter 13: Teachers: Discussion and Conclusion

13.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented a comprehensive discussion and conclusion of student views by comparing evidence from Kuwait and the UK. This chapter focuses on the findings concerning teachers, and critically discusses the main findings relating to existing piano pedagogic practices at CBE in Kuwait and in the UK institutes. In addition, the findings from the literature review and teacher data analysis are revisited for comparative analysis. Furthermore, the piano teachers' views on their motivation to teach piano at CBE (see Chapter Eight) are compared with the views of the UK piano teachers (see Chapters Ten and Eleven). This chapter focuses on the research objective set in Chapter One (section 1.8): To identify piano teachers' views on their motivation to teach piano at CBE and compare these to the views of piano teachers in the UK. This chapter also defines and discusses the overall views of the teachers on piano pedagogy.

13.2 Teachers' Perspectives

This section addresses factors from the teacher perspective. Research in higher education has shown that there can be global variations in teaching strategies and the overall approach to curricular needs (Conway & Hodgman, 2009). Conway and Hodgman (2009) also show that societal values may drive teaching and can influence teacher stance and teaching strategies. Therefore, it is expected that there will be teaching differences between the UK and Kuwait. This section will highlight these elements, discussing the teachers' perspectives of group piano pedagogy at CBE (Kuwait) and at LCM and City Lit (UK). The findings from the literature review in Chapter Three (section 3.2.1) illustrate several factors that contribute to group piano pedagogy including challenges of group teaching. Literature discussed in Chapter Four suggests different methodologies, learning theories and philosophies appropriate for group piano teaching. The analysis of the interviews in

Chapters Eight, Ten and Eleven illustrated the main findings from the teachers' perspective on group piano pedagogy. This section will discuss the teachers' attitudes and expectations of group piano teaching and learning, their perspectives on curriculum-based approaches to group piano pedagogy, their views on the challenges of group piano teaching, type of learning and learning environment, learning and testing, student engagement, teacher satisfaction and the role of technology.

13.2.1 Teachers' Attitudes and Expectations of Piano Teaching and Learning in Groups

The findings from the literature review in Chapter Two (section 2.3) show that due to the increasing focus on piano teaching and learning, the number of students has increased in the UK. As piano is seen as a legitimate subject for any music learner, in general, a positive attitude is seen regarding piano learning. However, the literature review in Chapter One (section 1.6) highlights several developing aspects of piano teaching including increased teacher professionalism and use of teaching activities. Moreover, it suggests that piano teachers should have understanding of implications relating to the globalisation of music education, such as shifts in teaching philosophies from primarily emphasising technique and performance to including creative and functional skills such as improvisation. The findings show that modern (up-to-date) piano learning facilities could also help to advance the development of piano learning and help students to gain piano skills.

The current study realises the importance of motivation and self-efficacy of both students and teachers to help student learning. The teachers at CBE, LCM and City Lit identified a supportive environment to be a prerequisite for active learning as it drives students' motivation and engagement. The need for flexibility in teaching approaches was also identified as vital for effective learning. Discussion of piano examinations from the teachers' perspective in Chapter Four (section 4.1), in Chapter Eight (section 8.3) and in Chapter Ten (section 10.4) shows that the focus was mainly on the playing techniques of the students through the syllabus requirements of scales and piano exercises.

It was also found that the student engagement with the curriculum in Chapter Four (section 4.2.4), in Chapter Eight (section 8.3) and in Chapter Ten (section 10.4) was also a factor influencing examination repertoire choices, which could include additional student-selected material.

On the students' role in piano learning and teaching the teachers concluded that students' interest in learning is determined by their personal interests. Moreover, the overall time spent on practice is driven by students' motivation, attitude and ability to understand the programme content. As mentioned in Chapter Eight in connection to the increase in the number of piano students, the CBE teachers believed that a high number of students took the music course because they did not have the option to take other courses within the college. However, in the UK institutes, the teachers think that piano learning is an essential part of music learning in order to develop other musical skills.

Overall, this study finds that the teachers' expectations are high and their attitudes towards piano learning relate to the availability of infrastructural support and use of technology for group learning. These piano teachers are generally satisfied with piano pedagogy; however, they feel that the pedagogical process has to overcome potential challenges to attain global accreditation. Also, the teachers believe that understanding individual student needs is vital, but focusing on each student in a large group is challenging, especially in a time-bound curriculum-based structure.

13.2.2 Teachers' Perspectives on Curriculum-based Approach to Piano Teaching and Learning in Groups

This section focuses on identifying the teachers' views on the curriculum-based approach to group piano pedagogy. The findings show that the learning assessments are both formal (through examination) and informal (through teachers' understanding of the learners' progress in class). Through assessment, the teachers can understand the student's achievement in regard to the curriculum structure and its pre-set levels.

Analysis of the teacher's perspectives in this study reveals that the teachers believe in the importance of piano learning as part of the music curriculum. The literature review in Chapter Two (section 2.1) and Chapter Three (sections 3.1 to 3.5) suggests that piano skills are fundamental for music students. The teachers also suggest that supporting and motivating students for a professional musical career is essential.

In comparing CBE and the UK institutes, all of the teacher's perspectives align with the curriculum-based approach to piano teaching and learning. The data analysis in Chapter Eight and further analysis in Chapters Ten and Eleven reveal that group piano learning is challenging, especially when it is curriculum-based. The teachers from both countries agree that a curriculum-based approach is essential for the delivery of the course and to evaluate the student's progress. From the overall views of the teachers, the curriculum drives the need for piano skills, and the curriculum-based approach provides the opportunity to choose test material that suits varied levels of ability and different musical interests. Additionally, in the UK institutions the teachers showed flexibility to include some material relating directly to students' interests into the curriculum; whereas in Kuwait, additional material was only added for the most able students.

The data analysis in Chapter Eight (section 8.3) shows that the teachers at CBE believed that the student's level of learning, the curricular expectations and the student's individual ability to cope with the examination influence the student's assessment. The selection of the exam material mainly depends on the CBE piano teacher. The teachers find that exams are driven by the curriculum that requires level-based testing. The UK teachers showed that the curriculum-based approach is important for conducting group piano classes, as the group learning process can be driven by specific criteria that are already set in the curriculum and delivered through the lesson plans. The findings in Chapter Ten show that the curriculum-based approach can help the teachers to evaluate their students' progression.

Moreover, the teachers in both countries think that the testing measures should include the fundamentals of pitch and rhythm, student's ability to read

music and theories of music. Therefore, the piano teachers adopt a mixture of teaching methods during their teaching for group piano classes, as using a mixture of teaching approachs and methodologies can help develop the piano skills of students with different interests, levels and backgrounds. The findings are similar to the literature review in Chapter Three (section 3.3) which demonstrates the benefits of a range of approaches, in which higher education music students can discover the value of different contexts and approaches.

13.2.3 Type of Learning and Learning Environment

The teachers, when questioned about the nature of the piano curriculum and the end goals of the programme, identified alternative views. The teachers in Kuwait believed that piano learning as part of the music programme at CBE helped students prepare for a career in music. On the other hand, the teachers in the UK argued that while piano learning was an essential element of music learning from the perspective of teachers, there are many cases where individuals learn piano for recreation and out of interest. Prior research (Taylor & Hallam, 2011; Nitsche et al., 2011) has shown that understanding the nature and goals of music learning is essential.

The UK and Kuwaiti teachers agree that the goal of piano pedagogy is to help students to improve their ability to learn music and conduct themselves in a professional manner which helps and supports them to success in their future career or plans as pianists. Egilmez and Engur (2017) identify that the effectiveness of a teacher is affected by several factors such as motivation, self-confidence and opportunities for learning technical mastery. Agay (2004) argues that there are multiple lesson formats available, which include private, group and class piano methods, and the choice of teaching is dependent on the level of expertise of students and the overall end goal. Daniel (2005) also argues that although a one-on-one method is ideal, students even at higher education level would benefit from group lessons to make the best use of the teacher's time through not having to keep repeating the same information to different pupils in one-to-one lessons.

The Kuwaiti findings also show that teachers are essential to give motivation to students and help them learn. The focus of the teacher's responsibilities is to help balance the curriculum structure with student needs. UK teachers support the need for encouragement and teacher engagement with the student. This is expected to reduce student stress and anxiety and aid in improving overall student piano skills. The teachers also showed their availability for offering some piano concerts in order to encourage and motivate learners. The teachers in both countries conclude that while motivating individual students is essential, understanding student motivation can help inform further instructional design.

Another similarity between the UK and Kuwaiti teachers' perspectives is the focus on the learning environment. Teachers in both countries have a positive view on this, concluding that this should be open and should encourage questioning and discussion. The overall comparison of teacher views across both countries shows that there is greater room for teacher-led discussion in group lessons in the UK, while teachers in Kuwait focus on the curriculum and are burdened by its completion. These differences can be attributed to overall differences in learning and teaching within these environments.

13.2.4 Piano Learning and Testing

Teachers in both countries were questioned about their approach to testing. In the UK and Kuwait, it was found that acceptance of examinations was high as students had a clear end goal. Babin (2005) contended from a historical analysis that examinations are often essential in piano learning and playing of specific pieces is considered essential.

UK teachers showed acceptance of the importance of examination and evaluation as they aligned their curriculum with the most widely-used examination board syllabus in the UK, despite teaching on lifelong (non-qualification) courses. Kuwaiti teachers identified level-based testing for the purpose of passing the piano modules which focuses on sight-reading, technical skills and flexibility as key elements.

Differences between UK and Kuwaiti teachers' views on testing and assessment were also evident in terms of formal and informal feedback. Most of the testing options that were highlighted in Kuwait focused on formal testing with some options for flexibility in terms of choice of piece. The research found that at CBE the focus of the curriculum was on ensuring that the student was able to replicate or memorise a piece of music. Therefore, the students were assessed on the ability to memorise and play without error, which helped the teachers evaluate if their students had practised properly. This shows summative formal feedback, where the teacher addresses student performance at specific intervals and at the end of course or semester (Harlen & James, 1997).

On the other hand, in the UK, the teachers believed that is essential to increase knowledge of music through informal feedback and engagement. The teachers believed that by providing informal feedback and by encouraging student interaction and perhaps group collaborations, the overall quality of student technical expertise in piano playing can improve. This supports the arguments of Yorke (2003), who concludes that formative assessment is essential, where informal feedback at different stages and encouraging peer collaboration are key to overall knowledge improvement.

13.2.5 Student Engagement with the Programme

An assessment of the teachers' perspectives on student engagement and teacher interaction shows that teachers in both the UK and Kuwait believe in understanding student motivation. The importance of motivation to enhance self-efficacy has been well discussed in literature. For instance, Kurtuldu and Bulut (2017) contend that lower self-efficacy leads to performance impairment or performance lower than the current capacity. The UK teachers acknowledge that when students are less motivated it reflects in their performance. The Kuwaiti teachers also argue that since a range of factors influence student learning and efficiency apart from technical knowledge, interaction with students to improve their motivation and self-worth and reduce their anxiety is essential. These findings support research such as Papaioannou and

Christodoulidis (2007) who suggest that in addition to task mastery and experience, various psychological factors affect performance quality.

Additionally, teachers in both countries identify the need to address student interest and level of engagement. The Kuwaiti teachers argue that student engagement with the programme and students' willingness to input additional time to improve technical skills encourages better student-teacher engagement. Student-teacher interaction quality has been proved to influence overall student performance (Furrer et al., 2014; Buzzelli & Johnston, 2014). Buzzelli and Johnston (2014) contend that teaching revolves around the teacher-student relationship and the ability of the teacher to motivate the student to perform better. Kuwaiti teachers concluded that students who approached them for lesson improvement and feedback often had better teacher-student relationships.

The teachers feel that understanding student personality is key to improving student-teacher engagement. Kuwaiti teachers contend that their approach is learner-centric and that adapting the class to meet the needs of a specific group of students is essential. As Cornelius-White (2007) concludes, person-centric education can help in improving holistic learning and improve constructivist learner-centric outcomes. The Kuwaiti teachers suggest that student willingness to learn, practise and improvise is driven by such learner-centric practices.

On the other hand, the findings from the UK teachers in Chapters Ten and Eleven identified that the students worked towards goals such as improving their piano skills for either enjoyment or professional purposes, completing the piano course, progressing to other available advanced group piano courses or further music qualifications, and taking UK piano examinations. These goals were considered as a vital element that affects student-teacher engagement; those students who show more commitment towards learning and are willing to set specific goals tend to have more personal engagement with the teacher. Skinner and Belmont (1993) conclude that the involvement of the student and their expression of interest in the subject can increase long-term engagement and sustained performance improvement. Therefore, expression of interest

and involvement seems to increase the frequency of student-teacher interaction.

Overall, the findings show that teacher engagement and student-teacher interaction are considered essential by both UK and Kuwaiti teachers. Kuwaiti teachers' comments, from their focus group and interviews, indicate a focus on the student interest and student personality, while the UK teachers' comments show a focus on students' needs, which then enable the teachers to identify and create goals.

13.2.6 Role of Technology

An analysis of the role of technology in teaching piano has shown common elements across both countries. Teachers in both countries believe that the use of technology is connected with the facilitation of better learning opportunities and improvement in student-teacher engagement. Both groups of teachers feel that out-of-class communication and online forum use can help students and teacher engage outside the classroom. These support arguments in research, such as Johnson (2002), who contends that the use of technology-based curricular content can help sustained group level instruction and implementation of knowledge and the learning process.

The use of technology to facilitate classroom-based instruction and overcome classroom challenges is further highlighted at the CBE and LCM institutions. Technology can be linked to an improvement in groupwork and teacher-led work processes (Nilsson & Folkestad, 2005). However, both groups of teachers acknowledge that the use of technology is still limited due to the need for more teacher training and also an issue due to the lack of budget. The teachers also showed that they were not very familiar with up-to-date technologies that could help achievement within the learning process and they also were not sure how effective some of these technologies were.

Overall, the findings from Chapters Eight, Ten and Eleven show that the teachers believed in and used some kinds of technologies as supportive tools and felt that these were very useful for many purposes such as recording,

finding musical materials online, supporting engagement inside and outside the classroom and for student practice.

13.2.7 Challenges of Piano Teaching

An analysis of perceived challenges in piano teaching shows major differences in the Kuwaiti and UK contexts. In Kuwait, it is observed that a lack of focus on international standards as in the UK or USA is a challenge, and the teachers acknowledge that this can be attributed to the limited opportunities available for music performers in Kuwait. The students at CBE expect to play more international piano repertoire and there are requests for popular music. Lack of resource availability and facilities are challenging for group piano teaching. The teachers at CBE are concerned that the lack of resources is leading to limited training. Therefore, the lack of opportunities to create such music in Kuwait is perceived as a potential challenge.

Interestingly, findings of the UK study emphasise learning music and creative engagement at an early stage. Given that the students in Kuwait are less advanced than some of the students in the UK (even though some adult students at LCM were at a basic level), it is seen that the importance of such co-creation and improvisation is stressed much earlier in the UK. The Kuwait findings also highlight the focus on Arabic elements and the importance ascribed to Arabic music. This research argues that addressing the importance of Arabic music should not be considered a challenge but rather should be considered as encouraging diverse learning opportunities. As Aubert (2017) argues, some institutions have begun to develop a coherent and global pathway for the revalorisation of so-called traditional music and integrate it with Western music. In this context, it is argued that the focus on Arabic music along with Western music learning should be encouraged and should not be considered as a potential challenge. The current study suggests that this could be a positive development for the music curriculum.

The other main challenge highlighted is that of institutional support for teaching. Kuwaiti teachers identified challenges such as high workload, number of students and lack of available piano rooms for practise. These

challenges support those identified by students, who feel that they do not have enough opportunities for practise as they often do not own a piano at home. Moreover, culture in Kuwait is also a challenge for teaching and learning piano. The social attitude towards music means that it can be difficult to practise piano outside the piano lab. The CBE teachers also showed concern that while supportive families encourage their children to study music by offering financial support, unsupportive families persuade students to study other subjects. This is in contrast to the UK, where greater resources were present, and attitudes towards music were not identified as being problematic or unsupportive.

However, an assessment of challenges faced by the UK teachers shows issues of individual attention and difficulties in meeting the needs of all students. While the UK teachers adopt different methodologies, student engagement is a challenging factor that relates to the background of learners and concentration in the class. The literature review in Chapter Three (section 3.3.4) reveals that in group piano teaching and learning, the difference in students' knowledge and experience is challenging for teachers.

Interestingly, in contrast to views stated by the Kuwaiti teachers, the focus on alternative music forms and their needs is evident in the UK context. The teachers believe that understanding the influences on piano learning through understanding the resource needs of every genre and helping students with specific needs is essential. However, the available time for such elements is relatively low as the curriculum is focused on a set number of pieces or specific music materials. Therefore, in both countries, a focus on the need for better resource provision and learner-centric teaching options are considered as key challenges that need to be met.

Overall, the teachers' perspectives on the challenges within group piano pedagogy are related to the diverse background of the students; their different levels of interest in learning piano and different levels of piano skills. In the curriculum-based approach the teachers have limited time for lessons, and therefore individual student attention is hard to achieve. In addition, student learning can be challenged by factors such as limited availability of resources, practice facilities and students' commitment to other subjects.

13.2.8 Teacher Satisfaction

Analysis of teacher satisfaction shows that teachers in both countries feel strongly motivated and satisfied through student engagement, student skill development and acknowledgement of overall student learning. Pitts (2012) contends that the influence of instrument teachers on the motivation of the student can be far-reaching and that such an influence can result in improvement in student skill mastery. Student skill mastery has been directly linked to overall teacher satisfaction in both the UK and Kuwait.

The Kuwaiti and UK teachers expressed satisfaction and felt that they were motivated. McPherson et al. (2012) report that the teacher's attitude and positive motivation was key to improving student involvement. This supports the arguments of the UK teachers who felt that by showing enthusiasm and love for the subject it is possible to inspire students. An assessment of music education in Kuwait by Soulayman (2001) shows that while the curriculum was set by the Ministry of Education, the growth of music as a career choice was limited. It is only at the turn of the twenty-first century that music learning and opportunities to integrate global music learning began to be part of Kuwait's music curriculum.

The findings of the study also show that in both countries the teachers are satisfied with their work and believe that they positively contribute to student learning. Teachers in the UK identify that, apart from employment needs, other factors like social skills, past experiences, social and personal benefits of teaching, and perception of one's own capability are factors that keep them satisfied.

The major difference in terms of satisfaction is seen with respect to the level of engagement. The teachers in the UK feel significantly engaged with learning and believe that improving the course structure through reflection at the end of every year is a key part of their role and improves their engagement with the programme. The UK teachers reported that in some classes they strongly encourage improvisation and co-create and enjoy music making with students. This shows that despite the presence of a structured curriculum, they are given the opportunity to structure their class in any manner that they see fit.

Therefore, flexibility and creativity of teaching is in group piano learning is possible for these teachers.

On the other hand, teachers in Kuwait contend that while there are efforts made by CBE to increase overall engagement, the teacher feedback to pupils is restricted in terms of length and to specific modules. Also, CBE teachers identify limited options for career growth, including absolutely no possibilities for further study at postgraduate level inside Kuwait, lack of research, and difficulties creating new pedagogies as factors which influence their dissatisfaction with the programme. The challenge of lack of career growth can be attributed to the general challenges of the music profession. Success in the industry is linked to personal career satisfaction, along with opportunities for growth (Bennett, 2016). The Kuwaiti teachers work in a relatively less established programme in a country where Western music and its role has been only recently recognised. Therefore, apart from CBE-specific characteristics, overall external environment-specific characteristics influence the development of music learning in Kuwait.

13.3 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the context and importance of the teachers' perspectives on the piano pedagogy. The chapter identified piano teachers' views on their motivation to teach piano in groups and established their views on piano teaching and learning, focusing on their attitudes and expectations, curriculum-based and assessment focused approach to piano teaching and learning. This chapter discussed the main challenges that hinder piano teaching and learning in the study contexts in Kuwait and the UK.

The findings show that a definite presence of infrastructure and technical expertise is essential to support piano pedagogy. The findings of data analysis in Chapters Eight, Ten and Eleven established that the teachers' expectations are high and their attitude towards piano teaching is changing, due to the availability of infrastructural support and use of technology for group piano teaching.

The study also establishes that the teachers' attitudes at CBE, LCM and City Lit towards piano teaching and learning are changing, supported by the availability of infrastructural support and use of technology. However, teachers and students are concerned that the availability of facilities and equipment is still not enough to accommodate a large group of students, although technology can improve piano skills.

Technology can also help to advance student-teacher interaction and consequently help students to focus on their learning. Student-teacher interaction advances student engagement in group piano learning, and understanding student needs is essential to aid student engagement. However, advancing student engagement and improving teacher-student interaction are the main challenges faced by the teachers.

Figure 20, below, illustrates the main findings from the current study representing the UK and Kuwaiti teachers' perspectives.
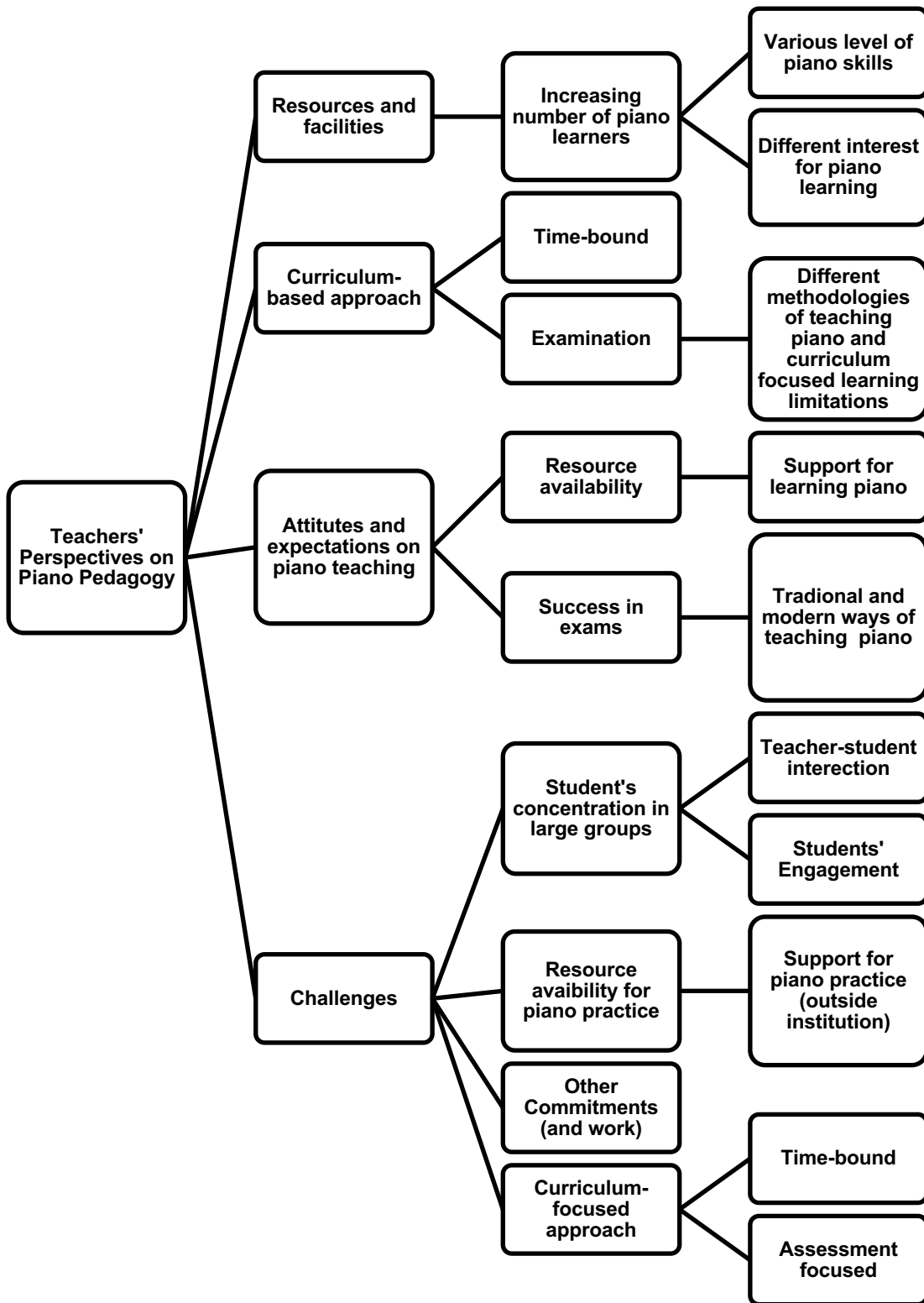
Figure 20: Teachers' Perspectives on Piano Pedagogy

The curriculum-based approach to piano pedagogy is used by these teachers and is time-bound and assessment focused. Teachers feel that this approach helps them to measure the students' performance periodically and motivates students to learn music within a specific timescale. The UK teachers use a variety of teaching methods, and their responses suggest that they are confident with students' achievements. They also provide extra support to the learners to help them practise the piano even after finishing the course.

However, despite teachers having a positive attitude, there are several challenges when teaching piano in groups. One of the primary challenges is student engagement. This demands a strong teacher-student relationship; however, due to the time duration of classes is it hard to maintain a positive relationship with the students.

Moreover, a lack of support outside the institution and from families can be a challenge for piano learners, particularly in Kuwait, where cultural and traditional factors influence views on learning music. Some learners in the UK and in Kuwait have other commitments (with other subjects and/or work) that may take priority over piano practice. In addition, the curriculum-based and assessment focused approach is also a challenge; some students may not be able to explore material that would motivate them; others may struggle to learn exam material within the time period. These factors influence the approach of the teachers.

Chapter 14: Conclusion and Recommendations

14.1 Introduction

This study arose from the aim to provide a starting point for piano pedagogy research related to Kuwait. The study compared the differences in understanding of piano pedagogy between selected Kuwait and UK institutes. This study also captures the teachers' attitudes and beliefs about piano pedagogy and students' perspectives on piano learning in Kuwait and the UK. The purpose of comparing and contrasting the approaches towards piano learning approaches in groups is to identify possible ways in which piano pedagogy could be developed at CBE, the College of Basic Education, in Kuwait. This study set out four objectives to determine and suggest suitable piano pedagogy for CBE:

- To present detailed documentation and background on existing piano pedagogic practices at CBE in Kuwait.

- To discover student views on their motivations, perceptions of teaching and pedagogic approach to learning piano at CBE and to compare these with the views of students within similar piano learning contexts in the UK.

- To identify piano teachers' views on their motivation to teach piano at CBE and compare these to the views of piano teachers in the UK.

- To identify possible ways in which piano pedagogy at CBE could be developed, as well as potential challenges within this process.

14.2 Significant Findings

The initial objective of the study was to explore the literature and determine the background on existing piano pedagogic practices. This study contributes to scholarship by focusing on piano pedagogy in Kuwait as this situation is currently unrepresented in literature. The study collected qualitative and quantitative data to discover students' perceptions of teaching and pedagogic approaches to learning piano in groups at CBE and within the UK. The views of teachers working in these locations were also analysed, and the generalised conclusions are presented in this chapter.

14.2.1 Findings from the Literature Review

The initial objective of the literature review (Chapters 2, 3 and 4) was to present detailed documentation and background on existing piano practices in Kuwait. Chapter Two focused on the nature of music education in the Middle East with a particular focus on the Kuwaiti situation. In this chapter, the environment for the teaching and learning of music were discussed; these are determined by religious, cultural and historical factors which influence the Kuwaiti educational system. Chapter 3 focused on piano pedagogy, identifying the actions which direct many concepts including teacher ideas, beliefs and attitude, as well as particular teaching practices. Chapter 4 focused on teacher's attitudes and beliefs concerning piano pedagogy. The findings from the literature review conclude that:

The primary challenge that higher education in Kuwait faces relates to political issues (Al-Nakib, 2015; Jabr, 2016). The main challenges are balancing modernisation and traditional norms, issues of budget and funding for modernisation of higher education in Kuwait (Urkevich, 2014; Reisinger, 2015).

The UK education system is comparatively much more supportive of music education, which also recognises the globalised need for music pedagogy and teaching to facilitate learner engagement. However, acquiring funding and enhancing equity in music learning in higher education is challenging for both countries.

The findings from the literature review also concluded that in the Kuwaiti context the awareness of the value of the arts is limited to primary and secondary level education. The literature suggests that the growth of music education in higher education is limited (Touma & Touma 2003; Alderaiwaish, 2014), whereas the higher education system in the UK offers a range of options for music learning. This study concludes that the difference between the Kuwaiti and UK higher education systems is due to a number of cultural challenges. The literature review established that in Kuwait there is a need for advancing the curriculum which ensures the consolidation of positive values and an upholding of national identity. Development of music education in Kuwait should consider global perspectives while maintaining its local identity.

The literature review in Chapter 3 reveals that it is essential for piano teachers to consider psychological and emotional factors within piano pedagogy. An increase in structured piano training can improve teachers' knowledge of piano pedagogy (Clark, 1992; Fonder, 1989; Humphrey, 1995); pedagogic training programmes are essential to learn how to deliver a high-level learning experience in higher education (Pike, 2014; Richards, 1967).

Many studies show the limitations in efforts to increase the awareness of learning theories and psychology in piano teaching. The literature has also emphasised the importance of critical thinking and critical learning in piano training (Uszler & Larimer 1984; Charoenwongse 1999; Agay, 2004; Jacobson, 2006). A number of authors have considered that the inclusion of functional skills is a primary challenge faced in the piano learning curriculum; however, there is a lack of research evidence to support these within piano teaching strategies. The literature analysis suggests that overall functional skills such as music reading, composition, accompanying, technique, harmonisation and improvisation are rated much higher by learners than memorisation, playing figured bass, repertory study and solo piano repertory and playing by ear (Christensen, 2000; Tollefson, 2001; Lowis, 2002).

Many authors consider the use of modern technology for piano learning as a critical element which contributes to functional skills such as improvisation, independent learning and repertory study. The use of technology can help in piano teacher training as well as sustained group level instruction and implementation of pedagogical approaches to learning (Johnson, 2002; Brubaker, 1997). The literature has also emphasised the importance of critical pedagogy for piano teaching and learning through identifying a need for fresh curriculum content, advanced curriculum structures and understanding of challenges in curriculum and in developing functional piano playing skills.

A great deal of research has focused on student performance, showing that anxiety is linked to student performance which can lead to lower self-efficacy and self-perception (Gün & Yildiz, 2014). Much of the current literature on self-efficacy stress the importance of the overall student performance while addressing independent student needs. The studies on piano learners suggest that the physical and psychological needs of amateur learners and student learners differ, and that student preferences for learning varied styles of music are becoming more evident. Therefore, pedagogical strategies should include a variety of approaches.

Evidence from research indicates that teacher motivation has a significant impact on student learning. The result of this study shows that improvement in the teacher's motivation contributes to their teaching performance, and this can positively affect dealing with other challenges related to group teaching such as student self-efficacy and individual needs. However, the evidence on improving teacher motivation is limited (Gibbs 1993; Sinclair 2008; Pitts 2012). This study suggests that teacher motivation, along with piano teaching skills and knowledge, supports the pedagogic content. In addition, a teacher's knowledge of curriculum and learning goals is an essential factor in advancing student performance; this can be supported through professional development.

14.2.2 Students' Perspectives on Piano Pedagogy

The students' views on piano pedagogy were analysed in Chapters 7 and 9, and the analysis from both studies is compared and discussed in Chapter 12. This concluding section presents a summary of responses from Chapters 7 and 9 and details the students' views and their experiences of learning in group piano classes. The findings on students' perspective on piano pedagogy in the current study conclude that:

- The students in both countries face two challenges: a) resource availability for piano learning and practice, and b) the curriculum-based and time-bound approach to learning piano.

- A lack of resources and support from the institutions leads some students to lose focus on learning and practising.

- The primary challenge students are facing is the resource availability for piano practice (inside and outside the piano learning facilities) as it was found to be limited in both countries.

- CBE students expressed difficulties in managing to practise piano due to the requirements from other modules during their programme.

- Students at CBE believe that exercises, using technology and additional learning workshops and adding more music modules could improve their skills.

- A curriculum-based approach to piano learning that is time-bound does not address the need of all students in both countries as they may have different interests in piano learning. This is because the curriculum-based institutional learning is focused on the pre-set theories and methodologies that fulfil the requirements of examinations or the course.

- As CBE has seen an increase in music students who are required to study piano as a part of their degree, there are a number of related challenges such as class management and giving an opportunity for individual time for each student in class that hinder the motivation and self-efficacy of the students within the curriculum-based approach.

- Students at CBE contend that the learning programme encourages overall skill development while creating positive self-efficacy and motivation, and their motivation was found to be high with respect to performance and confidence. These students were motivated in their piano studies as they believed that piano proficiency would help them in advancing their career paths.

- The findings from this study show that in both countries there is a positive relationship between student motivation and teachers' efforts to understand individual student needs. Particularly in Kuwait, the student's motivation is high when efforts were made by the teacher to understand the challenges faced by individuals. The students at CBE also feel motivated when extra support was given by the teacher.

- The students at CBE believe that the improvement in their piano skills was possible only through consistent practice and through the motivation given by the teachers.

- Students from Kuwait indicate that a sense of personal competency and self-awareness is a key element which may influence overall student motivation, and links their motivation to mastery goals.

- Family members can also hinder growth in music students' motivation and self-efficacy at CBE if they do not support piano practice.

- External learning environment elements such as society and culture were found as factors that may influence the performance, motivation and self-efficacy of the student in Kuwait.

14.2.3 Teachers' Perspectives on Piano Pedagogy

This section presents the main findings relating to the views of teachers regarding group piano pedagogy. It summarises the challenges that teachers had to consider in delivering group piano classes, which included resources and facilities, financial and cultural aspects and students' responses. The findings from teachers' perspectives on piano pedagogy (in Chapters 8, 10, 11 and 13) conclude that:

- The teachers consider piano learning as a fundamental skill for professional musicians. The increasing focus on the piano as a legitimate learning subject for music education has increased the number of students per class in both countries. As a result, this has implications for resources and pedagogy.

- The findings also show that the teachers in both countries aimed to do their best, using their experience and knowledge in order to meet the students' needs and to provide successful piano teaching.

- The CBE teachers believed that piano learning, as part of the music programme at CBE, helped students prepare for a career in music.

- The need for flexibility in teaching approaches at CBE was also identified by teachers as essential for active learning

- CBE teachers find it is challenging to manage their classroom commitments with administration requirements within CBE.

- CBE teachers believe that there is scope for professional development to improve their pedagogical knowledge and skills.

- The analysis of the perspectives of the Kuwaiti and UK teachers reveals that the curriculum-based approach is preferred for piano teaching and learning. The teachers agree that this approach is essential for structuring and assessing the progress of the course. In addition, the curriculum-based approach helps teachers to choose

test material that fits with the varied needs of students learning piano, particularly in Kuwait, where more able students could present own-choice material in piano assessments.

- The teachers provide informal feedback to enhance the engagement of students. The teachers believe a supportive environment to be essential for active learning as it drives the students' motivation and engagement.

- The infrastructure, availability of piano-specific resources and equipment, support from the institution and financial support from various sources is also essential for effective teaching and student engagement; however, in both the UK and Kuwait, teachers felt that their work with students could have been enhanced through more support. The teachers at CBE stressed that a lack of resources also created a negative impact on their teaching, research and professional development.

- Teachers viewed technology as having both positive and negative aspects in relation to piano pedagogy. The negative aspect concerns teacher training, as teachers need to know how to use technology, and teachers also need information to support their understanding of how technology may support learning and their delivery of teaching. While technology can facilitate and advance both independent and group learning the key challenge is the availability of appropriate technology and institutional support. The use of appropriate technology could help student engagement and facilitate effective piano pedagogy.

- Time-bound and curriculum-based approach and resource limitations at CBE are the main challenges for achieving balance between practical and theoretical lesson content and also for balancing teaching with administrative activities.

- Applying different teaching techniques and methodologies in group piano learning also seems to contribute to and reflect teacher satisfaction and motivation, and this factor also contributes to the satisfaction, motivation and achievement of students. Gaining basic piano skills is also driven by the overall time spent on practice and depends on student's motivation, attitude and support.

- The CBE teachers realise that the importance of motivation of both students and teachers can help student learning. The teachers at CBE believe that the students' motivation, attitude and engagement were linked to the students' achievement.

- It was also found that the student engagement with the curriculum at CBE was also a driving factor for examination repertoire choices. Discussion of piano examinations at CBE from the teachers' perspective showed that the focus was mainly on the playing techniques of the students through the syllabus requirements of scales, piano exercises and sight-reading. However, student comments suggested sight-reading was not sufficiently taught, and they revealed a lack of creative focus in the approach of their teachers. Compared to the UK contexts a lack of performance opportunities were revealed; furthermore, Kuwait teachers did not give students any information about musicians' health. This suggests areas for institutional development.

- The teachers at CBE showed that the structure of teaching was inflexible, with only summative assessments. The lack of formative assessment could be another factor contributing to the limited of presence of self-evaluation, therefore, it can be proposed that the students followed the programme set goals and lesson plans without evaluating their own capabilities.

14.3 Suggestions and Implications

This study reveals that the number of piano learners is growing at CBE, LCM and City Lit. Learning piano is considered by the participants as an essential skill for all music learners. The growing number of students also becomes a challenge for music institutions in terms of facilities and piano-specific learning resources that have not grown at the same pace to accommodate the needs of a diverse range of students.

The current study identifies the challenges through analysing the students' and teachers' perspective on piano pedagogy. As concluded in Chapter 13, the students face two main challenges, a) resources available for piano learning and practice, and b) the curriculum-based and time-bound approach to the piano learning. Both teachers and students are concerned that the availability of facilities and equipment is still not adequate.

The findings from this study can help improve piano pedagogy within higher music education. This study suggests that advancing student motivation to learn piano and boosting self-efficacy requires commitment to the curriculum and motivation towards performing in exams or achieving set goals. However, there is a need to motivate and support students to practise piano outside the classroom. This includes support from teachers, families and the financial support from institutions to develop up-to-date facilities.

The data also show that there is a difference of teaching approach in the two countries, which can be seen through the inclusion of skills such as sight-reading and the extent of research on music repertoire and interpretation in the UK, and this also reflects another gap in the training and accessibility of music for the piano teachers in Kuwait. Therefore, this study suggests that support for piano learning within and outside the institution is essential to develop group piano pedagogy, particularly in Kuwait.

14.3.1 Implications for CBE

- A growing number of piano learners leads to the need for development in the pedagogical tools and techniques for group piano classes, in addition to infrastructure and physical resources, in order to provide for the learning needs of these students.

- The literature review and data analysis suggest that the curriculum-based approach to piano learning and for preparation for exams or set goals at CBE is valid. However, the curriculum could benefit from expansion to include a wider range of materials and content (e.g. local music pieces, other resources for music skills such as sight-reading) with a variety of activities such as playing in ensemble, using games to develop knowledge of musical concepts, and providing opportunities for accompanying and offering coaching to develop skills in this area.

- This study also found that the current curriculum-based approach to group piano learning does not address the need of all students. This is because curriculum-based learning is focused on the pre-set theories and methodologies that fulfil the requirements for examination or course aims. Developing sight-reading skills, playing advanced piano pieces, having additional materials or content that could help at a foundational level or lead to further higher music study levels were requested by the students.

- Student learning at CBE is enhanced through skill development of music reading, rhythm, technique and playing by ear. However, redesigning the curriculum to include further learning methodologies could help to advance student engagement, motivation to learn and could enhance the student-teacher relationship. This approach could also develop student skills which connect to a broader understanding of piano playing through creative aspects including improvisation and interpretation. This could lead to a greater awareness of individuality as players while also supporting the development of keyboard and listening skills.

- The need to encourage the student at CBE and provide them with self-learning capabilities was observed from the focus group discussion analysis. Therefore, developing the teaching structure to include formative assessments is recommended, as this could help improve students' self-evaluation capabilities and develop their ability to deal with assessment situations.

- The CBE requires up-to-date facilities to accommodate the needs of an increasing number of learners. The design of facilities should address the various needs of different levels of learners through offering more flexibility of the availability of practice rooms with acoustic rather than digital pianos, and offering more performance opportunities. Providing piano lab practice assistants would help students to practice outside the class time and for give greater flexibility in their practice times as well as further supported learning opportunities

- As students in group piano learning contexts have varying levels, attributes and needs, this study also highlights that student engagement and a positive student-teacher relationship are required to negotiate a number of challenges that may hinder the motivation and self-efficacy of students within the learning process. Employing teaching assistants may also help the student-staff relationship as teachers mentioned the demands on their workload. They may have more capacity to develop their teaching skills and knowledge of resources through having greater support.

- Increased use of technology may also be useful to assist student-teacher interaction and consequently help students to focus on the learning in group piano classes. This could be achieved through activation of university/college email and using the Blackboard learning system. However, technology resources are limited and are in need of further investment and development. The implications of the availability

of technology also connect to student motivation and progression and challenges of engaging students in the classroom.

- Care and concern are expressed by the CBE teachers; this can enhance the teacher-student relationship and contribute to mastery goals. Developing student motivation at CBE is also considered a key element which could create opportunities for self-learning and improve student overall learning. This may be further supported through re-consideration of the curriculum content, particularly in relation to scales and repertoire and the style of music required.

- There is also scope to develop teachers' understanding of musicians' health and performance anxiety; this could be achieved through additional seminar sessions and performance workshops, though it needs to be informed by access to up-to-date research and, ideally, awareness of delivery of workshops in similar contexts elsewhere.

- Training and professional development courses for teachers would enhance the teaching pedagogy and equip teachers to provide extra support to the learners at CBE. As discussed above in the current chapter, one of the primary challenges faced by teachers is student engagement. Providing teacher-training on skills for collaborative teaching and using a variety of resources to encourage group work would be beneficial to advance student engagement to learning at CBE. However, group piano learning and teaching pedagogy demands a strong teacher-student relationship. Providing resources that encourage improvement in the teacher-student relationship is essential for group piano learning at CBE. Teachers also stated that they would like time for research; therefore, administration could be carried out by other staff, which might create time for research, which could also support curriculum development. Teachers could also receive access to international resources including academic journals, professional magazines for instrumental teachers and database access to scholarly literature which could enhance the teachers' expectations, attitudes and

efforts towards group piano teaching at CBE and piano teaching in general in Kuwait.

- Further institutional support for piano learning such as more workshops, student peer feedback and recitals could create a supportive environment for students at CBE and could develop feedback skills useful for their future career as a music teacher or performer.

- Support for piano learning outside the institution through involving family or society members could be an approach to gain support from those in a position to influence learner engagement and attitude in Kuwait. Organising music events such as music competitions, live shows for students and their families and friends could help to overcome the cultural and traditional factors that negatively influence the progress of music students.

The current study also proposes a model curriculum structure for group piano classes at CBE (see Table 15); this incorporates the points discussed above. Overall, this study suggests that the availability of up-to-date piano learning resources inside and outside institutions is essential. Teaching piano in groups needs development, particularly through enabling teaching staff to use a variety of teaching methods and IT equipment to promote a high level of engagement and student-teacher interaction. Due to the aforementioned facts, this study concludes that learning music in Kuwait needs funding and support from government and other sources to advance piano pedagogy.

Table 15: Proposed Model Curriculum Structure for Group Piano Classes at CBE, 2020

Piano Module and Teaching Style	Scales	Sight-reading	Supplementary Materials	Repertoire	Activities and Observations
Module 1, term 1 Duration 12 weeks; two classes of two hours per week	C major, A minor, one octave, parallel and contrary motion. Natural and harmonic minors (minimum tempo, crotchet = 70, two notes per beat) Arpeggios in parallel and contrary motion (minimum tempo, dotted crotchet = 70, three notes per beat)	G. E. Kowalchyk and E. L. Lancaster *Alfred's Basic Adult Piano Course: Sight Reading Book 1* (first part)	E. M. Burnam *A Dozen A Day – Book 1 Technical Exercises for the Piano* to be done each day before practicing (first part for Module 1, second part for Module 2) E. L. Lancaster and K. Renfrow *Alfred's Group Piano for Adults -- Ensemble Music, Book 1: Repertoire for Piano Duet, Two Pianos, and Multiple Pianos* (for Module 1-2)	One Western Classical or local popular piece and one etude	W. Palmer, M. Morton and A. V. Lethco *Alfred's Basic Adult All-in-One Course, Book 1*, (Introduction to playing, pp. 4-11) (for Module 1 only) Playing in ensemble, peer feedback, accompanying, improvising, formative assessment, quiz and games, research homework about a music piece or piano skills or other learning matter arising during the class (for all Modules) Tips guide for sight-reading (for Modules 1-4)
Module 2, term 2 Duration 12 weeks, two classes of two hours per week	C major, A minor, two octaves parallel and contrary motion. (minimum tempo, crotchet = 75, two notes per beat) Arpeggios in parallel and contrary motion (minimum tempo, dotted crotchet = 75, three notes per beat)	G. E. Kowalchyk and E. L. Lancaster *Alfred's Basic Adult Piano Course: Sight Reading Book 1* (second part)			

Module 3, term 3 Duration 12 weeks, two classes of two hours per week	G major, E minor, two octaves parallel and contrary motion. Natural, and melodic minors (minimum tempo, crotchet = 80, two notes per beat) Arpeggios in parallel and contrary motion (minimum tempo, dotted crotchet = 80, three notes per beat)	ABRSM, *More Piano Sight-Reading Grade1*	E. M. Burnam *A Dozen A Day – Book 2 Technical Exercises for the Piano* to be done each day before practicing (first part for Module 3, second part for Module 4) E. L. Lancaster and K. Renfrow *Alfred's Group Piano for Adults -- Ensemble Music, Book 2: Repertoire for Piano Duet, Two Pianos, and Multiple Pianos* (for Module 3-4)		Tips guide for effective practice Tips guide for performing with confidence Short video recording of practise sessions or performance (for Modules 1-4)
Module 4, term 4 Duration 12 weeks, two classes of two hours per week	F major, D minor, two octaves parallel and contrary motion. Natural, and melodic minors (minimum tempo, crotchet = 85, two notes per beat) Arpeggios in parallel and contrary motion (minimum tempo, dotted crotchet = 85, three notes per beat)	ABRSM, *More Piano Sight-Reading Grade2*			British Association for Performing Arts Medicine (BAPAM) Health Resources Guide (for all Modules) Recital performance and workshop

Module 5, term 5 Duration 12 weeks, two classes of two hours per week	D major, B minor, two octaves parallel and contrary motion. Natural, harmonic and melodic minors (minimum tempo, crotchet = 90, two notes per beat) Arpeggios in parallel and contrary motion (minimum tempo, dotted crotchet = 90, three notes per beat)	ABRSM, *More Piano Sight-Reading Grade3*	The Kuwaiti national anthem (the first part with singing) (see Appendix 1) M. V. Stefanuk *Improvisation step by step: Improvising Classical music on piano*	One Western Classical or local popular music piece	
Module 6, term 6 Duration 12 weeks, two classes of two hours per week	Bb major, G minor, two octaves parallel and contrary motion. Natural, harmonic and melodic minors (minimum tempo, crotchet = 95, two notes per beat) Arpeggios in parallel and contrary motion (minimum tempo, dotted crotchet = 95, three notes per beat)	ABRSM, *More Piano Sight-Reading Grade4*	The Kuwaiti national anthem (the full anthem with singing, second part) (see Appendix 2) M. V. Stefanuk *Improvisation step by step: Improvising Classical music on piano*		

Teaching Style	Scales to be individually checked during each class	(20-25 minutes) for sight-reading during each class	Guided and facilitated by the teacher	Selected by the student from variety of pieces, after discussion and guided by the teacher	Guided and facilitated by the teacher
			Individual informal feedback		Formative assessment and written feedback
	Individual informal feedback	Individual informal feedback	Teacher demonstrates a model example for practicing exercises, and explains different techniques	Teacher shows an example (using a video recording or plays for the student), giving more details and overview about the piece and suggestions for practice	Teacher explains and gives details to the group about the structure for each activity, providing the dates, time and feedback sheet
	Teacher explains task to group and gives information on technique, theory and tempo.	Teacher explains requirements to group and highlights how to approach the sight-reading task (checking details first, and looking ahead while playing)	Teacher directs the ensemble while playing and then observes and conducts while students play		
			5-10 minutes for each student in each class for improvisation (student has to play in front of other students or plays in a small group)		Allocated time for group discussion (where students can share peer feedback)

14.4 Limitations

The following limitations are found in this study:

1) The study is restricted to specific UK and Kuwaiti music institutions, and therefore the findings cannot be generalised. More research needs to be conducted, particularly within Kuwait, where there is scope to implement some of the findings and address research questions through, for example, conducting longitudinal research to explore the impact of resource provision and teacher training.

2) Administration of conducting the survey and interview on students' and teachers' perceptions of piano pedagogy may have been limited in detail by employing broad questions; therefore, conducting more focused interviews would enable rich data to emerge about these and further aspects that could affect group piano pedagogy.

3) The number of interviews with UK piano teachers working in group piano contexts is limited.

4) This research does not include the perspective of administrative and support staff. They may have insights into course development, skill development for teachers and students, examination and providing technological support for piano learning and teaching.

14.5 Further Research

As the current study aims to be a fundamental step in development of piano pedagogy in Kuwait, there are many possible extensions for future research in Kuwait, taking this thesis as a starting point.

1) Student engagement appeared as one of the primary challenging factors in terms of group piano teaching and learning; this can further be investigated to identify the factors that drive engagement in group learning contexts.

2) Secondly, the role of motivation and self-efficacy can be investigated to identify how those such as family members, administration staff, and skill development staff can influence piano learners, particularly in relation to cultural and societal attitudes.

3) A similar study in other music institutions might highlight a different set of challenges associated with group piano teaching and learning; therefore, this study can be taken as a starting point for an institution-specific or comparative study.

4) There is scope to develop research to explore student engagement and building student-teacher relationships in large group settings.

5) Investigating the training and support needs of piano teachers delivering group classes in institutional settings would be beneficial to teachers, learners and institutions.

6) Further research on the pedagogy of learning and teaching group piano in group should be attempted in terms of developing a pedagogical framework which would have input from international pedagogues and which could create Kuwaiti-specific resources, integrating international pedagogy and musical material as well as local material such as traditional melodies. This could also lead to the development of structures to support piano pedagogy such as teacher societies and establishing higher music study at postgraduate level in Kuwait.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Kuwaiti National Anthem (First Part)

Appendix 2: Kuwaiti National Anthem (Second Part)

Appendix 3: Interviews with Piano Teachers (Cover Sheet)

Dear Professors,

My name is Mohammad Alosaimi. I am a doctoral candidate majoring in piano pedagogy at the University of York, UK. The objective of this study is to conduct an in-depth analysis of the perceptions of students and teachers towards the current learning piano processes in the music department at the College of Basic Education, in order to develop understanding of learning piano at the College of Basic Education.

As I am hoping to conduct interviews with some current piano teachers at the College of Basic Education, I'd like to ask you whether you would be willing to take part in a short discussion (45-60 minutes) about the learning piano process in the music department at the College of Basic Education. Your participation and assistance are very important for the study.

The interview will be audio recorded. The audio recordings of interviews made during this research will be used only for analysis and for illustration in the research paper. No other use will be made of them, and no one outside the research will be allowed access to the original recordings. All data collected will be anonymised to assure confidentiality. You may request the return of your data or interview transcript at any time.

Sincerely,

Mohammad Alosaimi

E-mail: [Redacted]

Mobile: [Redacted]

Appendix 4: Consent Form

Research Title: Piano Pedagogy at CBE, Kuwait

Researcher: Mohammad Alosaimi

Email: [Redacted] **Mobile:** [Redacted]

Please Initial Box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions. ☐

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason. ☐

3. I agree to take part in the above study. ☐

4. I agree to the interview consultation being audio recorded ☐

5. I agree to the use of anonymised

    names/quotes in publications ☐

_____   _____   _____

Name of Participant   Date   Signature

_____
Participant contact

_____   _____   _____

Name of Researcher   Date

Signature

Appendix 5: Focus Group Interview with Two Piano Teachers, Teacher C (TC) and D (TD) at CBE, 29th June 2016

1. What are your beliefs about the current piano learning process at CBE?

TC: I see the piano learning process at CBE is good and helps the students to learn piano in the right way.

TD: I think the learning process is really good and is slightly developing, improving day by day with small downfall at times.

2. What are your perceptions of the piano learning processes at CBE?

TC: It is helping and preparing the students for their future careers and provides them good basic information and background about piano and music in general.

TD: Yes, definitely it [piano learning process] is [good] and it is also opening many future career aspects and sectors for the students, which are also affecting their thinking, minds, and may help them conduct their work in future in a professional manner.

3. What are your attitudes towards the current piano leaning process at CBE?

TC: I think we need more development in the current learning process, which could focus on the piano curriculum for undergraduate level beginner students.

TD: I agree, and I would also like to add that we need to take a recurring look into the learning environment as it could affect the students' responses. This should focus on the related wider student environment inside and outside the college. Subsequently we could offer the best solutions or choices in the piano curriculum, music subjects, or the music programme (course) structure.

4. How do you teach and which methods do you follow during your piano lessons at CBE?

TC: I use multiple teaching methods and my experience in an effort to cover any problems faced by the students.

TD: There are many teaching methods in the international settings, but here we are always trying to find the best and most suitable method for our students. This means the use of a mix of many teaching methods as per students' requirements and demands.

5. How are piano lessons carried out?

TC: I usually start my lesson by asking the students to do sight-reading for about 20 to 25 minutes. Then I carry on to explaining new information, followed by 10 to 15 minutes for piano exercises. Afterwards in the remaining time until the end of the lesson I check on the students around the class, listening to the music pieces from each student and spending some time with each student.

TD: I usually start my lesson with explanation of new information and checking the work from previous lessons. Then I start piano exercises followed by sight-reading for a while. Afterwards I start checking the music pieces for each student individually while the other students put on their headphones and practise their music pieces.

6. How does this method affect the learning progress?

TC: It is helping the students to comprehend various aspects of learning skills while focussing on our piano curriculum.

TD: It supports the students by giving them an opportunity to learn in an exciting and challenging group environment. It gives them an opportunity to help each other and gives them practising time during the lesson. It gives the students an opportunity to showcase their playing abilities to other students which motivates the other students to practise more and be good at piano.

7. How do you examine your students at CBE?

TC: In each term we conduct mid-term and final piano exams.

TD: The piano exams are just practical exams.

8. What are the requirements?

TC: For the mid-term exam sight-reading is required for all piano modules. Each module is different, playing one music scale is required for piano modules 1, 4, 5 and 6 while two music scales (one major and one minor scale) for piano modules 2 and 3. One piano exercise and one piano etude are required for piano modules 1, 2, 3 and 4. Part of the Kuwaiti national anthem is also required for piano modules 5 and 6. I will let my colleague explain the requirements for the final exam. [Laughed].

TD: [Laughed], thanks, yes, so in the final piano exams we ask the students to play all the music scales they had [learned] during the term, one music piece (etude or minuet) and a big part from the national anthem for piano modules 5 and 6, while sight-reading is required for all piano modules.

9. How are the piano exams conducted?

TC: The piano exam committee usually consists of two piano teachers or sometimes a piano teacher and a music teacher. Depending on availability sometimes the module teacher could be one of the examiners as well.

TD: Yes, also during exams we ask the students first to play the music scales, followed by the music exercise and then the music piece followed by sight-reading.

10. How do you evaluate students during piano exams?

TC: We usually focus on many aspects, such as sitting and hand positions, confidence of the student, the ability of playing, the ability of memorising a music piece or exercise, tempo, speed and sometimes we look at the main

basic dynamics such as *piano* or *forte*, *crescendo* or *decrescendo*, accuracy of playing, and sight-reading.

TD: Yes. Just to add that definitely we are considerate of the student's performance anxiety and expect some mistakes such as a wrong note, or [for them] to stop playing and start again.

11. *How do you perceive these exams?*

TC: Actually, they are fairly easy and suitable for each piano module.

TD: Yes, they are, and the really talented and smart students would usually have finished the exam requirements long before the exam date.

12. *What difficulties do you face in preparing, conducting and evaluating the exams?*

TC: No, there is no problem at all.

TD: Yes, but sometimes there might be just a little problem with clash in the exam dates with other exams within the music department or outside the music department. This could also affect the students' readiness for the piano exam and therefore we usually ask the students to finish the piano exam requirements early so that they may have more time during the busy exam period.

13. *Why is piano part of the music curriculum at CBE?*

TC: The ability of playing keyboard or piano is considered as one of the basic skills to be a music teacher everywhere in the world because the use of keyboard/piano could help the music teacher explaining a problem or music theory during his/her teaching time. Even if he/she might be teaching music education in general and not a specific musical instrument. Therefore, we are offering basic learning skills on keyboard and piano.

TD: Actually, learning piano is the start of learning music. Piano can offer a music teacher the ability of using the right note tone and loud sounds which is clear for the learner. Piano can accompany vocal or music melody and it is easy to use for teaching purposes. In order to explain something you can also ask the learner to share playing some notes.

14. *What are the goals of teaching piano at CBE?*

TC: The most important thing is that we teach students the basic piano skills in order to help them for their professional career.

TD: Exactly the same answer. Additionally, piano learning can also be a starting point for the student to continue into their postgraduate music studies abroad or other future plans in music industry.

15. *What resources are available for teaching?*

TC: We have got highly experienced piano teachers, and good piano labs, piano practice rooms, multi-collected music scores and printers.

TD: Yes, we also have a big room for music concerts including a grand piano. We have headphones for use during piano labs and a support service for students to find any music pieces that are not available at CBE.

16. *What types of music scores are available?*

TC: We are usually using piano exercise scores, sonatinas, etudes, scales, Arabic chants, Arabic music pieces and classical Western music pieces.

TD: Yes, the same.

17. *What is the level of the music scores taught at CBE?*

TC: Actually, they are not difficult at all, and most of them suit the level of our students.

TD: Yes definitely, we always try to suit the level of the student and keep pushing the students to improve to the next level. Suitability of the music scores is also determined by the students' capability of playing.

18. How does the level of music scores affect your teaching process?

TC: It affects the time that students take to understand and read the music scores. If it is easy, they will spend the remaining time to practise and focus on other piano playing skills related to that particular music score.

TD: Yes, and it is also important that we do not panic the student by assigning higher level of music scores and we encourage them by reaffirming that 'it is easy, you can do it'. Sometimes the students want to learn other music pieces and ask me to play them after we have finished the assigned music score. However, at the end of the day we want and need the student to learn with a highly motivated positive attitude in a pleasant environment.

19. How do you teach a music score?

TC: Firstly, I read it with my students, and try to identify the music scale, tempo, speed, notation, shapes, the associated difficulties and a solution to overcome the difficulties. Afterwards we start sight-reading the music score and play the first part slowly. Then we continue playing at a pace based on the students' responses and if required we stop and explain things. Anything unclear is taken up again in the following lessons. I also individually check each student during the piano lab, evaluate their playing and give comments accordingly.

TD: Actually, I usually start with playing the music score for the students so they can hear it. Afterwards I ask them about how they heard it and if there are any questions about it. Then we start sight-reading it together, and identify the music score's scale, tempo, difficult parts, and the way to play it. I also check the students practising during the class and help them to play and read it properly.

20. Which exercises do you assign your students?

TC: Usually, I am using Hanon exercises, music scales.

TD: I am using Hanon, also music scales with arpeggios.

21. Is there any other piano learning material offered to the students? Such as learning specific scales, pieces, sight-reading, audio or video records.

TC: Yes, definitely, we have got the piano curriculum, which includes specific music scales, sight-reading levels and piano exercises.

TD: In addition to that, we also have a little flexibility of adding some music pieces or exercises, where we can see it will affect the learning process and that is dependent on the student's response.

22. How do you prepare the students for their future work?

TC: As the aim of learning at CBE is to graduate music teachers for public schools therefore based upon our experience we try to inculcate the required abilities of basic music teacher skills in our students. Therefore, we teach them keyboard skills, music theory and music harmony.

TD: Additionally, there is a music module called 'practical education', which requires the final year students to teach the 'music education' subject in school for one term. There is also another music module called 'approaches of teaching music education'. These two modules are very useful for the students besides what they learn in other music modules such as piano or harmony.

23. How do you feel about your work with students?

TC: Really good work and enjoyable.

TD: Yes, of course it is good because our work is our career.

24. *How do you perceive the students' response and development during the learning process?*

TC: Actually, there are many types of students. Sometimes the students show great effectiveness and are excited to learn more so they get their work done quickly. Other students are good but they are not bothered with learning (they just want to finish the requirements for the module). There are also other students who really need more time to practise as they are not capable of finishing the work quickly. Additionally, usually each academic year we have one or two talented students who set a good example for other students. Also, there are some lazy students who do not like to practise more. However, we have got the experience to fulfil the aim of teaching piano at CBE dealing with all types of students.

TD: Yes, the most important thing is the motivation of each student. I think that it affects the student's mood and ability and therefore I encourage them. Additionally, it is not just the motivation, but also the factors that could affect the motivation, which could be something inside or outside the music department, personal problems, student's future plans or any other factors for that instance.

25. *How do you compare teaching and learning in Kuwait with other cultures based on your work or educational experience abroad?*

TC: The piano learning process abroad differs from that in Kuwait, in the methods of teaching piano, the ability of the students, the students' response, students' motivations, the piano curriculum, music modules and the level of undergraduate music major in general.

TD: Yes, and additionally abroad some universities use private piano lessons as the method of teaching piano rather piano group lab. While some other countries also use piano group labs instead of private lessons. However, when the student learns piano abroad, the student has to take other music modules which can help them to become a good musician. Because of these other modules the students do not lose time to read music when sight-reading it or

even practicing during piano lessons. While here [at CBE] we have students who are generally learning music for the first time and even touching a piano for the first time. Of course, we have the experience and ability to deal with these issues, but also as a researcher it is your role to help us find the factors that could affect the development of piano learning at CBE. The focus in identifying such factors should specially consider the requirements of our students. This will help us understand more about our deficiencies and we will be able to focus on the development of our learning processes.

26. *What efforts have been made for the development of piano pedagogy?*

TC: We have changed some Arabic music chants, updated the harmonies of school level Arabic chants scores and made them easier to learn for CBE students. We changed some levels for the sight-readings and exercises. We are now also offering private piano lessons as a second musical instrument for those students who want to learn more besides the piano group labs. Whereas it was not possible before, now the students can study piano in the group labs as part of the compulsory modules and as well as they can learn piano as a second instrument for four terms.

TD: Yes, additionally, we asked the head of the music department many times to include other music modules in the programme as it could help us and the development of piano learning. This will save the piano lessons time spent on teaching and explaining other problems not really directly related to playing piano. We usually lose time on explaining theory, history, cultures and reading music. Also we asked for a teacher's assistant for the piano teachers in the music department, but have not received any answer yet.

27. *What kind of support is available for the piano teachers in the department of music at CBE?*

TC: Actually, most of the basic things are available here. The piano teacher is provided a separate office room. The room contains an upright piano,

telephone, desktop computer and a printer. The teachers are also provided with a dedicated car parking space.

TD: Yes, also the piano labs are good, the number of piano lessons is also good (but not all the time) and it's a good salary.

28. *What is your opinion about the usefulness of digital pianos and headphones during piano lessons?*

TC: It [using digital pianos and headphones] makes the conducting of group piano lessons easier.

TD: Very useful during piano lab as it [using digital pianos and headphones] provides an opportunity for students to practise during the class without noise.

29. *Have you seen, heard, known or used any other technology or accessories (such as music applications or devices) that could support the piano learning process either during piano lessons or during the students' piano practice in general?*

TC: Students showed me many applications and programmes on smart phones and tablets which could help the students to learn more about music in general.

TD: No, but now technology and internet are making things easier; for example, students are able to access many musical libraries to read and download music scores. Also, the students can watch, how professional piano players play piano in YouTube videos.

30. *How do you think the use of this technology will support the piano learning process at the College of Basic Education?*

TC: Some of these programmes or applications could affect the student's motivation and interest as learning new things in music or piano increases their

curiosity. This leads the students to later on ask me about what they find in these applications or programmes to understand things better or just to take my opinion.

TD: I think the most useful piece of technology is a video recorder. Students can use it to record themselves during their piano practice. Later on the students can then watch these videos to assess and refine their piano playing skills. This leads them to practise effectively and develop themselves faster. However, watching either their own recorded practice or even YouTube videos sometimes has a negative effect because the students are not sure of what they are actually looking for in these videos. Therefore, watching videos can sometimes be a waste of time.

31. What are the challenges that you face in teaching group piano at CBE?

TC: The most difficult thing is that we are teaching beginner level students in an undergraduate level. Therefore, we need to be more careful in updating our teaching and curriculum each time or even from time to time. Through these updates we need to consider and resolve some of the students' problems related to culture, motivations, plans, societal changes and environment. For example, if the level of a student is high when they start learning in the music department at CBE, we will start teaching them at a high level and vice versa.

TD: Exactly, and also there are difficulties with overtime and the number of piano lessons. Therefore, we require more piano teachers and teacher's assistants to help us. Also, we cannot find time to conduct research, as most of the time we are busy in the department with piano lessons, departmental meetings, welcoming visitors and preparing for other tasks such as music concerts or exams.

32. What changes do you think are needed to improve the piano learning process at CBE?

TC: Actually, there is an idea of offering a non-credit module or a short programme of two to four weeks for new music students before they start their actual course. This could be a basic or foundation course to introduce the students to the concept of music learning and prepare them for their degree programme.

TD: Again, as I mentioned, we really need more piano teachers, and teacher assistants, to have an effective learning process. Afterwards we can look into other needs.

33. *Is there anything else you reckon would better support the piano learning at CBE?*

TC: No, these are the biggest things now.

TD: No, just this is the most important and we need to sort it now or in the following years.

34. *Are there any constraining factors for the teachers and the students that could affect the piano learning process (e.g. culture, tradition of learning piano, respect for Western culture, the instruments, resources)?*

TC: Actually, there are many students' preferences like some students prefer listening to the music piece or exercises before they play or read it while other students prefer a specific piano teacher rather than another teacher. Similarly, some students find it interesting to learn many types of music while other students do not like the Western classical music in the beginning when they start learning it but afterwards, they start liking it and can understand or accept it. As the piano teachers at CBE come from many international countries therefore, they also have different preferences such as following a particular teaching style or theory, piano method or idea. The teachers come from different cultures and therefore have different cognitive processes.

TD: I totally agree, and just want to add something, that you can imagine how the relationship is between the students and piano teachers and also the relationship between the piano teachers themselves, and this could reflect the

development of piano learning process at CBE and in Kuwait in general, either in a positive or negative way.

35. *What is the extent of the teacher-student relationship?*

TC: The relationship is usually friendly or same as siblings while maintaining the boundaries of respect for both the teacher and the student. However, some students do not understand this relationship and think the teacher has a weak personality. While some other students believe that they are just students and want to be treated as students, not friends.

TD: That is right, and also we have some problems with students misunderstanding this relationship, as a large number of students think that it will affect the results of evaluation or even the grades of the piano modules. We always try to clarify this misconception and control the student-teacher relationship based on our experience.

36. *How does this relationship affect the learning progress at CBE?*

TC: Definitely, it affects the learning process, as it could provide the student a good or motivating environment and helps in releasing tension. However, sometimes it can be negative, as my colleague mentioned, some students take this relationship as a means of securing high grades or passing the piano exams without fulfilling the requirements. Personally, I believe it is really helpful and has a greater positive effect than negative, as it increases the interest of the students, who are mostly aged between 18 to 25 years. The students really need this relationship to realise their potential and they need encouragement to do better.

TD: I believe that the piano learning process at CBE really needs this relationship, as it is really helpful and builds a good learning environment for both the students and the teachers. Therefore, the teacher now has the responsibility to always be in a good mood with the students. In an effort to maintain and control this relationship the teacher has to be in a good mood

even if the teacher is not available to help with something or is really busy with other work.

Appendix 6: Focus Group Interview with Male Students at CBE, 15th May 2016

1. Could you explain to me what you feel about the current leaning piano process at your college?

S1: I am just learning basics and children's chants, and the music department does not ask me to do more than this.

S2: It is good, and it is helping me to improve my skills.

S3: It is good.

S4: Learning and study piano in my college makes me feel happy and gladness.

S5: My feeling, it is a beautiful feeling which builds the confidence between the student and the piano.

S6: Actually, it is a nice feeling when I am learning and study how to order my fingers on the piano.

2. Can you explain why you feel that?

S1: Because, the structure of learning music in Kuwait is weak, especially in the music education subject, and all they need is to just play the national anthem and some other chants, those focus on the love of the home and Kuwait.

S2: Improvement in my performance on piano.

S3: Because learning piano starts when the student starts study in the college, until graduating, and learning piano is the basic of learning music.

S4: Because leaning piano in the college help me to develop myself and my skills, and makes me know much knowledge and skills.

S5: When I listen to piano harmony, I feel like I am by a very nice beautiful picture.

S6: Development in my piano performance.

3. Could you tell me what are the challenges and difficulties that you face when you learn piano at your college?

S1: The time of piano lab is not suitable. Most of the time in the piano lab I am in a bad mood. The environment in general in the college does not help and is not suitable. I just can play and practise piano in the college and specifically in the piano lab lesson, but I cannot do that outside the college due to the weak of the level of culture in the society.

S2: Sight-reading (reading score) with my hands on the piano and playing is dispersing my concentration.

S3: When I am reading score and playing with my hands at the same time.

S4: The big and important thing is the lack of musical instruments in the music department, and we do not have the opportunity to learn and practise any other musical instrument or even piano.

S5: There are some music pieces that need practicing for a long time, and there are also long music pieces.

S6: There are no problems or challenges.

4. Can you explain with more details how you feel these challenges can be avoided or solved?

S1: We can solve these problems by the effort of the student himself, but he must have other efforts from the other students and piano teachers and other professors in the college.

S2: First, memorising the music score or the music piece, second, keep practicing piano and not stop or find it boring.

S3: Not stop practicing the music instrument, in order to avoid any going lower in the level and forget what you have learnt.

S4: Buy new musical instruments.

S5: More practices focusing on the speed and concentration.

S6: Not find.

5. Can you tell me how many times you usually practise piano each week?

S1: From three to four times.

S2: Three days per week.

S3: Two days, for one or two hours.

S4: Five times.

S5: Currently, three hours, two hours in the college and one hour at my home.

S6: Actually, not usually, but (time to time) where I practise four hours at least.

6. Do you feel that's enough?

S1: Yes. That is enough.

S2: Yes.

S3: Yes.

S4: Yes.

S5: Actually, it is depending on how the music piece looks like (long, difficult,. easy, small).

S6: Yes.

7. Why/why not?

S1: The number of piano labs and levels is six, and I am now in piano level 6, so definitely these times for practise piano is enough.

S2: Because I am a student in the college and there is a pressure from the other subjects and modules outside the music department.

S3: In order to avoid any boredom when I practise or learning piano.

S4: Not find.

S5: When the music piece is difficult, I need more time to practise it.

S6: Not find.

8. Can you explain to me what are you usually doing through this time of practice step by step, (e.g. how do you start your practice and what you do, then what you do after, then what you do at the end of your practice)?

S1: Start my practice with something I really know it and had played before. Then start the new music piece. After I finish from the practice, I try to play and create a new melody or play improvisation from my mind.

S2: I start with finger exercises (Hanon), then keep continuing practicing the exercises and mark each one that I have finished.

S3: Start my practicing with reading the music piece to check if there any new scale or sharp or flat notes, then put my hand and fingers in the right place, then continue my exercises.

S4: At the start, I choose what I am going to practise, then listen to it, then try to play it, then record my playing, then compare the music recording with my playing recording in order to check the mistakes and which places in the music piece I need to focus on and study it again and improve it, then keep repeating and play it for more times.

S5: At the start of my practice, I play some music scales and some concentration and speed exercises, after that I start the new music piece with reading the music to check it, then start to play very slowly the left hand line, after I finish, I start to play very slowly the right hand line, after that I try to play with both hands with slow speed.

S6: First thing is practicing the music scales, then start to play the music piece that I have to play in the piano exam.

9. Can you tell me where you normally practise piano? (e.g. at the college, home, or other places)

S1: Sometime I practise in the college, and sometimes in my home when preparing for the piano exam.

S2: In the college and home.

S3: Usually at home, and sometimes in the college.

S4: Most of the time I practise in my home.

S5: Sometimes I practise in the college and home, and most of the time in my studio.

S6: I practise during the piano lab lessons, and sometimes in my home.

10. Do you feel comfortable when you practise piano in these places?

S1: It is suitable 75%, but I prefer to be alone when I practise.

S2: Yes.

S3: Yes.

S4: Yes.

S5: Yes. The studio is far away from the noise.

S6: Yes.

11. *Can you explain why?*

S1: I prefer to be alone in order to avoid any confusion or distraction in my mind.

S2: It is a good environment.

S3: Because everything is offered and helping.

S4: Have a good time (long time) at home, and good environment to practise piano.

S5: Because practise piano needs a high concentration far away from the noise.

S6: Nobody disturbs me.

12. Are there any other places you would like to practise piano in? Is it difficult to do this?
S1: Home.

S2: No there are not.

S3: No.

S4: No.

S5: I want to practise in the piano hall on the grand piano, because the piano is a high quality and it is not electronic or digital piano.

S6: On the beach.

13. Can you explain why it is problem or difficult to do?

S1: When I practise at home, my family are laughing and taunt at me.

S2: -

S3: -

S4: -

S5: The problem is that the piano hall is considered as a lecture room, where usually it is busy with classes.

S6: It is impossible and unauthorised.

14. Could you tell me what are you feeling currently about the improvement of your piano skills and level?

S1: I feel that I can improve my piano skills just in the music department only.

S2: I feel good and more confident in myself.

S3: Good.

S4: I feel very happy towards my development of my skills and ability on the piano.

S5: I feel good and confident, and I need more development for my skills.

S6: I feel good and would like to thank my piano teacher.

15. Can you compare how you feel about your piano ability, skills and improvement since you started learning piano at your college?

S1: I did not try to play piano before. I just touched and played piano on the first day in the college.

S2: Yes. Before my study in the college, I was playing piano (a little), but after I started in the college I have been in the piano levels process, and you cannot pass each level until you do well and then you go to the next level.

S3: Before study in the college, I did not know how to play piano well, then after study, I had learnt a lot such as reading music score, know the music notes, and am confident with my playing.

S4: Before study in the college I did think that I was playing piano very well, but later after studied, I discovered many things, there is a lot of information and knowledge for the music and playing piano. And I tried to learn as much as I possibly can in order to develop my piano skills and my thinking about music.

S5: Of course, there is a difference in each level of study.

S6: Before the college I was playing piano well, but after studying I have become a really good piano player.

16. Can you tell me what would you like to improve in your piano skills or ability?

S1: Reading music notes in a good, correct way.

S2: I would like to know how to play fast speed and to be accuracy.

S3: I want to improve my sight-reading and play with both hands very well.

S4: I want to learn how to improvise very well and how to change among music scales.

S5: I like to know how to play fast speed with playing fast speed music pieces.

S6: I want to learn sight-reading, with a more academic way.

17. How do you feel about the materials that you are using?

S1: I see that the exercises are good and suitable for the level and ability of the current students.

S2: All is good.

S3: I see these are good, because the materials are not so difficult and not very easy, and in each piano level you have to choose a specific music piece which is suitable for you and improve your skills.

S4: The music pieces are good, but we need to learn and play more music pieces and give me the choice for more options not specific piano composer or period.

S5: The piano materials are excellent as these are suitable for each piano level.

S6: Not bad.

18. Who chooses these – you or your teacher?

S1: The piano teacher offers some exercises and we have the choice which one I want to play.

S2: My teacher and I, but I prefer the teacher's choice as he knows my piano level.

S3: Sometimes me and sometimes my teacher.

S4: Most the time it is my teacher, but sometimes I can ask my teacher if I can play some other music piece.

S5: My teacher and I, depends on what the teacher wants.

S6: My teacher most the time, and I sometimes.

19. Could you tell me what are your plans after finishing your study at your college?

S1: I want to continue my study for master's studies in any Arabic country.

S2: I would like to be a music teacher.

S3: I plan to take and study for PhD to be a piano professor, as my family and my friends convinced me to do.

S4: May keep learning more about music and play piano.

S5: I plan to study my master's degree in Australia.

S6: I want to teach and be music teacher in a school.

20. Do you think you'll keep on playing and learning piano?

S1: I will just suffice by the basics what I have learnt.

S2: Yes. I will learn more about music.

S3: Yes, I will keep continuing.

S4: I will continue learning.

S5: I will keep learning, because what I had learnt was not enough.

S6: Yes. Just continue learning.

21. Can you explain why you feel this?

S1: The basics are suitable for the current level of employment for music teachers.

S2: Because the piano is a basic of the music.

S3: Because with keeping practicing and learning, I will love the music more and it will be easy for me.

S4: Because if I stopped now, my level will be decreased and start from the beginning, so I will keep learning.

S5: I do not want to lose what I have learnt, and I want to learn more.

S6: I would like to learn everything about piano.

22. Can you tell me if are there other places available outside your college where you can develop your piano learning or practise piano?

S1: We meet each other, with my friends, and play and talk together in some places.

S2: Yes. There are musical centres, but I do not know where their places are.

S3: I do not know.

S4: At home.

S5: There are some musical centres somewhere in Kuwait.

S6: I know there is the Higher Institution for Musical arts in Kuwait.

23. Could you tell me how do you feel about the type of music scores that you learning during your piano classes?

S1: -

S2: Good, not bad.

S3: Easy and fun

S4: I listen to them and try to know what they are meaning.

S5: Music scores are depending on the kind of music, some of them are boring but are very helpful.

S6: Good.

24. Can you tell me why you feel this?

S1: -

S2: Because these have been suitable for each piano level.

S3: Nice melodies.

S4: No comment.

S5: Because some music pieces are boring, but you can learn good things from them.

S6: Because I play good music pieces, which most pianists play.

25. Have you found any material outside the college that helps you to improve your learning piano process? What are they?

S1: Yes. Moonlight Sonata, and Pachelbel-Canon music piece.

S2: Yes, on the Internet and online.

S3: No, actually, I did not try to find anything outside the college.

S4: No. I did not try to look for other things outside the music department.

S5: No, because the music pieces in the college are enough.

S6: Yes. On YouTube.

26. Could you tell me any previous experiences, situation or learning that happened with piano, (e.g. have you had piano lessons when were younger, have you played piano or other musical instrument at school, have you tried to play any musical instrument during your life?

S1: No, I do not have any previous experience, as I just started piano in the college.

S2: Yes. I played the national anthem one hand (right hand) in my school and also played on drums a little bit.

S3: No, as I have not ever thought about learning music during all my school stages.

S4: No, I have not.

S5: No, I have not.

S6: Yes, I played keyboard in my school during primary and middle school stages with the music team.

27. Can you explain more details about what was happened and why you think it was like this?

S1: I was not having interested in music when I was small.

S2: I wanted that, and did it, as I wanted to play and participate with the music team in my school.

S3: For the same reason.

S4: -

S5: No reason.

S6: I have liked music since I was small.

28. Could you tell me more details about how you compare your previous piano learning experience to that of the current learning progress at your college?

S1: There is a little development in my skills and ability.

S2: Learning music was not necessary (not compulsory), but now I have to attend many exams and pass in order to graduate.

S3: I did not know anything about music or piano, but now I have a good knowledge.

S4: Definitely, I have learnt a lot about music during my study in the college such as how to listen to music, feel it, and maybe I can play it.

S5: No, just in the college.

S6: Before, I was just playing by ear, but now I can read music scores.

29. Can you tell me about your feelings about learning Western classical music during the piano classes?

S1: Before, I did not like it, but after study in the college, I like Western classical music more than Arabic Eastern music.

S2: After study at the college, yes, it is very nice.

S3: It is very good, because my direction now will be in Western classic music.

S4: Actually, learning Western music is very good thing, where I can learn about this music more and it is considered as the basis of music.

S5: It is good, and there are many levels for each student's ability.

S6: It is very nice, as my direction is to learn and know more about the Western classic music.

30. Were you familiar with Western classical music before starting learning piano at your college?

S1: No.

S2: Yes, a little.

S3: No.

S4: I had wrong knowledge about it.

S5: No, I did not have any idea about music in general.

S6: Yes, a little.

31. Would you be happy if the piano classes also included music scores from Eastern Arabic music?

S1: No, I would not prefer that.

S2: Yes, it must be including Eastern Arabic music.

S3: Yes, I prefer that.

S4: Yes, I would like that to happen.

S5: Yes, I strongly want that.

S6: No, I do not prefer that.

32. Can you tell me why you feel that?

S1: Western music is more popular than Arabic music.

S2: Because music is music, either Western or Arabic, both of them are music.

S3: Not bad to include Arabic music.

S4: Because this will give us more knowledge about different kinds of music and how to compare them.

S5: Just to avoid any boredom, so we have different styles of music.

S6: Because my direction is Western music.

33. Which kind of music do you feel is better for learning, or you would like to learn during the piano classes?

S1: Western classic music.

S2: Western classic music.

S3: Western classic music.

S4: Western classic music.

S5: Western classic music.

S6: Western classic music.

34. Can you explain why you prefer this kind?

S1: It is easier.

S2: I like it.

S3: I like it, and in terms of Arabic music actually we did not try it before, so we do not know how it is feeling when learning it.

S4: Because I feel it is the real music or the basis of music and piano.

S5: Because I did not try the Eastern Arabic music.

S6: I like Western music more, but also because we did not try how to learn Arabic music.

35. Could you explain what is the difference between learning Western classical music and Eastern Arabic music?

S1: Western music is more popular.

S2: I think there are some differences between the Western classic music and Arabic music in terms of tonality, style and scales.

S3: I do not know.

S4: I do not know too.

S5: We did not try.

S6: In the college we are always learning Western music.

36. Can you tell me your opinion about using digital-piano during and headphones in your piano classes, (e.g. do you feel it is very useful or you do not like it)?

S1: Yes, they are very good.

S2: No, I do not like them.

S3: Yes, very useful.

S4: Yes, they are good.

S5: Yes, they are good.

S6: No, I do not like them.

37. Can you please tell me why you feel that about digital-piano and headphones?

S1: Because you are not making any noise and disturbing each other during the piano lesson, and you can make mistakes without being shy.

S2: It is boring.

S3: Because it makes me feel that I am lonely and nobody disturbs me.

S4: I can play what I want without noise.

S5: Good quality and tonality.

S6: The touch is not like the normal piano, as we have to play in the exam on the normal piano not on the digital one.

38. Can you explain if you have seen, heard, known or used any other using for technology facilities or accessories (such as music applications, devices etc.) that could be very helpful when using during piano lessons, or even during your practicing piano time?

S1: Yes, ''Piano tiles 2'' application on my smartphone.

S2: Yes, there are many on my iPad.

S3: No, I did not try or use any.

S4: No, not used any before.

S5: I do not know any, except those we have in my college.

S6: Yes, on YouTube and iPhone.

39. If you mentioned some technologies that you use during learning or practicing piano, could you please explain how it supports your learning of piano?
S1: Helps me to learn the Eastern music.

S2: Helps me to memorise some music pieces.

S3: -

S4: -

S5: -

S6: -

40. How do you feel about learning piano in a group?

S1: There is competition among the students.

S2: It is a challenge

S3: I feel more confident.

S4: Yes, I like the group.

S5: It is good feeling, especially when we are sharing our knowledge and information.

S6: Learning with each other is enjoyable.

41. Why do you feel that?

S1: Because when you put good smart talented students with other normal students, the normal students will get a benefit from the others, as it can help all the students to improve their levels.

S2: Group can give confidence for all students and takes out any tension.

S3: We can help each other and it is a good environment.

S4: Because in group there are some students with very good level and ability with piano, so the other students will do their best in order to be as them.

S5: Feeling competition among students.

S6: It is good to correct our mistakes and hear each other.

42. Can you tell me about your feeling when you learn piano one-to-one?

S1: I can learn in more freedom situation.

S2: I feel tension and anxiety sometimes.

S3: I feel good.

S4: When I learn with one-to-one lessons, I feel more comfortable and I feel that I can play more music pieces and I can ask questions.

S5: I did not try before.

S6: I did not try before.

43. Why do you feel this?

S1: I have all the time just for me, so I can ask whatever I want.

S2: I do not know.

S3: No comment.

S4: Because the time will be just focused on me, so I feel I get more information.

S5: I do not know.

S6: I do not know.

44. Can you explain to me how you prepare for your piano exams at the college?

S1: Practicing before the exam.

S2: Practicing three days before the exam.

S3: More practicing with focus on exam.

S4: Practicing what we have to do in the exam.

S5: More practicing time and focus on what are difficult scores.

S6: Stay at home and practise more on my exam.

45. Is there anything else that the college could offer to help you prepare?

S1: Yes, more piano practice rooms.

S2: Yes, some more lessons that focus on exam music pieces.

S3: More play piano.

S4: No comment.

S5: No, I do not feel I need anything else.

S6: More practice rooms.

46. Do you feel that there is pressure on you to do well in the piano exams? Or do you think other areas of study are more important?

S1: Yes, sometimes.

S2: Sometimes.

S3: No.

S4: No.

S5: No.

S6: No.

47. Can you explain how you feel about your piano teachers, in terms of are they very helpful during the piano classes and outside the class time and giving you most of their experience and answering your questions?

S1: Yes, they are very helpful.

S2: Yes, they answer all my questions most of the time.

S3: Yes, they are very helpful and they have good experience.

S4: Yes, outside the piano lesson they are very helpful, and they are very busy during piano lessons.

S5: The piano teachers have always been happy to help all of the students at any time.

S6: Actually, it is very nice when we are dealing together as friends not as a students and teacher.

48. Do you think that your piano teachers always answer your questions?

S1: Yes.

S2: Yes.

S3: Yes.

S4: Yes.

S5: Yes.

S6: Yes.

49. How many piano teachers do you have during leering piano at the college since your started?

S1: Three.

S2: Three.

S3: Three.

S4: Three.

S5: Three.

S6: Three.

50. Is there a specific piano teacher you prefer at the college?

S1: No.

S2: Yes, there is one teacher.

S3: Yes, there is one teacher

S4: No.

S5: Yes, two of them.

S6: Yes, two of them.

51. Could you tell me why you think that?

S1: -

S2: Because he is very friendly and takes time to help me to learn very well.

S3: I think he knows how to start with basic methods for the students, in order to be a good student.

S4: -

S5: They make me learn with loving the piano instrument and I like to play and learn more.

S6: I feel that I am improving fast.

52. Can you please explain how you compare your piano teachers at the college (e.g. are some of them are helpful, or very weak in some points, or pros and cons)?

S1: They all are good.

S2: Sorry, I cannot say anything.

S3: All of them are good, but some of them do not attend piano class (absent).

S4: I can compare among the teacher in terms of how they explain and teach the piano, and which method they are using during lessons.

S5: No, there are no piano teachers with not good experience.

S6: All of them are good and friendly.

53. Could you please explain what do you think about the piano teacher's role during the piano classes or to help students when they learn piano at the college?

S1: More exercises.

S2: Teacher has to give us easy simple exercises and then be gradual.

S3: Help students by giving more piano exercises.

S4: Teacher has to talk with student in order to know what the student needs to improve and focus on, in order to be easy for the student when the teacher asks him to play such piano music.

S5: To teach me how to be ordering my fingers on piano.

S6: How to read music, how to play scales, and ordering of fingers.

54. Can you tell me about the relationship between you and your piano teachers, (e.g. is it friendly, formally, serious or like a very close friend)?

S1: Friendly.

S2: Friendly, and sometimes being a friend.

S3: Close friend.

S4: Friend and brother.

S5: Friendly.

S6: Friendly.

55. Can you mention some points about what are the best things you like, that make you feel happy and feel comfortable during your learning piano at your college?

S1: When I feel my piano skills level is improved.

S2: Yes, when the piano exercise is not too much. When teacher gives us the new exercises with the piano curriculum for each piano level.

S3: When I am with my group.

S4: When teacher asks me to play for the other students to show them as a good player.

S5: When teacher helps me and gets my tension to stop.

S6: When I play new music that I know.

56. Can you tell me why do you feel this?

S1: No comment.

S2: Because it makes me more specific about what I am going to learn and focus on.

S3: -

S4: No comment.

S5: The role of the teacher to make the learning process easy for students is not difficult.

S6: No comment.

57. Can you mention any points about the things you do not like, or annoy you and make you feel uncomfortable during your learning piano at your college?

S1: No, nothing.

S2: When other students talk during the piano lessons and make noise.

S3: No, there is nothing.

S4: There are not enough learning rooms for piano practice.

S5: The number of piano lessons is not enough, we need more.

S6: No, there is not anything very bad.

58. Can you tell me why do you feel this?

S1: -

S2: Because talking has stopped me to concentrate and I lost a lot from lesson time.

S3: -

S4: Because most of time most of the room is busy.

S5: There are many times the teacher is busy with other subjects and the department meeting.

S6: -

59. Could you please tell me if there is anything you would like to add, not mentioned in the questionnaire, or if you would like to add comments, opinions, more information, or refer to other points that affect your learning at the college?

S1: No, thanks.

S2: Yes, there is a module subject called '*"introduction to science of sound"* has to be in the music department, and better if we have some more modules related to learning music.

S3: No, there is not.

S4: No, thanks.

S5: Yes, I suggest to establishing a learning workshop between all piano levels in order to exchange our knowledge about music or piano, with music doctor supervisor.

S6: No, thanks.

Appendix 7: Focus Group Interviews with Female Students at CBE, 16th May 2016

1. Could you explain to me what you feel about the current leaning piano process at your college?

S1: Actually, it is a good feeling and nice to learn piano.

S2: It is good feeling.

S3: It is very good, I really happy.

S4: Good feeling, because piano is the basis of learning music.

S5: It is good.

S6: It is nice.

2. Can you explain why you feel that?

S1: It is good thing to learn piano and know how to read music scores and play piano in good way.

S2: I like piano.

S3: Because I have known and met a lot of friends, and I enjoying learning piano in the music department.

S4: Because I love music in general, and this is my future career.

S5: Everything is going well.

S6: There are no problems.

3. Could you tell me what are the challenges that you face when you learn piano at your college?

S1: I do not have enough time to practise piano, due to other studying other subjects not in music such as educational and psychology subjects in the college.

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S2: There was challenge at the start when I started study at the college, because I have not played piano before, but later on has been good and easy.

S3: The start of learning piano is really was very difficult, but now is really fun. And there is no respect from the other students from the other subjects and department at me and my friends too, as they consider music is prohibited, and some of them also considering music as not important subject to learn.

S4: I was very afraid of piano exams when I started study in the college, but now it is okay. I also did not have a piano at my home, so it was difficult to practise piano at home, but now am okay.

S5: I feel there are not enough music subjects to learn.

S6: The view of other students and doctors from outside the music department of me as a musician.

4. Can you explain with more details how you feel these challenges can be avoided or solved?

S1: Give me more free time in order to practise piano, and take off some other subjects that are not really related to my study.

S2: Learn piano at school.

S3: Firstly, in terms of learning piano for the first time, this can be avoided by having some music instruments in the school stages. Secondly, in terms of music being prohibited or not a good thing to learn, I see this is society culture which has to be more open minded and develop in order to see music from a different aspect, not just as a not important subject.

S4: Same answer.

S5: We would like to learn more about music, not just what they are giving us.

S6: They have to change this view and be more serious, as now music is one of many subjects in the college and as some other subjects and it is important even for just me, they have to respect me.

5. Can you tell me how many times you usually practise piano each week?

S1: Just during the piano lessons time.

S2: Two times.

S3: Two times.

S4: Eight times.

S5: Three.

S6: Two.

6. Do you feel that's enough?

S1: Of course not.

S2: Yes.

S3: No.

S4: Yes.

S5: Yes.

S6: Yes.

7. Why/why not?

S1: Because if I want to be a good pianist, I have to practise piano daily even if just for 30 minutes.

S2: Because I do what I want during this time, so I feel it is enough. I do not need more.

S3: Because I have to practise more in order to improve my piano level. But that actually, what I can do now because I have other subjects I have to study.

S4: In order to finish all of the piano curriculum for my piano level.

S5: Because that is what I need, I usually finish the piano level curriculum within this practicing time.

S6: I have other things to do, and I already finished music practice that the teachers asked me to do.

8. Can you explain to me what are you usually doing through this time of practice step by step, (e.g. how do you start your practice and what you do, then what you do after, then what you do at the end of your practice)?

S1: I usually start with music scales, then arpeggios, then start studying what I have to play such as a music piece.

S2: Start with 'Hanon' exercises, then the music piece.

S3: Start reading the exercise, then start with 'right hand', then the 'left hand', then try to play with the both hands the exercise.

S4: Start with warming up my fingers, then start the music piece, then check again if did well.

S5: Start with scales, then read the music that I am going to play, them play the music piece many times.

S6: Start exercises, then play some music that I had already played well, then start the new music piece.

9. Can you tell me where you normally practise piano? (e.g. at the college, home, or other places)

S1: I usually practise in the college only.

S2: In the college.

S3: In the college.

S4: In the college and my home.

S5: In the college.

S6: In the college.

10. Do you feel comfortable when you practise piano in these places?

S1: Yes, it is very good.

S2: Yes.

S3: Yes. It is good.

S4: Yes, it is.

S5: Yes.

S6: Yes.

11. Can you explain why?

S1: Firstly, there is the piano teacher and he can correct my mistakes. Secondly, the environment in the college gives me the motivation to be concentrate during practising piano.

S2: I feel it is comfortable place, and there some other students practising in other rooms, I feel I have to practise more.

S3: There are piano practice rooms, and it is good to practise without noise.

S4: Because when I practise in the college I can ask the piano teachers about something, and in my home I have a good environment to practise without any noise or disturbance.

S5: I can ask the piano teacher, and I can also ask my friends for help.

S6: I do not have piano at home or somewhere else.

12. Are there any other places you would like to practise piano in? Is it difficult to do this?

S1: Yes, at home.

S2: No.

S3: Yes, at home.

S4: No.

S5: No.

S6: Yes, home.

13. Can you explain why it is problematic or difficult to do this?

S1: I do not have enough time, as I finish at college at the end of the day.

S2: -

S3: I cannot pay for a piano, not enough money.

S4: -

S5: -

S6: My family do not like me to play piano, they said you can play or learn piano just in the college, not at home.

14. Could you tell me what are you feeling currently about the improvement of your piano skills and level?

S1: Actually, it is nice feeling, where I can see my development about playing piano, and how it has been now better.

S2: Yes. I feel better, as before I did not know anything about piano.

S3: It is good, I really happy that I play piano with both hands.

S4: It is good feeling which supports me to keep studying.

S5: I feel happy.

S6: It is good development.

15. Can you compare how you feel about your piano ability, skills and improvement since you started learning piano at your college?

S1: Before the study at the college was 0%, but after now it has been 84%. And I am really happy with that I have learnt a lot about piano in short period.

S2: Before the college I did not know anything about piano or music, but now I really like it and need to learn more about it.

S3: Same answer.

S4: Before study at the college, I was liking and love music in general, but after studying, I have loved it more and know how music is a good thing, and in terms of piano I had never touched a piano, but later in the college and I just started to do it and am happy with it.

S5: I have learnt a lot about piano, but I really need more.

S6: Before study at the college I did not know anything about piano, but now I like piano.

16. Can you tell me what would you like to improve in your piano skills or ability?

S1: I would like to learn how to control my speed during playing such music piece.

S2: I would like to learn how to play piano concerto.

S3: I want to learn how to sight-read a music piece at a good high level.

S4: I want to learn how to play with fast speed.

S5: Study more music pieces and play piano concerto.

S6: Improve my left hand ability when playing with both hands.

17. How do you feel about the materials that you are using?

S1: It is very good, especially as it offers for me the development for my piano skills and level for each piano level module.

S2: It is good.

S3: It is good.

S4: It is good and nice.

S5: It is good.

S6: It is good.

18. Who chooses these – you or your teacher?

S1: Of course, my piano teacher, because she knows my piano level and ability.

S2: My teachers.

S3: My teacher.

S4: Sometimes my teacher, and sometimes I can ask my teacher if I can play such different music piece.

S5: Teacher.

S6: Teacher.

19. Could you tell me what are your plans after finishing your study at your college?

S1: I am thinking about continuing study for masters and PhD, or may stay teaching in school.

S2: I want to continue my study for music in US.

S3: If I have opportunity to travel and study my masters and PhD outside that is okay, or that is fine to stay teaching in school.

S4: Teaching music in school.

S5: Teaching in school or may go another career perhaps working in bank.

S6: I would like to be a music teacher, but if it feels boring I will seek another job.

20. Do you think you'll keep on playing and learning piano?

S1: Actually, it is so difficult to stop learning piano, but I will try keeping practicing piano.

S2: Yes, of course.

S3: I hope to keep playing piano.

S4: I will keep continue, because it is easy thing to learn piano.

S5: Yes.

S6: Yes.

21. Can you explain why you feel this?

S1: Because piano is good thing and nice to keep learning, especially when I like playing piano.

S2: It will be my career.

S3: I feel good feelings when I play piano, makes me relax and not tense.

S4: I love music.

S5: I have known a lot about piano and music, so I do not want to lose this.

S6: Yes, me too, because even if I will not be a teacher, I will keep leaning piano as a hobby.

22. Can you tell me are there other places available outside your college where you can develop your learning or practise piano?

S1: Yes, I heard that there are some places, but I do not know where.

S2: Yes, there is the Higher Institution of Musical Arts in Kuwait, and there are some local music centres.

S3: I do not know.

S4: At home.

S5: No.

S6: No.

23. Could you tell me how you feel about the type of music scores that you learning during your piano classes?

S1: Actually, all music pieces I have played was from my piano teacher, as she knows my piano level and then gives me what is suitable for me.

S2: It is good.

S3: They are good.

S4: It is very nice, because these are the same as those I am going to teach in school.

S5: It is good

S6: It is good.

24. Can you tell me why you feel this?

S1: No comment.

S2: Good for my piano level and ability.

S3: I see they improve my piano level and help me.

S4: I feel happy.

S5: I see they are suitable for each student.

S6: Yes, they are not difficult.

25. Have you found any material outside the college that helps you to improve your learning piano process? What are they?

S1: No, actually, I believe that my piano teachers are the ones who have good experience to offer me the best.

S2: Yes. YouTube and my smartphone, where I can see how the professional pianist plays piano, and then know more piano pieces.

S3: No, I did not try.

S4: No, I did not try before.

S5: Yes. On YouTube and my smartphone.

S6: I do not know.

26. Could you tell me about any previous experiences, situations or learning that happened with piano, (e.g. did you have piano lessons when you were younger, have you played piano or other musical instruments at school or tried to play any musical instrument during your life?

S1: No, I have never leant piano before.

S2: No, I did not have any.

S3: Yes, I have registered in the music team in my middle school, but after that my family took me off from the music team.

S4: No, I do not have any.

S5: No.

S6: Yes, when I was with music team in school.

27. Can you explain more details about what happened and why you think it was like this?

S1: Because music was not important in my life, and nobody taught me how music is good to learn or even to just know some music culture.

S2: -

S3: Actually, my family do not like music, and consider it as prohibited. But now they changed their mind, especially after they saw there are many people teaching their daughter the music subject in order to be a music teacher in a female girls school where the salary of the teacher is very nice, and I will not be going to be a professional musician.

S4: -

S5: -

S6: I wanted to participate with the music team in school, but the music teacher said that to me that you are not good at a musical instrument, so I can put you in my team. I think that happened because the music teacher did not have enough time to just look at me or even try to teach me something.

28. Could you tell me more details about how you compare your previous piano learning experience to that of the current learning progress at your college?

S1: I do not have previous experience, but I can say that I am very happy to know and study piano and know piano is an important and nice thing in my life.

S2: Before I did not have the ability to play piano, but now I am happy that I know how to play piano.

S3: I just can learn music now, what I like.

S4: -

S5: I do not have.

S6: -

29. Can you tell me about your feelings about learning classical Western music during the piano classes?

S1: It is good.

S2: It is good.

S3: That is fine.

S4: I do not like it.

S5: It is good.

S6: I do not like it.

30. Were you familiar with classical Western music before starting learning piano at your college?

S1: No, I did not know anything about it.

S2: No.

S3: No.

S4: No.

S5: No.

S6: No.

31. Would you be happy if the piano classes also included music scores from Eastern Arabic music?

S1: Yes, of course, I love that very much.

S2: No.

S3: Yes, I like Arabic music.

S4: Yes.

S5: Yes.

S6: Yes.

32. Can you tell me why you feel that?

S1: Because I like Arabic music and would like to play some of them.

S2: I feel piano is a Western instrument, so it is better to play the same kind of music, especially as a basic.

S3: I like Arabic music and really would like to play some very common and famous Arabic music to show my family and friends.

S4: I love Arabic music.

S5: Yes, we like Arabic music.

S6: I really would like to learn some Arabic music pieces.

33. Which kind of music do you feel is better for learning, or you would like to learn during the piano classes?

S1: Arabic music.

S2: Western classical music.

S3: Both of them.

S4: Arabic music.

S5: Arabic and Western.

S6: Arabic.

34. Can you explain why you prefer this kind?

S1: Actually, I really like this kind of music and would like to play it.

S2: As I mentioned before.

S3: I see we have to learn both of them in order to learn many cultures and kinds of music.

S4: I feel I can learn piano faster and easier with Arabic music.

S5: Just to learn many cultures.

S6: I would like to play some Arabic music pieces.

35. Could you explain what is the difference between learning classical Western music and Eastern Arabic music?

S1: If I learn the Arabic music, definitely I will play it even if it is very difficult, because I really like it and like to play it.

S2: Learning Western music will give the student the ability to pass the basic things in piano.

S3: I do not know as we did not try before, but Arabic music will be easier as we know the melody already for some music piece.

S4: We did not try in the college, but I feel it will be easy and fun.

S5: I do not know, but I feel it will be good.

S6: Arabic music is familiar for me, but Western is not.

36. Can you tell me your opinion about using digital-pianos and headphones during your piano classes, (e.g. do you feel it is very useful or you do not like it)?

S1: It is very useful and helps the students.

S2: It is good.

S3: It is good.

S4: I do not like it.

S5: It is good.

S6: I do not like it.

37. Can you please tell me why you feel that about digital-piano and headphones?

S1: Because during the piano lesson, if you do not use the headphones, we cannot hear each other, and will make it very noisy.

S2: It helps the students to practice during the piano lesson.

S3: I can put the headphones on and play what I want without any noise.

S4: The touch of the digital piano is very bad, not like the wooden piano.

S5: Good to dealing with piano lab to avoid any noise.

S6: The touch is terrible.

38. Can you explain if you have seen, heard, known or used any other technology facilities or accessories (such as music applications, devices etc.) that could be very helpful when used during piano lessons, or even during your practicing piano time?

S1: Yes, online and smartphones.

S2: Yes, on my phone.

S3: Yes, there are many on smartphone.

S4: Yes. On YouTube.

S5: Yes, on online.

S6: No.

39. If you mentioned some technologies that you use during learning or practicing piano, could you please explain how it supports your learning of piano?

S1: It helps me to practise more piano.

S2: It helps me to play some difficult piano piece through the app on my phone.

S3: Actually, they are just for fun.

S4: I can watch and learn how the other people play my favourite music pieces.

S5: It helps me to find music scores that I want to play.

S6: -

40. How do you feel about learning piano in a group?

S1: It is good feeling, especially if this group is your friends, it will be a good challenge.

S2: It is good.

S3: I like it.

S4: It is very nice.

S5: It is good.

S6: It is good.

41. Why do you feel that?

S1: Same answer.

S2: It makes me more confident.

S3: I feel good to learn together with my friends.

S4: We can help each other during piano lessons.

S5: Group feeling is nice and gives me motivation.

S6: Good environment to learn.

42. Can you tell me about your feeling when you learn piano one-to-one?

S1: No, I do not like it.

S2: I do not know.

S3: It is good.

S4: It is good.

S5: It is good.

S6: It is good.

43. Why do you feel this?

S1: I feel it makes my learning process slow.

S2: I did not try before.

S3: I have tried some lessons, it is good because you have more time with your teacher to focus on your level and piano skills.

S4: Because the teacher's focus and efforts will be just about and on me and my level.

S5: Because all the time will be just for me, and I can ask what I want at any time.

S6: I feel it is improving my piano skills faster.

44. Can you explain to me how you prepare for your piano exams at the college?

S1: Of course, I will be finished already from the study for what I am going to play in the exam, and I just do some revision before the exam date.

S2: Practise more before the date of the exam.

S3: Practise what the has teacher given to me and be ready.

S4: Practising the piano exams music pieces more than 10 times.

S5: Practising more and focus on the exam requirements.

S6: Spend more time in practice and be in the college most of the time.

45. Is there anything else that the college could offer to help you prepare?

S1: No, everything is offered.

S2: No.

S3: Yes, more piano practice rooms.

S4: No.

S5: More piano practice rooms.

S6: More practice rooms.

46. Do you feel that there is pressure on you to do well in the piano exams? Or do you think other areas of study are more important?

S1: No, because each music piece is suitable for each student.

S2: No.

S3: No, just when we started study in piano module 1.

S4: No.

S5: No.

S6: No.

47. Can you explain how you feel about your piano teachers in terms of are they very helpful during the piano classes and outside the class time, and do they give you their experience and answer your questions?

S1: Actually, all of them are very helpful.

S2: They are good.

S3: They all are friendly.

S4: No comment.

S5: They are good.

S6: They are good.

48. Do you think that your piano teachers always answer your questions?

S1: Yes.

S2: Yes.

S3: Yes.

S4: Yes.

S5: Yes.

S6: Yes.

49. How many piano teachers do you have during your learning piano at the college since you started?

S1: Two.

S2: Two.

S3: Three.

S4: Three.

S5: Two.

S6: Three.

50. Is there a specific piano teacher you prefer at the college?

S1: Actually, I have learnt with two piano teachers, the first one I was not happy with for my development on piano. But the second one is very helpful and I can see my development on piano.

S2: Yes.

S3: Yes.

S4: Yes.

S5: Yes.

S6: Yes.

51. Could you tell me why you think that?

S1: Because the second professor is very concentrating on my level, but the first one was not interested about my piano level to improve it.

S2: I feel this teacher is very close to me, and knows what I need to learn about piano.

S3: There are two who I feel that they usually believe that I can do more and learn more about piano.

S4: Because I feel comfortable with her, she answers my questions, and focuses on my piano level.

S5: Some of them are very, very helpful and made me love piano.

S6: One of them is very helpful and always helps me and encourages me and asks me to do more.

52. Can you please explain how you compare your piano teachers at the college (e.g. are some of them helpful, or are some of them you see weak in some points, or pros and cons)?

S1: All of them are good.

S2: Some of them are very good and others are good.

S3: All of them are good, but sometimes are busy and not helpful.

S4: No, all of them are helpful.

S5: No comment.

S6: Some of them are good and some are not.

53. Could you please explain what you think about the piano teacher's role during the piano classes or when students are learning piano at the college?

S1: The piano teacher has to offer me all the learning tools and makes for me a good learning environment to make it easy for me to learn.

S2: Yes, the piano teacher has to explain for the student more about piano and how to be a pianist, and what shall I do in order to be a good pianist.

S3: The piano teacher has to offer the student the confidence and support, and let the student believe that she can do more and get a good piano level, not just doing or finish the piano curriculum.

S4: I do not know.

S5: I see that the piano teacher has to offer for the student more music resources and pieces, and if she can also let me know more about piano.

S6: The piano teacher has to be more patient with students, especially who just started playing piano, and support them.

54. Can you tell me about the relationship between you and your piano teachers (e.g. is it friendly, formal, serious or like a very close friend)?

S1: Friendly and close to me.

S2: Friendly.

S3: Friendly.

S4: Sometimes serious and sometimes friendly.

S5: Friendly.

S6: Friendly.

55. Can you mention some points about what are the best things you like, that make you feel happy and feel comfortable during learning piano at your college?

S1: The relationship between the students and teachers in the music department actually, making a very nice environment as a family.

S2: When I've been in the music department, I feel it is my home.

S3: The good thing is that I am learning what I want which is piano.

S4: When I finish the piano exam and did well.

S5: I met my friend and am in new environment.

S6: I learnt piano.

56. Can you tell me why you feel this?

S1: Because I am feeling comfortable and enjoy.

S2: Same answer.

S3: This is my dream.

S4: I feel my teacher was very happy with me.

S5: I am happy with the new friends.

S6: I was not thinking that I could play piano before studying at the college.

57. Can you mention any points about what are the things you do not like or that annoy you and make you feel uncomfortable during your learning piano at your college?

S1: No, there is nothing.

S2: Sometimes, I do not have enough time to practise and show my teacher my ability when playing piano due to other outside subjects.

S3: Sometimes the environment in the music department is not good for learning or focus on learning, as there are some problems between professors or the head of music department.

S4: When I am practicing piano and someone makes noise for me in the college.

S5: Nothing.

S6: No, nothing.

58. Can you tell me why do you feel this?

S1: Because the environment in the music department is nice.

S2: I feel pressure about the other subjects to finish and then start practicing piano.

S3: Because the teachers usually are not focused with students, and lose most of the lesson time to explain what are the problems.

S4: Because I feel it is very noisy and not comfortable.

S5: Because I have spent nice days here in the music department.

S6: Because I have learnt a new thing.

59. Could you please tell me if there is anything you would like to add, not mentioned in the questionnaire, or if you would like to add comments, opinions, more information, or refer to other points that affect your learning process at the college?

S1: No, thanks.

S2: Yes, we need to learn more about music in general and piano and other music instruments, as what we learn now is really not enough.

S3: Yes, we need open master's studies and PhD, as if I want to continue my study I will have to travel outside Kuwait, where this is impossible for my family, they definitely will disagree and not let me travel.

S4: No.

S5: No, thanks.

S6: No, thanks.

Appendix 8: Student Questionnaire (Cover Sheet)

Dear students,

I'm Mohammad Alosaimi, a Ph.D. student from the University of York in the UK. The purpose of this questionnaire survey is part of my research which aims to collect data concerning students' attitudes towards the current piano learning piano process in the music department at the College of Basic Education.

Your cooperation means a great deal to this study. Please take your time to answer this questionnaire carefully. This information you provide here will remain confidential. The questionnaire will take no more than 20 minutes to fill in. The information you provide in this questionnaire will be used for my research only. Your personal details will be absolutely confidential and will in no circumstances be revealed to any other parties. Your honest and accurate answers will be greatly appreciated for conducting this research. It will be of great help if you answer all the questions as indicated. However, you may decline to answer any question and you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Your time and help are truly appreciated. If you have any queries or concerns regarding this questionnaire, please feel free to contact me at [Redacted]

Thank you for your consideration!

Mohammad Alosaimi

Mobile: [Redacted], Kuwait; [Redacted], UK

Participant Information Sheet

Dear Participant,

Thank you very much for considering participating in this study. Please find below some information detailing the aims and objectives of my study. My name is Mohammad Alosaimi. I am a doctoral candidate majoring in piano pedagogy at the University of York, UK.

Research Project Title:

Piano Pedagogy at CBE, Kuwait

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide whether to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Kindly ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

The purpose of the project is to discuss your opinions towards the current learning piano process at the College of Basic Education, in order to develop greater understanding of learning piano at the College of Basic Education.

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. If you decide not to participate it will not involve any penalty or loss of benefits. You will not need to provide a reason for your withdrawal. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and you can still withdraw at any time without any consequences. All the information that is collected in the research will be kept strictly confidential. The research will be archived by the University of York. However, should you require a copy; your request will be granted.

Your participation is extremely valuable to the results of this study and your contribution is important. If you would like to provide any additional information related to this topic, feel free to contact me.

Best Regards

Mohammad Alosaimi

E-mail: [Redacted]

Mobile: [Redacted], Kuwait; [Redacted], UK.

Declaration of consent

I have been informed about the aims and procedures involved in the research project I am participating in. I reserve the right to withdraw at any stage in the proceedings. Any information that I have provided as part of the study will be destroyed and my identity will be removed.

Signed: ....

Date: ....

Appendix 9: Questionnaire for Students at CBE

Part 1: Basic Information

Sl. NO	DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS
1.	Age (years) ☐ 18-20 ☐ 21-25 ☐ 26-30 ☐ 30 and above
2.	Sex ☐ Male ☐ Female
3.	Year in Programme ☐ Piano Module 5 ☐ Piano Module 6

Part 2: Student Practice

Sl. NO	
4.	How often do you practise? ☐ Every day ☐ Three times a week

	☐ Twice a week ☐ Once a week ☐ Other _____
5.	Are you satisfied with the facilities available to practise at CBE? ☐ Yes ☐ No
6.	Are you aware of the following practice elements? ☐ Slow practice ☐ Isolated sectional practice ☐ Repetition ☐ Practice with each hand separately ☐ Variation in tempo ☐ Self-evaluation
7.	Which of the following practice elements do you use? ☐ Slow practice ☐ Isolated sectional practice ☐ Repetition ☐ Practice with each hand separately ☐ Variation in tempo ☐ Self-evaluation
8.	How often do you research or read about the pieces you play? ☐ Always ☐ Sometimes

	☐ Never
9.	Do you have a sequential practice routine? ☐ Yes ☐ No
10.	How often if ever do you ask yourself how the composer may have intended a work to be played rather than how your teacher told you to play it? ☐ Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never
11.	How often do you experiment in your practice? ☐ Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never

Part 3: Motivation and Self-Efficacy

Please identify your level of agreement with the following statements (1= Strongly Disagree and 5=Strongly Agree)

Identify your level of agreement with the following statements:	1	2	3	4	5
After working at learning piano for a while, I felt pretty competent.					
I am satisfied with my performance at this task.					
The encouragement given by my teachers has helped me improve my performance.					

It was important to me to do well at this task.				
I am quite confident in playing the piano				
I am sure that this is the best under graduate career path for me				
I am confident that I can excel in this field				
I am confident that I will be able to achieve gainful employment in this field.				

How do you rank yourself in the following skill areas? (5=Very good and 1=Very bad)

How do you rank yourself in the following skill areas?	1	2	3	4	5
Music reading					
Rhythm					
Technique					
Tone production					
Style/Interpretation					
Memorisation					
Sight-reading					
Score reading					
Accompanying					
Harmonisation					
Transposition					
Improvisation					
Composition					
Playing by ear					

Part 4: Student Views on Music Teachers – Attitude and Satisfaction

Identify your level of agreement with the following questions

1= Definitely dislike

2= Somewhat dislike

3= Unsure

4= Like somewhat

5= Definitely like

Identify your level of agreement with the following statements	1	2	3	4	5
Instructors who provide me with more information on how to improve my technique					
Instructors who encourage me to think for myself					
Instructors who test me on my technique as well as my competence and knowledge					
Instructors who encourage me to read and practise more					
Instructions provide tasks/explanations beyond the classroom					

How would you rank your instructors on the following piano teaching areas? 1- Very Bad and 5- Very Good

How would you rank your instructors on the following piano teaching areas?	1	2	3	4	5
Selecting piano teaching literature					
Selecting piano methods					
Learning theories					
Philosophy of piano teaching					
Establishing a curriculum					
Lesson planning					
Motivating piano students					
Games for students					
Medical problems of pianists					
Performance anxiety					
Preparing students for recitals					
Adjudication					
Preparing students for college					
Reference books on pedagogy					
History of piano pedagogy					
History of keyboard technique					
Purchase, care, and maintenance of keyboard instrument					

Rate your level of satisfaction with the current teaching provided with respect to the following aspects:

Rate your level of satisfaction with the current teaching provided with respect to the following aspects	1	2	3	4	5
Ability to synthesise and integrate knowledge of posture, hand position and instrumental technique into daily practice routine					
Improvement of technical proficiency of piano through touch, phrasing, and fingering					
Gained knowledge of a wide variety of contemporary and traditional styles					
Gained knowledge of reading conventional and chord-symbol (lead sheet) notation					
Confident in playing alone and in ensembles of varying size, instrumentation, and stylistic orientation					
Ability to apply knowledge of musical styles and harmonic practices in improvisation					

How would you rank the use of the following technologies? 1= Very Low and 5=Very High

How would you rank the use of the following technologies at LCM in the group piano classes?	1	2	3	4	5
Electronic keyboards					
Electronic keyboard labs					
MIDI applications					
Synthesizers					
Computer software					
Internet resources					

Appendix 10: Translated Arabic Questionnaire Form for Students at CBE

1- الجزء الاول: البيانات الشخصيه

	البانات الاساسيه
1	العمر (سنه) ○ 20-18 ○ 25-21 ○ 30-26 ○ 30 وما فوق
2	الجنس ○ ذكر ○ انثى
3	السنه الدراسيه ○ الثانيه ○ الثالثه ○ الرابعه

2- الجزء الثاني: تمرين الطالب

الرقم	
4	كم مره تتمرن بيانو ○ كل يوم ○ مرتين بالاسبوع ○ مره بالاسبوع ○ شيء اخر
5	هل انت راضي علي مستوى التسهيلات التي تقدمها الكليه لك ○ نعم ○ لا
6	هل تعلم شيء عن المهارات التاليه ○ التمرين البطيء ○ تقسيم التمرين ○ الاعاده ○ تتمرن كل يد علي حدى ○ تغير السرعه

	○ تقيم نفسك	
7	ما هي العوامل التي تتبعها عند التمرين ○ التمرين البطيء ○ تقسيم التمرين ○ الاعاده ○ تتمرن كل يد علي حدى ○ تغير السرعه ○ تقيم نفسك	
8	كم مره تبحث او تقرا عن المقطوعه التي تعزفها ○ دائما ○ احيانا ○ ولا مره	
9	هل عندك ترتيب معين عندما تتمرن ○ نعم ○ لا	
10	كم مره سالت نفسك ما اذا كان المولف هو الذي يريد ذلك او انه هو المدرس الذي كيف تعزف هذه المقطوعه ○ دائما ○ احيانا ○ ولا مره	
11	كم مره تجرب شيء جديد عندما تتمرن بيانو ○ دائما ○ احيانا ○ ولا مره ○	

3- الجزء الثالث: تاحافز والرضاء النفسي

5	4	3	2	1	
					بعد العزف والتمرير علي البيانو لفتره , هل تشعر انك واثق من نفسك بالعزف
					انا راضي علي مسوى عزفي
					تشجيع المدرس كان يعطيني دافع قوي
					كان دايما مهم عندي ان اعزف جيدا ما يطلب مني

					انا واثق من عزف البيانو
					انا مقتنع انه هذا هو افضل دراسه لمظيفتي المستقبليه
					انا واثق انني سوف ابرع في مجالي
					انا واثق انني سوف انجز افضل الدرجات في وظيفتي

كيف تقيم نفسك في المهارات التاليه؟ (1- سيء جدا , 5- ممتاز جدا)

5	4	3	2	1	المهاره
					قراءه الموسيقى
					الايقاع
					التكنيك
					التون
					القالب الموسيقي
					الذاكره
					قراءه السريعه للمقطوعه
					قراءه المقطوعه
					المصاحبه
					الهارموني
					التصوير
					الارتجال
					التاليف
					العزف عن طريق السمع

4- الجزء الرابع: نظره الطالب للمدرس – اراء و رضى

مامدي تقييم لي

1. لا يعجبني
2. عادي
3. لا اعرف
4. يعجبني
5. يعجبني جدا

5	4	3	2	1	التكنولوجيا
					المدرس يساعدني لتعلم معلومات جديده في التكنيك
					المدرس يساعدني اني اهتم بنفسي
					المدرس يقيس مستواي و مدى معلوماتي
					المدرس يشجعني انني اقرا واتمرن اكثر
					المدرس يشرح لي الكثير للوصول الي الفهم

ماهو تقيمك لمدرسك في المهرات التدرسيه التاليه

5	4	3	2	1	المهاره
					اختيار دروس عن البيانو
					اختيار طريقه التدريس
					فلسفه التدريس
					المنهج
					خطه الدرس
					العاب خلال الدرس
					تشجيع الطلبه
					مشاكل صحيه تواجع عازف البيانو
					الخوف من العزف علي المسرح
					تحضير الطلاب للعزف علي المسرح
					الحكم علي اشياء
					تحضير الطلبه للكليه
					اعطاء مراجع للدراسه
					تاريخ تدريس البيانو
					تاريخ التكنيك علي الكيبورد
					شراء, العنايه, تصليح الاليه الموسيقيه

قيم مدى رضاك علي المرحله التدرسيه الحاله

5	4	3	2	1	تكنولوجيا
					القدره علي تجميع ودمج المعرفه التقنيه في التمرين اليومي
					تطوير الالكفاءه الفنيه للعزف عن طريق اللمس ,الكلام , الاصبع
					اعطاء معلومات عن الطرق الحديثه والقديمه للعزف
					اعطاء تعليمات علي الورقه الموسيقيه بالقلم الرصاص او التدوين
					اعطاء الثقه في العزف المنفرد والجماعه مع التوجيه
					القدره علي تطبيق المعرفه بالاسلوب الموسيقي والهارموني في الرتجال

كيف تقم استخدام التكنولوجيه التاليه

5	4	3	2	1	التكنولوجيا
					البيانو الالكتروني
					مختبر البيانو
					تطبيقات MIDI
					نتقنيات الصوت الحديثه
					برامج الكمبيوتر
					المصادر علي الانترنت

شكرا جزيلا علي جهودكم

محمد العصيمي

Appendix 11: Interview with Piano Teacher A (TA) at CBE, 5ᵗʰ June 2016

1. What qualifications have you obtained to teach piano?

I got a Bachelor's degree in Education, majoring in Music from the College of Basic Education in 2000, a Master degree from US in 2003 and a PhD from US in 2007.

2. Have you taken any additional training courses in order to be a piano teacher?

Yes, I did a training course from the Higher Institute of Musical Arts in Kuwait, and I did summer workshops training in Turkey.

3. How long have you been teaching piano?

I have been teaching piano since 2008 until now [2016], yes, about eight years.

4. Was that in the same country or in the same college?

Yes, all in Kuwait, but not in the same place, I taught in the Ministry of Education as a music teacher for one year, then taught in the Higher Institute of Musical Arts for two years and in the College of Basic Education since then.

5. Do you teach one-to-one lessons?

Of course.

6. Is there any particular method or style that you use for teaching your students?

Yes, in terms of teaching one-to-one lessons, I have some views about teaching, for example; when teaching piano, regardless of the curriculum, I prefer to play before and as well as with the students when the student plays the music. This is because I like the students to hear the music or the exercises before they start playing and also because this can help in developing the student's listening ability.

7. Could you elaborate on this?

During the lesson I try to benefit the student in whatever way I can. At the same time I try to develop the necessary relevant capabilities needed by indirect means and without giving direct information to the students. For example; when I teach piano, I try to develop the student's abilities of sight-reading, hearing and performance. As some students are only concerned with performance or playing music when they start the lesson, but I have the role of developing their required accompanying abilities in an indirect manner.

8. Which style of music do you focus on in your teaching? Why do you prefer these music pieces?

Personally, in my view, I feel that Baroque and Classical are two important basic periods for the beginner student. I feel that the beginner students cannot find something suitable from, for example, the Romantic or Modern music. Especially, I feel that the counterpoints and harmonies in the Baroque and Classical periods music were simpler compared to the Romantic and modern music. Secondly as we are College of Basic Education, we always attempt to include Arabic chants in our curriculum. We start the Arabic chants for students from piano module 1 and continue until piano module 6. Personally, I also prefer to give students small music pieces such as sonatinas or something else when starting piano learning for beginners. The main focus is always on Arabic chants, even for students in piano module 6 after three years of piano learning. This is because at the end, we are graduating music teachers for primary to high level public schools and most of them will not be required to teach how to play piano but rather they are just going to teach

music as a subject. Therefore our role is that we have to prepare the music teachers for their career, and their career requires most of them to be just able to play piano and Arabic chants. These teachers are not going to play for their students, for example, piano concerto or sonatas, so my focus is on chants, even if the student has a high ability in their piano performance. Usually we want to develop the student's ability for their career; however, that does not prevent me from developing their piano level, skills or performance, but the focus is that we are graduating music teachers, not piano teachers.

10. Which practicing exercises do you use with your students?

It depends on the student's level, of course. The first thing is learning music scales and learning scales is different depending on the module, for example, there are specific major and minor scales for each module. Afterwards we start arpeggios, then we start Hanon exercises, and these groups of exercises are usually most common for beginner piano students. For the later modules the piano student can play, for example, etudes or studies, where it is considered as an exercise at this level.

10. Why do you prefer these groups of exercises?

I have a personal view that these exercises are very powerful, as they increase the student's piano skills, technique and develop their level faster than a music piece. These exercises also develop the student's physical skills. For example; if I give my students a difficult music piece, then they have to spend one term to finish it and to be able to play it properly. In addition, this way is not going to develop the student's physical skills or piano level as fast as what I am doing now by giving my students these exercises. I give them about 30 to 45 minutes daily to practise these scales and exercises. Additionally, we are talking about a student who will be a music teacher, so I see that about 60 to 90 minutes daily practising is enough for them. I am not going to ask them to practise as a pianist or piano performance student for six hours daily, as they do in Europe

or abroad, 'practising at least six hours daily' because they know this student is going to be a professional pianist in their future career.

11. What factors influence your choice of repertoire and exercises (for example, is it because they are set for examinations, or because they are ones you worked on when you were studying, or because you find them effective, or because students enjoy them, or any other factors)?

For music exercises, music pieces, or generally choosing student's curriculum, I strongly believe that these have to be in the student's level. We have created a specific curriculum for the students, but this sometimes has incompatibility with some students, when we can see there is a student with talent, and there are other students whose ability is lower than the average students' level. We have a specific piano curriculum which is easy for most of the students. However, for example, if I find a smart or talented student in piano module 3, I have the choice to give them some exercises or music pieces from piano module 6 curriculum if they would like to improve their level of piano performance.

12. Could you mention the specific factors that influence your choice of piano exercises and music pieces?

The students themselves and their development. For example, for finishing and mastering the same music piece one student would take two or three weeks while another may develop playing the same music piece excellently within the next few days. What I mean is, giving the same music scales or pieces to all the students is not fair to the excellent or talented students. Another factor is dependent on the musician's level or age of the learner or music playing experiences; for example, sometimes the knowledge and performance level of someone with three years' experience is higher than one who has 10 years of experience. Therefore we see that the capability for development differs from person to person. As I have mentioned before, in terms of my teaching target I just need the student to practise around 60 or 90

minutes daily. There might be a student who likes to practise more or another one with greater talent who would like to practise even more, maybe about two, four, five, or six hours every day, so I will not be helping them if I do not give them something that can help to develop their level.

13. Does that mean each student has a special curriculum or exercises, or there is a single curriculum for all the students for each piano module? For example, currently you are teaching piano module 1, and if there is a talented or smart student, will you examine the talented students with the requirements of piano module-1?

No, the basic set curriculum must be delivered to all the students; for example, in piano module 1 each student has to play the C major scale and a specific chant, etude or sonatina. However, if a student finished all of the curriculum for piano module 1 in a month with two months left until the end of the term or course is it good to ask them to just sit down without doing anything until the end of term!? Of course, no.

14. Sorry, I am a little confused; you mentioned that the factor which affects your choice of music is the student response level, and now you seem to suggest that the curriculum is the factor?

Once again, at the beginning the choice depends on the curriculum for the specific module. All students have to fulfil the requirements of the curriculum to pass a module. If there is a smart or talented student, I believe that I have a responsibility to develop their level by giving them additional material rather than just passing them with the normal average level of the module. Also in the exam, they have a choice to play only the requirements of the exam or they can play additional music pieces as well. This opportunity is provided to enhance their motivation for piano playing, even though the aim is not to graduate a professional or a high level piano player.

15. That is good, so can you tell me why is piano part of the music curriculum at the College of Basic Education?

Teaching piano is an integral part of music learning all over the world, not just in Kuwait. We also use it to develop the basic musical skills, because 90% of the students are going to use piano in class during their future career (as a music teacher at a public school). Since the tonality of piano is pure and easy to hear for school students therefore CBE graduates can use piano for playing harmony and chants with the children and students; for example, piano provides the music teacher with a capability to play the same chant with varying tonality for primary and high school students.

16. Could you explain more please? Why is piano part of the music curriculum at the College of Basic Education?

Because we are here to graduate music teachers, and we aim to prepare our students for their career. We are aware that a music education teacher needs to be able to play piano, chants and marches daily for the school students. Playing piano will make around 80% of their daily work around the year, so how could we not teach them how to play piano?

17. Can you tell me about your role in the piano learning process to meet the goals of piano teaching at the College of Basic Education?

In terms of the curriculum we always, as I mentioned, focus on school chants and marches, because the students will need this later during their teaching career or school job. The second thing is that as the students learn at the College of Basic Education, they also take other modules such as psychology or education at the college, which prepares them for dealing with school students in their future careers. Psychology or education modules also affects the performance of a music student in terms of learning an instrument, develops their thinking abilities and teaches them how to control or portray their emotions.

18. What resources are available for teaching?

In terms of resources, there are some global standards such as Hanon exercises, basic simple music pieces, and there are other Arabic resources like we added some religious chants, Arabic chants, special Arab commemorational chants. For example, most of the students in piano module 1 have never touched the piano before; I have to deal with them like small kids in the conservatory. I have to teach them how to put their hands on the piano, learn the finger numbers, see the finger numbers on the notes and start with the C major scale. These are global practices for teaching piano to beginners.

19. What types of music scores are available?

The most important things that I have to offer are Arabic chant scores, and music scales with some simple music pieces from the Baroque and Classical period, but I cannot give students something they have no need for now or even in their career.

20. How do you perceive the music scores' level?

In terms of levels, we usually include the music scores that are suitable for each piano module. The students can judge better than me whether these scores are difficult or easy. As I have mentioned before there are differences in the level of students' ability and skills. Furthermore, as I mentioned before, it may just take one month to complete the requirements of a module specified by our curriculum but again that depends on the students' responses.

21. How does the provision of materials (books and other resources) affect your teaching process?

Western music is very useful and also it is available through several easy to access means. However, we have had problems with accessing and compiling

Arabic Eastern music in the past, but now things have improved because new editions of most chants required at CBE are becoming available with added new harmonies and accompaniments.

22. How do you teach a music score?

Actually, I prefer to let the student hear the music piece first to give them an opportunity to develop their listening ability. It also helps to place the music in their mind and gives them an opportunity to think about how the music is going to be. I follow the same procedure even when I teach music scales or exercises. Afterwards I start to study the music piece with the student but before that I have to make sure that the student is at least aware of the way to read a music score even though they have learnt how to read music in other classes such as music theory. After that I can help, explain and teach them any new music signs/symbols that were not taught in other lessons.

23. If you find the need to teach and explain a lot of music symbols or notes requires too much time, do you think it is better or easier to change the music piece or such an exercise for other music material?

Definitely, I cannot, for example, give such a music piece that is including trills or difficult music shapes for piano modules 1 or 2. I have to be aware of the music theory module's curriculum for each level but I also have the role of developing a student's reading ability during piano lessons.

24. Could you please elaborate in more detail your teaching of a music score?

- Number one, I play the music score for the students so that they can hear it.
- Number two, I sit down with the students to study and discuss any problems or difficult things in the music score.

- Number three, I ask the student to play the music, even if they play it very slowly it is fine by me so they can be confident with the normal speed.
- After that, they can play it at the normal speed either playing from memory or sight-reading it.
- After the student plays the music with the normal speed of the music piece, I ask the student again to play the music piece at a very slow speed, as I believe that this will fix a lot of small simple things that the student does not focus on when playing at normal speed. I do this because when the student plays the music I see there are some things that need improvement and I correct them.

As a result of following these steps, you will see that the student will play the music piece much better than before.

25. Do you have to play it for the students or you can use a recording?

No, I prefer that I play it for the students. I believe that this helps to build the student's confidence in the piano teacher's abilities and as well as boosts their confidence to play by following their teacher. I believe this is the most important thing. It does not mean that I am showing off my 'muscles' or piano level to the students, no, not like that, but, the students need to have a confident regard for their teacher, therefore at the beginning of learning a music piece the first thing that the student needs is to hear the music piece. At the same time, that does not prevent me from later on giving them a standard recording for the music piece.

26. Do you help the students in developing any other skills, such as sight-reading, aural skills, theory and improvisation? Why are these included/not included and how do you work on these skills?

Of course, we focus on all of these skills like I mentioned while I explained the sequence for teaching a music score. Number one, I play the music score for the students so that they can hear it and helps in developing their listening

skills. Number two, I sit down with the students to cover the theory aspect of music learning by explaining any problems related with theory. Number three, I said, I help the students on how to order their fingers and help them with piano skills to develop their performance skills. Even though the students think that I am just teaching them how to play the specific music piece but actually they do not realise that my role is to teach them how to play piano in general.

27. Do you use video or audio recordings during the piano lessons?

Actually, no, no, in my class no, I do not like to use any video or audio recording during my lessons but I prefer to give the students information about the music piece to improve their knowledge of music history. However, I do recommend some music recordings to diligent students. I just want to highlight an important point that we do lack in the practice elements for singing or vocal music. I believe that singing the music piece while practicing is very useful in developing the student's listening and thinking skills about the music piece and about music in general as a musician. Therefore I see that this does not prevent me from recommending some opera or piano concerto records to the students. Even if the students will not or cannot play at such a difficult level, this will have an effect on their thinking about music. So, yes, my role is to enhance their musical knowledge even if it is by recommending some music records or books, but definitely these will not be used during my class, as my class is usually practical performance.

28. How does your work with students help them prepare for and relate to their future work?

Of course, we focus on how to sing the chants, but we usually make the students play and sing simultaneously starting from piano module 4 until 6, but not in piano modules 1, 2 or 3. We believe that students at the level of piano module 4 would have developed enough ability to be able play and sing simultaneously. I will not ask my students to sing any difficult music pieces, no,

we are talking about children's chants for school. Therefore, the singing is focused on correcting the tempo and tonality.

29. How many piano lessons do students take per week and term at the College of Basic Education?

We have a two-hour piano lesson twice a week. A study term is usually about three months but the number of piano lessons depends on the days off or holiday time in each particular term.

30. How do you conduct a normal piano lesson and how do you manage the lesson time?

Of course, in piano lab, I am dealing with more than one student. Because of group teaching, first I explain how to play a music scale or an exercise to the students on a whiteboard. Afterwards I go around the class to individually check how each student is playing the music scale or exercise.

31. How do you think this method affects the learning progress?

Actually, since the aim of teaching piano in the College of Basic Education is to graduate music teachers for public schools we cannot follow the typical piano group lesson or anything else that is done in an international setting. Therefore, since we started to use piano group lessons we have been trying to find something suitable for our students. We have reasons for following piano group lessons, for example; when I teach piano group lessons, I can teach the music scales to all the students at once and it takes less time to teach music scales compared to teaching students in one-to-one lesson. Piano group lessons provide an opportunity for me to individually check each student's practice during the lesson or piano lab. Each piano lab (piano group) usually has around eight to twelve students. So I usually spend between five to ten minutes with each student while going around the class. Students might not find time to practise after the class and therefore while I am going around the

class individually attending to each student it provides other students with time to practise during the class.

32. Could you please elaborate on the students' responses to piano learning?

Actually, as I have mentioned before, the response varies from student to student. For example, there is a student who spent one month in order to play the C major scale while there is another student who can finish the same scale in two days.

33. Does the response vary with levels of ability or age?

The first thing I see is that the age of the student is not related to the student's response and nor does it affect the student's response. However, in terms of level, of course, the response of the student in piano module 1 will be different than that of a student in piano module 5.

34. Who do you think is responsible for the student's piano learning process at the College of Basic Education? The student or the teacher?

The first thing is, I see that the responsibility does not lay on just two parties, rather I believe that there are three parties; the student, the piano teacher and either head of the music department or head of the piano department or whoever is supervising and approving the piano curriculum. And there is another thing which I have mentioned at the beginning is that we do not want to graduate a pianist or piano performer. We are a College of Basic Education and our aim is different. We want to graduate teachers for education as the graduate certificate will be Education Certificate with Focus on Music and it is not a Musical Arts Certificate. We graduate an educational person with an ability of teaching music education and a responsibility of introducing public school students to music culture. They are not required to teach [public school students] how to play or perform musical instruments. For example; on a religious remembrance day, the role of the music teacher is to explain that it is

a religious event and to play a suitable chant for this event or remembrance. What I mean is that teaching piano performance or other instruments to the students in the College of Basic Education is not going to benefit them in public schools. Just an introduction to music culture with little music playing skills would suffice to meet the requirements for public school teacher role. For example, if the student learns to play a piano concerto but not the school chants while in college and then they go for teaching in school, they will not be doing their job, as their job requires them to play and sing chants for the students in the school.

35. So who do you think is responsible for the student's piano learning progress at the College of Basic Education?

So, number one, the responsibility is on the student and the progress depends on the student's response. If a student responds well then I will give them more things to do. Number two is the piano teacher, though there are some piano teachers who do not like to give the student more information, more time, more care, or even do not like to make the normal effort for a student. Number three is the piano curriculum; sometimes the piano curriculum is not suitable for students.

36. Do you think that the role of a piano teacher determines the student response?

I told you, there is responsibility on the teacher; I care for students and focus on their response and like I said that I try to develop the student in my class in different ways, not just one way. For example, (sorry) I consider the student as a paste, where I can shape it however I want, but of course, there is a soft paste which is easy to shape and there is a hard paste, which is difficult to shape as you planned.

37. Are there any other factor which affect the students' response?

Actually, the music department in the college offers good standard facilities in both the male and female buildings; we have piano labs, private learning rooms, there is a grand piano in the college theatre (hall), we also have many electronic digital pianos, many upright pianos, we have four small grand pianos and two large grand pianos. However, in terms of the society and culture, the Kuwaiti society is made of various groups and families. There are some families who help and encourage students with studying music and there are others who do not. Supportive families encourage their kids towards studying music by offering financial support for purchase of musical instruments whereas unsupportive families lead the students to leave the music career and persuade them to study other subjects. However, the head and administration of the music department massively affects the students' response in an indirect manner by actually affecting the teacher. Most of the time I have to cancel some lessons because the schedule of the many meetings we have to attend usually revolves around the availability of the head of the department. This affects the students' learning time and thus the learning process. Also, some previous heads of the music department did not choose a suitable piano curriculum for students by focusing on one learning aspect in the curriculum and forgetting to pay attention to other aspects of learning.

38. Is the piano teacher not responsible for charting a suitable piano curriculum?

No, there is a basic piano curriculum that is fixed by the head and administration of the music department. The piano teacher has the flexibility to add more things to what is being taught but I cannot cut things out of the curriculum. For example, I find that there are some things that are very difficult for students but I cannot change them and vice versa. However, most of the piano teachers and the administration view the piano curriculum content to be appropriate and this cooperative environment could positively affect the development of piano learning process in the college.

39. What are the challenges associated with piano group teaching for teachers?

In terms of piano labs, the big challenge is the management of piano lab time. Like I said during the lesson we need time for explanation and individually attending to each practising student while sometimes we need to spend additional time with some struggling students.

40. What are the challenges associated with piano group teaching for students?

Sometimes the timetable of the piano lab lessons is not suitable because they are usually scheduled for the end of the study day and the students are very tired by then. However, recently we have tried to reschedule some piano lab lessons to morning.

41. Could you please highlight the challenges associated with the teaching process during the piano lessons?

In terms of the facilities there are no problems with broken pianos or headphones. However, the differences among the students' responses are really the major factor that affects the teaching process during piano lessons. The requirement of extra time for struggling students affects the pace of the piano lesson. However, these differences challenge the students to practise more to catch up with their classmates and creates a competitive environment.

42. What challenges do teachers face in one-to-one piano teaching?

In one-to-one lessons the student usually is not asked to practise and the teacher mainly focuses on instructing and advising the student and discussing the problems they face. However, in piano group lessons the students are encouraged to spend time on practising during the lesson. For example, in one-to-one lessons, I am not going ask them to just repeat and repeat and practise. No, I just give them some instructions and discuss how to overcome

the problems in their performance. But the problem is, when I give the student some notes and instructions, they come back to the next lesson with nothing and no practise of what we covered in the last lesson. Sometimes the students might have acceptable reasons for that [not spending time on practising material from the last lesson] but generally speaking this is a recurring problem with one-to-one piano lessons. This student behaviour really annoys me but we are dealing with students aged 19 to 24 and this age group is really difficult to handle. For example, you have to be very friendly with them but sometimes you have to be very serious and deal with them strictly.

43. What challenges do students face in one-to-one piano teaching?

I believe that teacher's ability and experience could be the main reason for creating challenges for the student in one-to-one lessons. Sometimes if the teacher is not aware of the load and difficulty level of the task they assign to the student during the piano lesson then it affects the student's concentration and focus which could lead to loss of student's time.

44. Do you personally prefer group or one-to-one piano lessons? Why?

Of course one-to-one; I am able to focus and concentre on the student's needs and suit the level of my teaching for the specific student while at the same time I can explain to them some other related problems such as in music theory. Simply speaking it gives me a chance to tailor the lesson according to the specific student's needs.

45. Could you please give your views on whether one-to-one or group piano lessons better suit the needs of the College of Basic Education students?

Definitely the piano group lessons is a suitable method for the College as it saves money by cutting the cost associated with one-to-one lessons for all students. Piano group lessons are also good for the students as it provides a competitive environment and also a good chance for the students to practise

piano during the class while I can make sure that the student is practising and following the correct technique.

46. Which kind of music do you use during the piano lessons?

As I said before, we use Arabic music for school chants, and Western classical small music pieces, music scales and exercises for the students.

47. Would teaching Eastern Arabic music as part of the piano curriculum be effective? How different would that be compared to teaching Western classical music?

No, I would not prefer to teach Arabic music pieces for the piano curriculum. Because, Arabic music forms are not suitable as they are not composed for piano playing and have different scales and harmony. Most Arabic music was composed to be played on Eastern Arabic instruments. But when we look at Beethoven's piano works, the pieces were already composed on piano for a specific form and level.

48. Does that mean there is no Arabic music piece suitable for piano?

There is music for piano, but it is not suitable for the students. As I mentioned that I also want to teach some classical music forms such as sonatinas, sonatas and preludes but the Arabic music is based on different structures. Also, Arabic music works focus on melody and not on harmony like the Western classical music.

49. Why do you use Western classical music forms for teaching piano as you mentioned before that the student is going to teach chants in school and will not teach Western classical music forms?

The reason is that using Western classical music pieces, marches and scales is effective for helping the students to learn fast and in a correct way.

Therefore, after finishing studying music at the College the student will be capable of playing whatever music forms they want or need to play.

50. Do you not think that the use of Arabic music could increase the interest of students in piano and encourage and motivate them to play piano, especially at the start of piano module 1?

I can help the students to love piano without using any other music forms that will not benefit the students' piano learning techniques or skills, even if it be Arabic music. As I mentioned, I can develop the students' interest by playing music pieces in front of them and motivate them to be like me or even better. Furthermore, I usually recommend additional music pieces to the students and they have the freedom to practise whichever they prefer.

51. What is your opinion about the usefulness of digital pianos and headphones during piano lessons?

There are many advantages of using digital piano during our piano lessons; firstly, it is very useful when students use their headphones and do not make noise in the class. Secondly, the digital pianos provide a functional advantage. Since the students get an opportunity to practise in the piano lab and because of the digital pianos I can set up the metronome to let the student practise until I can attend to them. Digital pianos are economical and because of the small size it can easily be placed in any room. However, the disadvantage is that the touch of the digital piano is unlike the acoustic piano and that affects the development of such piano skills.

52. Have you seen, heard, known or used any other technology or accessories (such as music applications or devices) that could support the piano learning process either during piano lessons or during the students' piano practise in general?

Yes, I know there is a possibility of using iPad as a music sheet for reading and playing music but we are not using it in our lessons yet. The music sheet on the iPad can automatically turn pages and the students do not need to stop playing for turning the music pages and nor do they need their friends to help with that. There are also many computer programmes and iPad applications which can help the students with playing such music sheets at various speeds and tempos and therefore the students can practise music anywhere.

53. How do you think the use of this technology will support the piano learning process at the College of Basic Education?

See; let us be more realistic, for effective and successful learning until now the music learning is dependent on previous learning methods. For example, when I want to record some music live, I usually prefer to use a real live music instrument for it. I am not going to use digital musical instruments for concerts or recording music and therefore I need to teach the students with what they are going to play on, not using an iPad. However, we can use technologies such as electronic music sheet devices, digital pianos, headphones, data-show and electronic board (smart board). But personally, I see that we are not teaching a history subject, rather we are teaching a practical subject which demands physical movement. I need to play a music piece for the students and I need to go around the class to check on the students and encourage them.

54. Do you want to share any interesting story from your teaching journey?

Personally, actually, music learning and teaching boosts my self-control. Music learning and teaching makes me really happy as I feel that it develops patience in me and teaches me how to control myself and stay calm. However, in terms of my teaching journey, I remember a situation with a male student who had a problem with finishing a music piece. I made an agreement and challenge with him about his piano level and final grade on the module. After that he really did well and got a high grade in that piano module. There is also

another situation that I remember – a student broke his finger in the middle of a term and we had to create a special piano module exam requirement for him so that he could finish the piano module without a break in his studies. We found him some music pieces that could be played with one hand. He continued playing with one hand during the piano lessons and also played in the exam with just one hand. He finished the piano module with a high grade.

55. Are you gratified with teaching piano? Why?

Yes, of course, especially when I can see how a student starts touching the piano for the first time and then see them graduate with good playing skills. I feel much better about what I am doing and realise the importance of my role when I see my students succeed in the society.

56. What are the future plans for piano teaching at College of Basic Education?

 Firstly, we are trying to reach a good high standard piano curriculum by offering some development and including more piano learning material to help make the piano learning easier for students.

57. How do you feel about the current piano learning process at the College of Basic Education?

Generally, our aim is not so difficult to graduate students with playing music chants and some piano pieces but we need to develop the current piano learning process in general.

58. What are the requirements for the piano exam and who devises the exam syllabus in the College of Basic Education?

The exam requirements are different for each piano module. However, the evaluation depends on the view of each examiner. The most important points

that we usually evaluate during the piano exams are tempo, right notes, performance of the student, position and student's confidence level.

59. How do you perceive the level of exams in the College of Basic Education?

Actually, the exams difficulty levels, the piano curriculum content and piano teaching in the College of Basic Education are all dependent on the level of the student. The students' attitude towards piano practise during and outside of the piano lesson time determines whether the students will find the exam difficult. For example, if the students like and love playing piano then they will find that everything is easy, and vice versa.

60. *How do you compare teaching and learning in Kuwait with other cultures based on your work or educational experience abroad?*

Yes, of course, there is a big difference in the piano teaching aim and the ways of achieving this aim. Firstly, here we aim to graduate music teachers for schools while abroad the aim is to graduate a music player. Secondly, the piano learning abroad is structured better than ours. They have specific learning steps and stages which the students can complete at their own pace in time but here in Kuwait we do not have any long-term option for piano learning. Outside Kuwait they have enough time to learn and teach piano for long term but here in the College of Basic Education we just have to finish each piano module in a maximum of two to three months each term and we have a total of six terms in three years. The third thing is that the students at CBE start with zero experience whereas abroad most of the students have good ability and experience before they start learning piano at college level.

61. What challenges do you face with the development of piano learning process in the College of Basic Education?

Additionally, on what I mentioned before about the differences between Kuwait and abroad, the multi-national faculty at CBE can sometimes pose challenges

to the development of the piano learning process. The music department at CBE comprises music teachers from Kuwait and many other countries such as Poland, Uzbekistan, Russia, Egypt and Lebanon. There are also some Kuwaiti teachers with postgraduate graduate education from the UK and the US. Therefore, the relationship between these piano teachers in the music department at CBE could pose a challenge to the piano learning process as sometimes their difference of opinion makes it difficult to put in place some teaching plans in the music department. This affects the development of piano learning process at CBE and Kuwait in general.

62. What support does the music department at The College of Basic Education offer to piano teachers?

The music department provides good teachers' rooms, teaching classes and labs to support piano teaching. However, duties/responsibilities repeatedly assigned to us by the head of the music department and administration are not really related to my job. This includes preparing timetables, attending many meetings, register checking for some events or even preparing for events at CBE. All this affects my availability for helping the students and this has a negative impact on the overall piano learning process at CBE.

63. What else do you think could support the piano learning process in the College of Basic Education?

First of all, the piano curriculum needs a careful restructuring based on the students' needs and the current international trends in the field. For improving the performance, teaching and focus of the teachers we need more teachers to share the workload. If you ask each teacher to teach six hours daily it will not be the same quality of performance compared to where they are required to just teach three hours a day. Offering teaching assistants for the piano teachers during the piano labs also could help in distributing the workload and improving teachers' performance.

64. How is the student-teacher relationship?

The relationship is very friendly with a serious focus on teaching. The quality of delivered knowledge could affect the student's response and therefore the teachers need to be serious during teaching to ensure proper delivery of information to the students without losing time. At the end of the day, examiners will be evaluating the students and we need to make sure that we prepare our students for the exam by delivering quality lessons. This can only be achieved by maintaining a friendly environment in general but a serious attitude while teaching.

65. *Are there any constraining factors for the teachers and the students that could affect the piano learning process (e.g. culture, tradition of learning piano, respect for Western culture, the instruments, resources)?*

Sometimes the teachers and students have similar interests in some music styles and sometimes there are common interests outside the college. For example, I meet my student in the gym and then they are with me in the gym and in the music department. At the same time there might be some other students who want to be close to me because they like my piano playing. Also some students might be impressed by a teacher's personality and view the teacher as a role model. Additionally, I believe that if the student likes and loves me, they definitely will like and love learning piano and what I am teaching them and therefore they will learn faster and better.

66. How does this relationship affect the learning progress in College of Basic Education?

Of course, it has a big effect, if the relationship is negative, the student will just want to finish the piano lessons without interest and care. They will not be bothered about developing their piano level or gaining more out of the piano learning path. They will just want to finish the piano module and may even be absent from many lessons. However, if the students like and love me, they will

be very excited about learning more about piano and improving their piano skills.

67. Are there any opportunities for the students to perform piano in concerts or in ensemble with other students?

Of course, yes, sometimes we offer music concerts to encourage the students for their musical instrument abilities. The students can showcase their abilities on any musical instruments and this usually happens two to three times each term. However, in terms of music ensembles, no, we actually do not have this but the students can play some music pieces together during the music concerts.

68. What role could parents play in improving the piano learning process?

As I have mentioned at the start of the interview, yes, the role of the family could affect the students learning process either positively or negatively. Providing a good learning environment for their children and being supportive is the main role a family needs to play in improving the piano learning process for students. This will encourage the students to just focus on learning.

69. What is the attitude of the College administration toward music learning and music teachers?

The administration offers facilities similar as other subjects but actually sometimes some requests from the music department are ignored because of lack of interest from administration. Sometimes other subject teachers in the college also deal with the music teachers and music students in a less respectful manner.

70. What are the underlying reasons for such attitude?

Actually, the reasons could be linked to the culture of the society and the way the society perceives music learning: if it is important or not or may be prohibited by Islam or maybe music learning is viewed as a shameful act. However, personally, I am in a position to counter this attitude in the College through informative dialogue but I really sympathise with music students while they are taking modules outside the music department in the College. Music students are usually not treated with respect by teachers outside the music department and face a difficult situation where they cannot argue or clarify their stance on music learning. Therefore, the music students just want to quickly finish these modules outside the music department and pass with a high grade avoiding any confrontation with the teachers because the students are aware that confrontation could create personal problems for them in the College.

71. What role could the College administration play in improving the piano learning process?

Offering more music concerts, offering financial support for these music concerts, media support for the talented music students. Especially more respect for the music students would be helpful.

72. What is the Kuwaiti government/Ministry of Education doing for music learning in Kuwait?

The Kuwaiti government is doing the best thing for music learning in Kuwait by offering financial support for music learning in schools and colleges. The government is financially supporting music concerts and is keen on supporting all the aspects of music learning. The problem lies with the directors and leaders of the music learning in Kuwait. In order to make sure that the government's support and rules for music learning are effectively employed for the development of music learning processes in Kuwait we need a major restructuring in the departments responsible for delivery of funds and as well

as the departments responsible for planning the development of music learning in Kuwait.

73. What role could the Kuwaiti government/Ministry of Education play in improving the piano learning process?

Sometimes we have seen many Kuwait government run music festivals and events inviting music performers from other countries, but actually this does not usually find support from the society or the media. Because of lack of societal interests usually the government cannot justify further financial support for regularly holding such musical events.

74. Why?

Of course, this is the culture of our society, and we need a change in many aspects that relate to music learning in Kuwait. Usually musicians are not considered for important roles in Kuwaiti society, for example: we never heard of the day that the Dean of CBE was a music teacher or that a head teacher in a school was a music teacher or a deputy minister in the Ministry of Education was a music teacher. Also, the society will not treat a doctor of music with the same respect as a doctor in education.

75. Do you think this could have an effect on the decision of students to become music teachers or even study music at CBE?

Of course, this affects the student's thinking and decisions but recently we have noted changes and met many students who are aware of this problem, but they really like music and really like to learn music and they believe in it. So, the number of music students in the college is increasing each year. Actually, the mentality of the society is changing.

76. Is there anything else you would like to add that you think could affect the piano learning process at CBE, but we did not cover it in our discussion?

No, I think that is all.

Appendix 12: Interview with Piano Teacher B (TB) at CBE, 12th June 2016

1. Which qualifications have you obtained to teach piano?

Firstly, I graduated with an excellent grade from the Higher Institution of Musical Arts in Kuwait, where I studied for five years (one year foundation and four years undergraduate) and then I taught in the same institution as a piano teacher for three years. Afterwards I got a scholarship for my postgraduate studies abroad from the music department in the College of Basic Education. CBE usually offers scholarships for students who want to pursue postgraduate studies outside Kuwait and on completion return back to teach at CBE. However, I also taught for one year in the music department at CBE and I remember that we were using the piano lab system for the first time in Kuwait that year (2004). Then in 2005 I travelled to the Colorado State University in the United States and completed my Masters studies there. Later on I started my PhD in the University of Mississippi and graduated in 2010. Now I have finished five years as a piano teacher here in the music department and most of our work is to prepare the students for becoming music education teachers at public schools in Kuwait.

2. Have you taken any additional training courses in order to be a piano teacher?

Yes, I have passed a training course in piano lab pedagogy from the University of Colorado and also attended some other courses while I was in the US during my postgraduate study period.

3. How long have you been teaching piano?

Nine years.

4. Was that in the same country or in the same college?

Yes, all in Kuwait, but not in the same place. I taught in the Higher Institution of Musical Arts as a piano music teacher for three years, taught in the Music Department at CBE for one year and have been teaching in the College of Basic Education for the last five years since I returned.

5. Do you teach private lessons?

Of course.

6. Is there any particular method or style that you use for teaching your students?

We follow the most popular or common international methods for teaching piano. We have one-to-one piano lessons for students who are interested to take piano as a second musical instrument for up to four terms. The first musical instrument is piano lab for all music students in the department for six terms. The curriculum of piano is usually comprehensive and is a collection of piano exercises, scales, arpeggios, an etude, a sonatina, a small sonata and Arabic school chants. We start with students by giving them collections from the Baroque century such as Bach and Scarlatti; actually the curriculum is open, it depends on the level of student and their response.

7. Could you elaborate this further?

In the piano lab we teach the students for the music major in which the aim is to give them the ability of playing on the keyboard later in their career as a music teacher in public schools.

8. Which style of music do you focus on in your teaching? Why do you prefer these music pieces?

Most of it is Western Classical music and some Arabic chants for schools.

9. Which practicing exercises do you use with your students?

Actually, we do not follow just one piano teaching school, we are applying many exercises from different styles such as Hanon, Longno and Czerny.

10. What factors influence your choice of repertoire and exercises (for example, is it because they are set for examinations, or because they are ones you worked on when you were studying, or because you find them effective, or because students enjoy them, or any other factors)?

The level of the students and how to cover the piano curriculum aspects such as technique, etudes, music piece and music forms.

11. Can you tell me why piano is part of the music curriculum at the College of Basic Education?

If you look anywhere in the world and not just the music department at CBE you will not find any music education teacher who is teaching music without using piano. So that is why we put the piano here in our music curriculum. If the student is going to teach music education in school, even if the second musical instrument for the student is Arabic *Oud*, violin, cello, or flute, the music student has to learn piano for 6 terms in the music department.

12. Can you tell me about your role in the piano learning process to meet the goals of piano teaching at the College of Basic Education?

As I said, all music students have to take and learn the six core piano modules to gain the skills I had mentioned before. Besides this if there are any talented or interested students in piano we can offer them up to three one-to-one piano modules to learn piano as a second musical instrument. However, I believe that this is really not enough and too little for learning piano, but that is what we can offer now in this time. Personally, I try to help the student even if they

have finished all their piano lessons and modules at any time by giving them some more additional piano learning material and I check them in my spare time.

13. What resources are available for teaching?

Resources in the music department are expert piano teachers, grand pianos, upright pianos, students' music concerts to encourage students to put more effort in learning piano and other musical instruments, piano practice rooms, electronic (digital) pianos, piano labs system and headphones.

14. How do you perceive the music scores' level?

This depends on the student's level and response; for example, I have a student who is very clever and shows talent in the piano lab but his second musical instrument is cello. Therefore, to encourage him and not leave him feeling bored during the piano lab lessons I try to give him advanced level music pieces for practicing during the lesson. That often happens during piano lab, and we usually call them a 'horse rider' – therefore you usually have to give them more work to finish during the piano lab to make sure they do not get bored with nothing to do, or they also can assist the piano teacher in the piano lab to help other students, which is also a good idea and commonly happens in the piano lab teaching method.

15. How do you teach a music score?

For piano labs in piano modules 1 and 2 the students do not have any idea about piano. Therefore, in these stages firstly I try to play the music piece for them to give them some idea about it. Afterwards I try to ask them to sing the music piece's melody as they do not have the piano skills yet and cannot play it because even if they know the music piece's melody they still cannot locate the notes on the piano. Then I start by putting their right hand on the piano and

tell them about the notes and then do the same with the left hand with more explanation about harmony and chords.

16. Do you use video or audio recordings during the piano lessons?

Yes, as I said before, I play the music live for the student and sometimes can play a music video and I usually do this with piano modules 1 and 2 who really need to see how to touch and play the piano. They need to see how to sit and position the hands on a piano. While in piano modules 5 and 6 I just give them the music piece and tell them to come see me if they need any help. In order to encourage the students to work hard and finish their pieces I try to hold a small piano quiz every two weeks.

17. Do you help the students in developing any other skills, such as sight-reading, aural skills, theory and improvisation? Why are these included/not included and how do you work on these skills?

Yes, we do focus on sight-reading during the piano lessons, as most of the students need to gain this skill because they will need to use it during their career and work anywhere. Usually we spend about half an hour or a little more during the two-hour piano lesson.

18. How does your work with students help them prepare for and relate to their future work?

Actually, this is the most important point and currently I am doing my best to meet the requirements for international academic approval for our music department by discussing the deficiencies in the requirements with the head of the music department and the college administration. Some global international organisations are responsible for such approval and they need to visit our department to evaluate our learning process, curriculum, facilities and teaching staff to approve our curriculum. Currently, we are actually covering three out of four (or nearly four) elements required for approval. The first is

keyboard skills and we have six modules for learning piano from zero level. The second element is choir, we have this, but it looks like an optional activity, not professional, or I mean it is not compulsory. Therefore, we are working on making choir mandatory to complete this element required for approval. The third element is teaching experience (placement) for students. We cover this element by offering the students at CBE a compulsory practical module in the last year of study where they train in practising teaching music in public school for one term. The fourth element is the student has to play any musical instrument and we almost cover that by offering a compulsory second musical instrument module for each student for three terms. Therefore, the important thing is that the choir has to be made compulsory and we are currently working on it to complete the requirements for acquiring international academic approval. We are in the process of adding new modules called 'choir and conducting' modules.

19. How many piano lessons do students take per week and term at the College of Basic Education?

Each term is 12 weeks and there is a two-hour piano lesson twice a week for each piano module.

20. How do you conduct a normal piano lesson and how do you manage the lesson time?

I usually start with checking the previous lesson notes and then start sight-reading for a while. Afterwards I start to explain the new information for the new lesson and then the students start to study this new lesson and practise it on their piano. Most of the time during the lesson I am busy going around the class checking the students' work and helping them individually.

21. How do you think this method affects the learning progress?

I think this is the best way we can do things here. Since most of the students are beginners and most of the information we provide will be helpful for all of them therefore it is good to have big number of students in one place.

22. Could you please elaborate on the students' responses to piano learning?

Actually, the responses received from some students are good because they sometime find it really interesting to learn more about music and piano while at times other students do not.

23. Does the response vary with levels of ability or age?

No, I think it is depending on what the student believes and what they want to do or what are their future career plans. I think these beliefs and attitudes control the student and encourage or discourage them to learn more and pay attention towards what we teach them.

24. Who do you think is responsible for the student's piano learning process at the College of Basic Education? The student or the teacher?

The role and responsibility are shared by both the teacher and the student. Sometimes a student might not be interested in learning more about the subject and just wants to pass the module with any grade. This definitely affects the teacher's motivation of effectively passing their knowledge of the subject to the students. However, sometimes the problem comes from the teacher. The teacher just wants to finish the lesson by giving information and instructions without understanding the students' needs or the teacher is not capable of dealing with the different thought processes or styles of the students. This really affects the motivation and effectiveness of the student to learn or take interest in the subject. However, in general, I think to achieve a good learning process and environment, you need a good teacher's experience and good attentive students who really want to learn.

25. What are the challenges associated with piano group teaching for teachers?

Actually, the biggest challenge here is that we are teaching total beginners who do not have any experience about keyboard or even music at an undergraduate level. Most of the students who come to the undergraduate programme to learn music are aged 18 to 21 years and do not know anything about music. Therefore, especially in piano modules 1 and 2 it is very difficult to start with them. Teaching the positioning of hands on the piano is okay because we realise that it will take time but it is really difficult to teach them sight-reading because they do not have any background knowledge of music. Therefore, in order to enable them to read a music score we also have to spend time on teaching them some music theory during the piano lesson. This is actually the biggest difficulty in teaching students in the beginning when they start to learn music, however, usually we continuously face this problem with some students until they graduate. I think it is normal because they started learning and reading music at [a relatively] old (mostly 18-21 years or sometimes even older) age. Even though we are expert piano teachers with high international experience still we face some other difficulties in teaching piano in Kuwait. For instance, piano group teaching started in the United States and is now also applied in Japan, Canada and some other counties but not in the European system and most of our piano teachers are from Europe. Therefore, the teachers from Europe need some time to be more able to manage the piano group class at the start of their teaching career in Kuwait. I believe that the class is 'management' more than how to teach or teaching method but class management needs special experience. However, there are some piano teachers who gained the experience over time. We started piano group teaching in 2004-2005 and have been doing it for 11 years now, so we have really gained the experience in class management over time. We now know not just how to teach piano but also how to manage the class. As you cannot conduct short one-to-one lessons in a piano group lesson, it is important to know how to manage the class and this is a difficulty that we face.

26. What are the challenges associated with piano group teaching for students?

I think that time is a challenge for the students as we cannot leave the piano lab room open if there is no class. It means no opportunity for the students to practise in the piano lab except during the piano lesson and we do not have a secretary who could help with managing this problem. We also do not have any teacher assistants to help with this problem either. The college administration and the head of the music department have been promising to offer and provide teaching assistants for the piano teachers very soon but nothing has happened yet. So if this is to happen it will be very useful for the students as we can leave the piano labs open for most of the time and the teaching assistants can help the students while they practise, and also help me, the piano teacher, during the lessons.

27. What challenges do teachers face in one-to-one piano teaching?

I do not face any challenges, but I may often evaluate myself in terms of seeing how the student who I am teaching is developing. If they have been a good student and a good piano player, I feel that I have succeeded.

28. What challenges do students face in one-to-one piano teaching?

Since the focus of one-to one lesson is on the student the student needs to have a good attitude towards practising the material taught in each lesson before the next lesson. Each lesson they have to show the teacher that they are fully conversant with previous lessons and there is no need to go backwards. If they come to my lesson without having prepared or practised what we had done before, then we do not need to conduct the following lesson until they finish their work and practising.

29. Do you personally prefer group or one-to-one piano lessons? Why?

Both are good, because I am ready to teach both of them.

30. Could you please give your views on whether one-to-one or group piano lessons better suit the needs of the College of Basic Education students?

For the general music major student, of course the group piano, because they are at the same level and need to work together and we cannot offer a separate lesson for each student. However, for the piano student who selects piano as their second musical instrument, we prefer one-to-one lessons, because the time will be different and also each student's ability and skill level will be different too.

31. Which kind of music do you use during the piano lessons?

We usually use Western classical music, which we believe is the best for learning Western music in general.

32. Would teaching Eastern Arabic music as part of the piano curriculum be effective? How different would that be compared to teaching Western classical music?

At the end we are teaching a Western musical instrument; however, we try to cover the requirements of the students' future career in school and in piano modules 5 and 6 we can fulfil these requirements by teaching the Kuwaiti national anthem, some Arabic music chants and chants for the music education subject's school curriculum. But of course, we cannot offer learning Arabic songs as it is not academically educational.

33. Does that mean there is no Arabic music piece suitable for piano?

Actually, I remember that when you started here in 2004-2005, we were just starting to apply the piano lab system and we did not have a specific curriculum at that time, but now we have developed the curriculum contents. Now we have John Thompson's books 1 to 4 and if you open John Thompson

book no.1, you will find it is very basic and easy. The student can learn through this level (book no.1) the music sounds, tones, where is middle C and etc. Following this book is really easier than giving the students Arabic or Kuwaiti music or songs to learn which is very difficult to learn especially for beginners. Additionally, at the end we want to offer the keyboard skills for the student and need easier ways to help them gain these skills. However, the student has the flexibility in piano modules 5 and 6 to choose what they want to play for the music piece section in the curriculum in addition to the compulsory requirements. However, I would like to add something else, that is for the future plan, there is Alfred's group piano for adults books 1 and 2, which is internationally certified and these books have many popular, folk and American songs and also the book's authors mentioned that you can swap these American songs for your popular or folk or classical tunes from your country or place. These books are very useful as a framework where you can change and put your thinking into it while following the same learning method.

34. What is your opinion about the usefulness of digital pianos and headphones during piano lessons?

Yes, I really agree that digital pianos and headphones are very useful and so is the group piano system in its entirety. Actually, in addition to what we have from the piano lab system, I think that we still need more learning facilities to support our piano learning ways and methods. As you have seen during piano lessons, we have a piano lab system with a feature called 'conferencing system'; this device connects all the students' headphones in the class, where you can connect three students together so they can just hear themselves and practise piano exercises and they can also speak to each other. With this system I can also make some groups and connect them together and I can also explain or play the correct notes for each student separately without really needing to go around the class; however, I still need to look around to check the hand positions and fingers. In general it is very useful where it can offer you the ability to manage the piano class and be more effective. Additionally, I see that we need to have a computer screen with camera for each piano as

then we can use other programmes to help the students record their playing and then I can hear it later and also examine them through it without conducting days of piano exams for all the students. Of course, that could be also easier if we have a TA (teaching assistant) then I can hear each student's recording and evaluate them.

35. Have you seen, heard, known or used any other technology or accessories (such as music applications or devices) that could support the piano learning process either during piano lessons or during the students' piano practise in general?

The most current technology that I know is using the piano lab system with adding a camera on screen (whiteboard/board in class) and a camera on each piano and the master dashboard (teacher's system), where the piano teacher can play the music for the students and all the students can see his/her hand position and how to play the music. There are also some computer educational programmes such as 'blackboard' where you can share online, and the students and teachers can put comments on some subjects and discussion problems.

36. How do you think the use of this technology will support the piano learning process at the College of Basic Education?

Additionally, to what I have mentioned before, I see it is very useful and makes the learning process easier and simple for the student. Especially in order to develop our current learning process it is helpful in being up-to-date with the current international learning methods.

37. Do you want to share any interesting story from your teaching journey?

Actually, I have a lot of happy situations; however, in general I think the best thing to please a teacher is when your students are effective and have done a

really good job. It really pleases me when my students have had a big development and other teachers commend me for that work.

38. Are you gratified with teaching piano? Why?

Definitely, this is my subject and my life.

39. What are the future plans for piano teaching at College of Basic Education?

Actually, I do not have a special plan for myself, but the most important thing most of the time is that I try to think on how to develop the learning process and make it easier for the student.

40. How do you feel about the current piano learning process at the College of Basic Education?

I think it is good, but also we are looking to develop something more effective. Because, actually the current learning process is much better than it was some years ago but we are still in the development process.

41. What are the requirements for the piano exam and who devises the exam syllabus in the College of Basic Education?

It is usual that the piano teachers have meetings at the start of each term. They confirm the exam requirements and make sure that it is clear for each piano module.

42. How do you perceive the level of exams in the College of Basic Education?

I see that the piano exams for the music department are easy and suitable for all students and it is clear for the students from day first in the term what they

are going to play in each piano exam. Therefore, they have a long time to prepare for it and it is also not really difficult.

43. How do you compare teaching and learning in Kuwait with other cultures based on your work or educational experience abroad?

Outside Kuwait is a really different case; as I said, here we work with total beginners. Even the music exam for accepting new students is not really a music exam that would be for undergraduate level entry anywhere abroad. Abroad the entry exam would include playing an instrumental music piece or sight-reading or a music or theory test but here we just can examine the basic readiness for learning music, such as if the student likes to learn music and if they have got the ability to do this or not. Additionally, there is an idea for offering a music 'non-credit' or foundation module before starting the first year or maybe just for one term, or maybe just as a short programme for two to three weeks and then doing the music test before starting learning music at CBE. This could actually be very useful for the students and also improving the quality of the music department; however, this is just an idea and we are still discussing this.

44. What challenges do you face with the development of piano learning process in the College of Basic Education?

Actually, one of the main challenges that we face here is a slow response from the head of administration and as well as from the head of the music department here at CBE in regards to approving the procurement and installation of new resources such as piano labs and other musical equipment required for the development of music learning process at CBE. This problem is further complicated by availability of budget for such developments. Especially now that we are here in a new building and we have been here for just four years. We have shortfalls in terms of the number of piano labs; however, recently in the last term we have got two new piano lab rooms. Also, the number of the music students increases each year, as the head of the CBE

is asking the music department to accept more students in the music department to solve the problem of accommodating the increasing number of students who apply to CBE and there is no space in the other departments. Therefore, the CBE administration wants the music department to accept more students. This leads to a shortfall in the number of music teachers available for the increasing student number. Therefore, it can be really difficult to manage the timetable for each teacher as the teacher's duty requires each teacher to only teach a limited number of lessons. For example, in a normal situation each teacher has to teach 12 hours weekly, whereas now we teach 22 hours weekly which is more than over overtime and we have to do this for free without additional fees or money.

45. What support does the music department at the College of Basic Education offer to piano teachers?

As for facilities for the piano teacher, I see they are good. They provide a separate room for each teacher which is a basic need. There may be problems with time as we are busy most the time with music department meetings, committee meetings and other events. This takes most of our time as a piano teacher and we do not have enough time to conduct research which is important for the teacher to be up-to-date with the current learning processes inside and outside the country. Therefore, research is important to help us develop our learning processes.

46. What else do you think could support the piano learning process in the College of Basic Education?

We need teaching assistants for the piano teachers to help during the lab time and also outside the lab. We also need more piano teachers in order to cover the increased of the number of students.

47. How is the student-teacher relationship?

Actually, most of the staff, specifically piano teachers here have graduated from US, UK, Poland and Russia, so usually the relationship is very friendly. However, the students sometimes do not understand that, and they think this friendly relationship is related to the grade or marks for the piano evaluation. For example, if I have a good relationship with some students, and after that they did not get a good mark or grade, they ask me, 'Why, doctor? We have a good relationship, and I am surprised about this grade'. But actually, I try to explain to them that the relationship does not relate to how I am going to evaluate them. We try to be really serious in terms of evaluating the student piano levels and exams because it is important for developing their piano learning progress and quality. In terms of piano exams we have two exams (a mid-term exam and a final exam) and each exam has a different committee and teachers.

48. Are there any constraining factors for the teachers and the students that could affect the piano learning process (e.g. culture, tradition of learning piano, respect for Western culture, the instruments, resources)?

There are some students who are sharp and have a good thinking ability which makes it really easy to deal with them. They have the ability to quickly comprehend any problems that I explain to them. Also there are some students who always show interest in learning new information about piano learning and history.

49. How does this relationship affect the learning progress in College of Basic Education?

Of course, I believe that if you have a good relationship with the students, the students are going to like the subject and try to do their best at it. The students will also come to the class with a positive attitude. Also, as a piano teacher, most of the time I try to take the middle path for controlling this relationship by following the 'carrot and stick' rule. For example, in terms of absence form class, in foreign countries if a student is repeatedly absent without reason, the

subject teacher will notice that the student is not interested in the class and may even report it to the administration. However, over here we understand the thought process of the Kuwaiti student and we realise that they have just finished high school and they still see themselves as school students without realising the responsibility about their own future. For example, as piano is a practical module, the rule here is if the student is absent from six lessons without reason they will be withdrawn from the module. We try to explain this to the students beforehand to maintain a good relationship and to offer a good learning environment for the students to work in.

50. Are there any opportunities for the students to perform piano in concerts or in ensemble with other students?

Actually, we conduct three to four musical concerts each year, where the students have the opportunity to participate in these concerts and show their talent and ability of playing a musical instrument. Students can also play in a group.

51. What role could parents play in improving the piano learning process?

Definitely, the parents can play a positive role focusing on encouraging their children and supporting them by whatever means they have to provide a good learning environment for the student.

52. What is the attitude of the College administration toward music learning and music teachers?

Actually, this can go back to the start of music learning in Kuwait in the 1950s, then after the Iraq invasion of Kuwait in 1990, then also after 11/09/2001. I can see that the culture has considerably changed after each period and we can now see that music and arts have become a major part of the culture and music learning is more acceptable so therefore more people are interested in it. For example, before, the Kuwaiti parents would put their child in some

Islamic or religious centre to learn additional subjects and the parents were thinking this was the best place for their children to develop in their spare time. They wanted to keep their children away from bad influences during the teenage years. However, after those events the views of most Kuwaiti parents have changed and they really worry about whether to put their children in those places in their spare time and if the result will be bad, so they now have many choices to put their sons and daughters in different arts centres to learn music or football during their spare time or holidays. Additionally, also the Kuwaiti government has supported the interest in learning arts, where now they are starting to establish the first Opera House in Kuwait in the next couple of years. We can see more focus and respect for arts in the Kuwaiti culture with a new thinking and mind-set. Now we go back to the administration of CBE: of course, the attitude of administration is usually related to the educational system and Ministry of Education and also relates to the general system of the country. Actually, there are no problems with the administration of CBE, but there are, as you know, some people in the administration of CBE or teachers outside the music department in CBE or outside the college who have their [problematic] personal views and attitudes. But in general I see now it is a good environment for the students and better than what we had before or what we had when we were learning music. In addition, we also have here about three to four musical concerts for the CBE during each year led by the music department, so it shows they (administration of CBE) respect the music department and the work we do throughout the year and they can see how we are doing our best to participate and be a good college.

53. What are the underlying reasons for such attitude?

As I explained to you, this goes back to the culture.

54. What role could the College administration play in improving the piano learning process?

Offer more music concerts, offer financial support for these music concerts, media support for the talented music students and more respect for the music students.

55. What is the Kuwaiti government/Ministry of Education doing for music learning in Kuwait?

Actually, I would like to mention that in Kuwait, we can see how the government is supporting the learning of arts and how much they spend on it, but for example, they would pay a lot of money for buying new musical instruments or for music and arts events and after that when the Minister of Education changes, things also change with the new Minister and they discontinue what the previous one started. Therefore, as a result the financial support and plans for the musical and arts events and festivals does not continue and these events could not be conducted, and later we forget it. This keeps on going every time there is a change of minsters. For example, the idea of building the first Opera House and Kuwaiti orchestra in Kuwait was started in 1994, then we forgot it, then it came back again in 2000, then we forget it again, then back again in 2005, then forgotten again and then back again in 2012, and we hope they may be serious about it this time, as we can see there is a building built on the seaside for the Kuwaiti Opera House and soon it will be finished. It is actually related to a country's system. I have referred to 'centralise and decentralise' in my PhD dissertation about music learning in Kuwait; here in Kuwait we are following the centralised system and if we have political stability that will reflect on the development of the country and will reflect on the stability in the Ministry of Education system and as a consequence will reflect on the music learning in Kuwait, and vice versa.

56. What role could the Kuwaiti government/Ministry of Education play in improving the piano learning process?

I think they need to support the plans/projects for the development of music learning from the Ministry of Education or CBE in Kuwait until the plans/projects are completed.

57. Why?

As I said, we have seen many plans/projects for music education which were approved by the government but then these plans/projects were not continued and did not complete.

58. Do you think this could have an effect on the decision of students to become music teachers or even study music at CBE?

As I said, student culture now is different from before, even if they face problems with choosing to learn music, they have the right and should believe what they are going to do.

59. Is there anything else you would like to add that you think could affect the piano learning process at CBE but we did not cover it in our discussion?

No, thank you very much.

Appendix 13: Interview with Piano Teacher E (TE) at LCM, 8th May 2017

1. *How long have you been teaching piano?*

Five years, I am teaching group classes here at Leeds College of Music. Also, I am teaching one-to-one piano lesson.

2. *Is that in the same country or in the same college?*

Same country, the same city, so I've always taught around Leeds.

3. *Which qualifications have you obtained to teach piano?*

I achieved a bachelor's degree in piano last year. In terms of my piano qualifications I actually stopped studying piano when I was about 13; I learned with my granddad and I found the exam boards were so strict and it was killing my appetite for learning, so I studied up to grade 8, which is the highest grade in piano that we study here in the UK, but I didn't sit the exams after grade 4, but I began teaching around that time so my only teaching qualification actually, apart from my experience that I have built up, is a bachelor's degree in classical music.

4. *Have you taken any other (specific) training courses in order to be a piano teacher?*

No. But I am about to take one in about two or three week's time here. It's called *Piano tuition in the twenty-first* something like that, which is a weekend course. I can send you a link actually after today, that will detail what that will involve but that will be the first one, actually.

5. *Can you tell me why piano is part of the music curriculum at the Leeds College of Music?*

I consider piano learning through music learning as an essential skill, I would say that the piano is one of the most popular instruments and there is always going to be demand for it and every year we get lots and lots of people, up to 40 people, wanting to do these classes for a wide range of purposes. There are some who focus on career needs, others for other purposes. We also have a specific piano course that I don't teach for jazz piano as well. I think because it is one of the most popular instruments it's got to be a course that is continuously run here. I think piano learning should focus on the student learning and career growth, but it should be seen as part of the curriculum rather than something that is independent of the curriculum.

6. *Can you tell me what you are offering for learning piano in order to meet the goals of teaching piano at the Leeds College of Music?*

I try to keep the lessons as open as possible because what you tend to find in a group class is that everybody has an individual want or desire for the lessons; some people have a very general intention of just wanting to learn piano and perhaps you'll see today many of the students that come here just want to learn for pleasure. Some people also want to learn to sit exams and so what I have to do is cater to all of them, which is really difficult, and plan lessons that include general music theory studies, scales that some of the students can use in exams and popular tunes as well for those that just want to play for fun.

7. *So the aim, just to confirm, the aim of this course, training course, just to…?*

It's a general… 'Introduction to Piano' is the title of the course so it's brief examples of how you can play the piano and in different styles like classical, pop and blues.

8. *And how does what you do with students help them prepare for a future career or what they are looking for after they finish this training course?*

Well, most people are not musicians and these courses are for people that have never played piano before in their lives, so most of them just want to study piano. What I try and do is set them up so that they can practise independently at home and I try and help them find a teacher. Once they've finished the Part 1 course and the Part 2 course there's nothing for them yet here for them to continue their studies unless they did a bachelor's degree. So at the moment everybody just leaves the college, and some of them unfortunately stop playing because they can't find a teacher, so I try my best to give them lots and lots of resources that they can practise independently, and help them find a teacher.

9. *That could lead you to provide them new courses like part three or four…?*

We are talking about that at the moment. I am thinking about doing a workshop, which would be on Wednesday, Thursday or Friday evening, we haven't decided yet but we are hoping that will begin in September. It has not been confirmed yet and it's not a formal course yet, but the idea would be that those lessons aren't a course, you just come in, and I teach you individually but within the group and we all work together to improve skills, this would be a new programme; I have not quite worked that out yet, but we are aware that when they finish the part 2 class that there's nothing else for them here so we're trying to combat that by giving them something else.

10. *What resources are available for teaching?*

In here we have got the whiteboard; sometimes we use PowerPoints; today I will not be, actually; we have also got another whiteboard which has got two staves on it. We have one digital piano with a pair of headphones for each of them [students], and there is an online service where they can download PDF files and my PowerPoints after lessons or if they are ill and they miss a lesson, they can download them so they can keep up with it. I would like to think that

eventually we might be able to start recording my lessons next year so that if they are ill they can watch them so that they do not feel like that they've missed out. Although I don't know whether there'd be much benefit from watching a piano lesson at the computer at home. It might change the dynamic of how I teach, but I am not sure yet, so we have got two boards, the keyboards and headphones with them as well.

11. *And how many students are in the groups?*

How many people are in the group?

12. *In the group and how many groups,*

We used to have four but we now have three, two part 1 classes and one part 2 class that run on a Monday and a Tuesday evening. And there can be up to ten people in the class. At the moment there are 10 in each class.

13. *Okay… how many per week? Also in the term?*

We run the courses twice a year, so they run from February to July and that's 15 weeks for an hour and a half, and up to 10 people in each of the three classes and it runs again September to February each year.

14. *Could you explain to me how your piano lessons normally work, what they contain?*

Well, they are an hour and a half, and as I've taught this for longer, I have realised that an hour and a half is a long time to be sat at a piano, so what I try and do is halfway through the lesson, I have a five-minute break and allow them to go out and use the toilet or get a drink if they want. But generally I open the lesson with some kind of small exercise which normally takes 20 to 30 minutes, this week we're going to be looking at an exercise by Aloys Schmitt, and I think I've given … I've got a copy for you; you can take of each

of the hand-outs I'm using this week. Finger exercises, then what we do is we have normally about a 20-minute lecture where I talk to them about what we are going to do: usually a new topic of music theory such as extensions, broken chords this week – and then we apply that theory by using a piece, and this week we're going to be using 'Moonlight Sonata' by Beethoven. So normally I chop the lesson into three chunks: an exercise, and theory, which is then applied in some practical way.

15. *Which style of music do you usually use or focus on?*

I usually use classical music because I think that there's lots to get out of classical music, but I normally begin the course by using pop songs because everybody knows them; in fact, every single class I begin with 'Let It Be' by *The Beatles* because it's a simple chord sequence you have got [plays chords on the piano], and it's easy to show them that, and we can begin by talking about chords. As we move through, we look at classical music – looking at people like Beethoven and Mozart; we also look at blues music as well – just a general 12-bar blues improvisation.

16. *Is there any particular method or approach that you use for teaching your students even in one-to-one or in group lesson?*

Can you give an example?

17. *Approach or method like the Suzuki method or Kodály method, or maybe different ones?*

Unfortunately, I'm not sure about that actually because I've not done much studying around the theory of teaching itself, which is something that I really should do at some point soon. But I approach every lesson in a very structured way, so every lesson has a clear plan which might adhere to one of those examples that you just gave - and I write down a list of five things usually that I want to cover so there'll be something to do with technique - I want them to

understand something new about music theory and reading it and technique, theory, finger strengthening and things like that.

18. *Yeah, that's my question about; do you focus on just theory, just exercises, just technique?*

I use a lot of exercises, yeah – particularly because a lot of people just have terrible technique when they start, because I forget, sometimes, being a teacher for so many years that brand new beginners don't even know what the correct posture is or the correct hand shape, so I spend a lot of time focusing on technique before playing.

19. *Could you explain more how you see this?*

I think that they can practise more efficiently if they have good technique, I think the better the technique the more confident they feel in playing as well.

20. *How do you feel about the levels of the music scores?*

I try and keep things as easy as I can, but sometimes - if I introduce a new piece at the end of the lesson when I see everybody has tired faces, I realise I've picked something a bit too difficult - which does happen sometimes - the piece that we're going to be looking at in the part 2 class is a piece from the *Jurassic Park* soundtrack, a beautiful piece of music - but I'm not sure if they're going to find it too difficult, but we'll soon see. But generally I try and keep things as easy as possible. A good example, actually, is we're looking at Beethoven's 'Moonlight Sonata' today and we are looking at the reduction of the score which takes out a lot of the octaves and a lot of the double finger playing just so that we can look at the principle of broken chords [playing an example on piano], than play the piece in its original state because it's just too hard, too much information at once for a beginner, I think.

21. *What factors influence your choice of repertoire or exercises or music (for example, is it because they are set for examinations, or because they are ones you worked on when you were studying, or because you find them effective, or because students enjoy them, or other factors?)*

Oh, some of [the pieces] are ones that I learned when I was a child or when I started learning. Sometimes students request a certain song, not too often, but sometimes they request a certain song and if I can find a way for it to fit into the course I will make every effort to do so. But generally the repertoire that I choose was recommended by the person who used to teach this course. I was quite nervous when I first got the job; I wasn't sure how to structure the course, I only had two weeks when I got the job to plan all 15 lessons and in a panic, I made a phone call to the person who used to teach it and he sent me his lesson plan and I kind of took some of the songs that he was teaching them and changed them to fit my teaching style a little bit. I usually pick an element of theory and find a piece that fits with that, usually. So we're looking at chord extensions today with the part 2 class, so I found a piece in the *Jurassic Park* soundtrack that uses chord extensions a lot.

22. *How you teach the music score?*

Well, we've got the whiteboard here and it's got two staves, so normally, and in fact I might do it today at the start of the lesson, I like to draw a short three-bar piece and deliberately make mistakes: I can put the stem the opposite way round, I'll add one too many notes into the piece, I'll forget to put in the bass clef and I ask them, I ask everybody to gather around and fix what I've done wrong and that's really good way of them beginning to spot errors in music and be confident that they can read it properly. The biggest issue I find is that people don't practise music theory at home and they still can't read it and some other students that I have today that unfortunately still can't read music, so I have a huge emphasis on music theory, more so than other people who've taught this course before.

23. *Do you use video recordings or audio recordings in your work with students like show them some examples on YouTube?*

In the first lesson I do, because in the first lesson I ask them, how does a piano work, if I press the key what happens inside? Not on an electric piano, in an acoustic one, and then I found some videos on YouTube of the hammers hitting the strings. I would show them in class if I had a real piano in here, but I usually use videos for that, but no, I don't normally use videos. Sometimes - I will link YouTube videos on the online resource to help for further study – if you didn't understand everything, here is a helpful video that explains it. There's a YouTube channel called *MusicTheoryGuy*, and they're fantastic videos if they're struggling with reading music, I link them to those videos.

24. *And also for music they want to play, to hear how the…*

I normally play it to them. What I like to do now, though, is get them to do it themselves. I wait five minutes and I come around to everybody individually, and then I play it to them because I want them to feel confident that they can do it without being shown how to do it then, you know, I try not to treat them as if it's a you know a monkey copying, you know, they should feel the confidence to do it themselves.

25. *And also are there any other areas that you help students to focus on like you see they need focusing on sight-reading or aural skills or…?*

I've tried, I've really tried, but because they're beginners and because many of them have full-time jobs and don't get to practise much, the 15 weeks or the 30 weeks if they do both courses, there just aren't enough time to cover all those things. I would love to do them, but, I tend to find that, especially if we have a break for Easter, for example, and we have Bank Holiday Mondays, like last week, where we can't see each other as often, I tend to spend a lot of time recovering basic bits of theory, so we don't get time to go on to things like sight-reading and aural skills. I think those are techniques that are best introduced later in the studies, later than the 30 weeks that we currently offer.

Some people can do it but most can't, I have to tailor the lessons to the person who struggles the most usually, so that they don't feel like I'm leaving them behind.

26. *Which practicing exercises do you use here?*

Aloys Schmitt and Hanon, those are two piano finger exercise books that I use. Today we're also going to be using arpeggios and scales that I use from the ABRSM grade 1 syllabus; there're just great ways of getting them to move the fingers and it allows me to watch them do a basic technique and spot if they're doing anything wrong – if the hand is the wrong shape, or if the posture's bad and I can fix that before it's too late.

27. *Could you tell me about students' responses to learning piano?*

Most of them really enjoy it. Every now and again I get one or two students that really don't want to learn Chopin or really don't want to learn Coldplay; they came here to learn Beethoven, but generally everybody loves it. I tend to find as long as you teach with a sense of humour they'll enjoy anything, and as long as it's not too difficult and you teach in a relaxed environment like this then it's fine.

28. *How about in terms of the physical, do they respond fast?*

Most of them are quite quick to repeat what I do, some of them aren't - it depends. If I show them what to do, they'll watch, but if I say read the music and play it, and I'll give you five minutes, for example with the Schmitt exercise I don't tell them what to do; I give them the sheet and then I say work it out, and they're much slower than if I go [playing the exercise on piano] which is the first exercise, and if I show them they do it straight away, but I try to get them to do it themselves by reading the music.

29. *So there is a problem for theory?*

It's the theory that is the real roadblock for development, I find, because it's a totally new language for them.

30. *And a related question, do you find that there's a difference in of ability/ages?*

Not in part 1 usually, not in part 1. But in part 2 yes, because the course is designed for people who have completed part 1 or who have had a little bit of experience playing piano before, and so what you tend to find in part 2 is in the same class I will have somebody who has finished part 1 and is familiar with my teaching style; somebody who learnt when they were a child so they don't need the very basic understanding; and I also had somebody who played violin and could read treble clef perfectly. And to have all three of those people in one class is very, very difficult, so it takes a few weeks to test out all the skills and level the playing field; it's really difficult [laughing].

31. *So you assess each one separately?*

Oh, I will give them a general task to do, such as working out what the chord is, giving them a simple melody and trying to work out what the best finger pattern is, and I'm testing can they read music, how good they are being fluid with the finger patterns, and do they know what chords are and things like that. And then when I know where the weaknesses are and where the strengths are, I can plan the rest of the course. Part 1, I plan from start to finish, part 2, I barely plan it all until about week 3, when I know everybody's abilities, because I don't want to give them something easy if they're all very good and I don't want to give me something very hard if a handful of them would struggle.

32. *If someone is good when you ask him to do something, and next week he has done more and the others not, how do you teach in this situation?*

I try to spend more time with the people that struggle during the early weeks to make sure that they're progressing, but try to not do that too much because than people who are doing well are not getting any attention as well, and I haven't actually worked out a solution to that, to be completely honest with you. And what tends to happen is that really good pupils quit because the classes they feel are beneath them, and they quit about lesson six out of 15 and then in lesson seven the people who really struggling and were holding them back, they quit, and I'm left with the middle people who are very steady. That's just something that I've accepted happens and there's not a lot that I can do. I'm hoping that as I go through more teacher training, I can prevent that from happening, but my granddad, who taught me for many years, did say it's very hard to manage that and sometimes you will just lose people who were too good or struggle with the course. I wish there was an answer.

33. *But most of them…*

Most of them, yeah, but there are just one or two, sometimes, who are very good or who really struggle, usually because they don't practise. A lot of people, when they sign up for this course don't realise how much work they need to do each week and some of them are too busy so I don't tell people off if they don't work, but there comes a point where I can't spend more time with them because it's not fair on everybody else.

34. *Could you tell me who do you think is responsible for the student's learning, their development?*

I think it's important for the teacher to provide the right resources, to make sure that what they're learning is an appropriate technical level; don't give them a grade 7 piece on day one is basically what I'm saying. But then it's up to the student to find time; they're paying for the course, therefore, put in the time, you know to do it. I used to blame myself when people would quit the course, I would think, what could I have done differently, but my boss used to say that you can't please everybody and not everybody is prepared for how difficult it is

to learn piano. I think it's a mixture of both, but I think there's a huge responsibility on the student to prepare each week and I do try emphasise that in class, and I try to give them homework, but I don't make it compulsory because if nobody does it then the lesson I've planned is a waste, if that makes sense, so I just have to say practise this, practise this bit. It is difficult.

35. *What do you feel are the challenges of group teaching piano, as the teacher?*

I think again, the biggest thing is balancing the attention on all of the students; it could be very easy to spend half an hour with one person who is really struggling on one bit, and then miss everybody else out. What other challenges do I have? I think that's the main one that I worry each week it's just - is everybody going to enjoy this, is everybody going to understand this, and I have to think of - I try to think of three different ways to explain something, so a crotchet is worth one beat, a crotchet is worth one count, this note I come up with different sentences because one explanation of something isn't going to be understood by everybody, so I have to have alternative ways of explaining how chords work, for example.

36. *And same question but in terms of students – what are the challenges for the student?*

I think the biggest pressure that they have is that they have got to keep up with the rest of the group, and not get too far ahead as well. I think the one of the biggest challenges is that they've got to concentrate, and it's an hour-and-a-half lesson so there's stamina involved as well, they've got to be able to concentrate for a long period of time, and if the class is full, I only get about four, five minutes of one-to-one tuition with each of them as I go around the room, because I spend 20 minutes talking to them all and teaching them something using the board, we do an opening exercise, and so one of their biggest challenges is making use out of the very little time that they have with me in a one-to-one environment as I come around. I try to provide them with a

positive environment, with options to interact with the members of the group as well as one-on-one with me to truly understand and provide comparative information.

37. *So the same question about private or one-to-one piano lessons, what do you feel are the challenges when you do private lessons?*

With private lessons, I think that you have to plan more in a lesson; you know, I've said to you I planned three things to teach them today - three things in a one-to-one lesson will be done in five, ten minutes, especially with the children that I teach, because they learn so quickly, so if I gave them an exercise - easily done, whereas if I taught a group class an exercise I have to come round to everybody twice to make sure that they are still picking it up. So with a one-to-one it's about finding the right amount of different things to teach in one lesson without over-filling it or, teaching too little, if that makes sense. So planning a timescale for the lessons is very important, I think.

38. *What do you think also the challenges for piano one-to-one, but in terms of as a student?*

Well, just like that I think, they've got more to learn in the lesson as well, so there's more stamina involved. I attempt to teach half an hour with one-to-ones though, whereas this is an hour and a half class, but for most people it's a 30-minute lesson - so I still get through a similar amount of work, but over a much shorter a space of time.

39. *Can you tell me which piano lesson do you prefer and why?*

Oh, I don't think I do have a preference to be honest. I love teaching groups, because I can point to things on the board and get excited about it and make jokes, and the students themselves joke between each other usually as well. But with one-to-ones – what I love about one-to-one lessons is just seeing the progress of an individual, it's so much faster. One of my youngest students,

she is six years old and she's learnt so much in three months and that's incredible. So those are two things that I enjoy, but the things I enjoy are different; so I enjoy - you know - professing about music in front of lots of people - my job title is a lecturer and I don't really consider myself a lecturer because that's more - I don't know - formal - I feel like I'm a teacher, that's just the job title, it's a bit wrong, but I do a bit of lecturing in class and I love talking about music.

40. *Which do you feel is more suitable for the Leeds College of Music?*

I think for everybody one-to-one lessons are just better, I don't really agree that group teaching is a good way of developing your skills. I think it's a good way to begin especially if you've not got a lot of money, because this course is £180, I think, at the moment, but that works at £8 an hour whereas I might charge £25, £30 an hour if you are learning one-to-one, although we wouldn't do as long a lesson. I think one-to-one lessons are just better for everybody involved, in every way except financial, because you get lessons tailored to you, you develop faster as well, but these [group classes] are very cost-effective and a good way of getting a general understanding of music I think.

41. *And also to extend this question about the aim of the college in terms of teaching the piano, do they require or are they happy to do more than two groups, like eight groups, ten groups for the curriculum of maybe undergraduates or something like that?*

Undergraduate students all have one-to-one lessons, whereas the students in this aren't actually official students of college. But all undergraduate students here have a one-to-one teacher with one of the big names, whereas this is a bit more of a general course, whereas what they'll [college students] be learning is very specific to their degree.

42. *So they usually go to a one-to-one lesson in their official undergraduate?*

Yeah, and they don't use this.

43. *And why can't they use this situation?*

They can, but they're advanced players, so a beginners' course wouldn't be suitable to them. One or two students do study this and they're usually composers who can't play piano and so they just want to be able to play a little bit so that they can programme their scores into their laptop for example, that's why some students use this course, but everybody else just wants to learn for the pleasure of learning, I think.

44. *Could you tell me, is it effective to teach local traditions like pop music in the curriculum, or in your course, instead of classical music?*

Do you mean is popular music and classical music easier to teach?

45. *Sometimes as you mentioned, you can have something local or traditional in the piano curriculum. Could you explain what is the difference when teaching classical Western music?*

I begin with Irish tunes and Beatles songs and things, because the chords are simpler, and what they've got to play is simpler, but there are some very simple classical pieces as well that I do use, but generally classical music is harder, I think, technically, to play many of the pieces that people like to play such as 'Für Elise' and 'Moonlight Sonata', so I usually begin with pop tunes because it's technically easier.

46. *For beginners do they want to play like such kind of pop music?*

Well, it depends because some people really like classical music, as well, that study the course, so I am trying to teach both anyway, and you tend to find actually that most people don't care whether they are learning pop music or classical music, the amount of people when I said we're going to learn

'Moonlight Sonata' this week were really excited, because it's a piece that everybody wants to play, it's a piece that everybody learns as well, although it's a simplified version, but most people don't have a preference, they just want to soak it all up.

47. *Can you tell me your opinion about using or not using digital pianos and headphones or technology during teaching?*

I think it's good because they can only hear themselves, and I can come around and plug-in and listen with them, or I can just watch them because I can hear when they're pressing the key silently what it should sound like and I can see if they've pressing the right keys. It's not very good in terms of it doesn't develop their confidence in performing in front of each other, because some people may have anxiety issues or confidence issues, I do absolutely no performance technique with them in front of other people to avoid that, I tried it once; it didn't go well.

48. *Have you seen or heard about any up-to-date knowledge or technology?*

I can plug-in and listen to everybody's keyboard through *The Haines Music Laboratory Control Unit* and the idea is that I can patch-in and listen to everybody's keyboards, but I didn't like it because I don't like to be reliant on technology, and I think it's very inhumane for me to sit at the front and 'keyboard number four play this differently', I prefer to be a human and come round and talk and show them things, so I try not to use them, actually, but they are applications that we have here, that staff have used in the past, but I don't like it, and it's covered in dust which probably suggests that none of the other teachers like it either, so I think they should sell it.

49. *So it's like conversation?*

You can mute people and you can patch-in and listen to one person and I can speak to them, it's a bit like that, but I just don't think it's good - I don't, I think it

makes lessons robotic – and it takes away the personal nature, and for me the most important part about teaching, it's being personal with students, and that is a massive barrier.

50. *And how do you think technology could give you more support for your teaching?*

I don't really know of any other systems that people use electronically to learn piano, but I don't think that they work, because I've got some friends that teach cello actually, one of my friends teaches cello, she's got many students that have learnt cello by watching YouTube videos and the problem with that is – they develop a really bad technique.

51. *Like using iPad can help you or support something?*

I think so, especially if you don't have a teacher – if someone's learning and doesn't have a teacher.

52. *What else you would like to see involved in learning piano that could support the learning process?*

There's an app that I discovered a couple of months ago - I wish we could have iPads in here and a bit more interactive technology, it's very expensive - there's an app called *Flashnote Derby*, and I have shown it to my pupils but obviously because it's one iPad in a big room it doesn't work, and it flashes up with a note on the stave and you have to play the note on the keyboard within 10 seconds and it trains your ability to sight-read single notes. I'd love to have more stuff like that but with a project with 10 pupils, it's hard to find something that means everybody can be involved at once – and I don't know what the solution would be at the moment, unfortunately.

53. *Could you use a separate iPad for each one?*

That would be so expensive, I would love it though, but you know these keyboards are expensive enough.

54. *Could you please tell me how are the relationships between you and the piano students? Do you see yourself as a master-apprentice style teacher, or something else, when working with these group piano students?*

Oh, I like to have a friendly relationship – it doesn't extend beyond the building, but before lessons start, for example, I like to ask, you know, how is your week going, and get to know them a little bit, because I don't like or I don't want a relationship where I am the qualified person - I don't want to be worshipped or anything like that - I like to - I really enjoy teaching and music and I like to be able to share it in a very inclusive way.

55. *Are there any constraining factors for teachers and for students like something cultural or traditions?*

There's a few. I have had pupils that have already learnt a bit about music theory that know the American terminology – like G-clef instead of a treble clef, staff instead of stave, quarter note instead of crotchet, and I have had to kind of retrain them, because I like to be consistent in my lessons. In terms of musical material as well as I have had students that want to learn, for example, *Bollywood* and I have no clue if there's anything on piano that relates to that, and because it was a specific request from one student I couldn't really do it - and so in some cases there's a bit of a language barrier, but I think if you speak clearly, explain things and give out enough handouts for them to take home and read and links to websites that they can read further then it's not too much of a trouble.

56. *What opportunities are there for students to perform in concerts, for example, or workshops?*

In here, nothing actually. Most of them just want to play for themselves. When the headphones go on they're in their own little zone, and that's fine, because – I'm only sort of going over the basics of how to play. That would probably be different with a different teacher on a different sort of course - so for people who are specifically learning on my piano courses, there's no performance element. At this early stage, I don't think they'll be ready after only 15 lessons for example.

57. *How about if you were to do something like a one-day workshop or a small concert where each person plays just one piece?*

That would be really good if we could do it, but what I tend to find is that in class if I say 'would somebody mind playing this aloud for everybody else', nobody wants to do it, so to introduce some sort of workshop I think wouldn't be particularly popular - that's just something that I've learnt unfortunately.

58. *Could you tell me about the college administration's attitudes toward learning piano and piano teachers?*

Oh, they've been brilliant, they hand out a pack at the start of the course with some blank sheet music and pencils for them to use. I don't know too much about how they liaise with students but, for example, when we have a week off for the holidays, they always send out an email to remind everybody, and at the end of the course they have a questionnaire asking them to give feedback on how they think the course went, but generally they just let me get on with it. Occasionally my lessons are observed as part of the procedure for assessing the quality of teachers here, and if I ever find that I am struggling, if I've got an idea that I want to teach and I don't know how, I can have a consultation with them and meet a member of staff to help me through that. I haven't actually used it yet but I will if I need too, so they really are very, very helpful in many ways.

59. *Yes, I mean about the approach and how they support the learning specifically for the piano, I can see they run some group piano for the undergraduate students or something like that…*

There's not a lot that we can do to support them outside of the classes at the moment, because all of the practice rooms are taken up by the undergraduate students, whereas many of the people on this course just come from outside of the college - but the facilities in here are pretty good for helping them through it. But generally as the course runs they just let the teachers cater to them mostly and they mainly provide administrative support.

60. *Why do they have this view?*

The mission of the conservatoire is that music should be for everybody, and that's the driving force behind every department in the building. I think it's one of the more valued short courses that we hold here, at least I feel that way, because there's a lot of advertising that goes into it, because piano is a huge part of Leeds as a city, we've got the Besbrode Piano Shop in Holbeck very nearby, that we've got very strong links with. We're also quite close to some of the other music schools in Leeds and I think piano is regarded as a really important instrument and something that should be encouraged.

61. *What do you think about the role or relationship of the college administration to improve the piano learning process, actually not just for the course but for this building and in general, how they support and care for staff, resources, facilities?*

Other than the facilities they provide, I'm not sure if I can answer that question really because I don't know - because again I think most of the responsibility lies on the teacher, the only thing I can think of that actually I haven't mentioned if there's any headphones that are damaged or something, they are very quick to get them fixed so that there's not one student who hasn't got a pair of headphones and is struggling. So they take the facilities very seriously

in the whole building - to repair things and make sure that - you know, because people are paying for studying here – that the quality is very high.

62. *Is it also as you mentioned before that your teaching classes is observed to develop and improve the learning process?*

Yeah, quite a lot, so the quality of both; the delivery of a course and equipment on it, is always at the top.

63. *Could you tell me about what the English government or Ministry of Education offers for learning music in England?*

I don't know too much about it broadly, but I think that music should remain an essential part of learning, particularly as a child because most of your basic understanding of music; singing, rhythm and hearing pitch - comes from when you're very young, and that I don't think that the arts in general is funded enough in this country. There is a lot of funding available for a student who is wanting to do a project, for example, but I think schools can always do with more money to make sure that they can keep up with - you know - kids break things a lot and it's expensive to repair, I remember in school a lot of damaged equipment and things, and it's a shame that there's not enough money going round to make sure that everything is as in good nick as it is here. I think there's more money in university education for music then there is in schools but I think it's really important that it's in schools for children, because if you don't learn then, you won't learn now, or there's less opportunities to learn now I think.

64. *What do you think about the role or responsibility of the English government to improve the piano learning process?*

Oh, I think it should be far more involved than it is. I never think of it specifically as just piano tuition, but music in general I think should always be one of the priorities, again because it's about self-expression, it's about creativity and

those are things I fear many jobs don't encourage that unless you're working specifically in arts. Many of the people who study here say that part of the reason why they study on the Leeds College of Music course is because it's their only creative outlet, and I think that it should be the government's responsibility to make sure that there are lots of things. This area [the place around where the interview was conducted at LCM] is called the *Leeds Arts Centre*, because we've got the *West Yorkshire Playhouse* for acting, we've a *ballet school*, we have a *College of Music,* we've the *BBC headquarters*, and I think that's the sign of a lot of spending locally on arts, but I think that it needs to be more focus on it.

65. *I observed that when I came here in terms of opportunities for studying music as a future career, there are not a lot of opportunities, I feel, when compared with other jobs.*

No, but I think, I can't give you a statistic, but I'm sure that the problem with this country is many people who graduate with a degree in anything [subject] don't get a job related to it. I don't know where music fits into that, whether it is one of the big degrees that doesn't translate to work, but equally I do know lots of people who do get into music work as well.

66. *I see the only way for a musician is to be a performer.*

I would actually say that performing is not one of the ways that people earn money so much. Teaching is the big one, I think, these days and most of my friends go into teaching. Function bands for weddings and parties, playing at weddings, playing at funerals, there's a lot of money in that and tribute bands as well, but to be a soloist or a successful musician - just doing what you do - I think that is harder, but teaching, I think, and education is the main one; the problem with that is many of them don't going to training, they just do it, but that's a different argument all together, I think.

67. *Also I can see from the schools there are no music teachers, just one like visiting not settled in the school. There is one teacher for five schools, rather than five teachers for five schools.*

There's definitely a shortage of it, but also a shortage of people who want to learn, I think. I don't think that there's many children in school that can afford piano lessons as well. That's the biggest trouble is that it costs a lot of money to learn. And that's why a lot of people come on this course, because it's cheaper to learn in a group class then it is to find one-to-one teacher.

68. *Could you please tell me if there is any other thing you would like to add, that we did not mention in our discussion?*

I think there is a major difference between teaching piano in a group and teaching piano to a one-to-one, and it's all about pacing and speed, because you can have one class of people who all learn and practise each week, and you can have another class where only one or two of them are, and then you've got to balance it, and what happens is the people who don't practise quit, the people who practise so hard also quit, because it's too slow - and you're left with only a few people, and I think that's a major fault in group teaching. But again it's cheaper this course is £180, I think; that works out at £8 an hour, and if you think a one-to-one teaching might charge between £20 and £35 an hour. So you can end up spending a lot more money just having one-to-one teaching at home – it's much slower pace as well here, so I can get through this much in the course, but I can get through the same amount in maybe two or three lessons with just one person, but that requires them to practise a lot harder and that's another reason why people don't get one-to-one teachers as much, because it's very intense, I think. I don't believe that you have to be a child to start learning piano. One of my students said before that she doesn't like her last teacher who said unless you learn at seven, you'll never learn now, you'll never be very good, and I completely disagree; I think it's about having free time, the motivation, the right piano, not just a little toy, a proper good piano, a teacher that has got all the relevant materials that you need and keeps it engaging, and the teacher that can adapt as well. I like to

use lots of music theory because I think it's really interesting and I think that it's exciting, but some of my students find it boring so I have to change how I teach them it, otherwise they will quit. It is important to focus on other types of feedback and engagement. For example, we can look at informal feedback, listening to a student's recorded pieces, trading feedback in class as part of collaboration. All of this helps. So I think that's all I've got to say on it really. Some of the questions weren't quite relevant to them quite yet because we haven't been learning long enough to look at improvisation, chord symbols or accompaniment because most of them just want to learn for pleasure really, and most of them again don't want to learn to get a job in piano, it's just a hobby that they've always wanted to do, and they've only just started to explore it now, but who knows, because I've officially applied for a part 3 course now, which is going to work in a different way. This is; lesson one we're going to do this, lesson two, lesson three, lesson four, lesson five, this is going to be a 15-week workshop, I'm going have up to 30 pieces and everybody picks their own, and works on it and I come around to everybody individually – and we might show each other different ideas, and might do a lecture on one of the pieces - and that way they're not pressured to keep up with the speed of the rest of the class, and if this person doesn't practise this person isn't going to struggle, because they've been practising different things. And I think the best way around group piano classes is not having them doing the same thing, because if they are then I can't move them on unless everybody is ready – I've been doing this job for two years and I think that is the way forward. The trick is not to make that course so popular that then the other two stop running, so I will introduce the basic principles of how to play and how to read in part 1 and part 2, and if they want to they can join the workshop idea afterwards, because it's different each time they're looking at new pieces and they've got no pressure, they can do it again and again and again and again and again, because it's a cycle.

69. *Could you explain about student motivation? I've got a question about parents and also students themselves, what their motivations are, or what they*

think about their future – what's their reason to encourage them to take this path? And is it the student's choice or their parents?

Oh dear me, that's a very big question. Why did I do it, that's probably the best way to start – again it varies, but I can give examples, I did it because I'm not good at anything else really, I can do a little bit of writing so I could have maybe been a journalist or something, but I think for a musician it's a calling, and the most successful musicians just know that that's what they want to do. Parents worry about employability so there are lots of parents that make their children pursue a career in music, but there are some parents who stop them because they think there's no money in it, so don't do it. I would say that the most successful people, though, they go onto undergraduate and do it because they want to do it and they've got a plan. The people who aren't successful; and I think this is the case for anybody doing a degree in anything, is if you don't have a reason to do it, you don't want to be in this job at the end of it or have this path career then you won't. For example; I've got friend who studied for three years geography - just because - and it's not worked out because she hasn't had a plan for afterwards, and my other friend is studying biology and he's now working in a laboratory because he knew that's where he wanted to be in four years' time. I think unless you've got very controlling parents that are able to make you go for that job, it's got to come from yourself in music, it's self-motivating and the policy on the undergraduate course at Leeds College of Music is you're a professional the first day you start your undergraduate degree, we're not going to make you come to lectures, we're not going to make you do any practise, but if you don't, then you've got no career ahead of you. So I think it all has to come from within I think, the motivation; otherwise don't bother because it's a hard, hard job.

70. *So, last question, so there are no choices for music to be just a hobby?*

You could, but if you just want it to be a hobby, I wouldn't do a degree in it, because at £9,000 a year now [for the university tuition fees] if you're going to do a degree, do it in the job you really want to do. But again for people who just want to do music as a hobby, that's what the short courses are for,

because that's a one-off. Nobody that does my piano classes wants to be a career musician, some of them are a singer and they want to play at the same time. Most of them, you know, [are like] 'I've got to a certain age'; some of them are retired and thought 'I've always wanted to learn, now is the time'.

71. *Actually, sometimes students like to study music, but when they graduate, they find or are surprised that the opportunities of jobs are limited, for example; the student wants to be a performer, but after they graduate he/she found they're not a high enough level to get the job they want. Or for example they think that I am just going to be a piano teacher not a performer.*

It's about a portfolio career, that's what they call it here, I'm a teacher, I'm a performer, I play in churches as an organist, I write music; but you've got to take them all because you are not going to be a piano performer, you're not going to be a music journalist, you're going to be all of those things, otherwise you won't make enough money to live.

72. *Could you tell me your feeling about this view; some people see that music is not important or a part of our life like how it was maybe 15-20 years ago, for example? Or parents, society, or people are more interested or moving towards practical jobs or study in order to get more money in future; however, they also feel that they don't have more time or interest for attending musical concerts and events, as they are busy most of the time? For example; when I ask someone who's a non-musician about their opinion in music, they said that music is a good thing, but it won't bring you a lot of money now.*

Oh, It's a shame, but the thing is, there is a diagram and there is a list of all the major careers in England, and which ones are most likely to be replaced by robots, and which ones are least likely to be replaced by robots and machines, you know woodchopper - anything manual, robots can do – but creating music, being a nurse or a doctor, those are not like…. music is one of the jobs that will never be replaced by machines [laughing], so that's good, and I hope they

never teach computer to compose music, because I'll be out [laughing], so you know we're not in danger of losing work.

73. *I think the modern life affects the attitudes, views or using of music in our life now.*

Yeah, people's attention spans are shorter now, people don't sit still and do the same thing, and practising, you know. Children don't learn piano because - it's not - done it, done it, done it [acting] it's not just done it, it's work, work, work, work, work, and then a little reward, and then you know, it takes a long time to pick it up, but that's the responsibility of the teacher to keep it … to keep it entertaining, and to keep the targets small and mini.

74. *Thank you very much.*

You're very welcome.

Appendix 14: Interview with Piano Teacher F (TF) at City Lit, 21st June 2017

Short Conversation before starting the interview:

TF: That [learning piano in group setting] is very interesting, I get a lot of new pupils who don't really understand how you can learn piano in a group. We spent a lot of time trying to explain that to people, I mean sometimes I don't understand it, there are moments when wish they weren't in a group!

Teach in City Lit?

TF: At City Lit, we're an adult education college, so we pick up where school stops, so you need to be more than 19 years old to come here. We don't do a degree but we do do some access diplomas, but not in the music department, we only do non-accredited learning, so courses to get better that they don't terminate. Although a lot of our students sit the ABSRM piano exams and theory exams, so they tend to do their Grade 1 piano, Grade 3 piano or whatever. And our classes work at the same level as those exams if they want to do both.

Are they beginners?

TF: They start right from the beginning, there are three terms every year; module 1, 2 and 3. And there is a foundation year. Then level 1 is basically learning grade 1 exam standard things, level 2 is learning grade 2 standard things, level 3, right up to level 8, then after level 8 there are two repertoire classes, and they're taught by visiting teachers from music conservatory, from the Guildhall and from the Royal College of Music. They work their way through different piano repertoire and different composers every term as a study project, they learn on the Steinway concert piano. And then there's a very advanced class which is post diploma standard, so most of the students are working on the diploma or have sat it, and they play to an incredibly high standard and they enter local piano competitions and that sort of thing, give

lots of recitals. So some people work their way all the way through the system with us, but most people join either in the beginning and then they go off to do pop piano or something and they leave my classical field or they join halfway through or they're just coming for a year or whatever, there is no typical case study of student.

Interview start:

1. How long have you been teaching piano?

On and off for about 15 years.

2. Is that in the same country or in the same college?

Always here [England], but in different colleges, so always in the same country, but in different colleges or schools. I've had a variety of positions.

3. Which qualifications have you obtained to teach piano?

Not a specific piano one, I have got a music degree, masters, and PhD, I have got a diploma in Performance, I have got a teaching diploma as well, but that's general. I've not got an LTCM

4. Have you taken any other (specific) training courses in order to be a piano teacher?

I did teaching modules in college; I mean, I have a teaching degree which is a general teaching diploma, and I have got a diploma performance in music. But they're separate halves, I guess, so no.

5. Can you tell me why piano is part of the music curriculum at City Lit?

Well, two reasons, one is for piano reason, so we have a huge piano programme just for piano. The second reason is a lot of people come … we recommend they come and do the foundation piano year, when they are doing

something else, as part of their theory, so for keyboard harmony skills and music reading skills. So a lot of people come and do a year or so of piano with us because they are learning some other parts of music programme and we want them to have some keyboard skills. So the composition students for instance, if they are not pianists, they come and study piano for a while, so they have got a way of being able to understand how the instrument works to write for it. So it fulfils several routes. We've got a lot of jazz pianists.

6. How does what you do with students help them prepare for and relate to their future work?

Well, actually I think many individuals focus on piano learning and piano teaching so that they can have an additional skill. For example, as we're in adult education we're not always preparing for work or a career so more than half of my students are retired people. A lot of people are coming back to piano at a high level, because they once studied it seriously. They didn't play it for their whole working life and they are coming back to about grade 7 or grade 8, because they always wished they would have had more time, so a lot of it is aspirational playing. But that has a huge effect because they give recitals and things at College, so a lot of confidence for them. A lot of people, when it works towards their career, they're maybe learning piano because they're looking to going to university as adults later, there's some of that. Some of the diploma students that are studying are actually trying to get into Music College, so they're having like a gap year before they go off to music college, so, I guess that helps with their career – yeah, but that's not the focus, the focus of adult education is not career driven.

7. What resources are available for teaching?

The beginners classes, the first three years, are in a digital keyboard room, so we have Yamaha Clavinovas 15, and an acoustic piano for the teacher, and we use projected ... we write some work sheets in Sibelius, and we project them up on the screen and then they have copies. And we use the Alfred Adults tutor series as a standard textbook or the ABRSM exam pieces. But

after that they go into smaller groups of 12, with a grand piano or baby grand piano in classroom situation, like a little mini masterclass every week. So there are two basic set ups. And there is a lot of work with metronomes, and we record them a lot, we have 'zoom players' [computer software player], and Dropbox them their recordings after class, so they can hear how they did when they were nervous under pressure. We video just the concerts usually, but some of the students they'll give us their phone and I'll hold it while they are playing, so they can see their fingers. But we don't tend to video students, they tend to video themselves with their own equipment – just for copyright it's easier.

8. How many piano lessons do students take per week and term at the City Lit College?

One per week, either a one-and-a-half hour course for beginners, or a two hour class for the more advanced students, three hours for the very advanced, so they go longer as they go through the programme, but it is only once per week. And what we try to get them to do is to do a second course in music theory at the same time, so they have one piano lesson and one music theory lesson every week. But they're mostly coming after work so they won't have time to do a big study programme.

9. Could you explain to me how your piano lessons normally work, what they contain; how do you manage your lesson, class and time?

There are two lesson types (the keyboard type is different to the acoustic piano); in the keyboard type group, so let's go with that one to start with, there is a lot of group playing where we're all together, so the lesson always starts with whatever the homework was, I've always asked them to prepare a piece or something, so they come in, they start playing and warm up, and I can listen to them individually with the headphones to each player, so I leave them alone for 20 minutes and I just listen individually and give them little bits of individual advice, then as soon as everybody is relaxed and playing, then we all play

together, usually Czerny study exercises or something like that for rhythmic staff, or then we'll do like a theory piece where I asked them to provide chords I, IV and V to a melody, so some in a class are playing the melody and some providing the chords they prepared, that little theory, and then we'll work on individual pieces, either by playing bits together or volunteers playing to the class for teacher demonstrating, and there is usually a theory work sheet they're working on at the same time. So a variety of activities between group playing to the group, playing as a group and playing individually on the keyboards with headphones on. So that's just in the keyboard room, because you have got so many options, they can all play with the headphones in, so you can work, you can go around, listening to them individually, so half the lesson is like that, and then they all play together at the same time, we're talking about playing in the time, or we're doing rounds or something like that. But the other lessons passed grade 3 when they working on the baby grand piano, they can only play one at time on that, or duet works. So that is different, that's like a masterclass; they're presenting the piece and you're giving them notes, and that has a strict timetable each week, everybody knows who is playing each week, they have to tell the class if it's their slot to play next week what they're going to play, so the other people will bring the music to follow, and then I'll ask people who are listening to answer questions about the piece; so they'll play it and I'll ask the class like what key is it in? Did you hear the *legato* in the left hand, and they'll have to answer these questions and they'll give notes to the student.

10. What style of music do you focus on? Why do you prefer these music pieces/style?

For the beginners' classes – everything, absolutely everything. The only thing I avoid is religious music in the beginning. So they'll do beginners' classical pieces, a lot of folk songs, pop song arrangements, because for the beginners classes they need to know everything, and then after Grade 3, they split, they either choose Jazz or Rock, pop and soul or Classical and then specialise after Grade 3.

11. Is there any particular method or approach that you use for teaching your students in group lessons?

In terms of piano technique, I use a mixture of Hanon and Cramer technical exercises. In terms of a method of the class, I use as much differentiation as possible (that's 'teacher speak'), so I try to give activity that means everybody can work on the same activity but they can do it to their own level, so that's the technique I'm most concerned with, so with pieces I choose them so that it will work if somebody's still just playing the right hand, or they can play a simplified version of the left hand with just basic chords if they're a little bit behind and they can just catch up later. So I try to pick pieces that work in various ways like that.

12. Could you explain more how you think this method affects the learning progress?

I don't think it is the best way, I think there are advantages of lots of ways of learning the piano. I think it is really great there is a strong focus on reading music, the way we teach piano. So nobody has piano classes without also learning staff notation, everything is done from notation. And I think that is a really useful skill to have and to feel fluent with. Then in some other classes they are using a mixture of improvisations or they're playing with figured bass or something, so that they are playing around with notation, they're not stuck with it. And they do have to learn things by memory in advanced classes. But I think it is great that focus is there, then they can go in lots of directions then once they can read music, and explore their own taste. And I think in group piano lessons students often have a much better sense of performance, because right from the beginning they will play the music piece to the class, you know, so when they get more advanced, they just find it really easy to play in front of other people without panicking. And they find it is really easy to talk to each other about music respectfully to sort of say what they like and what they don't like about a performance and they have opinions. And they have a much better sense of rhythm, because in all those beginners classes they are

learning all that stuff and playing together and the teacher's counting or the metronome's on, the idea on playing in a group of ensemble playing is right there from the beginning. But progress is slower, because you're working as a group. You do have to get, if a student really takes off at a different speed, there is a limit to how much differential you can have in the class. So you do have to get people to move if they need to go to different speed, and that means they need to come to a different time in the week, and you can't be fixable, like if someone says 'I'm only free on Tuesday night', and I don't have an advanced class on Tuesday night, they can't just come on Tuesday and be in a wrong class, it doesn't work like that. So it has got disadvantages.

13. Could you compare teaching in group and one-to-one?

I used to teach lots of children privately when I was first teaching, and the college doesn't offer one-to-one lessons. I used to teach privately quite a lot, because I taught peripatetically in a school, so I taught a lot of individual students, and it meant that my students could go much, much faster if they needed to, because they are only dealing with me, and I can teach whatever level they need when they are in front of me. But, it's much harder to give them performance opportunities, and to make them get used to playing the piano – still I found a lot of my young … particularly the children, wouldn't play in front of their parents, they'd get nervous. And you'd think 'Wow, this is incredible, we're doing Grade 5, we've been doing this for five years, you're still nervous'.

14. How do you feel about the levels of the music scores that you teach with?

I feel they do really well actually – they tend not to study very hard, because there is a difference between the evening classes, which have sort of professional people coming after work, they learn fast and they do a lot of practise. In the day time when you have got the retired crowd, they're not doing it for a career, they are lovely, and often they'll repeat a year, they sometimes don't practise, they're not in a hurry, and they're coming for pure enjoyment and they work really hard in the class, but they don't [practise enough], so I get them to repeat years or terms again and again if they need to

and there's a real plateau around Grade 3; everybody gets to Grade 3 and then they just fall off for a while, so sometimes I'm frustrated, sometimes I'm delighted. But the advanced students are so advanced – I don't teach the advanced class, they're taught by concert pianists and they're beyond my standard. And many of them are piano teachers themselves, doing an advanced class to improve their own skills. We have a Steinway Concert D piano, we have two. So some of the very advanced students come for the masterclass because they want the practice time on the Steinway, they want access to an instrument of that calibre.

15. What factors influence your choice of repertoire and exercises (for example, is it because they are set for examinations, or because they are ones you worked with, or one you were learning with?)

There are two basic reasons for that, one is technical, so I'm choosing something because we're studying G major, or because we're learning *legato* left hand, with the tune in the left hand, so I choose pieces because I actually need them to learn something, *staccato* technique or wrist *staccato* or something. But then other pieces are chosen from repertoire, because we're spending the term looking at classical sonatas or Debussy piano works. So there are always two reasons, either a technical reason or a repertoire reason, for why we're doing it. But I also do studies, so some of the technical staff I'm working through Czerny or Cramer or Burgmuller. You know, books that are actually meant to be about piano technique rather than about music, musical satisfaction I suppose. And the exam repertoire, I don't let it occupy the entire year. We're always working on exam repertoire, but it's always only one of several pieces available, so they don't feel their lives are controlled by an exam.

16. How does the learning process work in lesson?

Right from the beginning we used to have notation from the lesson number one, when we just learn where the middle C is, there is never a moment where they're playing piano with just letters, they're always looking at staff notation

right from the beginning, and it comes in incrementally all the way through, there are no shortcuts, no solfege or anything like that, it's straight staff notation all the way down. And even when they're doing improvisation, they're always looking at a chord sheet or have to write down their improvisation. We try and persuade them to do a theory class at the same time. So they go faster; it doesn't always work.

17. Could you give me an example for how the lesson might go?

That depends; if it has a new concept in it, quite often the teacher demonstrates it first, they might be recording me playing on a phone to listen to later, particularly if they're learning trills or something, that isn't written out in that way, I'll record it first. But if it's a piece that already contains things they know, I often ask them to prepare the right hand for homework, and then they'll present it first and then will decide if we think it's correct, and then I will play the correct version afterwards. So sometimes it's me first, sometimes it's them first. Once they're doing a piece, there's a lot of me playing it, them playing it, 'Can anyone tell the difference?' Or when they're learning to read music, I often play pieces that they're not learning because I just want them to follow the score, then I'll stop and they have to say what bar I stopped, or I'll play a deliberate wrong note, and they have to identify the wrong note, or something like that, there's a lot of listening, aural skills.

18. Do you use video recordings or audio recordings in your work with students?

I invite them to record me playing piano if they want to take a recording of a piece. We record the concerts mostly, so that they can see themselves perform. And they are told they could bring a phone or Dictaphone or recording device if they want to record part of a lesson, but they're not allowed to record the other students, only their own playing, they must have permission from the student if they want to record someone else's private lesson, and so they just record their own performance in class so they can study how they did later. That's the rule.

19. Are there any other areas that you help students with such as sight-reading, aural skills, theory and improvisation? Why are these included/not included, and how do you work with students on these areas?

All these areas are included. The balance is different, so some of the jazz courses have much more improvisation and much more theory, because they need know much more about what key they're in and why they're in it. With the classical piano which I teach, the theory we follow is roughly the same as the ABRSM theory grades. And I spend a lot of time with the beginners giving them worksheets on theory about note names, I ask them to write things out, or transpose things to a different clef, to try and add finger numbers. But as soon as they get to a certain level, I really make them do a special theory course, so that they can spend the time in class playing. I need them to separate that out a bit more, but we only meet theory in the context of a piece, after a certain level. We do a lot of scale playing in the class of course, so that's like theory.

20. Which practicing exercises do you use with your students?

With the beginners, I use the Alfred adult book, that's how we start. Because it has worksheets and it has pieces. But then I'm giving them loads of things, I just write stuff on Sibelius, if they are struggling with F sharp, I just make something on Sibelius with a lot of F sharps on it. And just give it to them. There's lots of supplementary stuff going on as well.

21. Could you tell me about students' responses to learn piano?

There is a huge drop-off rate at the beginning. That's not piano related, that's with all courses. Because they suddenly realise actually it's really hard: you spend all day at work and you come at 7:30 at night and you're tired and it's expensive. And so a lot of people realise they don't have time to keep doing it; it takes more time then they realise. But as soon as they've through a few terms, and they've established a routine, progress is usually really good, really

impressive, because they tend to have friends in the class, it becomes social and they start (particularly in the later piano classes when the quality of what they're playing is really interesting, it's not beginners' music any more), then they start doing lots of practice, because it's enjoyable, you know, they're playing real Mozart sonatas, you know they just do loads of practice. But in the beginning when they're just playing, you know … I have a lot of sympathy for them at that stage, we're trying to keep it as interesting as possible, and while they're playing it, I play some funky left-hand chords to cheer it up, you know.

22. Could you explain more about doing/making/adding something that could attract and encourage students, especially for beginner students?

Yeah, so if they're just playing, say lesson number 1, they're just playing lots of middle Cs, Ds and Es, and they're counting to four-count notes, two-count notes and one-count notes, that's all they've got, so we just do loads and loads of exercises, and I play interesting chords underneath, and all they have to do is just count and do it, but it's interesting and they'll do stuff in rounds and things like that and they'll count in rests and then all have to do things at once, so I'm trying to keep it interesting and not patronising, and not repetitive. Because I know they are intelligent adults, some of them have PhDs in something, you know – they might be a junior doctor learning piano number one and I'm asking them to do six middle-Cs in a row, so you've got to keep moving with them. I almost always have two pieces on the go that we're swapping between, because they can only do half an hour on one thing, then they must change activity and they've got theory and worksheets in front of them, they always get options in the classroom: which option do you want do next, limited options, but options.

23. Do you find that these vary at different levels of ability/ages?

Yeah, ability isn't related to age, in the way you would expect. Ability is sort of the wrong word, because often it's to do with concentration span. So sometimes the most able people are just really tired because they have come from, and you know they're totally going to get it right at home on the weekend

when they do some practice, but that Wednesday night they're just exhausted, and they're just getting it wrong, you have to just know when to just go: 'it's okay, you are an adult, I just get you're having a crappy evening, I'm not going be on your case about it, we'll pick it up next week'. So you've got to be very friendly with people [laughing] and know they understand it. But some people are limited in ability, because they haven't met music before and they don't listen to it – they don't really know what they want it to sound like, there is a big difference between people that enjoy classical music or jazz or something, and so they have a sort of natural concentration span for it, that helps some practice. With people that are just doing it because they fancy it – some of the concepts that I find quite easy, and some the other students like 'just playing *legato*, it's just going to sound smooth they can't hear the difference, they're not interested in music, and they don't listen to it particularly, so they might learn more slowly than other people, but that doesn't mean they're not … it's not an ability issue, it's just not a part of their everyday life, so every concept is new to them.

22. Could you tell me who do you think is responsible for the student's learning of piano process at the City Lit? The student or the teacher?

It's in the beginning stage it's the teacher, because they are virgins, piano virgins, they know nothing, so it's absolutely the teacher, everything is coming from them. But that relationship changes over the years, so towards the end, they're working with such complex things, and you're only seeing them for three hours a week in a masterclass. They really have to then take ownership of their practice, and then there's a responsibility to follow repertoire you recommend; you cannot make people learn something, but if you say to an advanced student 'I really need you to play Haydn sonatas next because there is a problem with the way you are articulating the left hand, and you're playing too much romantic music with the pedal on and I can't hear - you know, and then they don't accept that advice, they have to take their responsibility for that. But in the early days, they're only working on pieces I'm giving them, it's my responsibility to keep it fun, to keep it interesting, and to make sure I chose

the right thing for that group, not just the next thing I would normally to do, I have to change it per group, so it's the right thing for the right moment, and that's the teacher's responsibility in the early days. But the shift, I don't know quite when it happens, it's different for everybody, but it's moving over the years, so eventually… Because you want them to be independent by the end of it, I don't want them to always need me as a guru, you know, halfway through I need the scales to tip to feel like they're their own musicians.

23. Could you tell me about the responsibility of meeting the course aims at the end of the course?

All that is on the course outline, actually. I'll send you a link to the webpage, which has all of the courses linked. And you click on it and it'll say we're learning these scales, you're learning G position, or you're learning Classical sonatas this term, or this term is all about pedalling techniques for Debussy, so each term has got a set of goals absolutely put down for it. And because there are so many different classes during the week, if somebody struggles with one, they don't do the next one, they go and do a repeat of that term with one of their other teachers. It should be like that, that's the ideal of we have.

24. What do you feel are the challenges of group teaching piano for you, as the teacher?

Biggest challenges are personal, actually. It's getting the group to understand that everybody needs equal attention, and not everybody is having a great week, so if somebody turns up and they are upset, or they haven't done the homework, it's the other students who get frustrated first, not the teacher. So you have to help them, you have to always have activities that they can get on with, while you go and deal with someone who's got a problem, if that's going to happen. And that's the biggest challenge. You are a stand-up comedian in adult education, as much as a teacher, you have just to keep giving out friendliness the whole time, you know, because they love to argue with each other.

25. What do you think are the challenges that face the students during piano group?

The biggest challenge is concentration. Because in the beginning everything is new and it's exhausting: an hour and half of playing, and in the end there is a lot of listening, you're listening to each other, then suddenly there is this 20 minutes and you're playing in the masterclass and it's like being on a long haul flight, you're sort of sat there for two hours and then suddenly 'Shit! I'm playing Messiaen and everybody's watching!'. So concentration is the biggest challenge, I think.

26. What do you feel are the challenges of one-to-one piano teaching for you, as the teacher?

As a teacher the challenge in one-to-one is how to make space for them to try something in front of you, without them being nervous. So, when they are learning something new it's easy. But when you just need them to keep playing it until the dexterity increases or something, it's different, because like with the group you can say 'right, okay put the headphones on and practise that for 10 minutes and get used to it, and then we will play it together in a minute'; you can't do that in a one-to-one class, it's like you're looking at them the whole time, and sometimes you've shown them something and they've understood it, and they just need 10 minutes on their own to get used to it, they need you to go away so then they just can try that and relax, and you can't do that, so that's a big challenge, having space in the lesson, it's too intense sometimes.

27. What do you think the challenges are for the student in one-to-one piano lessons?

I think it is that lack of privacy, actually. I think there is nowhere to hide, I think they feel that's the biggest challenge, they feel under scrutiny, so self-conscious. I think that's noticeable in the middle stages, because in the beginning everything is new so of course they need you, but in the middle,

when they're learning a grade 3 or grade 4 piece, you know they need time, they understand the theory, and they're just waiting for the dexterity to catch up, and then there can be moments just like that throughout the cycle where they really need time just to repeat staff a lot, they don't need their teacher there, they just need to be digesting it.

28. Can you tell me which piano lesson do you prefer (group or one-to-one), and why?

I love teaching beginners, because they're fun and that's interesting. I like the fact that I can do it the way I wish I had been taught, that I can give them lots of really interesting pieces that I found over the years, I collect all my favourite pieces, and we share them. I love the digital keyboards, it gives you so much flexibility – look, teaching is fun, if you like people and you like your subject, teaching beginners is great, because you're just introducing them to all this great music, and I think that's pleasure, and it's stress-free for me, it's nice.

29. Which do you feel is more suitable for the City Lit students, is it teaching piano in group or one-to-one lessons?

In a group, yeah. The whole thing about adult education is that it's group learning, that it's not individual learning, because it's accessible, it's social, and it keeps the cost down, so adult education is all about giving people a learning experience that they might not have had opportunity to have had when they were younger, because it was too expensive or they came from a different background. And I think it really suits the ethos of our college, that anybody from any walk of life can come to any lesson and learn a new skill. And it doesn't matter - we don't expect you to have been to public school, or your parents don't need to be rich, or you don't need to have a great piano at home; the whole thing is levelling, it's like a social leveller. Group teaching really suits that ethos. Private teaching just feels too much like it's for people who can afford it and not for other people so it's too selective.

30. Do you think that if we put some local traditional music to learn at the beginning for beginner students that will encourage and be attractive for them?

I try to avoid being local. I try to put tunes in as many different things as possible, because what's local to me is probably not local for everyone else, it's like I try to avoid Christmas music, you know because Christmas is not Christmas for everybody, that sort of thing, but I'm try to make sure that particularly in the beginners' classes they have done a jazz tune they'll recognise, a pop tune they'll recognise, a classical tune they'll recognise, a Scottish folk song they might recognise, you know, so they have got the idea that there are different styles from the beginning, they've also got a free choice in our classes.

31. Can you tell me your opinion about using or not using digital pianos and headphones during piano classes (e.g. do you feel it is very useful or not)?

I think for beginner piano, digital pianos are excellent, because they spend more time playing so there is more familiarity, and they have the option to practise privately with the headphones and play publically, so it gives lots of option to mix and match. I think past about grade 3 they really need to be spending a lot of time on an acoustic piano, they can still do a lot of useful practice on a digital piano, but they need to really get to know an acoustic piano at the same time.

32. Have you seen, heard, known or used any other technology facilities or accessories (such as music applications, devices etc.) during piano lessons, or even during students practicing piano out the piano class

No, not so much actually, some of our students went and did a to trial for TIDO which is a start-up piano tutorial system on the iPad, but I mean that doesn't really fit, I think that's useful if you're studying alone, but it doesn't quite fit what I need to do in the class. The only other technology we really use is we use metronome a lot, because we listen to it and then we stop it, and try to continue playing at the same sort of speed; we do a lot of group work like that,

and we use recording technology, so maybe record something so we can listen back to it, either video or audio.

33. How do you think this technology (if used) supports the learning piano process at the City Lit?

Well, it supports people with literacy difficulties or learning difficulties hugely, and that's just not to do with piano process. You know, the fact that they can record the lessons, they're not trying to take notes at the same time, or hear a piece again, that's really powerful for them. Also if a pianist doesn't already play another instrument, they can have extra support by listening to the piece again at home, because they're new to the notation as well as the piano, so recording is the key, that's what's so useful.

34. Could you tell me what are the challenges that you face when you teach piano at City Lit? What causes these challenges, and how do you think these challenges can be avoided or solved?

The first challenges when one is new to a class is to work out what everybody knows, so initial assessments are a big challenge, so I need to work out who already reads some music – we have a system, we have a little questionnaire, and then they prepare me a little piece or something like that, talk about their previous musical background, introduce themselves to the class, and then I quickly have to realise 'okay they all are new pianists, but one is an advanced guitar player', or may be one has already done a little course on YouTube or something, and so they have little pockets of knowledge, so it's important to acknowledge those, even if I can't speed the class up just for that person, just so they feel valued, so that is the biggest challenge, I think, for teaching.

35. Is there any solution?

I think the first solution is to plan carefully, so you have got differentiated tasks, so you can give people things to do, and then they can achieve it at their own speed to their own level, but still take part in the group activity when we play it

together, so with piano that's very easy, because sometimes people will only play the right hand or only the left, and some people will play both, or some people will be playing a counter-melody or something so I can structure activities. The other thing is just to be really honest with students, and acknowledge 'I know you already know this, but I'm going to just say it again, to be clear', and so that people feel considered as adults, valued as adults even though you're teaching them something basic. There's a very odd situation sometimes when you have a surgeon and a dentist in your class and someone who works as a cleaner sitting next to each other, but you want make them all feel - they're all brilliant in other aspects of their life, but they're all getting quavers wrong, so how do you not patronise them, you know, you have to be honest with them as adults, that's important.

36. What support does The City Lit offer for piano teachers in terms of teaching resources, teacher's room, teaching classes, number of lessons etc.?

Yes, we have the piano teachers, we all observe at least one of each other's lessons every year, and we have meetings to discuss repertoire and stuff like that, and that's really important. When I was new as a piano teacher, before I started I went to see three other classes, so I just knew what atmosphere to expect, what sort of relationship people have in the classes, and nobody told me I had to teach like the other teachers, but they didn't want me to go into the classroom and not know what to expect and be lost. And I thought that was a really, really good idea. So we're sharing our best ideas the whole time, we call it *sharing best practice* - it's the 'education speak' phrase. But that's really nice, and if you're taking on a new class, you're invited to go see it with its old teacher, the previous teacher, so you just say 'hi' and there's some continuity.

37. Are there any other facilities or things that you feel you need at City Lit?

Rooms is the thing, yeah. The big thing we struggle with in facilities, we only have one digital piano room, so sometimes if the numbers become too small in a class in a year, people leave for various reasons or have babies or whatever, and then a class can't continue, and has to become a beginners class again to

have more students, and those students will have to change the time they come to join one of the other classes in the right level, that's then really difficult for the students. And sometimes they can be going for three years at the same time which suits them and suddenly there's only five of them, it's not enough to run a whole class, and they must change. If I had two piano rooms, I could always have two parallel classes, so I guess I just want more facilities.

38. What else you would like to see that would support the learning process?

I'd like to spend more time on musicianship, which is difficult to do in a piano class, because people come wanting to learn piano, but I would like to spend more time away from the piano working with theory, working with rhythm, clapping at rhythms and little bits of singing, which is really hard to get them to do, but just humming intervals, it's not about, you know, aural listening musicianship, and it's always a battle to persuade people at the beginning that's important, because they just want to get on the piano the whole time - I have to balance their enthusiasm with what they need.

39. Could you please tell me how are the relationships between you and the piano students?

I am really lucky – they are really good. If you like people and you like piano, the relationships always work. Now and again there'll be a difficult relationship; that's usually because somebody is nervous, or they're embarrassed, because they feel they should be on a better level, a higher level than they're on, or they haven't done any practise – as long as you don't take it personally, you have to remember there's 15 people here, and I don't know what's going in their lives, I only know about them in piano, so if they're having a difficult week, it's not personal. Then the relationships stays fine, I don't take that baggage with it. But there are times when I leave feeling quite personally upset, you know, I don't understand why they've been rude or something. But that happens – that's teaching.

40. Are there any constraining factors for teachers and for students (e.g. culture, tradition of learning piano, respect for Western culture, the instruments, resources?)

Yes, respect for Western culture is a problem, because a lot of the piano repertoire is Western classical music, and I do often mention to people, 'by the way,' you know, 'I'm sorry about this, just at the moment it's going to be a diet of German music, because I really do need you to learn Alberti bass, we just have to do a lot of Mozart at the moment'. But I choose carefully; I avoid any beginners piano music that's fake Eastern, you know: 'This piece is called "Camel Trot"'. Books like that, like Disney's Aladdin tunes that are just patronising, or embarrassing little attempts to sound like a Japanese song. I don't approve of any of that, so I'd rather just either stick to Western or to do more pop music, and I avoid Christmas carols on principle. You don't have to play anybody else's religious music, I think. There is plenty of good music to choose.

41. How does the relationship affect the learning progress at the City Lit?

I think if you get it wrong, and you choose the wrong music, you've patronised your audience and they stop learning. And it's the same with when you speak to them, if you get it wrong, and if you accidentally patronise them, make them feel like they're children or that they're not clever, then you can see it, even if you didn't mean to do it and you apologise, you can just see that they switch off, they just stop learning. They don't feel valued. We're probably the same though.

41. What opportunities are there for students to perform in concerts on the piano? Or even play piano in ensemble with other students?

Every Thursday lunch time, there is a lunchtime recital, so any class can put together a recital programme to be in it, though only the advanced pianists can do a whole recital together. Then we've got six external recitals in local churches in Covent Garden every year just for pianists, plus lots of ad hoc

recitals that happen for various evenings at college. But also at the end of each term, each class does a little concert, just inside the class, so if you don't want play in public or you're just a beginner, you all play a piece just at least just to other people in the class, and often they'll just invite their friends, and so it's a very small number of people, but those first concerts are actually the most valuable inside the class.

42. Could you tell me about the opportunities or possibility of accessing piano practice rooms, grand piano or other facilities?

We've got a few options, we've got practice rooms they can book – it's a quite cheap, it's £5 an hour as long as they are a student enrolled in a music course. Although access to them can be quite tricky to get, because everybody wants them at seven o'clock at night, nobody wants to come in the morning. We've got two open access keyboards in the waiting room so you can just warm up before a lesson, and they're just crappy Yamaha keyboards, and at the end of term we have a piano in the canteen, in the café coffee shop downstairs, so they can book a 10-minute slot and just play something, nobody listens, everybody chats, it's very informal but they can just play pieces in an informal setting like that. So there's quite a few ways they can get a hold of stuff.

43. Could you tell me about the college administration's attitudes toward learning piano and piano teachers?

Yes, I mean they are very supportive actually, because the piano is quite lucrative for us, even though we've got a very high turnover of beginners, because our audience is adults, usually coming after work, a lot of people will leave when their work changes and they can't fit the class in, so it's a high turnover. But it's a very popular course and the college supports it a lot, because it's a very stable source income for us, and it's also a very stable learning process; pianists go in lot of directions to other musical activities as well, so, it's seen as a core subject.

44. Could you tell me about what you think is the responsibility of college administration in order to develop the learning piano process? Do you think they have to do another role or something else?

No, I don't think they do, I don't think there is anything - I want an extra room, I'm campaigning for it, but it's being balanced against what other departments need as well, we're part of a huge college, so I don't there is a - I'm not being neglected.

45. Could you tell me about what the England government/Ministry of Education offers for learning music in England?

In my personal opinion, as opposed to my professional opinion, we are having a lot of education funding cuts at the moment, and music is disappearing in schools, so when I first started teaching young adults, there was stuff that I knew they knew, because I knew what sort of basic music education they had. So there were sort of songs that I knew they knew already would sort of understand, and I knew that they will have a basic … and I don't see that now, I see the focus is on too many topics at once; music technology, music notation – we're all vying for the same small bit of attention, I think, from a small part of curriculum.

46. What do you think about the role or responsibility of England government/Ministry of Education to improve the piano learning process?

I think just time for music should go back into the curriculum, it doesn't have to be piano, but it has to be time for music, and then people will find their instrument. I don't think they should make piano compulsory, but I think music should be more available, more time for it, so that it's there to find it find it if they want to.

47. Could you tell me why?

I think because the activity of making music in an acoustic fashion is not normalised. So it's not a normal part of everyday lived experience, or people in a school environment, and they don't make the connections between music they enjoy in a film soundtrack, like 'Game of Thrones' is full of sort of classical music, but they don't make the connection, because they don't live in environment where they see pianos, where they see people playing pianos, or violins, or anything else, or even opera. I have been working on a project with the opera house opposite where we take primary school children to the opera, and so many kids have never seen or heard an opera, it's extraordinary. And of course they enjoy it when they see it but imagine getting to age 30 and never having been to the opera – you're going to find it a bit weird when you finally get there. So these things, without forcing it on anybody, they just need to be introduced, so that children have a better idea of what options are available to them, so they can enjoy discovering it for themselves, I think.

48. Could that affect the students' choice to be music teachers or to even study music at undergraduate level or other musical institutions?

That affects us, because a lot of people who come to a beginners' music course, they don't have a clear picture of what their options are in future already, so we have to introduce to everything, not just the piano, to all sorts of things they might want to do with piano skills.

49. Could you tell me how you see the future career opportunities for music students at undergraduate level, or for who wants to be a musician?

Yes, I'm quite positive about the idea of people still having – what's changed is the sort of career they have now doesn't look like the sort of career we thought or I thought I would have when I was a music student. The options are different now, the pressure, the expectation now is that they will freelance and they will do lots of different disciplines, there is not the idea that you will graduate, even after my PhD, the idea that I will graduate and get tenure and work in a music

department and specialise in my subject, has evaporated. The traditional structures are not there, but that doesn't mean a great career is not there.

50. Could you tell me what you think or believe about the reasons that lead student to choose study music and be a musician?

A lot of the adults come to us to learn music, and will say in the first few lessons they were always told that they couldn't learn piano, that they were terrible at piano, so they have come back later in life because that's bothered them, and they want to deal with it. A lot of the kids I teach piano to come because their parents have suggested it, and some of them come because their friends are learning the piano and then they've seen it and they want to have a go. But mostly parents will suggest it, and a lot of parents will suggest it because they realise that their children should have extra talents on their CV, they don't see it as a core curriculum subject, they see it as icing on the cake.

51. How do you see the effect of parents' positive and negative support on their children in terms of planning for children's career since early years? For example; some parents avoid giving the opportunity for their children to learn music and then just focus on other subjects such as science or maths for a great future career.

Yes, I do see that sometimes actually. Usually at the beginning they want music to start it, and then as soon as the exams start to come in once they get up later school years, they [parents] want them [children] to stop music, that happens quite a lot. It happened to me, I was going to be a doctor but the other sort of doctor [Medical]. But I'm sympathetic, I understand why parents think that way, and sometimes I think that way, because I think there is so much pressure to be commercially successful as a musician now, because that's the way we've gone. So sometimes I have difficulty recommending it to people as a career choice, because in the back of our mind I think you might still be a brilliant pianist and never be able to buy a flat, you know, it's not

related to quality; you might be a much better singer than Katherine Jenkins and still not be able to get a job, you know, that's very difficult.

52. Could you tell me how you think the England government or Ministry of Education supports learning music? Is it equal with the other subjects?

I think it's lumped together with the arts. The government has a changeable view to the arts, and every time we fund the arts, we prove that business follows the arts. So when the previous Labour government funded the Southbank regeneration, suddenly business followed and we have a vibrant area built around some concert halls. And then they cut the arts funding again, so I feel that we're constantly justifying that in a swing relationship, if that makes sense, there isn't a consistent approach to how to fund the arts, its boom and bust.

53. Could you tell me about reasons for that?

I think because people don't understand that something needs continual support. 'Why can't it be commercially successful?' So when they look at a *Madonna* concert and they say she is a millionaire, they don't see the difference between looking at the opera house where the tickets still cost hundreds of pounds, but the opera house itself needs funding. They don't understand that an art form can't pay for itself, football can pay for itself, but opera can't, and they don't understand why.

54. Do you think that happened because the government could think that the society is not interested in the arts?

Yes, yes, in austerity the first reaction is to cut the arts – that's always – it's seen as non-essential. But also I think, and I'm not an expert, I don't know my opinions about this very well, but when people fund the arts, they tend to fund it with a short term view; they feel they're boosting it, because there will be this point when it pays for itself in the future, they never suggest arts funding as

'This is what we now going to do for the rest of our lives'. It's the same with the foreign aid budget, we never say this country needs regular money, we say it needs some help at the moment. But the promise is always tacit that in the future it will pay for itself, we're just helping for the short term, so the arts funding works in pockets of short-term plan, rather than an ongoing commitment. That's how it appears to me, but I'm simply not an expert, so I don't know.

55. Could you please tell me if there is any other thing you would like to add, that we did not mention in our discussion?

I think that point I just said about mental well-being is a point I really want to make more of in this. I think it's sad that it's still means tested. So even though we're cheap, we're a partially funded adult education college, and we have bursaries available for people on very low incomes, and student charity funds and things, I couldn't afford to do a class here and I'm head of department. So I mean there must be other people… and it's still sad that the arts, well, most forms of education once you pass the age of 18, are limited to either very clever people who get scholarships who usually had a private school education in order to become very clever in the first place, or people that can afford it. And I just think as you get older it becomes even more noticeable that we attract mostly middle class people, because it's just a regular outgoing of money, even though it's not very expensive, it's too much for people living in London. And that's really sad, because we've got something to offer people, and they want it – we're as cheap as possible, we're a charity, you know we just can't make it cheap enough, so that plays on my mind sometimes. We talk the talk, yeah, I talk about accessibility and everything, but the bottom line is if they don't have £159, they can't come, so that's difficult. Anyway, there we go.

56. Thank you very much for your time and contribution!

My pleasure, absolute pleasure.

Appendix 15: Questionnaire for LCM 'Introduction to Piano' Course Students, Spring 2017

Note: Your participation in this questionnaire is completely voluntary. All efforts to protect your identity and keep the information confidential will be taken. You have a right to withdraw at any time without any penalty.

Part 1: Basic Information

	DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS				
1.	Please give your age (years) ☐ 18-20	☐ 21-25	☐ 26-30	☐ 31-50	☐ 51 +
2.	Sex ☐ Male	☐ Female	☐ Prefer not to say		
3.	How long have you been learning piano for?				
4.	Why have you chosen to attend these classes?				
5.	What do you enjoy about the classes?				
6.	Is there anything you dislike about the classes?				

Part 2: Student Practice

4.	How often do you practise? □ Everyday | □ Three times a week | □ Twice a week | □ Once a week | □ Other _____
5.	Where do you practise?
6.	Are you aware of the following practice strategies? □ Slow practice | □ Isolating one section to practice | □ Repetition □ Practice with each hand separately | □ Variation in tempo | □ Self-evaluation
7.	Which of the following practice elements do you use? □ Slow practice | □ Isolating one section to practice | □ Repetition □ Practice with each hand separately | □ Variation in tempo | □ Self-evaluation
8.	How often do you research or read about the pieces you play? □ Always | □ Sometimes | □ Never
9.	Do you have a sequential practice routine? □ Yes | □ No If so, what is the sequence you use? (please describe):

10.	How often, if ever, do you ask yourself how the composer may have intended a work to be played rather than how your teacher told you to play it?
	☐ Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never
11.	How often do you experiment in your practice?
	☐ Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never

Part 3: Motivation and Self-Efficacy

Identify your level of agreement with the following statements (1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree)

Identify your level of agreement with the following statements	1	2	3	4	5
After learning piano for a while, I feel pretty competent.					
I am satisfied with my performance at this task.					
The encouragement given by my teacher has helped me improve my performance.					
It is important to me to do well at this task.					
I am quite confident in playing the piano					
I am confident that I can excel in this field					
Will these classes help you gain future employment in any way?					

How do you rank yourself in the following skill areas? (5 = Very confident and 1 = not confident)

How do you rank yourself in the following skill areas?	1	2	3	4	5
Music reading					
Rhythm					
Technique					
Tone production					
Style/Interpretation					
Memorisation					
Sight-reading					
Score reading					
Accompanying					
Harmonisation					
Transposition					
Improvisation					
Composition					
Playing by ear					

Part 4: Student Views on Music Teacher – Attitude and Satisfaction

Please identify your level of agreement with the following statements

1= Definitely dislike, 2= Somewhat dislike, 3 = Unsure, 4 = Like somewhat, 5 = Definitely like

Identify your level of agreement with the following statements	1	2	3	4	5
An instructor who provides me with more information on how to improve my technique					
An instructor who encourages me to think for myself					
An instructor who tests me on my technique as well as my competence and knowledge					
An instructor who encourages me to read and practise more					
An instructor who is available to provide tasks/explanations beyond the classroom (i.e. I can email with any questions)					

How would you rank your instructor on the following piano teaching areas?

1= Very Bad and 5 = Very Good

How would you rank your instructor on the following piano teaching areas?	1	2	3	4	5
Selecting piano teaching pieces					
Selecting piano methods					
Learning theories					
Philosophy of piano teaching					
Establishing a curriculum					
Lesson planning					
Motivating piano students					
Using games for students					
Providing advice on medical problems of pianists					
Providing advice on performance anxiety					
Preparing students for recitals					
Adjudication					
Referring students to books on pedagogy					
Giving information on the history of piano pedagogy					
Giving information on the history of keyboard technique					
Giving information on the purchase, care, and maintenance of keyboard instrument					

Please rate your level of satisfaction with the current teaching provided with respect to the following aspects:

Rate your level of satisfaction with the current teaching provided with respect to the following aspects	1	2	3	4	5
The teaching has given me the ability to synthesise and integrate knowledge of posture and hand position					
The teaching has given me the understanding and knowledge of instrumental technique to apply in my practice routine					
The teaching has resulted in improvement of technical proficiency of piano through touch, phrasing, and fingering					
Through the teaching I have gained knowledge of a wide variety of contemporary styles					
Through the teaching I have gained knowledge of a wide variety of traditional styles					
Through the teaching I have gained knowledge of reading conventional notation					
Through the teaching I have gained knowledge of chord-symbol (lead sheet) notation					
Through the teaching I am confident in playing alone					
Through the teaching I am confident in playing in ensembles of varying size					
Through the teaching I have the ability to apply knowledge of musical styles and harmonic practices in improvisation					

How would you rank the use in the classes of the following technologies?

1= Very infrequent and 5 = Very frequent

How would you rank the use of the following technologies at LCM in the group piano classes?	1	2	3	4	5
Electronic keyboards					
Electronic keyboard labs					
MIDI applications					
Synthesizers					
Computer software					
Internet resources					

Do you have any other comments about the classes and your piano learning?

Please feel free to add comments here:

Many thanks for your help with my research, it is much appreciated!

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