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# THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRIVATE PIANO LESSON PLANS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN BASED ON GORDON'S MUSIC LEARNING THEORY

By

**Mi-Young Choi** 

# A THESIS

Submitted to Michigan State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

# MASTER OF MUSIC

Department of Music

### **ABSTRACT**

# THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRIVATE PIANO LESSON PLANS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN BASED ON GORDON'S MUSIC LEARNING THEORY

By

**Mi-Young Choi** 

Instead of continuing to teach as piano teachers were taught, now it is possible for them to explore new ways of teaching that will inspire both their students and themselves. This study focuses on how Gordon's music learning theory can be employed in private piano instruction. It provides sample piano lesson plans demonstrating an approach to applying learning sequence activities to private piano instruction with actual piano pieces. These piano lesson plans are appropriate for five- to six-year-old children who have already passed through tonal and rhythm music babble stages. The lessons begin with five minutes of learning sequence activities that form the foundation for learning how to audiate and perform music literature in performance activities. In learning sequence activities, tonal patterns and rhythm patterns are taught separately. Children are encouraged to experience various tonalities, kevalities, tempos and meters. The lesson plans put emphasis on the development of audiation and executive skills in conjunction with rote learning, singing, movement, and improvisation. The introduction of notation is delayed until children develop an executive audiation vocabulary of tonal and rhythm patterns. As a result, children are motivated to develop audiation skills and play the piano with enjoyment and good musicianship.

To my parents Jun-Ho Choi and Young-Suk Yang, who graciously supported me with their love and prayer

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# **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

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•	V

# CHAPTER 1

FRODUCTION	1
Piano Teaching	1
Gordon's Music Learning Theory	7
Purpose	B
Problems	9

# **CHAPTER 2**

GORDON'S THEORY AND INSTRUMENTAL INSTRUCTION	20
Teaching Principles	20
Learning Sequence Techniques	
Jump Right In: The Instrumental Series	
Adapting Gordon's Learning Theory for Private Piano Instruction	30

# **CHAPTER 3**

SAMPLE PIANO LESSON PLANS	45
Description of Lesson Plans	
Sample Lesson Plan I	
Sample Lesson Plan II	
Sample Lesson Plan III	
Sample Lesson Plan IV	

# **CHAPTER 4**

DISCUSSION
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REFERENCES	76
------------	----

# **LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 1. Levels and sublevels of skill learning sequence	10
Figure 2. Gordon's ten steps to coordination and rhyhtm readiness movements	23
Figure 3. Chanting a rhythm pattern using a neutral syllable at the aural/oral level of learning	25
Figure 4. Chanting a rhythm pattern using rhythm syllables at the verbal association level of learning	el 25
Figure 5. Singing a tonal pattern using a neutral syllable at the aural/oral level of learning	27
Figure 6. Singing a tonal pattern using tonal syllables at the verbal association level of learning	28
Figure 7. Tonal pattern using a neutral syllable at the aural/oral level of learning	32
Figure 8. Tonal pattern using tonal syllables at the verbal association level of learning	33
Figure 9. Rhythm pattern using a neutral syllable at the aural/oral level of learning3	33
Figure 10. Rhythm pattern using rhythm syllables at the verbal association level of learning	34
Figure 11. Performing musical phases with syllables at the partial synthesis level of learning	40
Figure 12. An alternative form of measure signature	42

### **CHAPTER 1**

### INTRODUCTION

#### Piano Teaching

# The Importance of Piano Teaching

Performance provides experience in projecting musical meaning, and such experience is essential to the development of a deep responsiveness to music and of musical understanding. It generates a unique level of involvement with music and enthusiasm for it, both of which are basic to successful learning of music. In addition, it serves as a valuable means to the clarification and refinement of musical meaning for students. (Leonhard, 1972, p. 284).

Piano is said to be "basic" among instruments. Indeed, many musicians have considered it the cornerstone or starting point for instrumental music study. Primarily most people tend to learn piano before starting other instruments (Rabin, 1996). The piano is a popular instrumental performance medium, compared to other instrumental activities. The phrase "a piano in every parlor" indicates the wide dissemination of the piano (Miller, 1988, p. 27). Moreover, since the piano is capable of providing melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic elements simultaneously, it can provide an especially satisfactory musical experience (Miller, 1988).

Piano performance can provide educational benefits that promote the growth of musical understanding among children. The following are some of the educational values of piano:

1. Piano has a systematic relationship between score and keyboard. Children can be familiar with the keyboard and its relation to musical notation through piano. Thus,

pitch relationships become definite rather than nebulous. Piano is also useful as a visual tool for demonstration and study of intervals, scales, and chords (Miller, 1988; Rabin, 1996; Sur, 1957).

2. Piano produces melody and harmony simultaneously (Dubois, 1963; Rabin, 1996; Sur, 1957), enabling the study of chords. In addition, when melodies are accompanied, children's perceptions of pitch and intonation can be improved (Humphreys, 1986).

3. The range of the piano is wide, so children can experience pitches within their voice range as well as extremes of pitch. Children usually possess a limited vocal range. As the development of their auditory sense refines the discrimination of pitch and their own range becomes broader, they can be receptive to a broader range of sound. (Dubois, 1963; Johnson, 1987; Sur, 1957).

4. Piano is a tuned instrument. Since children can produce tones and effects with ease, piano has seemed a natural beginning instrument. Children do not have the complication of producing the sound in tune, as with the string and wind instruments (Dubois, 1963; Uszler, Gordon, & Mach, 1991). Studies have shown that vocal problems are minimized with the introduction of piano. That is, monotones are aided and sight singing is improved (Johnson, 1987; Rabin, 1996; Sur, 1957).

5. The sense of touch is very keen in young children. When they feel with their fingers and hear with their ears simultaneously, they begin to grasp musical concepts intellectually (Dubois, 1963). Besides, children will reap benefits both physically and neurologically by learning to control the smaller muscles of the body and can improve their coordination, sense of timing, and memory (Johnson, 1987; Yelin, 1983). Therefore,

piano facilitates the development of musicianship and may contribute as the means of bringing greater understanding and enjoyment of music to all children.

#### Piano Teaching in Early Childhood

Early childhood refers to children from birth through age eight (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1998). However, the term frequently is used to refer to children who have not yet reached school age, and the public often uses it to refer to children in any type of preschool (Morrison, 1997, p. 33).

Children can learn musical concepts from infancy, if the activities are presented to them in ways that do not demand response beyond their capacity. With some special preparation, a teacher can help a young child discover and achieve many musical concepts and skills through piano learning. Thus, it is important for the teacher to understand children's physical and intellectual development (Gilbert & Talcott, 1978; Yelin, 1983). In early childhood, children possess the necessary intellectual perception, auditory capacity, and manual dexterity to begin musical training, as well as a personality filled with curiosity and eager for stimulation (Steck, 1976).

Above all, young children learn best through direct perception and concrete experiences. Abstract explanations are not helpful (Abeles, 1984; Gilbert & Talcott, 1987). According to Piaget's stage theory, in the preoperational stage that lasts approximately from ages 2 to 7, children's interactions with the world still tend to be dominated by the senses. Thus, musical activities with children of this stage must be direct ones (Abeles, 1994, p. 197).

Piano pedagogues have discovered that young children's musical capabilities improve with age (Steck, 1976; Yelin, 1983). Children learn through the reception of sounds, and it appears that the most progress in pitch discrimination is made during early

childhood. Steck (1976) reports that most three-year-old children have a limited ability to discriminate the basic concepts of sound, such as pitch, duration or volume. At this time the musical examples need to be widely contrasted for children to discern between the sameness and difference. But, by the age of four, the need for extreme contrast is reduced. When children are five, they have the ability to classify or order the direction of sound. Therefore, they are able to determine differences and identify details in melodic lines. They also can associate up or down and high or low sounds with right and left hand motions when playing piano.

Young children demonstrate the principles of cephalocaudal and proximodistal development. Cephalocaudal development is motor development that is from head to foot (tail), and proximodistal development is motor development that is from midline or central part of the body to extremities. The cephalocaudal development enables young children to participate in many physical activities; likewise, the concentration of motor development in the small muscles of the arms and hands lets them participate in finemotor activities (Morrison, 1997, p. 207). By the time children are three, they can use their fist and whole hand to play clusters of keys. They are capable of developing skills using one finger (usually the second or third on either hand) to repeatedly play one key or to play a series of keys. At the age of four, children can begin to coordinate one, two, and three consecutive fingers on one hand, because they can use smaller body movements. They are also able to imitate simple rhythmic patterns with limited accuracy. Five-yearold children can articulate five-finger patterns with greater facility and accuracy, although it is difficult to keep fingers shaped in a curved position. Their manual coordination is well-established and they are capable of more precise and better differentiated movements. They are growing in their ability to maintain a steady beat when playing

instruments, and they associate symbols with pitches and rhythms (Steck, 1976; Yelin, 1983).

A teacher should recognize children's physical and psychological limitations and audiational development. Their large motor muscles (arms and legs) are more developed than smaller muscles (fingers) (Yelin, 1983; Morrison, 1997), so activities should involve the entire body, rather than require concentrated finger motions. Also, imperfect eye-hand coordination at this stage suggests that the teacher minimize activities that require concentration on small things and complicated muscle responses. And since their attention span is limited, the teacher must plan many different activities. However, their imagination is at a peak and the responses to rhythm and sound are at a high level, so opportunities to express their imagination musically can be included. Moreover, young children have a love of repetition. Therefore, using familiar songs and activities is ideal when new musical elements are presented (Gilbert & Talcott, 1987).

Teachers should set realistic and attainable goals for young children. Common piano lesson books for early childhood have taught music reading before most children are ready for it. However, without the important primary steps of hearing and making music, lessons lead to frustration. Nevertheless, piano teachers need not abandon all available literature in incorporating this philosophy into lessons. To help children understand and experience music, each piece of music can be still used as a springboard for many music activities and opportunities to teach a variety of musical skills (Widhalm, Baker, & Rabin, 1993).

Piano teachers found that young children can be realistically expected to learn listening, singing, rhythm, playing, and creative experiences (Gilbert & Talbot, 1987; Sur, 1957). Listening is the most important activity for piano lessons, because it serves as the

necessary readiness for learning to sing and play songs, and move to music. The more music children hear and the greater the balance for listening experiences in terms of many characteristics of music, such as tonality, meter, harmony, dynamic, timbre, and so on, the better they will be able to sing, play and move. Singing and movement should be fundamental musical activities in early childhood. Singing the songs from the beginning level of method books makes children experience music in an easy and fun way. Only after they have sung the songs and are familiar with them should they be asked to play them. Rhythm activities can be more creative than simply tapping out the rhythm. (Widhalm, Baker, & Rabin, 1993).

Piano learning is more than performance. It involves singing, rhythm, listening, creative activity, as well as playing. Thus, piano learning should enable children to become functional musicians who understand and love music. Through piano learning, children will not only have enjoyable experiences, but will gain many skills that will affect the process of learning throughout life.

The following section presents a review of the music learning theory of Edwin E. Gordon. This theory may be useful in improving piano pedagogy.

### Gordon's Music Learning Theory

# Audiation and Its Importance

Audiation, which was coined by Gordon (1995), is "the ability to hear and to comprehend music for which the sound is not physically present (as in recall), is no longer physically present (as in listening), or may never have been physically present (as in creativity and improvisation)." One can not audiate what he hears at the exact moment that sound is heard. Audiation is different from aural perception that takes place when one simply hears sound that is physically present. Sound is not comprehended as music until it is audiated after it is heard (Gordon, 1997).

Gordon (1997) has identified eight types and six stages of audiation. The eight types of audiation can be thought of as a specific situation in which audiation occurs. The six stages of audiation can be thought of in terms of how the process of audiation actually occurs. The stages of audiation occur within each type of audiation.

Audiation occurs when one (a) listens to music, (b) reads music, (c) writes music from dictation, (d) recalls music, (e) writes music from recall, (f) creates or improvises music, (g) reads music as it is created or improvised, and (h) writes music as it is created or improvised. The process of audiation involves the organization of perceived sounds into meaningful patterns, the comparing of those patterns with other currently-heard sounds, the comparing of those patterns with previously-heard sounds, and the prediction of imminent sounds (Walters, 1989, p. 9). The six stages of audiation are hierarchical and they occur concurrently. The eight types of audiation are not hierarchical, but some of the types serve as readinesses for others.

Audiation is the key to good musicianship. Although music is not a language, the process is the same for audiating and giving meaning to music as for thinking and giving

meaning to language (Gordon, 1997, p. 5). That is, audiation is to music what thought is to language. Just as meaning in language is given from an understanding of language syntax, meaning in music is derived from an understanding of music syntax.

The highly skilled audiator can recognize familiar music, identify unfamiliar parts on the basis of their relationship to familiar parts, and eventually give meaning to the whole on the basis of the recognition, identification, and understanding of the parts. He can also retain the understanding of musical sound over time and draw on his understanding to recall, create, and improvise music (Walters, 1989).

One's audiation is dependent on one's musical environment. A child with extensive music instruction will have developed a larger vocabulary of musical patterns than a child with little music instruction. The child who has the larger vocabulary will be able to organize the patterns that he is hearing and restructure the patterns that he has heard in other pieces of music better than the child who has the smaller vocabulary. He will also be able to predict better, because he has a large vocabulary to use in making predictions (Taggart, 1989). Therefore it is important to provide children with a rich musical environment. The more accurately children are able to audiate patterns, the better they can established music understanding. Audiation is the ability to think musically. Gordon (1997) established his music learning theory to help students learn to audiate.

# Description of Music Learning Theory

Music learning theory is an explanation of how students learn music appropriately and efficiently. It addresses the process of learning, not the product of learning. It includes three music learning sequences. They are skill learning sequence, tonal content learning sequence, which includes tonal pattern learning sequence, and rhythm content learning sequence, which includes rhythm pattern learning sequence

(Gordon, 1997, p. 86).

Skill learning sequence must be taught in conjunction with either tonal content learning sequence or rhythm content learning sequence. Content learning sequence must be selected in terms of its pattern difficulty levels. Tonal content learning sequence and rhythm content learning sequence are not combined in learning sequence activities, although the two are combined in classroom activities and performance activities. Skill learning sequence

Most basic to Gordon's music learning sequence is the skill learning sequence. It consists of two types of learning: discrimination learning and inference learning, although the two are not mutually exclusive. Discrimination learning is largely rote learning, and inference learning is largely conceptual learning. In discrimination learning, a teacher gives students all the information about what to learn and how to learn. The students know what they are learning. In inference learning, the teacher gives students how to learn but not what to learn. The students often do not know what they are learning. Discrimination learning is the readiness for inference learning. Discrimination learning is further divided into five hierarchical levels and sublevels and inference learning is further divided into three hierarchical levels and sublevels. Figure 1 shows skill learning hierarchy (Gordon, 1997, p. 90).

### Discrimination

Aural/Oral

Verbal Association

Partial Synthesis

Symbolic Association Reading-Writing

Composite Synthesis Reading-Writing

#### Inference

Generalization Aural/oral – Verbal - Symbolic Reading-Writing Creativity/Improvisation Aural/oral – Symbolic Reading-Writing Theoretical Understanding Aural/oral – Verbal - Symbolic Reading-Writing

Figure 1. Levels and sublevels of skill learning sequence.

Aural/oral is the most elementary level in the hierarchy of discrimination learning. Students learn to listen to (aural) and perform (oral) tonal and rhythm patterns in different tonalities and meters using a neutral syllable. Tonal patterns and rhythm patterns are never combined but learned separately. Gordon emphasizes that singing, chanting, and movement activities are essential at this level.

Verbal association is the next level in discrimination learning. At this level, students learn to listen to and perform tonal and rhythm patterns that are learned at the aural/oral level with proper names and vocabulary names. Proper names describe tonal and rhythm patterns and functions (e.g., major and minor tonalities, tonic and dominant functions, duple and triple meters, macro and micro beats). Vocabulary names are given through use of tonal and rhythm syllables to perform and discuss specific tonal and rhythm patterns. Gordon uses the movable "do" system with a "la" based minor for tonal syllables, which enable the development of audiation skills and provide for ease of transposition by instrumentalists. For rhythm syllables, he has created the rhythm system based on beat functions, such as "du de" and "du da di." His rhythm syllables are especially meaningful, because students can learn to feel where the large beats occur and identify the beat divisions.

Next is partial synthesis. Students learn to synthesize patterns into series of patterns, recognizing patterns learned earlier. The combining of familiar patterns in unfamiliar order enables students to gain insight into the possibilities for creating wholes out of parts (Walters, 1989, p. 18). As the results, tonal and rhythm syntax are established at this level.

At the symbolic association level of learning, students learn to associate syllable names and proper names with the written symbols that represent them. They learn to read familiar patterns and to write the patterns dictated by the teacher.

Composite synthesis is the highest level in discrimination learning. All levels of discrimination learning are synthesized into a whole at this level of learning. Students can read and write series of familiar patterns in both familiar and unfamiliar order. They also recognize the tonalities and the meters of series of familiar patterns in both familiar and unfamiliar order.

Generalization is the most elementary level in the hierarchy of inference learning. Students are expected to repeat and identify the teacher's performance of sets of familiar and unfamiliar patterns with neutral syllables (aural/oral) and to perform them using tonal and rhythm syllables (verbal). They are also expected to read and write series of familiar and unfamiliar patterns (symbolic).

Creativity/improvisation is the next level in inference learning. Students can move on to creativity and improvisation when they have the requisite audiation and performance skill as well as a large vocabulary of patterns. At this level, students respond to the teacher's performance of familiar and unfamiliar patterns (aural/oral). They also create and improvise with familiar and unfamiliar patterns and write patterns that they have created and improvised (symbolic). Verbal association is not a sublevel of this level. But it may make the teaching of creativity and improvisation easier.

Theoretical understanding is the highest level in inference learning. Gordon emphasizes music theory should not be attempted before students have achieved all previous levels of discrimination and inference learning to the extent that their music aptitude allows. At this level, students learn technical aspects of music and why music is performed, constructed, and interpreted as it is.

Music has a syntax like language. Just as groups of letters form words in language, pitch and beat groupings form tonal and rhythm patterns in music. Tonal and rhythm patterns are grouped into phrases in music in the same way that words are grouped into phrases and sentences in language. Syntax in language allows the reader to give meaning to what is said. As does language, music has a syntax that allows the listener to give musical meaning to what is heard, even though musical syntax does not have a specific meaning (Grunow, 1989).

There is intrinsic meaning and extrinsic meaning in music. Intrinsic meaning in music is syntactical and is given to the music by the listener. It is based on the listener's sense of tonality and his sense of meter, and on his vocabularies of tonal patterns and rhythm patterns. Extrinsic meaning in music is programmatic and is taken from the music by the listener (Gordon, 1997, p. 138). Fundamental meaning in music is intrinsic. It is

given to the music by an individual through audiation (Grunow, 1989, p. 37). Syntactical meaning in music is given to tonal and rhythm patterns through a sense of tonality and meter. The more tonal and rhythm patterns that the listener has in his audiation vocabulary, the greater the possibilities that he will be able to give appropriate tonality and meter to music. Therefore, a vocabulary of tonal patterns and rhythm patterns in various tonalities and meters is primary in tonal learning sequence and rhythm learning sequence.

### Tonal content learning sequence

Among the musical elements associated with tonal learning sequence, a sense of tonality is most fundamental to a syntactical approach to listening to, performing, recalling, creating, and improvising music. Traditionally, tonality refers to major and minor tonal systems. But, in tonal learning sequence, tonality refers to what is commonly called a mode, including major and harmonic minor. There are eight tonalities: major, harmonic minor, dorian, phrygian, lydian, mixolydian, aeolian, and locrian. One acquires a sense of tonality when he can audiate a resting tone. A resting tone is a tonal solfege syllable associated with a particular tonality. For example, "do" is the resting tone in major tonality, "re" in dorian tonality, "mi" in phrygian tonality, and so on. The greater the sense of tonality, the more secure one feels and in-tune one will be when singing in solo or ensemble and when creating and improvising. A sense of tonality is not composed of the ability to locate tonality at a keyboard or identify it from notation.

In tonal learning sequence, it is necessary to consider tonality and keyality separately. Keyality was coined by Gordon in order to help explain tonal learning sequence. It is associated with tonic, whereas tonality is associated with a resting tone. There are fifteen common keyalities: C, G, D, A, E, B, F#, C#, F, Bb, Eb, Ab, Db, Gb,

and Cb. Although most music is in both a tonality and a keyality, it is a sense of tonality, not a sense of keyality that provides the basis for giving syntax to music.

When listeners agree on the tonality of a piece of music, the music has objective tonality. On the other hand, if listeners do not agree on the tonality of a piece of music, the music has subjective tonality. Most music has objective tonality. Some music has subjective tonality. Audiating music with subjective tonality requires more effort than audiating music with objective tonality. However, the larger the vocabulary of tonal patterns that listeners possess, the better they can audiate any tonality.

Many listeners give subjective tonality to much of contemporary music. In common practice, that music is called "atonal." However, from the view of tonal learning sequence, if music had not any tonality, no one could give meaning to it using tonal syntax. Thus, what is traditionally called atonal is referred to as "multitonal" music in tonal learning sequence. Multitonal music contains many tonalities. When two or more tonalities are sounded at the same time, a piece of music is called "polytonal." It is easier to audiate music that is unitonal than music that is multitonal or polytonal. But, the larger vocabulary of tonal patterns that listeners have, the easier it is for them to audiate multitonal and polytonal music.

Tonal patterns are best understood by organizing them into a taxonomy (Gordon, 1997). Gordon specifies the functions of patterns as they relate to tonalities and to music that is multitonal, multikeyal, polytonal, polykeyal, and monokeyal in the taxonomy. Most patterns are two or three and no more than five notes in length. A tonal pattern is not unique to any one tonality. All tonal patterns are based on syntactical functions. The taxonomy of tonal patterns ranges from easy to difficult pertaining to the specified functions, moving from tonic and dominant functions in major and minor tonalities to all

functions in other tonalities, and to patterns in multitonal, multikeyal, polytonal and polykeyal areas.

### Rhythm content learning sequence

Most traditional explanations of rhythm in music disregard movement and are reduced to counting and fractions. However, Gordon's rhythm learning sequence is based upon natural body movement and audiation. Thus, by learning rhythm through audiation, not through notation, one will be able to listen to, perform, and organize rhythm, and consequently teach and learn efficiently (Jordan, 1989). Gordon's rhythm content learning is based on a perception of a sense of meter and rhythm patterns superimposed on meter.

There are three elements of rhythm: macrobeat, microbeat, and rhythm patterns. Macrobeat is the largest unit of rhythm and fundamental to rhythm audiation. He describes microbeat as two or three equally spaced beats superimposed on macrobeat. Rhythm patterns are the result of the simultaneous interaction of macrobeat, microbeat, and shorter and longer rhythm values. Rhythm patterns are categorized according to one or more combinations of the following terms: divisions, elongations, rests, ties, and upbeats. All three elements should be audiated simultaneously in order to give syntactical meaning to rhythm.

Of the three rhythm elements, Gordon regards microbeat as more important than other two, because it establishes consistent tempo and meter of music. Unless one has the ability to place microbeats accurately, he will never experience the feeling of a consistent tempo. When one cannot establish consistent tempo, three rhythm elements must be audiated separately and then combined in audiation. Unless they are audiated separately before being combined, each loses its fundamental character and relationship to one

another (Jordan, 1989). The strength of his approach to teaching rhythm is that it separates three rhythm elements in audiation, and then superimposes rhythm patterns on two rhythm elements, which provide consistent tempo.

Just as the audiation of tonality is the basis of tonal syntax, so the audiation of meter is the basis of rhythm syntax. Meter is classified depending on the relative length of macrobeats and the division of macrobeats into microbeats. If macrobeats are of equal length, the meter is usual. If macrobeats are unequal length, the meter is unusual. There are three types of usual meter: usual duple meter, usual triple meter, and usual combined meter. There are four types of unusual meter: unusual paired meter, unusual unpaired meter, unusual paired intact meter, and unusual unpaired intact meter. The basic distinction between usual meter and unusual meter is that in usual meter the concern is how macrobeats are divided and in unusual meter the concern is how macrobeats are grouped (Gordon, 1997, p. 167).

Rhythm patterns are best understood by organizing them into a taxonomy. It is organized according to meter classifications and rhythm pattern functions. Most patterns are two to four macrobeats in length. A rhythm pattern is not unique to any one meter. All rhythm patterns are based on syntactical functions. The taxonomy of rhythm patterns ranges from easy to difficult concerning the specified functions, moving from macro and micro functions in usual duple and triple meters to all functions in other meters, and finally to patterns in multimetric, multitemporal, polymetric, and polytemporal areas.

# Music Readiness

According to Gordon (1997), there is no correct chronological age for a student to start instrumental music. But, there is a correct musical age at which a student should begin studying a music instrument. When a student has developed a sense of tonality, a

sense of meter, a vocabulary of tonal patterns and a vocabulary of rhythm patterns to the extent that he can sing with acceptable intonation some tonic and dominant patterns in major and harmonic minor tonalities and can chant with a consistent tempo some macro/microbeat and division patterns in usual duple and triple meters, he is ready to begin the study of an instrument.

Just as a child engages in speech babble before learning how to speak a language, he engages in music babble before learning how to sing in tune and how to move his body in a consistent tempo. There are two parts of the music babble stage. One is tonal babble stage and the other is rhythm babble stage. In the music babble stage, a child informally establishes an aural/oral sense of music. The aural sense is collected by listening to music, and the oral sense is acquired by singing and chanting songs and by moving or dancing to music. The aural/oral sense of music represents a child's fundamental understanding of music. It is the readiness for formal music instruction such as learning sequence activities and instrumental instruction. Moreover, it provides a child with the basis for audiation (Levinowitz, 1989). A child who is in music babble stage imitates without giving syntactical meaning to music. On the other hand, a child who has emerged from music babble stage audiates with syntax in terms of objective and subjective tonality and meter (Gordon, 1997). At that time, he is ready to learn to perform on a music instrument. Although those readinesses may occur at any time, the typical child with appropriate music guidance achieves them between the age of five and nine.

In the case of piano, it is possible for children to play better in tune than they can audiate, but they will not learn to play an instrument in tune any better than they can audiate in tune. Nor will they learn to play instrument with consistency of tempo and appropriate meter any better than they can audiate consistency of tempo and meter. Some

teachers believe that children will learn to audiate as a result of playing instruments. However, instruments do not necessarily teach children how to audiate. Children express their audiation through instruments. Instruments become an extension of their body. In this sense, children teach their instruments how to audiate (Gordon, 1997). Thus it is desirable that children start the formal study of a music instrument after they can audiate both tonally and rhythmically, that is, when they can sing in tune and they are beat competent.

Young children who have had the benefit of informal music guidance during the music babble stage will emerge from the music babble stage sooner than children who have not received such guidance. In music babble, children should be encouraged and given opportunities to explore many pitch sounds in various registers, and many body movements at various tempos. To help children emerge from music babble, a parent or a teacher should teach rote songs that represent various tonalities and meters. When teaching songs, the parent or the teacher should demonstrate and encourage movement to the macro beat. During the music babble stage, a lack of informal music guidance and favorable music environment will make children have limited music achievement when they are given formal music instruction. Therefore, appropriate informal music guidance as readiness for formal music instruction is of paramount importance to help children out of music babble.

### Purpose

With the intent of improving music pedagogy, the purpose of this research is to develop private piano lesson plans for young children based on Gordon's music learning theory. These plans serve as examples of how Gordon's music learning theory can be

employed in private piano instruction.

# **Problems**

Instrumental instruction based on Gordon's music learning theory significantly differs from common instruction. Common instrumental lesson books for beginners emphasize technique as well as the decoding of music symbols and theoretical understanding. Meanwhile, instrumental instruction based on Gordon's music learning theory puts emphasis on the development of audiation and executive skills in conjunction with rote learning, singing, movement, and improvisation. As the results, students can / develop audiation skills and better musicianship.

There are two attempts to apply Gordon's music learning theory to piano instruction. Marilyn Lowe wrote a paper on teaching piano based on Gordon's music learning theory. Midori Koga and Suzanne Burton developed a piano method book based on it. Their works are still in progress and are not published.

The following are the specific problems of this study:

1. to develop piano lesson plans based on Gordon's music learning theory with reference to melody learning for use with five- to six-year-old children who are already out of tonal and rhythm music babble stages.

2. to develop piano lesson plans based on Gordon's music learning theory with reference to basic rhythm training for use with five- to six-year-old children who are already out of tonal and rhythm music babble stages.

3. to develop piano lesson plans based on Gordon's music learning theory with reference to music reading for use with five- to six-year-old children who are already out of tonal and rhythm music babble stages.

# **CHAPTER 2**

### GORDON'S THEORY AND INSTRUMENTAL INSTRUCTION

### **Teaching Principles**

Gordon's goals of instrumental instruction are: (a) to motivate students to be successful in performing on an instrument with enjoyment and good musicianship, (b) to teach students to perform on an instrument without the aid of notation, (c) to teach students to read notation on an instrument with comprehension, and (d) to provide students with the readiness to continue meaningful performance on their instruments and to become intelligent makers and consumers of music during and beyond their formal education (Grunow, Gordon & Azzara, 1999, p. 9). In Jump Right In: The Instrumental Series that is based on research in music learning theory and beginning instrumental music instruction, his principles are emphasized as follows.

First, although music is not a language, the process of learning music is similar to that of language. In language one first learns to listen, and to speak, then to read, and finally to write. The same process occurs in music. First, children should listen to music. Next, just as children learn to speak words in language, they learn to sing tonal patterns and to chant rhythm patterns in music. Finally, they learn to read and write in music.

Second, students learn music with sequence. Sequence in music learning theory has in common with that of language learning. Skill learning sequence systematically explains the readiness needed to learn each new musical skill. Content learning sequence is selected in terms of its pattern difficulty levels.

Third, Gordon advocates the importance of early experience. The younger children begin to study a music instrument, the more they can learn. Although there is no

correct chronological age at which all children should begin the formal study of a music instrument, there is a correct musical age (Grunow & Gamble, 1989). Children pass through tonal and rhythm music babble stages in the process of learning how to sing in tune and how to move their body in a consistent tempo. They have emerged from music babble stages when they can sing in tune and move their body in a consistent tempo. At that time, they are ready to study a music instrument.

Fourth, Gordon states that a child's music aptitude is innate, but it is affected by the quality of the environment. All children are born with some level of music aptitude, and the richer their music environment, the higher the aptitude will be maintained throughout their life. In order to improve the environment, children should be exposed in music of different tonalities, harmonies, meters, and rhythms. Also, many different types of music can provide rich environment, including folk songs, cultural songs, classical music, jazz, and so on.

Fifth, unlike common pedagogical approaches, the development of audiation is a cornerstone of music learning theory. Audiation is made before any attempt and toward reading music symbols or music theory. Through audiation, students learn to understand music. Just as it is unproductive to teach reading English to students who do not learn to listen and speak with understanding, one should not teach students to read music notation before they learn to listen to and perform music through audiation (understanding) (Gordon, 2000). When students encounter instrumental technique problems or have memory lapses while performing a piece of music, it may be because they memorize the music without audiating what they were performing.

Sixth, Gordon stresses the importance of singing for the development of tonal audiation and the importance of movement in the teaching of rhythm. Executive skills are

developed in combination with rote instruction, singing, movement, and improvisation. Students build a solid foundation of aural and performing skills through singing, rhythmic movement, and tonal and rhythm pattern instruction before they are introduced to notation and music theory. If students have not learned to sing and move, their instrumental performance can result in lacking good intonation and rhythm.

Finally, students learn to audiate and then to read the patterns that they audiate (Gordon, 1995). A common approach of instrumental instruction is to begin with notational symbols rather than allow students an opportunity to experience the music before reading notation. Gordon believes that the best sequence moves from aural experience with tonal and rhythm patterns to the notation which represents those patterns. In music learning sequence, music reading is necessarily delayed to allow for the development of other skills. As a result, reading becomes a process of recognition, not merely decoding.

# Learning Sequence Techniques

A carefully organized sequence of tonal and rhythm pattern instruction is basic to Gordon's beginning instrumental music instruction. Learning tonal and rhythm patterns in music is similar to developing a vocabulary in language. The larger one's vocabulary of tonal and rhythm patterns, the greater the possibility of music understanding. In Gordon's approach to instrumental instruction, students learn to sing tonal patterns, to chant rhythm patterns, and to perform those patterns on their instruments. For the sequenced tonal and rhythm patterns, it can be useful to consult Gordon's tonal and rhythm register books and the Reference Handbook for Using Learning Sequence Activities (Gordon & Woods, 1992).

# Rhythm technique

A reasonable starting place for the development of rhythmic understanding is to have students feel beat. To do so, students can be asked to mirror the movements of a teacher. Gordon has designed coordination and rhythm readiness movements to assist student in developing physical coordination and rhythm readiness. Those movements are shown in Figure 2 (Grunow, Gordon, & Azzara, 1999, p. 194). For further information about sequential rhythm instruction, read Linda L. Jessup, "Beginning Learning Sequence Activities: Techniques for Tonal Unit 1 and Rhythm Unit 1 of Jump Right In: The Music Curriculum," Readings in Music Learning Theory (Chicago: G.I.A. Publications, Inc., 1989), and Phyllis Weikart, Teaching Movement and Dance: A Sequenced Approach to

Step	Position	Movement
1	Seated, elbows resting on a desk	Move both arms in the same direction (up and down).
2	Seated, elbows resting on a desk	Move both arms in the opposite direction (one arm is up when the other is down).
3	Standing	Swing both arms in the same direction (front and back).
4	Seated	Sway the upper body from side to side.
5	Seated	Move both feet (heels only- up and down) in the same direction.
6	Seated	Move both feet (heels only) in the opposite direction (one arm is up while the other is down).
7	Seated	Move both arms and feet together in the same direction.
8	Standing, knees slightly bent	With both feet on the floor, shift the weight from one foot and the other. The weight should be on the heel of one foot when the weight is on the toes of the other.
9	Standing	While executing step 8 to macrobeats, tap thighs with both arms and hands to duple microbeats and with only hands to triple microbeats.
10	Seated	Move both feet in the same direction to macrobeats and both arms and hands to duple microbeats and only hands to triple microbeats.

Rhtyhmic Movement, 2nd Edition (Ypsilanti, Michigan: High Score Press, 1984).

Figure 2. Gordon's ten steps to coordination and rhyhtm readiness movements.

The movements progress from macrobeats to microbeats, from the upper body to the lower body, and finally to macro and microbeats in the upper and lower body together. When students are capable of the last activity, they should move simultaneously their feet to macrobeats and their hands to microbeats while chanting rhythm patterns. To begin teaching rhythm patterns, the teacher chants a rhythm sequence.

A rhythm sequence is a series of durations that are chant by the teacher in learning sequence activities. Its purpose is to establish tempo and meter of rhythm patterns. The tempo of the rhythm sequence should be consistent. It may be helpful to use a metronome to establish appropriate tempos.

Before students hear or are asked to respond to rhythm patterns, the teacher should establish tempo and meter by chanting the appropriate preparatory sequence shown below.

Usual duple sequence- Du De Du | Du De Du |

Usual triple sequence- Du Da Di Du | Du Da Di Du |

But, in the case of teaching rhythm patterns at the aural/oral level of learning, meter should be established using a neutral syllable such as "Bah." After establishing meter, the teacher should pause to allow students to audiate it. Then, the teacher should chant a rhythm pattern. At first, he should sing the rhythm pattern using a neutral syllable at the aural/oral level of learning and students should echo it, beginning on the next macro beat (see Figure 3).



Figure 3. Chanting a rhythm pattern using a neutral syllable at the aural/oral level of learning.

When students chant rhythm patterns using a neutral syllable, they can then learn to chant the same patterns using rhythm syllables at the verbal association level of learning (see Figure 4).



Figure 4. Chanting a rhythm pattern using rhythm syllables at the verbal association level of learning.

Rhythm patterns should be chanted without melody. In other words, all notes in the pattern should be of the same pitch. Most patterns are two to four macrobeats in length. There should be no pause between the teacher's and the students' chanting of rhythm patterns. The teacher should conduct rhythm chanting by giving an upbeat and a downbeat. Students should be taught to breathe on the upbeat and to chant on the downbeat.

Gordon's rhythm syllables are comprehensive, explicitly accounting for any rhythm. His syllables help students audiate and hold the patterns in long term memory, because the syllables are based on beat functions. The syllable name for macrobeats is "Du" in all meters. For microbeats, "Du De" is the syllable name in usual duple meter and "Du Da Di" is the syllable name associated with usual triple meter. In unusual meters, "Du Be" is chanted when macrobeats divide into two microbeats and "Du Ba Bi" is chanted when macrobeats divide into three microbeats. The same syllable "Ta" is used when microbeats are divided, regardless of the meter and position of divisions in the pattern. Since any pattern in any meter has its own unique syllables, students are able to distinguish between different patterns, functions, and meters with ease.

As students become proficient at chanting rhythm patterns using rhythm syllables, they should perform those patterns on their instruments.

# Tonal technique

A tonal sequence is a series of pitches that are sung by the teacher in learning sequence activities. Its purpose is to establish tonality and keyality of tonal patterns. The teacher sings unaccompanied tonal sequence in musical manner. It is recommended that the teacher take a reference pitch from a well-tuned instrument to sing the tonal sequence.

Before students hear or are asked to respond to tonal patterns, the teacher should establish tonality and keyality by singing the appropriate preparatory sequence shown below.

### Major sequence- So La So Fa Mi Re Ti Do

# Minor sequence- Mi Fa Mi Re Do Ti Si La

But, in the case of teaching tonal patterns using a neutral syllable at aural/oral level of learning, tonality should be established using a neutral syllable such as "Bum." After establishing tonality, the teacher should pause to allow students to audiate it. Then, the teacher should sing a tonal pattern. At first, he should sing the tonal pattern using a neutral syllable at the aural/oral level of learning and after a short pause students should echo it (see Figure 5).



Figure 5. Singing a tonal pattern using a neutral syllable at the aural/oral level of learning. When students can sing tonal patterns using a neutral syllable, they then are ready to learn singing the same patterns using movable *do* syllables at the verbal association level of learning (see Figure 6).


Figure 6. Singing a tonal pattern using tonal syllables at the verbal association level of learning.

Tonal patterns should be sung without rhythm. In other words, all notes in the pattern should be of equal length. Most patterns are two or three and no more than five notes in length. No more than two tonal patterns of one function (tonic or dominant) should be performed in succession. Each series of patterns should begin and end on the resting tone. The patterns can be transposed if considered appropriate.

The tonal syllables in his method serve a different purpose from the traditional methods. These syllables help students audiate and hold the patterns in long term memory. Because the syllables are based on function, for example, "do" is the resting tone in major tonality and "la" is the resting tone in minor tonality, students can understand music aurally without notation and read music through audiation. By singing using the syllables, students can hear the sound of notation before they perform it on their instruments.

As students become proficient at singing tonal patterns using tonal syllables, they should perform those patterns on their instruments.

### Jump Right In: The Instrumental Series

Jump Right In: The Instrumental Series is designed to provide efficient and appropriate instruction in learning to play a musical instrument. The series is based on the latest research in music learning with the belief that a musical instrument is an extension of the human mind and body (GIA Publications, 2000, p. 46). It incorporates Gordon's music learning theory and is designed specifically to attend to individual differences.

Jump Right In encourages young children to learn tunes by ear from the beginning, because it advocates "sound before sight." Students learn to perform tonal and rhythm patterns by singing and movements before they learn to read music notation of those patterns. They have opportunities to improvise with their instruments from early stages of instruction in the same way that a child learns to engage in conversation before learning how to read. Music reading begins no sooner than three months into the beginnings of instruction using the series. In addition, students learn executive skills that enable them to enjoy playing their instruments in an expressive manner with good intonation and rhythm with and without music notation.

Jump Right In: The Instrumental Series includes the following ten components: (a) teacher's guide; (b) student book one and home-study CD; (c) student book two and home-study CD; (d) composition book one; (e) solo and accompaniment cassettes and CDs, and solo books one, two, and three; (f) Simple Gifts, Don Gato, and You Are My Sunshine; (g) solo books one, two, three- reading; (h) solo books one, two, three- writing; (i) solo books one, two, three- piano accompaniments; and (j) video for teachers (Grunow, Gordon & Azzara, 1999, p. 13).

An extensive teacher's guide provides many sample lesson plans, includes teaching procedures for implementing the lesson plans, and contains other support

materials. An integral part of Jump Right In: The Instrumental Series is the home-study CD and solo and accompaniment cassettes and CD, which includes rote song, articulation exercises, tonal patterns, rhythm patterns, and accompaniments that are coordinated with the lessons. All the songs consist of many styles, tonalities, and meters, and span many cultures and many centuries. The songs are performed by highly accomplished musicians.

Jump Right In: The Instrumental Series is available for flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn in F, trombone, trumpet, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone, tuba, baritone TC, baritone BC, violin, viola, cello, and bass (GIA Publications, 2000).

#### Adapting Gordon's Learning Theory for Private Piano Instruction

In many common approaches to piano instruction, the first lesson starts introducing note reading along with hand position, the names of the notes on the keyboard, and some basic note values. Singing and movement are not encouraged. Thus, students learning in this way may never leave music babble tonally and rhythmically. They may have an abstract theoretical understanding but have not yet developed audiation. If a piano teacher uses Gordon's music learning theory in his teaching, the same students can be taught to audiate as well as solve some problems in their playing. He can still use the same musical pieces, but his approach to those pieces will be different. Also, he should coordinate learning sequence activities and performance activities in his lessons. In his lesson plans, emphasis should be on the development of audiation as well as on the acquisition of knowledge of literature and executive skills.

Before lessons actually start, the teacher should have an interview/evaluation with the prospective student (Ranke, 1989, p. 247). Using that time, the teacher should determine whether the student has emerged from the music babble stage. It is also an

appropriate time to know the student's personality, motivation, and needs. In addition, the teacher can evaluate the student's hand structure to see if his hand is developed enough to start piano study. Ranke (1989) suggests some techniques for determining the student's emergence from music babble as follows (p. 248):

 Play games that require physical activity to reveal the coordination skills of the student.

2. Have students echo simple rhythm patterns in duple and triple meters.

3. Have students echo simple tonal patterns in major and minor tonalities.

4. Have students sing a couple of songs that are well-known to them, preferably representing duple meter and triple meter and major tonality and minor tonality. If the student is in music babble, a pre-piano class should be recommended to bring him out of the music babble stage before beginning piano study. During the pre-piano class, the student should learn rote songs and basic movements without and with music (Ranke, 1989).

Each piano lesson should include learning sequence activities. Learning sequence activities take the place of or supplement "warm-up" exercises in common private piano lessons. Knowing how to perform tonal and rhythm patterns in learning sequence activities forms the foundation for learning how to audiate and perform conventional literature in performance activities of piano lesson. In turn, audiating and performing conventional literature in performance activities of piano lesson give meaning to and complement the audiation and performance of tonal and rhythm patterns in learning sequence activities. The purpose of learning sequence activities is to help students audiate and perform conventional literature in performance activities of piano lesson with understanding of syntactical meaning (Gordon, 1997). In this way, students perform

musically, not mechanically.

Learning sequence activities require undivided attention on the part of the student and concentrated effort on the part of the teacher (Gordon, 1997). Because of the need to consider young children's limited attention span, learning sequence activities should be taught during the first five minutes of each half-hour lesson and no more than ten minutes of an hour lesson period. All of the remainder of the lesson period is used for traditional performance activities of piano lessons. In learning sequence activities, students learn tonal patterns and rhythm patterns by singing, chanting, and moving. Tonal patterns and rhythm patterns should be taught on alternate weeks so that one dimension is taught without the other and each dimension is given approximately equal attention.

When teaching tonal patterns at the aural/oral level of learning, the teacher should first sing the patterns for the student, then echo the patterns with the student, and finally, have the student echo the patterns in solo. The teacher and the student should sing tonal patterns using a neutral syllable (see Figure 7). When the student can sing tonal patterns using a neutral syllable, he moves to the verbal association level of learning. At this level of learning, tonal patterns should be taught in the same manner, but the teacher and the student should sing tonal patterns using tonal syllables (see Figure 8).



Figure 7. Tonal pattern using a neutral syllable at the aural/oral level of learning.



Figure 8. Tonal pattern using tonal syllables at the verbal association level of learning.

When teaching rhythm patterns at the aural/oral level of learning, the teacher should first chant the patterns for the student, then echo the patterns with the student, and finally, for the purpose of evaluation, have the student echo the patterns in solo. To keep a consistent tempo or if the student has trouble doing that while performing the patterns, the teacher should have the student synchronize movement with the macro beat as the student chants the patterns. The teacher and the student should chant rhythm patterns using a neutral syllable (see Figure 9). When the student can chant rhythm patterns using a neutral syllable, he can move to the verbal association level of learning. At this level of learning, rhythm patterns should be taught in the same manner, but the teacher and the student should chant rhythm patterns using rhythm syllables (see Figure 10).







Du Ta De Ta Du Ta De Ta Du De Du

Figure 10. Rhythm pattern using rhythm syllables at the verbal association level of learning.

After the student can audiate tonal patterns and rhythm patterns and is proficient at singing and chanting those patterns using neutral syllables and using tonal and rhythm syllables, the student should be taught to play those patterns on the piano. Tonal patterns and rhythm patterns should be played first with one hand, then with the other, and finally with the two together in parallel motion. During that activity, the teacher should reinforce good hand position, proper fingering, and good tone quality (Ranke, 1989, p. 253).

When tonal patterns are reinforced on the piano, the teacher should introduce ways to play the same patterns in different keyalities. For instance, the teacher should introduce the pattern "Do-Mi," with C as "Do," and then play the pattern with D as "Do." If the student audiates well, he will hear that D to F is not the right sound. He will adjust F to F sharp without knowing that the note he corrects is a sharp (Ranke, 1989). Of course, at this level it is not necessary for the student to learn the detailed information of the theoretical understanding level of learning, such as pitch relationships or the terminology of "sharp" and "flat." However, the student can be introduced to sharps without going through the intermediate levels of skill learning sequence, by using a technique called bridging movement.

Bridging movement is a temporary skip of one or more sequential skill or content.

For example, forward bridging movement takes place from the aural/oral level of discrimination learning to the creativity/improvisation-aural/oral level of inference learning and then back to the aural/oral level of discrimination learning. Of course, when the bridging takes place, students' performing of creativity/improvisation-aural/oral skill will not be as solid as when intermediate levels of skill learning have been achieved in stepwise movement before the creativity/improvisation-aural/oral level of inference learning. The reason is that the skills are more difficult when they are introduced in forward bridging movement than when they are introduced in forward stepwise movement. Nevertheless, forward bridging movement is valuable in that it is effective to bridge between a discrimination skill and an inference skill, and it provides motivation, variety, and challenge for students (Gordon, 1997).

When the student plays rhythm patterns on the piano, the teacher should apply the finger exercise activities (Ranke, 1989). For example, when chanting a simple triple rhythm pattern with a neutral syllable or after chanting the patterns with rhythm syllables, the student should play that pattern using fingers one, two, and three on any three white keys. As the student's hand gets stronger, he can perform a five finger exercise.

The performance activities of a piano lesson consist of rote song learning, hand exercise, exploration of the keyboard, and the performance of conventional literature. Incorporated into the classroom activities is periodic reinforcement of audiation skills learned during learning sequence activities (Ranke, 1989, p. 249).

Singing is essential to the development of audiation. Children learn to sing rote songs in various tonalities and meters. It is not necessary to coordinate the patterns contained in the songs with the patterns presented in learning sequence activities. Through rote song learning, the student benefits from hearing at the aural/oral level of

learning, and becomes familiar with many patterns that he will be learning later in the learning sequence activities. The teacher might provide the student with rote song tapes. By moving to songs, the student can improve his sense of tempo and meter, and finally he can transfer his audiation skills to playing those songs on the piano. The following examples are suggested movement activities: (a) The teacher may play a familiar folk song while the student moves freely to the music, (b) the teacher may play march music and have the student respond to the beat of the music through a large motor activity such as swaying, and (c) the teacher may play a song such as "Gallop Quickly" to demonstrate a faster tempo, and have the student move to that new tempo (Ranke, 1989, p. 250).

The teacher should focus on the strength and flexibility of the student's hand muscles. The "Coffee Table Exercise," "Finger Rotations," "Landing on a Penny" are exercises to strengthen the fingers away from the keyboard (Ranke, 1989). To form a good hand position, the teacher can use the "Coffee Table Exercise." The student should place his arm on a closed keyboard cover, relax his arm, and form a good hand position. Then the student should lift each finger slowly, as high as he can, while maintaining a good hand position. When the student's fingers become strong enough, he should be asked to lift two fingers. At this time, the teacher should incorporate elements of learning sequence activities into the finger exercises. The student should perform a familiar rhythm pattern from learning sequence activities using two fingers. The "Finger Rotations" involves the same hand position as the "Coffee Table Exercise," but it is different in that the student develops skill in alternating finger movement. The student should alternate his fingers while maintaining a consistent tempo. For the student who has difficulty moving his finger up and down in the same spot, the teacher can help the student develop a strong, accurate finger attack on the piano keys, using the "Landing on

a Penny." The teacher should place five pennies on the closed keyboard cover in a configuration of the student's hand size. The student should lift his finger, hold and then slowly land it down on the penny without moving the position of the penny.

Exploration at the keyboard should be taught concurrent to beginning finger games. During that portion of the lesson the student should become familiar with all of the keyboard and with the sounds of the different octaves. The sequence for the exploration series should be the following (Ranke, 1989, p. 252):

1. The student should be taught to recognize the black and white keys, look inside the piano, and experiment with the pedals.

2. The student should learn to recognize the groups of two and three black keys. He should play the groups of two black keys up and down the keyboard. Depending upon the strength of his fingers, the student may use the second and third fingers, striking the two black keys simultaneously. Next, the student should play each note separately while concentrating on good finger position.

3. The student should repeat the same exercise as 2, but this time playing the groups of three black keys using fingers two, three, and four. If the student has the necessary readiness, the teacher should have him play those exercises hand over hand while maintaining a consistent tempo. Using only one hand and increasing the tempo will present an even greater challenge. Also, the student should learn to alternate between groups of two and three black keys.

4. The student should learn to recognize the positions of the white keys of the keyboard. He should play each C hand over hand, while maintaining a consistent tempo.That process should be repeated for each of the remaining six white notes of the keyboard.The student should also play other white keys in the same manner. Using the strongest

fingers first at the keyboard facilitates good hand position, which, in turn, makes good tone quality possible.

As the student becomes proficient at singing tonal patterns using tonal syllables, he should learn the words of tonalities and tonal pattern functions. The following example is the explanation of how students should be taught to recognize tonalities and tonal pattern functions (Grunow and Gamble, 1989).

The teacher establishes major tonality using tonal syllables and sings a series of major patterns ending on "Do." Students should be asked to audiate the tonality and the patterns. By singing on "Do," the teacher should explain that the pitch he is singing is called the resting tone and its names is "Do." He should explain that when the resting tone of the patterns is "Do," the tonality is major. The students should be asked to audiate and sing the resting tone. Next, the students should be asked to listen to the teacher's singing of tonal patterns and respond by singing only the resting tone. The teacher should drill the students by asking what the resting tone is called in major and what the tonality is if the resting tone is "Do." Then, the teacher should explain that when the students hear a pattern that consists of any combination of "Do," "Mi," or "So," it is called a tonic major pattern. The students should be asked to listen to the teacher's singing of familiar tonal patterns and respond by saying "tonic" after they hear a tonic pattern or saying "no" when the pattern is not tonic. When the student can audiate tonic patterns, the teacher can introduce tonic triads at the keyboard, because it is generally easiest for the student to reach the white key triads (Ranke, 1989, p. 252). Finally, the teacher should explain that when the students hear a pattern that consists of any combination of "So," "Fa," "Re," or "Ti," it is called a dominant major pattern. The students should be asked to listen to the teacher's singing of familiar tonal patterns and respond by saying "dominant" after they

hear a dominant pattern or saying "tonic" after they hear a tonic pattern. The teacher may sing tonal patterns in any keyalities. Other tonalities and tonal pattern functions are taught in the same manner.

As the student becomes proficient at chanting rhythm patterns using rhythm syllables, he should learn the words of meters and rhythm pattern functions. The following example is the explanation of how students should be taught to recognize meters and rhythm pattern functions (Grunow and Gamble, 1989).

The teacher establishes duple meter using rhythm syllables and students should be asked to audiate the meter. The teacher should explain that "Du" is the macro beat name in duple meter. He should explain that when the students hear a pattern that only the syllable "Du" is used, the pattern consists of all macro beats. The students should be asked to listen to the teacher's chanting of rhythm patterns and respond by saying "all macro beats in duple meter" after they hear that pattern or saying "no" when the pattern contains micro beats. The teacher should explain that "Du De" is the micro beat name in duple meter. He should explain that a pattern that "Du De" is always repeated is a pattern including all micro beats in duple meter. The students should be asked to listen to the teacher's chanting of rhythm patterns and respond by saying "all micro beats in duple meter. The students should be asked to listen to the teacher's chanting of rhythm patterns and respond by saying "all micro beats in duple meter" after they hear that pattern or saying "no" when the pattern contains macro beats. The students should be asked to listen to the teacher's chanting of rhythm patterns and respond by saying "all micro beats in duple meter" after they hear that pattern or saying "no" when the pattern contains macro beats. The students should move to the macro and micro beats when they learn to recognize the words, "macro," "micro," and "duple." A same procedure should be used for triple meter, except "Du Da Di" is the micro beat name in triple meter.

When the student audiates tonal function within a tonality and rhythm function within a meter, he should perform melodic patterns that tonal and rhythm patterns are combined (see Figure 11). He can play melodic patterns on the piano. Melodic patterns

performed in literature need not duplicate the tonal and rhythm patterns that students learned apart from literature (Gordon, 1993, p. 313). After the student can perform melodic patterns, he should perform the entire song with his singing voice and on the piano. Next, the student should perform the song using different keyalities. All of activities should be done without music notation (Grunow & Gamble, 1989).



Figure 11. Performing musical phases with syllables at the partial synthesis level of learning.

Before the student engages in music reading, he should be taught to recognize the tonality of series of familiar tonal patterns that the teacher performs with a neutral syllable. For example, without establishing tonality, the teacher should sing or play a series of familiar major tonal patterns and remind the student that if he is audiating the resting tone as "Do," the tonality is major. Then, without establishing tonality, the teacher should sing or play a series of familiar minor tonal patterns and remind the student that if he is audiating the resting tone as "La," the tonality is minor. Finally, the teacher should sing or play other series of familiar tonal patterns and ask the student whether he is audiating major or minor tonality. Also, when the teacher should sing or play a series of familiar tonal patterns using a neutral syllable, the student should audiate those patterns and play them on the piano (Grunow & Gamble, 1989).

Likewise, before the student engages in music reading, he should be taught to

recognize the meter of series of familiar rhythm patterns that the teacher performs with a neutral syllable. For example, without establishing meter, the teacher should chant or play a series of familiar duple rhythm patterns and remind the student that if he is audiating "Du De," he is audiating duple meter. Then, without establishing meter, the teacher should chant or play a series of familiar triple rhythm patterns and remind the student that if he is that if he is audiating "Du Da Di," he is audiating triple meter. Finally, the teacher should chant or play other series of familiar rhythm patterns and ask the student whether he is audiating duple or triple meter. Also, when the teacher should chant or play a series of familiar syllable, the student should audiate those patterns and play them with the same pitch on the piano (Grunow & Gamble, 1989).

When the student can recognize tonalities and play series of familiar tonal patterns on the piano, he is ready to be introduced to those patterns in music notation at the symbolic association level of learning. Because the student can audiate the patterns that he is seeing in music notation, he will be able to bring meaning to the notation. First, the teacher should establish tonality and keyality. Next, the teacher should sing a familiar pattern with tonal syllables. After a short pause, the student should echo the pattern. Then, the student should be shown the pattern in music notation. An arrow should be pointed to the line or space on the staff that is the resting tone. The teacher should explain the placement of the other syllables on the staff in relation to the resting tone. Therefore, the student can read notation for patterns previously performed by rote, such as figure 8. Finally, when the student audiates and sings the pattern in notation, he should be reminded how to place his fingers on the piano to play the pattern and play it (Grunow & Gamble, 1989).

When the student can recognize meters and play series of familiar rhythm patterns

on the piano, he is ready to be introduced to those patterns in music notation at the symbolic association level of learning. First, the teacher should establish meter and tempo. Next, the teacher should chant a familiar pattern with rhythm syllables. Without a pause, beginning on the next macro beat, the student should echo the pattern. Then, the student should be shown the pattern in music notation. The teacher should explain the measure signature used in the pattern. For instance, he should explain that the patterns written in 2/4 are in duple meter and the patterns written in 6/8 are in triple meter. An alternative form of measure signature can be used (see Figure 12). The number tells how many macro beats there are in a measure and the symbol indicates the kind of note that is a macro beat. Therefore, the student can read notation for patterns previously performed by rote, such as figure 10. Finally, when the student audiates and chants the pattern in notation, he should play it on the piano, on a single pitch designated by the teacher (Grunow & Gamble, 1989).

Duple meter	Triple meter
2	2
ل	۵.

# Figure 12. An alternative form of measure signature.

After the student can audiate and perform individual familiar tonal patterns and rhythm patterns in notation, he should learn to audiate and perform series of familiar tonal patterns, rhythm patterns, and melodic patterns in notation using neutral syllables. Series of familiar patterns should be taught in the same manner as the symbolic association level of learning. At this level, the teacher can reinforce the learning of patterns by teaching a new song that has familiar tonal and rhythm patterns in an unfamiliar order. Therefore, the student can read notation for musical phrases previously performed by rote, such as figure 11, as well as new phrases that consist of familiar pattern.

After the student can read series of familiar patterns by singing and chanting them with neutral syllables and playing them on the piano, he is ready to sight-read series of patterns that are combined with familiar patterns, and similar patterns that have not been taught by rote. Before playing the patterns on the piano, the student should audiate them. If the student has difficulty in reading some of the patterns on the piano, he should read them using tonal or rhythm syllables and then play them on the piano. In addition, the student should read familiar and unfamiliar patterns in many keyalities and measure signatures. With the development of music reading skills, he should continue to play by rote, write in notation familiar songs in the variety of tonalities and meters, and engage in creativity and improvisation. Finally, he should learn theoretical understanding such as the letter names of lines and spaces on a music staff, the time value of notes, sharp, flat, clef, legato, staccato, and so on.

The practice of technical exercises, such as scale exercise or arpeggio exercise, is not a part of music learning theory, but the student must practice scales. Practicing scales and arpeggios removes many technical problems that might otherwise occur while the student is learning to perform a piece of music, because familiarity with scales and arpeggios outside a musical context serves as a readiness for successful performance of scales and arpeggios in a musical context. However, it is not to say that the exercises should be played mechanically. Even when practicing technical exercises at the keyboard, the student should audiate them and concentrate on good tone quality and musicality.

Scale playing can be introduced as soon as the student is able to audiate "Do-Re-

Mi-Fa" at the aural/oral level (Ranke, 1989, p. 254). A small child should divide the scale between their two hands. For instance, to play C major scale, he should play C, D, E, and F with his left hand, and G, A, B, and C with his right hand. The teacher should ask the student to play the major scale in any keyalities. If the student audiates well, he will make the necessary adjustment at the keyboard to play correct scales. As the student's technique improves and his fingers strengthen, he should play scales with each hand independently. He should play them in connected and separated styles. Finally, the student should play ascending scales with a crescendo and descending scales with a decrescendo.

In the lesson plans that follow, the principles that have been explained in this chapter are applied to the teaching of actual piano pieces to five- and six-year-old children.

#### CHAPTER 3

### SAMPLE PIANO LESSON PLANS

### **Description of Lesson Plans**

This chapter will provide sample lesson plans demonstrating an approach to applying music learning sequence activities to private piano instruction with actual piano pieces. These piano lesson plans are appropriate for five- to six-year-old children who have already passed through tonal and rhythm music babble stages. Musical examples are examples of pieces that are commonly found in beginning piano methods books

Musical pieces are written in C major, A harmonic-minor, G major, and F major. Tonic and dominant functions are taught in both major and harmonic-minor tonalities. For measure signatures, 2/4 and 4/4 are used for duple meter and 6/8 is used for triple meter. The functions of macrobeats, microbeats, divisions, and elogations are taught in duple and triple meters.

The lesson plans have the following characteristics:

1. Each sample lesson includes learning sequence activities and performance activities. The lesson would be 45 to 60 minutes long. During the five minutes of each lesson, learning sequence activities are taught, and the remainder of the each period is used for performance activities.

2. In learning sequence activities, tonal patterns and rhythm patterns are not combined, although the two are combined in performance activities. In other words, in learning sequence activities tonal patterns are taught without rhythm and rhythm patterns are taught without melody. Tonal patterns and rhythm patterns should be taught on alternate weeks so that one dimension is taught without the other and each dimension is

given approximately equal attention.

3. The development of the audiation skill is emphasized. The first step is to have children experience the musical concept first through aural modeling and rote learning rather than by sight. The more children hear music, the sooner they can audiate it. Therefore, children would have the tonal and rhythm tapes as well as the rote song tapes.

4. The performing sequence in lesson plans is that children should play what they audiate vocally at first by singing and chanting, and then playing it on the piano. By singing and chanting before playing instrument, children can develop the audiation skill on the instrument effectively. After children can audiate patterns and be proficient at singing and chanting them, they can transfer patterns to the keyboard.

5. Music reading is necessarily delayed until other skills are developed. Gordon believes that the best sequence is to allow children to experience the musical concept first through aural modeling and rote learning rather than by sight. Thus, children learn to audiate then perform the music that they audiate, and finally read them. Reading begins with music that is familiar to children. Patterns that children have performed by rote are read first.

6. Although sometimes there are forward bridging movements to inference learning, lesson plans are developed in terms of discrimination skill learning sequence. In the selection of tonal content learning sequence, the lesson plans include tonic and dominant functions in both major and harmonic-minor tonalities. In the case of rhythm content learning sequence, 2/4 and 4/4 are used for duple meter and 6/8 is used for triple meter. The functions of macrobeats, microbeats, divisions, and elogations are taught in duple and triple meters.

### Sample Lesson Plan I

Musical piece: Go Tell Aunt Rhody

Tonality: Major

Resting tone:



Keyality: C

Meter: Usual duple



Objectives: 1. The student will play duple rhythm patterns on the piano.

2. The student will play "Go Tell Aunt Rhody" on the piano.

Materials: Piano and keyboard chart

Readiness: 1. The student can sing "Go Tell Aunt Rhody" by rote.

2. The student has some vocabulary of tonal and rhythm patterns in major tonality and duple meter at the aural/oral and verbal association levels of learning.

3. The student is proficient at singing and chanting those patterns using syllable systems.

4. The student is experienced in playing five-finger melodic patterns.

Procedures: I. Learning sequence activities

# Rhythm patterns

1. Review duple rhythm patterns with rhythm syllables at the verbal association level of learning (if necessary, first with a

neutral syllable). Play duple rhythm patterns on the piano,

hands separately and then together.



2. Explain that "Du De" indicates duple meter, and "Du" is the macrobeat and "Du De" is the microbeats in duple meter.

II. Performance activities

A. Rote songs

1. Sing rote songs that the student is familiar with ("Hot Cross Buns," "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" "Mary Had A Little Lamb," "Old MacDonalds," etc.). In this activity, model locomotor movement. The teacher shows tiptoe to macrobeats as he sings songs. Then have the student copy the teacher's movement as the student sings songs or the teacher plays songs on the piano.

2. Teach new song "Row, Row, Row, Your Boat" without accompaniment. Sing the song in entirety one or more times without words and have the student audiate it, before asking him to sing it. Sing each phrase of the song and ask the student to audiate and echo it.

B. Keyboard exploration

Have the student recognize the positions of the white keys of the keyboard. Play each C as "Do." Repeat the same process for each of the remaining six white notes of the keyboard (e.g., D is "Re," E is "Mi," etc.). If the student has the enough readiness, have him play those exercises at a faster tempo or hand over hand while maintaining a consistent tempo.

## C. Technique

 Hand position: Continue the "Coffee Table Exercise." When chanting some familiar duple rhythm patterns from learning sequence activities with a neutral syllable or after chanting the patterns with rhythm syllables, have the student perform those patterns using two fingers on a closed keyboard cover.
Finger exercise: When chanting some familiar duple rhythm patterns from learning sequence activities with a neutral syllable or after chanting the patterns with rhythm syllables, have the student play those patterns using right hand fingers one, two, and three on three white keys, C, D, E.

# D. Playing

1. Have the student sing "Go Tell Aunt Rhody" in its entirety, by rote. Establish tonality and the first pitch of the song before singing using the following sequences.



2. With one phrase at a time, have the student: (a) echo sing the pitches using a neutral syllable without rhythm, (b) echo the pitches of the phrase using tonal syllables without rhythm, while fingering on the keyboard chart, and (c) echo play the pitches on the piano without rhythm.

3. With the same phrase, have the student: (a) echo chant the rhythm using a neutral syllable and rhythm syllables without pitch, and (b) echo play the rhythm on the piano with single pitch.

4. Have the student echo the teacher playing the combined tonal and rhythm patterns of phrase 1.

5. Repeat the process for each phrase of "Go Tell Aunt Rhody."



6. Have the student play the entire "Go Tell Aunt Rhody" song.Discuss the student about the first tone, posture, hand position, the meter, and the tonality before playing the song.

# III. Wrap-up

A. Closing song: Sing "Row, Row, Row, Your Boat" again.

B. Assignments: Chant duple rhythm patterns that have been studied at the lesson at the verbal association level of learning and play them on the piano. Practice finger exercise and play "Go Tell Aunt Rhody."

# Sample Lesson Plan II

Musical piece: Scarborough Fair

Tonality: Minor

Resting tone:



Keyality: A

Meter: Usual triple



Objectives: 1. The student will improvise simple tonal patterns.

2. The student will play minor scales on the piano.

3. The student will play "Scarborough Fair" on the piano.

Materials: Piano, recordings, and keyboard chart

Readiness: 1. The student is familiar with "Scarborough Fair."

2. The student has some vocabulary of tonal and rhythm patterns in major and minor tonality and duple and triple meter at the aural/oral and verbal association levels of learning.

- 3. The student is comfortable with syllable systems.
- 4. The student can audiate minor tonality.

Procedures: I. Performance activities

Rote songs

Sit on the piano chair and move both feet (only heels) in the same direction to macrobeats, as sing a rote song or play a recording. Ask the student to copy the teacher's movement.
Sing the song or play the recording again and move to microbeats. Tap thighs with both arms and hands to duple microbeats and with only hands to triple microbeats. Have the student copy the teacher's movement.

3. Move to macrobeats and microbeats simultaneously while singing the song and have the student copy the teacher's movement.

Sing the resting tone and have the student audiate and sing it.
Ask him to sing the resting tone everytime the teacher stops singing the song.

- 5. Have the student audiate the entire song and then sing it.
- 6. Do the same procedure with other rote songs.
- II. Learning sequence activities

### Tonal patterns

1. Review tonic and dominant patterns in minor tonality using tonal syllables and proper names. After establishing tonality, sing a tonic pattern with tonal syllables without meter and remind the student that any sequence of La, Do, and Mi is a tonic minor pattern. Then ask the student to listen as the teacher sings the series of tonal patterns with tonal syllables. Have the student respond by singing "Tonic" on La after he hear a tonic pattern and by saying "No" when he does not. Do the same procedure on dominant patterns except reminding that any sequence of Mi, Si, Ti, and Re is a dominant minor pattern, and responding by singing "Dominant" on Mi.





2. Teach tonal improvisation with tonic and dominant patterns in minor tonality. After establishing tonality, sing a tonic or dominant pattern in minor tonality with tonal syllables and ask the student the proper name of the function of the pattern. Then have the student audiate a different tonal pattern with the same or different pattern function using tonal syllables and sing or play it.

III. Piano Performance activities

A. Keyboard exploration

1. Review the groups of two and three black keys. Have the student play the groups of two black keys up and down the keyboard and play each note separately. Have the student do the same activity on the groups of three black keys.

2. Have the student play those exercises at a faster tempo or hand over hand while maintaining a consistent tempo.

### B. Technique

1. Finger exercise: Have the student play some familiar triple rhythm patterns using right hand fingers two, three, and four on three black keys when chanting those patterns with a neutral syllable or rhythm syllables. Have him play the patterns hands separately and then together.

2. Scale exercise: Have the student audiate minor scales and play the first four notes of scale with left hand and the rest notes of scale with right hand. Have him play the minor scales

in connected and separated styles.

C. Playing

1. Establish tonality and the first pitch of "Scarborough Fair," and have the student sing the song by rote using the following sequences.







2. With each phrase, have the student: (a) echo sing the pitches using tonal syllables without rhythm, while fingering on the keyboard chart and (b) echo play the pitches on the piano without rhythm, hands together.

 With each phrase, have the student: (a) echo chant the rhythm using rhythm syllables without pitch and (b) echo play the rhythm on the piano with single pitch, hands together.
Have the student echo the teacher playing the combined tonal and rhythm patterns of each phrase with both hands.

 After all, have the student play the entire "Scarborough Fair" song with both hands.



6. Duet: Have the student experience root melody. Play the root melody in the bass register of the piano, while the student plays the melody of "Scarborough Fair" song. Have the student listen to the following root melody carefully while playing the song melody.



IV. Wrap-up

A. Closing song: Sing a song of the teacher's choice.

B. Assignments: Practice finger exercise and minor scales in connected and separated styles. Play "Scarborough Fair" and sing and play its root melody.

## Sample Lesson Plan III

Musical piece: Lightly Row

Tonality: Major

Resting tone:

Do

Keyality: F

Meter: Usual duple

Macrobeats: 2 4 Du Du Du Du Du Du Du De Du De

Objectives: 1. The student will recognize meter of familiar songs through movement or chanting.

2. The student will play "Lightly Row" with its root melody.

3. The student will recognize the same (or similar) and different patterns.

Materials: Piano and recordings

Readiness: 1. The student can sing and play the melody of "Lightly Row" by rote.

2. The student has a large vocabulary of tonal and rhythm patterns in major and minor tonality and duple and triple meter at the aural/oral and verbal association levels of learning.

3. The student can audiate tonic and dominant tonal functions and the rhythm function of divisions.

Procedures: I. Learning sequence activities

## Rhythm patterns

1. Teach partial synthesis. Remind duple and triple meter.

Without establishing meter, chant series of familiar rhythm patterns with a neutral syllable and ask the student whether he is audiating duple or triple meter. Also, ask the student how he gets his answers.





If necessary, ask the student to move to the macrobeats or to the macrobeats and microbeats of familiar series of rhythm patterns, or chant them using a neutral syllable. Then have him name the meter.

2. Play series of familiar rhythm patterns again using a neutral syllable and have the student audiate those patterns and play them on the piano.

3. Review duple rhythm patterns with rhythm syllables at the verbal association level of learning. (if necessary, first with a neutral syllable). Then play duple rhythm patterns on the piano, hands separately and then together.





4. Explain that these patterns are "divisions" of the macrobeat in duple meter.

# II. Performance activities

A. Rote songs

 Remind the student of duple meter and triple meter. Then without establishing meter play recordings of familiar songs.
Have the student move or chant along with the songs and determine their meters. Ask the student which meter he is audiating during the songs and why.

2. When the student recognizes meter of the songs, have him play the rhythms on the piano along with the recordings.

# B. Technique

1. Finger exercise: Do "Landing on a Penny" game on a closed keyboard cover. Have the student lift his fingers down slowly and accurately while maintaining a consistent tempo.

2. Scale exercise: Have the student audiate major scales and play them. If the student's fingers strengthen, encourage him to play scales with one hand rather than divide them between two hands. Have the student play scales in connected and separated styles. C. Playing

1. Performance habits and performance piece review: Have the student think posture, hand position, meter, tonality, and the first tone. Then have him play the entire melody of "Lightly



sing and float, sing and float, in our lit - tle boat.

2. Root melody: (a) Sing the root melody while the student sings the melody. (b) Sing the root melody and have the student audiate and echo it. (c) Sing the melody while the student sings the root melody. (d) Have the student play the root melody on the keyboard. The teacher should explain that root melodies should be played with the left hand in the bass register of the keyboard. (e) Play the root melody with the left hand while the student plays the melody with his right hand. Switch roles. (f) Have the student play the melody and root melody simultaneously.

3. Music form: Have the student recognize the same or similar patterns (lines 1,2, and 4) and different pattern (line 3) by moving, while he sings or chants "Lightly Row" using neutral syllables. Suggest that the student walk in lines 1,2, and 4, and hop in line 3. Ask the student to improvise several different ways of moving such as running, skipping, crawling, galloping, walking, hopping, and so on.

### III. Wrap-up

A. Closing song

B. Assignments: Chant duple rhythm patterns with the rhythm function of divisions that have been studied at the lesson and play them on the piano. Practice major scales with one hand. Play "Lightly Row" with root melody.

### Sample Lesson Plan IV

Musical piece: Ode to Joy

Tonality: Major

Resting tone:



Keyality: G

Meter: Usual duple

Objectives: 1. The student will understand the history and context of "Ode to Joy."

2. The student will read the melody of "Ode to Joy" in notation.

3. The student will play "Ode to Joy" with chord accompaniment.

Materials: Piano, a recording of Beethoven symphony No. 9, score, and color pens

Readiness: 1. The student can sing and play the melody of "Ode to Joy" and its root melody by rote.

2. The student has large vocabulary of tonal and rhythm patterns in major and minor tonality and duple and triple meter.

3. The student can audiate tonic and dominant tonal functions and the rhythm function of divisions and elongations.

4. The student can read some tonal and rhythm patterns in notation.

Procedures: I. Performance activities

Rote songs

1. Root melody: With the familiar songs, sing the root melody

and have the student audiate it while singing the melody. Then switch roles.

2. Tonality change: Sing a familiar song and remind the student that the song is in major tonality and why. Then sing the same song in minor tonality again and ask the student whether he noticed anything different from the performance of the song. Guide the student to recognize that the tonality of the song changed to minor and the new resting tone is La. Sing the song in major and minor tonality with the student. Do the same procedure with a familiar song that is in minor tonality, except that the tonality changes to major and the new resting tone is Do.

II. Learning sequence activities

Tonal patterns

1. Review tonal reading at symbolic association. After establishing tonality, sing familiar tonic or dominant patterns with tonal syllables and have the student echo them. Then show the student what the patterns look like in notation. Explain that the arrow points to Do. When teaching the relationships of the syllable names on the staff, "hand staff" with the five fingers may be used to represent the five lines of the staff. Then have the student remind how to place his fingers on the piano to play the patterns and play them.


2. Teach reading series of patterns. After establishing tonality, sing the patterns with tonal syllables and have the student echo them. Then show the student what the patterns look like in notation. Explain that the arrow points to Do. Then have the student remind how to place his fingers on the piano to play the patterns and play them.



# III. Piano Performance activities

#### A. Technique

Scale exercise: Have the student audiate major scales and play

them with both hands. Have the student play scales in connected and separated styles. Have the student play ascending scales with a crescendo and descending scales with a decrescendo. Teach new scales combined with the rhythm pattern that has the function of elongation as follows:



# **B.** Playing

 Composer: Provide information about Beethoven (e.g., He is one of Germany's most famous composers., Although he became deaf during his later years, he wrote some of his finest music during that time., Symphony No. 9 is one of his best known works written during his later years., etc.).
 Listening: Say that "Ode to Joy" is a theme from Beethoven symphony No. 9. Have the student listen the theme from symphony No. 9.



3. Sing "Ode to Joy" and identify its tonality and meter with the student. Sing each melodic pattern of the song and have the student echo it and see what it looks like in notation. Ask the student to sing each pattern again while looking at the notation. Then ask the student to play it on the piano looking at the notation. If the student has the enough readiness, the teacher may teach the same procedure as the above with series of melodic patterns.

4. Give the student a copy of the melody of "Ode to Joy" and ask him to mark the patterns that the teacher sings or plays and their repetition. For instance, sing or play measure 1 and have the student echo sing it and find its notation. Then ask the student whether he can see the same pattern in the remaining notation.

Have the student color the notation of the song using different color pens in order to differentiate similar series of melodic patterns from different series of melodic patterns (system 1, 2, 4 vs. system 3).

5. Have the student sing the root melody of "Ode to Joy" while singing its melody. Then ask the student to play "Ode to Joy" with its root melody.

6. Add a new harmony that moves "Mi" to "Fa," when the student plays the melody and root melody of "Ode to Joy." Sing "Mi" for tonic and "Fa" for dominant. Repeat this new harmony a couple of times, while the student plays the melody and root melody. Then have the student sing this new harmony by rote along with the teacher's playing of the melody and root melody.



7. Have the student play harmony part on the piano. First, have the student play the melody and root melody and simultaneously play harmonic part. Then ask the student to echo play it.

8. Chord accompaniment: Have the student play the root melody and harmonic part with his left hand and the melody with his right hand. Ask the student to play the accompaniment softer than the melody for the correct balance.

## III. Wrap-up

A. Closing song: Listen the theme from symphony No. 9.

B. Assignments: Read tonal patterns and series of patterns that have been studied at the lesson and play them on the piano. Play "Ode to Joy" with chord accompaniment.

#### **CHAPTER 4**

### DISCUSSION

Instrumental instruction provides students with opportunities to clarify and refine their musical understanding. Among instruments, the piano can give an especially satisfactory musical experience to young children, since it is a tuned instrument and is capable of providing melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic elements simultaneously. Through piano instruction, young children can learn listening, singing, rhythm, playing, and creative experiences.

Typically, executive skills are emphasized at the expense of audiation skill in much piano instruction that concentrates on techniques and repertoire, rather than helping children's audiation and improvisation. Some children can imitate what they hear their teacher play, but they do not audiate what they are imitating. Music reading is taught before most children are ready for it. New concepts and songs are usually introduced symbolically first, then experienced later. In addition, common piano teaching focuses on major tonality for a long period of time and new songs are often introduced in melodic patterns that are combined tonal patterns and rhythm patterns.

Some piano teachers make the erroneous assumption that children will learn to audiate as a result of playing piano and that they will properly develop audiation skills by learning music notation and music theory. However, the activity of simply playing the piano does not necessarily teach children how to audiate. They do not learn to audiate as a result of playing the piano. Moreover, music reading without the readiness of hearing and making music can make children frustrated.

Children should develop audiation skills before music reading, learn to read music

notation with meaning, and bring meaning to their playing. In piano instruction based on Gordon's music learning theory, music is learned in the same manner as language. At first, much time is spent on listening. Then, developing vocabularies and labels precedes reading and writing. Thus, during the music babble stage and before starting piano instruction, it is of paramount importance to provide children informal music guidance and favorable music environment. Children should be exposed to rich musical environment that embraces music of different tonalities, harmonies, meters, and rhythms, and many kinds of music such as folk songs, cultural songs, classical music, jazz, and so on.

When piano is taught based on music learning theory, the first step is to have children experience musical concepts first through aural modeling and rote learning rather than by sight. Teaching music pieces by rote is important because imitation proceeds audiation. But it is more important that children are carefully guided from imitation to audiation. From the beginning of instruction, children are encouraged to experience various tonalities and keyalities. Tonal patterns and rhythm patterns should be taught separately at first. The introduction of notation should be delayed until children develop an executive audiation vocabulary of tonal and rhythm patterns.

Piano instruction based on Gordon's music learning theory develops audiation skill and executive skill, and allows children to experience the joy of learning to make music. Such piano teaching gives children opportunities to express themselves through improvisation, composition, and performance. In addition, children can learn to read and write music notation with musical meaning. Therefore, piano teachers can help their students' musical development by beginning to integrate music learning theory into their teaching. Teachers should make connections between skill learning sequences and

performing and reading of their present piano literature. This study developed sample private piano lesson plans for young children based on Gordon's music learning theory in order to show how to apply music learning sequence activities to private piano instruction.

The following are the characteristics and educational values of sample piano lesson plans:

1. Audiation functions as the guide for everything that is played. First of all, children should begin with music experience through aural modeling and rote learning rather than by sight. After that, children should play what they audiate vocally by singing and chanting. Then they should play it on the piano. By singing and chanting before playing the piano, children can develop audiation skills on the instrument effectively. When children can audiate and be proficient at singing and chanting what they audiate, those skills may be transferred to the keyboard in a natural and logical manner. Therefore, in order to audiate music that children will perform later, they would have the tonal and rhythm tapes as well as the rote song tapes.

2. Each sample lesson begins with five minutes of learning sequence activities before piano performance activities. In learning sequence activities, tonal patterns and rhythm patterns are taught separately, although the two are combined in performance activities. In learning sequence activities, children audiate and perform tonal patterns without rhythm and rhythm patterns without pitch. The purpose of learning sequence activities is to form the foundation for learning how to audiate and perform music literature in performance activities (Gordon, 1997).

3. The introduction of music notation is delayed as long as possible to enable children to develop an executive audiation vocabulary of tonal patterns and rhythm patterns. The longer the time before children are taught to read notation, the better they

will read notation with meaning. But, regardless of how long the reading of notation is delayed, only if children are taught to audiate first, they will learn to read notation quickly. Reading should begin with music that is familiar to children. Patterns that children have performed by rote should be read first.

4. Like common piano teaching, children develop keyboard skills, such as scales, chords, and arpeggios. Children must practice technical exercises because these exercises remove many technical problems that might occur while they are learning to perform a piece of music. However, the exercises should not be played mechanically. Even when practicing technical exercises at the keyboard, children should be taught to audiate them and concentrate on good tone quality and musicality.

Considerations in teaching with sample piano lesson plans are as follows:

1. In beginning piano instruction, the student's music readiness is of paramount importance so that it should be measured before the first piano lesson. By having an interview/evaluation time with a prospective student, a teacher should determine whether the student emerges from the music babble stage. When the student can sing in tune and have beat competency, they should begin studying the piano. In addition, using this time, the teacher can comprehend the student's hand structure, personality, motivation, and needs.

2. A teacher's capacity is important. The teacher who teaches young children should possess enough knowledge about children's developmental characteristics and motivation. He also has the keyboard techniques for accurate demonstration. Besides, it is required that he understands his role as a coach rather than as a "lesson giver" so that children can take part in improvisation or composition activities and develop better musicianship and musical expression.

3. The value of teaching children to write notation should not be overlooked. Although this study is limited to reading notation, the teacher should encourage children to write notation. Just like reading notation, writing notation should begin with music that is familiar to children. Patterns that children have read in notation should be written first.

Now it is possible for piano teachers to explore new ways of teaching that will inspire both their students and themselves instead of continuing to teach as they were taught. In this respect, piano teaching applied to Gordon's music learning theory may be highly recommended. However, this does not mean that music learning theory is a complete piano teaching method. By implementing its principles in their piano teaching, piano teachers may help their student to enhance the ability to perform, improvise, and read. We can expect children to have a deeper understanding of music, that is, better musicianship.

When piano teachers apply music learning theory to their teaching, they can easily plan learning sequence activities from the <u>Reference Handbook for Using Learning</u>. <u>Sequence Activities</u> (Gordon & Woods, 1992). This provides teachers with a structured and systematic way of teaching learning sequence activities to students, as well as the sequenced tonal and rhythm patterns. Students can acquire a sense of tonality and meter and the ability to audiate and engage in creativity, improvisation, and music reading in the proper sequence. Also, in terms of learning sequence activities, the teacher can freely select the appropriate musical compositions and exercises that will best suit the levels and needs of students in performance activities.

There are a number of ways of combining skill learning sequence and piano literature. A piano teacher should know how to make the transition from theory to practice and needs to continuously study practical applications. He can acquire practical

assistance by attending seminars and workshops about the application of music learning theory. Publications or journal articles dealing with music learning theory will also give him insight into teaching.

On the other hand, since piano teachers rarely encourage their students in activities such as listening, singing, moving, and improvisation or creativity, they may be challenged in developing piano lesson plans with music learning theory. Students realize a deep structure of music through audiation. Rote songs and movement can help students to readily transfer music pieces to the piano. Creativity and improvisation activities are important in developing audiation and keyboard skills (Trapp, in press). Therefore, piano teachers should incorporate those activities into almost every lesson at an appropriate time. They can improve their rote song and movement activities by observing themselves in front of a mirror, or by studying an audio or video tape of their teaching. For the development of audiation skills and rote song learning, piano teachers can provide students with tapes that contain tonal and rhythm patterns and rote songs. Any learned skill or content can be used activities for creativity/improvisation. Piano teachers may consult the book <u>Creativity and Improvisation</u> (Azzara, Grunow & Gordon, 1997).

Early piano lessons should build on children's natural abilities (Rabin, 1996). Young children bob in their seats to songs they hear, and hum and sing long before they speak. They communicate naturally through movement and play. They have high imagination and inventiveness, so they will enjoy any opportunity to express their imagination musically in the process of learning related skills. Children who sit next to us in our studio provide the focus for all of our works. They are our active partners in a process of exploration and discovery of new ways of teaching that will inspire both of us.

The sample piano lesson plans are not intended to represent a model lesson plan in

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any way. They may serve as a suggested guideline. Additional study of the effectiveness and strength of these sample lesson plans is required, which was not the focus of this study. Furthermore, since these lesson plans are developed using some music examples that are written in fragmentary tonalities and meters, the development of more diversified and comprehensive piano lesson plans with more various tonalities and meters is needed.

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