

---

## DEVELOPING TEACHING AND LEARNING SKILLS FOR MATURE AGE LEARNERS: CASE STUDIES FROM AUSTRALIA AND MALAYSIA

---

*Dr Jan McMillan*

---

*The benefits of learning in mature age have been well documented yet many piano teachers state that they do not feel comfortable teaching adults, and adults have reported difficulty finding suitable teachers. Recent doctoral research (Gwatkin, 2008) found that whilst many postgraduate piano performance qualifications include pedagogical training, empirical research from practising Australian pedagogues unearthed a desire for training at earlier stages. This paper presents the results of Australian case studies over the past 7 years and more recently introductory investigations from Malaysia. Positive outcomes encourage the inclusion of teaching strategies and skills at earlier levels than is currently available.*

### INTRODUCTION

An abundance of scholarly and widely published resource literature is available for classroom music education including curricula, assessment, teaching principles and practice, and classroom management (Tait and Haack, 1984; Cole and Chan, 1994). Similarly resources for adult education and teaching strategies are widely available (Hillier, 2005; Timmermann, 2010; Rogers & Kramer, 2008). By comparison, there is a recognised lack of scholarly publications that investigate piano teaching and or pedagogy (Frederickson, 2007). In fact, several notable music dictionaries (Apel, 1970 and Hindley, 1971) failed to define pedagogy. Derived from the Greek word *paid* meaning “child” and *agogus*, meaning “teacher of” pedagogy pertains to the teaching of children whereas andragogy, a term recommended by Knowles in 1980, comes from the Greek prefix *andr* meaning “man” and is more appropriate to adult teaching, i.e. at tertiary level (Graessle, 2000). Universities of the third age (50-75 years old) were developed in the 1970s and more recently ‘gerontology’ has been coined to describe those in the 4<sup>th</sup> age (75 and over). Despite this, Gwatkin (2008) found ‘pedagogy’ commonly used to describe instrumental teaching units in tertiary courses without making any distinction for age groups. Similarly, conference brochures and descriptions of instrumental teaching skills are enveloped under the term pedagogy.

Following in the tradition of early treatises of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, most piano teaching literature has focused on piano repertoire and techniques allied to sound production (Gerig, 1974; Neuhaus 1967; Sandor, 1981). A minority of articles and studies regarding the qualities and effective teaching practices of a studio piano teacher include Hope (1995), Jayatilica (1995), Hallam (1998) and Tollefson (2000). Still, little critical evidence exists of

piano teaching in relation to adult education and vice versa although articles pertaining to the benefits of mature age piano study are growing such as Graessle (2000). Davidson and Jordan (2007) identify the need to ascertain if past or current training is still relevant to current needs of piano teachers who often work in isolation. Several Australian studies have provided impetus to this discussion (Bennett, 2005; Daniel, 2005; Michalski, 2008 and Gwatkin, 2008). The latter will be discussed in further detail below.

## **CURRENT SITUATION**

### **Training for piano teachers in Australia**

Even though no minimum qualification is mandated by the Australian government for studio piano or instrumental teaching, recent doctoral research (Gwatkin, 2008) found two pathways to gaining a federal qualification: a) a tertiary qualification from a recognised accredited university or self accrediting institution in the higher education sector and b) a Vocational Education Sector (VET) qualification. Government schools only offer employment for piano teachers as accompanists, preferring band and orchestral tuition. Private schools employ piano teachers on an individual basis with no defined minimum qualification.

A large scale review of all 38 accredited Australian universities found 24 that offer qualifications in music; a total of 65 courses from certificate to doctoral level. Bachelor degrees ( $N=38$ ) offered two distinct pathways: classroom music education (BMusEd;  $N=9$ ) or performance (BMus;  $N=17$ ). Classroom based courses emphasised educational psychology, developmental theories and some creative methodologies whilst performance degrees the most common and relevant for piano teaching focused on repertoire, theoretical, aural and historical knowledge. Several combined degrees investigated were geared towards instrumentalists with emphasis on performance rather than pedagogy which lacked a clear description. Only four bachelor courses were found that combined education and instrumental pedagogy. Further investigations into relevant postgraduate qualifications revealed eight programs from 21 that listed pedagogy. Whilst more references to pedagogy were discovered in postgraduate degrees, definitions and content were unclear (Gwatkin, 2008).

Michalski (2008) reviewed the piano pedagogy components of current undergraduate music degrees in Australian tertiary institutions and found:

A considerable proportion of qualified teachers and undergraduate teacher trainees perceived practicum as a central piano pedagogy degree component. However, lecturers presented misc [sic] opinions on the validity of practicum with over 40% considering it less important in leading to future effective teaching. Overall, the majority of both lecturers and qualified teachers perceived practical field training to be a very important pedagogy degree component, although not currently being addressed in degrees and having received minimal emphases provided in respondents' past training (p. 1).

A total of 23 certificate, diploma and advanced diploma courses were found within the same Universities. Whilst universities can write their own course content, the outcomes are dictated by the VET sector which concentrates on competency and on the job based training. Qualifications in the Music Training Package CUS01 ( $N=14$ ) range from Certificate I level to Advanced Diploma; the study found only the latter to contain a unit entitled CUSLRN02A *Provide instrumental/vocal tuition* which was not transferrable to lower qualifications (NTIS, 2008) or applicable to classroom teaching.

An alternative to becoming qualified through higher education pathways are Registered Training Organisations (RTOs); private enterprises accredited by State governments to deliver VET qualifications. Only three were found that were specific to piano teaching; Suzuki Philosophy (2) and one public examination board Australian Guild of Music Education (AGME). All deliver instrumental training from Certificate III level begging the question at what level could a minimum and introductory teaching qualification be set and what should be included (Gwatkin, 2008).

In an effort to encourage teachers to become qualified, non-registered organisations have been established offering membership and an accreditation status according to a number of criteria: qualifications (private and federal), references, and teaching experience. The three most prominent organisations investigated were: State music teacher associations, The Suzuki Talent Education Associations of Australia (STEAA) excluding the NSW branch as it is an RTO; Public examination systems that operate in Australia: Australian Music Examination Board (AMEB), Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM), AGME and Trinity Guildhall. Data revealed teaching qualifications offered were not recognised within the federal education system (except AGME), had limited portability and

offered only partial and somewhat out-dated pedagogical content. As entry into tertiary music courses have mandatory audition and interview, this was found to negate public examination performance qualifications which are generally used as a guide to ability for both the public, tertiary institutions and professional associations for accreditation status. Similarly, professional development offered by these associations concentrated mainly on repertoire and technique as historically relevant but several were out dated in educational, creative and assessment content. Furthermore, without mandatory registration, these associations are officially struggling to maintain or encourage membership.

### **Initial Findings**

Initial outcomes of the study identified the variety of teacher training options in both higher and vocational education pathways finding little evidence of pedagogical training. Investigating the later end of the career spectrum Bennett (2005) confirmed training to be insufficient in preparing musicians for portfolio careers. An in-depth survey of current higher education performance studies (Gwatkin 2008) identified repertoire, technique, history aural and theoretical basis as the core subjects.

For the purposes of this paper, relevant outcomes of an extensive literature survey into Australian and international qualifications suggested the need for:

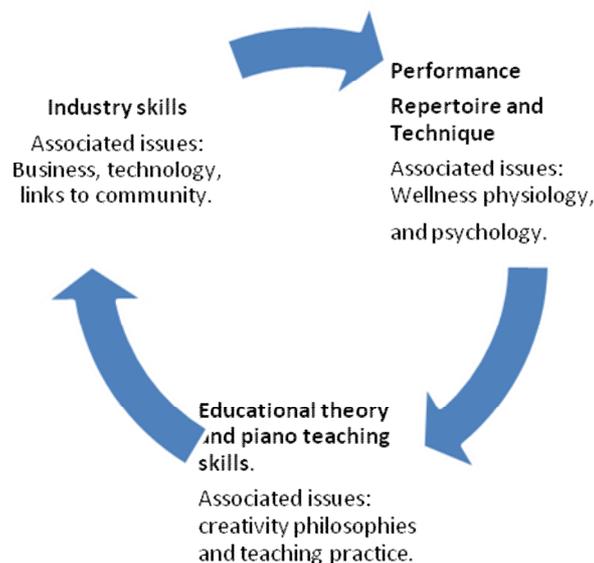
- A wider variety of courses.
- Content and uniformity of courses,
- Inclusion of educational and teaching skills.
- Introductory piano pedagogy courses.
- Clearer definitions of piano pedagogy.

More specifically, initial suggestions for a piano pedagogy course included:

- More courses below undergraduate degree level specific to piano teaching.

- Retain performance, technique and repertoire studies in all courses possibly at slightly lower levels to accommodate new content.
- Graded additional content in all courses to include industry practices, early childhood, andragogical, psychological, physiological, educational development, teaching skills and subsequent demonstration.
- Mentoring opportunities
- Specific research at masters' degree level.
- Performance students to undertake at least some pedagogical studies.
- Inclusion of creative teaching methods and skills (Gwatkin, 2008).

An interpretation of these emergent points had been developed and is show in Figure 1, demonstrating a structure that might be undertaken in a triangular approach.



**Fig.1 Proposed Approach for Training Piano Teachers**

A brief review of piano teacher training in Malaysia will now follow.

## **Training for piano teachers in Malaysia**

Similar to Australia, there are no formal requirements for piano teaching although ABRSM examination qualifications are highly valued. Piano teachers may be employed on a fee paying basis in government high schools with a minimum of Grade 7 or 8 if they do not have undergraduate training. With this additional employment option, there is more incentive to become qualified. Malaysia offers Bachelor and postgraduate courses in piano performance/pedagogy and music education for classroom teachers with slightly lower entry requirements for performance. A positive modification is the core requirement of piano skills for both music education and all performance majors not found in Australian degrees. Instrumental teaching and practicum featuring ensemble together with creative methodologies are also compulsory due to the nature of high school programs. Piano practicum may not be depending on the program. An initial review of several Masters programs focusing on piano pedagogy reveal the inclusion of teaching practice, performance, educational theory and business skills similar to that outlined in Fig 1 above. The amount of pedagogical or andragogical content is not specified at any level. The popularity of the ABRSM is likely due to government employment and that instrumental lessons are highly valued by the community. However, as an international board, course content and training remain unaltered from the description above.

To summarise, training for piano teachers currently focuses on the teaching of younger students. They are therefore not fully equipped to teach adults who require a different set of strategies and who are becoming increasingly available through work and retirement options to afford leisure and retraining activities. Graessle (2000) states

For piano teachers, this growth in adult learners provides the potential to increase income by tapping another segment of the population. Teaching adults can provide the opportunity to develop rewarding relationship and friendships... Adults also benefit...in addition to fulfilling what is often a life-long dream...studying music may help relieve stress and, for retired adults, can fulfil intellectual, physical, and social needs no longer found in the workplace ( p. 1).

Further research for adult learners in piano is scarce although growing. Initial results from the UK (Hallam and associates, 2010) have shown the benefits of learning an instrument in

mature age as part of a community program. The 2011 *Conference on Ageing in America* lists creative activities for the elderly yet no music activities were presented (ASA, 2011).

With little evidence of adult teaching strategies in piano training programs in Australia or Malaysia, a brief review of adult learning strategies ensues.

## **ADULT LEARNING**

### **Background**

A significant trend affecting music educators is that adults are wealthier, living longer, retiring earlier and maintaining healthier lives. Learning in later life is challenged for both teachers and students without some form of initial training. Changes in employment/ vocation/ retirement require different educational needs through the lifespan for both teachers and their students. With a growing mature population many adults, retirees and seniors are returning to or commencing studies to unleash passions, provide a creative outlet or to find personal meaning. Suitable opportunities lie in a variety of settings; education, community and the private sector.

The development of further adult education is reflected in the variety of programs now available through University of 3rd Age, 4<sup>th</sup> age (gerontology), i.e. learning and lifelong/continuing learning programs. Timmerman (2010) reflects that early examples of program development in the 1970's (US) contained little about curriculum or content. Initial effective processes included putting learning in a broader context, i.e.-drawing from experience; allowing learning to be self-paced, so that people could review and absorb information at their own speed; organize material, let learners know what they can expect. In the early 1980s little changed and by the 1990s, educators of older adults found themselves in what she terms "the Era of Scarcity" (ASA, 2011, p. 1). Since then, research on the brain and how the mind works has revolutionized the way we think about learning as we age. There is now hard scientific evidence that healthy brains can grow dendrites (nerve extensions) at any age and that brain cells can regenerate themselves in the hippocampus, the part of the brain controlling memories and information. The benefits of learning in mature age have been well documented over the past 30-40 years (Jarvis, 2001; Long, 1998, Knowles, 1980). Jarvis (2001) presents now as "a new age for growing old...When adults are challenged there exists

the potential for cognitive development...Ours is a time to explore the relationship between learning, living and ageing” (Jarvis, 2001, p. ix).

Teacher education in adult learning has since developed more specific processes and strategies such as reflective teaching, reflexive teaching and communities of practice, (Hillier, 2005; Rogers, & Kramer, 2008) yet these have still to be reflected in training programs or professional development opportunities for piano teachers. When portfolio careers are common (Bennett, 2005) and a rise in adult learners is being experienced, this is further evidence to support the inclusion of a variety of teaching strategies in piano courses as demonstrated in Fig 1. As important criteria to add to the teaching portfolio of piano teachers, a brief review of these follows.

### **Learning Strategies**

The distinction between how adults and children learn was an important landmark in teaching and learning practices in both vocational education and training, and higher education. Knowles (1984) speculates from previous research by Bruner (1961); Erikson (1950, 1959, 1964); Getzels and Jackson (1962); Bower and Hollister (1967); Iscoe and Stevenson (1960) and White (1959) that “as individuals mature, their need and capacity to be self-directing, to utilize their experience in learning, to identify their own readiness to learn, and to organize their learning around life problems, increases steadily from infancy to pre-adolescence, and then increases rapidly during adolescence” (p. 53). He maintains that as learning tasks increase in difficulty then the appropriate theory and teaching method should be selected. If learning can be seen as “a continuum, with self-directed inquiry being the highest form of learning, then we have an obligation to build into our strategies at each level some learning experiences that will help learners move up the continuum... the more proficient we become as self-directed learners, the better we can make use of all kinds of learning resources” (Knowles, 1984, pp. 116-117). Therefore teachers need to learn and continue learning different strategies such as experiential learning, lifelong learning and e learning throughout their careers. A brief explanation of these now follows.

### **Experiential Learning**

Experiential Learning Theory as described by Kolb et al. (1999) provides a holistic model of the learning process and a multi-linear model of adult development, both of which are

consistent with what we know about how people learn, grow, and develop. The theory is called “Experiential Learning” to emphasize the central role that experience plays in the learning process, and distinguish it from other learning theories (p.2). The Australian VET system is heavily based on this system using performance outcomes and competencies as the basis for assessment and incorporating a variety of arenas in which assessments may take place for the flexibility of the adult learner.

### **Lifelong Learning**

The Jagiellonian University Extension defines seven main professional profiles in the Lifelong Learning domain: Trainer, coach, competency assessor, consultant, training project manager, and curriculum (Wikipedia, 2008). Lifelong learning applies to both learners and teachers:

Lifelong learning is the concept that "It's never too soon or too late for learning [and] is attitudinal; that one can and should be open to new ideas, decisions, skills or behaviours... Lifelong education is a form of pedagogy often accomplished through distance learning or e-learning, continuing education, home schooling or correspondence courses. It also includes postgraduate programmes for those who want to improve their qualifications, bring their skills up to date or retrain for a new line of work. (Wikipedia, 2008).

“One of the reasons why lifelong education has become so important is the acceleration of scientific and technological progress. Despite the increased duration of primary, secondary and university education (14-18 years depending on the country), the knowledge and skills acquired there are usually not sufficient for a professional career spanning three or four decades”. (Wikipedia, 2008).

These are a major consideration in Australia where distances between learners and educators can be thousands of kilometres. With the increase of video technology the opportunities for e-learning on line are far greater.

### **E-Learning**

e-Learning involves the use of a computer or electronic device (e.g. a mobile phone) in some way to provide training, educational or learning material. “It can involve a greater variety of equipment than online training or education, for as the name implies, ‘online’ involves using

the Internet or an Intranet. CD-ROM and DVD can be used to provide learning materials. Distance education provided the base for e-learning's development. E-learning can be 'on demand'. It overcomes timing, attendance and travel difficulties" (Stockley, 2003). Evidence of successful online music tuition in primary schools in Scotland included two and three way video links. Whilst the program does not include piano lessons a present, a pilot test was conducted for keyboard (personal communication, A. Campbell, 2010). Initial inquiries for Australian piano teachers required strong and high speed broadband, which is currently being developed nationally.

Conole et al. (2004) state "A number of pedagogies and approaches are often quoted in the e-learning literature – constructivism, communities of practice, collaboration" (pp. 17-33). For mature adults, communities of practice exist with the combination of VET programs being available together with traineeships and apprenticeship schemes as many re train or upskill. In music these would include qualifications in the *Music Training Package CUSO1*, now CUS09 (2010). Although no prerequisites are formally required, institutions are at liberty to impose their own criteria which may not be advantageous to some adult learners.

## **Gerontology**

A lesser known and more recent classification, gerontology pertains to those aged 75 and over. According to Jarvis (2000), changes in employment/ vocation/ retirement, bring different educational needs through the lifespan, globalisation. "On a social level, now is the time to investigate the connection between human growth and lifelong learning. When adults are challenged their exists the potential for cognitive development. This is a new age for growing old. Ours is a time to explore the "relationship between learning, living and ageing" (Foreword, p. ix). "Studies indicate that the more education people have, the more likely they are to seek lifelong learning opportunities. The boomers--and those slightly older, who are in their 60s--are the most educated generation so far" Timmerman in Ageing Today (American Society for Ageing [ASA], 2011). Jarvis (2001) explains that those over 75 want to reflect and find meaning in their lives as they deal the prospect of dying. Their stories are important lessons for any teacher to be empowered by their elders. With programmatic direction, reminiscence and life history work and sensitive communication, individualised approaches and interpersonal relationships we must trust our own sense of caring as we develop learning experiences for elders.

## **Piano Learning Opportunities**

Opportunities for piano tuition for the mature age in Australia are generally found in the private sector, at colleges or institutions and community based courses, although the latter are rare. Many adult learners have reported difficulty finding suitably trained or “flexible” teachers for one to one lessons. In turn, many piano teachers state that they do not feel comfortable teaching adults most likely due to the lack of training. VET courses are open to all ages and require no prerequisites. Other courses are more generated to group keyboard, guitar, theory, history or music appreciation. Distance learning courses required lower performance levels but a private tutor on site. Private websites and blogs offer written assistance on teaching and reflective comments rather than instruction.

Similarly in Malaysia, the most popular avenue to learn piano is through private teachers or businesses such as Yamaha. E learning through YouTube is popular although numbers and the extent to which this is successful is not known. Western popular music overrides western classical music in status. Of the three nationalities, those of Chinese heritage seem to support private lessons and examinations through the ABRSM the most. The ABRSM is highly active with over 60,000 entries in Malaysia each year through self-entry or teachers who maybe qualified or not (Gwatkin 2008, Personal communication J. Thonell, ABRSM Australia). However, attempts to ascertain the number of adult candidates or teachers from the both ABRSM or AMEB is an unknown factor due to “Commercial Confidentiality” (Associated Board of Royal Schools of Music, in Gwatkin, 2008). Tutor books are the same worldwide and readily available but guidance is often required again from teachers.

## **PROCEDURE**

### **CASE STUDIES**

The focus of the Australian and Malaysian lessons was on an individual basis, both in content and pace. In Group A from Australia there were eight individuals aged between 45-70 years at the time of instruction. Lessons were conducted between 2004 and 2010 for varying lengths of time (Refer Table 3 below). Malaysian participants (Group B) total 4 to date and have only just begun instruction and are coded M1- M4 (Refer table 4 below). Group (A) were the researchers own piano students undertaking regular lessons of approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour on a weekly basis whilst the second group (M) are part of a current research project, each individual receiving 30 minutes of instruction of 15 weeks. Participants

have been contacted through email and snowballing technique. Without a national or state registration board it is difficult to make contact with other piano teachers except through a snowballing technique, an ongoing process in current research. A qualitative case study was considered most appropriate as it allows for the view points of the participants. Semi structured interviews, observations and a reflective journal (researcher) were the three methods of data collection employed. Consent was gained prior to lessons commencing for photographs, recording and verbal comments that were written by the researcher and later transcribed. For confidentiality, participants were given a letter for their respective Country and number within it (e.g.A1, A2, M1).

### **Group A Australia**

The majority of students were goal oriented although did not feel confident about performing (Table 2). Therefore, the nature of the programs were guided by participants desires (student centred) rather than external factors such as examination requirements except in the case of A8. Nearly all had negative experiences with prior teachers which had been a factor in initially stopping lessons and in part recommencing lessons. Other factors included family, work and financial considerations. Participants lack of confidence often required slower paced teaching. However, they were very goal oriented and appreciated the difficulty of the tasks and were extremely willing and trusting in the process of learning.

Students were guided to success using an accumulation of small sequential steps and given many different methods of practising the same sections. Through demonstration and explanation by the researcher, students were required and able to competently perform any new skill prior to leaving the lesson. This built confidence and ensured understanding of the tasks. Weekly improvement concentrated on building familiarity, dexterity and speed. A similar approach was given to new tasks or repertoire so that the learner built a portfolio of practice and learning techniques to become more independent. Whilst cognitive understanding was well developed, physical skills, coordination and time factors proved the main hindrance to improvement. Over extended periods of study, initial goals were achieved and surpassed in many cases. A successive and developmental range of performance opportunities was devised to assist learners overcome performance anxiety. This entailed opportunities in the studio, home, small halls, larger halls progressively moving from safe

environments with family friends and teacher to relatively unknown environments and a paying public.

A summary of adult teaching and learning strategies were employed as described above and are presented in Table 1 forthwith.

<b>Learning/Teaching Strategy</b>	<b>Main Application</b>	<b>Student Outcomes</b>	<b>Teacher Outcomes</b>
Experiential	Skill development Emotional development Staggered performance opportunities	Positive experience negated earlier experience Development of confidence and skills	Used sequential developmental and slower paced approach to develop physical skills
Lifelong learning	All opportunities for exams followed through.	Confidence increased Performance	Joy! Varying roles – mentor, coach, consultant, project leader.
Self- paced/directed learning	Pick own repertoire Work to students pace	Not frustrated, sense of control, choice and contribution	Student centred approach Patience, listening and empathy skills Rejecting unsuitable repertoire requires explanation.
E learning	Email correspondence between lessons  Website for music downloads	Immediate reinforcement or support as required  Immediate clarification  Greater choices of repertoire in a semi rural environment	Time consuming Greater rate of progress  Information exchange and learning

**Table 1. Outcomes of Adult Teaching Strategies in Piano Lessons**

An overview of the development of students using these approaches in demonstrated in Table 3 below.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Lesson Period (Years)</b>	<b>Background &amp; starting point</b>	<b>Goals</b>	<b>Achievement</b>
<b>A1 Male 40-45</b>	4	Self- taught, highly nervous when playing Could not perform in lesson or in public Highly educated	Pleasure combined own choice repertoire with suggestions from teacher to develop technique	Bach two part invention.  Public performances – duet, trio and solo
<b>A2 Female 45 – 50</b>	4		Pleasure but specific pieces in mind. Approx Grade 2. Open to repertoire suggestions.  Happy to perform. Approx. Grade 2-3	Public performances – duet and solo  Grade 5-6  Expressive development
<b>A3 Female 35-40</b>	3 + 1.5	Lessons as a child. Highly anxious. Bad memories. Could not perform in lesson or in public	Approx. Grade 2-3. Grade 5 goal	Public performances – duet, trio and solo
<b>A4 Female 65-70</b>	1	Retired grandmother 5beginner	To play for a community choir	Enjoys teaching grandson Prepared to perform  Teacher terminated lessons to relocate
<b>A5 Female 45-50</b>	2 <sup>1/2</sup>	Retired business woman Highly educated goal oriented and motivated  Previous lessons over 30 years	Possibly Grade 8 or diploma Absolutely NO THEORY!	Completed Grades 1-5 theory books  Reached approximately Grade 7-8 level

		ago.  Bad memories of teacher  Mainly self-taught since.		Public performances – duet, trio and solo  Preparation of work highly improved with detailed practice disciplines. Took up cello.
<b>A6 Male 40-45</b>	5	Full time employed senior management  Very emotional towards playing, easily embarrassed  Reluctant to perform	Grade 5 goal Approximately Grade 2. Self- taught Awkward technique and fluency. No command of pedal.	Public performances – duet, trio and solo
<b>A7 Female 55-60</b>	6 weeks	Fully employed has prepared 2 pieces for BMus audition in 6 weeks -approx. Grade 5-6 level. Mainly self taught Prior bad memories	Bachelor of Music in Performance	Stopped due to ill health and relocation Postponed audition for one year.
<b>A8 Female 50-55</b>	2	Previous lessons. Learned Grade 7 repertoire Has Parkinsons disease.	Grade VII for Music teacher certificate.	Awarded Teacher certificate.

**Table 2. Summary of Australian Participants.**

### **Teacher Reflections**

The researcher found teaching these adults a very humbling experience and an emotional journey and developed a greater awareness of the numbers of students in this age bracket. Timetabling however was preferred as day and evening teaching replaced late afternoon lessons. The role was often friend, confidant and advisor which entailed greater listening

skills but could be emotionally exhausting. Opportunities for community of practice were given in the form of adult performance soirees, discussions, duets and trio rehearsals and family events but required extra effort in planning and executing. However, students seemed to stay with the studio longer than other teachers reported. Lessons were only terminated due to relocation and it was incredibly difficult to find replacement teachers that both parties valued. To date, exit questionnaires have yet to be received from all students and will be included in final presentation. Students reported they had great difficulty finding teachers with suitable experience or without prior agenda. This led the researcher towards a greater desire to provide more for this age group and to research better teacher training and learning opportunities for adult students.

### Group B Malaysia

For the research project a specific questionnaire was designed based on an original Australian version using mixed methods in order to receive a combination of qualitative and quantitative data. The value qualitative data gave a better understanding and development of empathy in teaching and learning. Table 3 presents initial data collected thus far for Malaysian participants who have also defined specific goals to achieve.

Subject	Lesson Period (weeks)	Background & starting point	Goals
M1 male 30-35	3	Beginner	Still by Lionel Ritchie
M2 male 30-35	10	Approximately preliminary standard. Has BMus (vocal)	Accompanying self or choir.
M3 Male 60-65	0 Commencing June	Beginner	Pleasure, I've always wanted to play
M4 Female 50-55	0 (formal) Informal assistance and advice being given currently due to work schedules. Commencing June	Post graduate qualifications in music. Can play accurately but slowly. From a large family where piano was played by other siblings.	Accompany choir play more proficiently, more fluently, better improvisation, better sight-reading, [and] interpretation.
M5 Male 60-65		Beginner Commencing June	I have a keyboard at home and don't know what to do with it.

**Table 3. Malaysian participants in Adult learning research project.**

Teacher Reflections will be reported at the end of the project, whilst an update is planned for delivery of this paper at the conference.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Outcomes of the study provided evidence that piano teacher training needs to be updated to cater for adult learning, early childhood, educational philosophies, creative methods and business skills confirming reasons for initial results which suggested a three pronged approach (Fig. 1). This was reflected in empirical results from practising Australian teachers which also highlighted that current pedagogical training was desired from the outset of career training teachers also specified creative methodologies, business skills and early childhood learning theories, however as the number of adult learners increases, adult teaching and learning strategies will become more important. To create a lifelong learning pathway Bennett (2005) recommends musicians to “recognise and value your diverse skills and knowledge, and apply the new definition to your practice.... Continually update and develop career goals, and the skills and knowledge required to achieve them” (p. 236). Educators are recommended to train musicians in a number of generic skills used in the profession rather than for performance alone. Initial investigations pertaining to the Malaysian context encouragingly offers a broader spectrum of training closely aligned to Fig. 1 although performance levels and teaching practicum for pianists may be lower due to entry requirements and a concentration on ensemble teaching for high school and warrants further investigation for greater in depth comparison.

Recent improvements to teacher training in Australia have included the addition of CUSLRN02A *Provide instrumental/vocal tuition* to the Diploma Level in version CUS09 (2010) and included in a new Music Tutor Skills set which also includes a business unit (Commonwealth of Australia, 2010). Whilst Gwatkin (2008) recommended the addition of more certificate courses, similar to those found in Europe and North America, to encourage piano teachers to become qualified, it is noted that STEAA NSW have not renewed their license to deliver their certificate qualifications for reasons unknown.

## **CONCLUDING COMMENTS**

By applying a combination of andragogical strategies, a sequential and developmental program, human development and reflective practices, participants demonstrated improved technical, personal and performance skills. Most importantly, listening and providing space and time for people to grow and express themselves were important factors to keep a stimulated, energised cultural and educated exchange. Jarvis (2001) explains that “Learners should be carers and carers should be therapists” (p. 143). We don’t teach the subject, we teach the people the subject so the human element has to be the focus: to keep the human development as part of the process. Such positive outcomes can only serve to encourage the proposals put forward by Gwatkin (2008) to include pedagogy in its broadest capacity in all piano teacher training courses and professional development globally.

## REFERENCES

- American Society for Ageing, 2011 Conference, Retrieved 4 February 2011 from <http://www.asaging.org>
- Apel, W 1970, *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, Heinemann, London.
- Bennett, D 2005, *Classical instrumental musicians: Educating for sustainable professional practice*, Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Western Australia, Perth.
- Cole, PG & Chan, L 1994, *Teaching principles and practice*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, Prentice-Hall, Sydney.
- Conole, G Dyke, M & Oliver, M & Seale, J 2004, Mapping pedagogy and tools for effective learning design. *Computers & Education*, 43, August-September , pp17-33, Retrieved January 9, from <http://www.science.com>
- Campbell, A 2010 Instrumental Music Lessons delivered by Video Conference to Remote Schools in Dumphries and Galloway, Scotland. Unpublished presentation, ISME Forum for Instrumental and Vocal Teaching, Beijing, China. July 30-31, 2010.
- Daniel, R J 2005, *Challenging the orthodoxy: Alternative strategies for the tertiary teaching of piano: Models towards the 21st century*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, James Cook University, Queensland. Retrieved April 7, 2007 from <http://adt.caul.edu.au/>.
- Davidson, JW & Jordan, N 2007, 'Private Teaching, Private Learning: An Exploration of Music Instrument Learning in the Private Studio, the Junior and Senior Conservatories' In: Bresler, L (ed), 2007, *International Handbook of Research in Arts Education*. Section 6, Springer, Netherlands.
- Frederickson, WE 2007, Perceptions of college-level music performance majors applied music lessons to young students, *International Journal of Music Education*, Vol 25, 1, April, pp 72-79.
- Gerig, RR 1974, *Famous pianists and their technique*. R.B. Luce CT.
- Graessle, Y 2000, 'Teaching Adults: The Rewards and the Challenges', *Piano Pedagogy Forum* v.3, no. 1. Retrieved 22 January 2011 from <http://www.music.sc.edu/ea/keyboard/PPF/3.1/3.1PPFphtml>
- Gwatkin, J 2008, *Investigating the viability of a national Accreditation System for Australian Piano Teachers*, Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Western Australia, Perth.
- Jarvis, P 2001, *Learning in Later Life*. Kogan Page, London.
- Hallam, S 1998, *Instrumental teaching. A practical guide to better teaching and learning*.: Heinemann, Oxford.
- Hallam S, Creech Y, Gaunt H, Pincas A, McQueen, H & Varvarigou, M 2010, 'Promoting Social engagement and well-being in Older people through community supported participation in music activities', Unpublished presentation at 29<sup>th</sup> ISME World Conference Beijing, China. Abstracts p. 169.
- Hillier, Y 2005, *Reflective Teaching in Further and Adult Education*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Continuum, London.
- Hindley, G 1971, *The Larousse Encyclopedia of Music*, Hamlyn, Middlesex.
- Hope, S 1995, 'Purposes and values for professional musicians in the twenty-first century', In Bruhn S (ed.) *The education of the professional musician: Towards a change of attitudes regarding goals and values*, pp 192-211, CIRCME, University of Western Australia, Perth.
- Jayatilica. B 1995, *Effective Piano Teaching*. Unpublished doctoral thesis. University of Western Australia, Perth.
- Kolb, DA Boyatzis, R E & Mainemelis, C 1999, 'Experiential learning theory: Previous research and new directions', Department of Organizational Behavior, Weatherhead School of Management, Case Western Reserve University. Retrieved January 8, 2008 from <http://www.learningfromexperience.com>

- Knowles, M 1980, *The Modern Practice of Adult Education: Andragogy versus pedagogy*, Association Press, Chicago
- Knowles, M 1984, *The Adult Learner: A neglected species*, 3rd edn, Gulf, Texas.
- Long, H and associates 1998 *Developing paradigms for Self-Directed learning*, College of Education, University of Oklahoma.
- Michalski, Y (2008) *Skills and Behaviours important for effective piano teaching: A survey of the piano pedagogy components of current undergraduate music degrees in Australian tertiary institutions*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of Queensland, Brisbane.
- National Training Information Service 2008, *Music Training Package, Qualifications*, Retrieved January 26, 2008 from [http:// www.ntis.gov.au](http://www.ntis.gov.au)
- National Training Information Service 2008a, *Search: Music and Music Teaching*. Retrieved January 26, 2008 from [http:// www.ntis.gov.au](http://www.ntis.gov.au)
- Neuhaus, H 1967, *Die Kunst des Klavierspiels*, Musik-verlag Hans Gerig, Koln English edition translated from the Russian by Leibovitch, KA 1973, *The Art of Piano Playing*, Praeger Publishers, New York.
- Sandor, G 1981, *On piano playing*, Schirmer, New York.
- Tait, M & Haack, P 1984, *Principles and processes of music education: New perspectives*, Teachers College Press, New York.
- Timmermann, S 2010, *Older-Adult Learning: Shifting priorities in the 21st century*. Retrieved 4 February, 2011 from <http://www.asaging.org>
- Tollefson, (2000). 'Beyond the curriculum: The teacher as role model, unpublished spoken paper at *ISME World Conference 2000*, Edmonton.
- Rogers, R & Kramer, MA 2008, *Adult Education Teachers: Designing Critical Literacy Practices*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Taylor and Francis Group, New York.
- Stockley, D 2003, *What is E-learning?* Retrieved 6h May 2011 from <http://derekstockley.com.au/elearning-definition.html>.
- Wikipedia 2008, 'Lifelong Learning', Retrieved January 9 2008, from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lifelong\\_education](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lifelong_education).

### **About the Author:**

**Dr McMillan** is a full time senior lecturer in Malaysia specialising in Piano Performance and Pedagogy. Her Master's thesis was the first academic publication to critique the Suzuki philosophy and its adaptation for older beginners. Following this her doctorate focused on accreditation, qualifications and training, registration and professional development for studio piano teachers in Australia. Dr. McMillan presents internationally on a series of performance and pedagogy topics for teachers and students. Her areas of interest are teacher training, human development through music, improvisation, creativity and the mature age student.