

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI

A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600

THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA
GRADUATE COLLEGE

THE LATE BLOOMERS PIANO CLUB:
A CASE STUDY OF A GROUP IN PROGRESS

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

by
JANE MICHELLE CONDA
Norman, Oklahoma
1997

UMI Number: 9721060

UMI Microform 9721060
Copyright 1997, by UMI Company. All rights reserved.

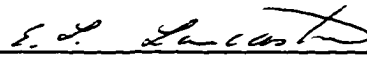
**This microform edition is protected against unauthorized
copying under Title 17, United States Code.**

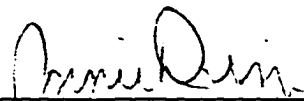
UMI
300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

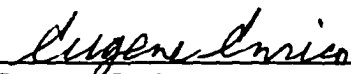
THE LATE BLOOMERS PIANO CLUB:
A CASE STUDY OF A GROUP IN PROGRESS

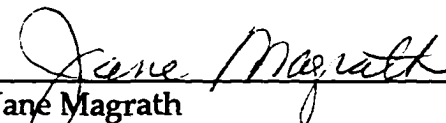
A DISSERTATION
APPROVED FOR THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC


By

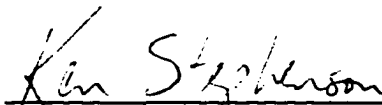

E. L. Lancaster, Major Professor


Connie Dillon


Eugene Enrico


Jane Magrath


Roger Rideout


Kenneth Stephenson

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

•

© Copyright by J. Michelle Conda 1997
All Rights Reserved.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the following people:

To Dr. Michael Langenbach, who started me on my journey of qualitative research. He understood what I wanted to do, and gave me invaluable suggestions on how to do it.

To my friend Daniel Schlagetter, who sent me the article about *The Late Bloomers Piano Club*, the focus group of the dissertation. He offered encouragement, an occasional nudge, and a place to stay while doing research.

To Lucy Riebe, founder of *The Late Bloomers Piano Club*, who graciously agreed to let me into her home and organization for over a year. Her meticulous record keeping was also of profound help in the completion of the dissertation. Thanks also to Ken Riebe for being a terrific co-host.

To the members of *The Late Bloomers Piano Club*. They didn't realize the time and energy that would be required of them when they agreed to help in my research. Still, they opened their hearts, souls and homes to me without complaint and with warmth.

To Dr. E. L. Lancaster, who served as chair and major professor, I am grateful for his unwavering support and help in allowing me to take a less traveled road in music research. His enthusiasm and confidence in me helped more than he will ever know.

To the members of my doctoral committee, Dr. Connie Dillon, Dr. Eugene Enrico, Dr. Jane Magrath, Dr. Roger Rideout, and Dr. Kenneth Stephenson. I was inspired by all of them even when my dissertation was just a dream.

To Darla Eshelman, my thanks for the model she graciously provided that pulled me through many a rough spot in my writing.

To the yet unborn "weejun," who kept me company during the many lonely hours in front of the computer.

Finally, to my best friend and husband, Robert Conda, who learned to cook and clean and be supportive, even during the unproductive times. Without his encouragement and love, the successful completion of this degree would not have been possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES	xi
ABSTRACT	xii
CHAPTER	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Rationale.....	4
Purpose of the Study	6
Procedure.....	6
Limitations.....	9
Definition of Terms.....	10
Organization of the Study.....	16
II. RESEARCH PROCEDURE	17
Selection of Subjects.....	17
Observation Procedure	18
Interview Procedure.....	19
Supplemental Data.....	21
Research Analysis.....	23
Credibility of Findings	24
Multiple Sources of Data.....	24
Observational Data Compared with Interview Data.....	24
Private Conversations versus Public Conversations.....	25
Consistency of Information.....	26
Comparing Perspectives from Different Points of View.....	26
Check of Program Documents and Other Written Evidence.....	27
Deviant Cases.....	27
Evaluator Affect	28
Summary.....	30

CHAPTER	Page
III. DESCRIPTIVE DATA.....	32
Program Origins and History	32
Program Activities, Processes and Goals	36
Membership Characteristics	38
Patty Egert	39
Darla Brinks	39
Peter Bench.....	39
Judy Breese	40
Donald Edwards	40
Debbie Davis.....	41
Frank Park.....	41
Tim Jenson.....	42
Robert Shaw.....	42
Mary Brighten.....	42
Violet Stevens	43
Mel Hanson.....	43
Lucy Riebe.....	43
Carrie Hull.....	44
Carol Fisk.....	44
Ellen Valmar.....	45
David Shale.....	45
Sheila Shale.....	45
Lucy's House—Home of the LBPC.....	46
Description of the Findings	47
Motivations for Members to Attend the LBPC	48
Factors Members Overcame to Attend the LBPC.....	51
The Role of Socialization in the Club's Existence.....	56
Member Motivations to Play the Piano.....	58
The Importance of Piano in the Members' Lives.....	65
Factors that Keep Members from Quitting the LBPC.....	66
Why the LBPC Exists.....	70
Changes and Strategies that have Occurred in the Development of the LBPC	71
Changes and Developments of Interrelationships Between the Club Members and Founder.....	72

CHAPTER	Page
IV. ANALYSIS OF DATA.....	74
Related Theory	74
Motivational Theory.....	74
Transitional Theory	78
Ego Identity.....	80
Small Group Theory	80
Theory Related to LBPC Members	83
Debbie Davis.....	83
Darla Brinks	84
Frank Park	85
Peter Bench.....	86
Tim Jenson.....	87
Robert Shaw	88
Mary Brighten.....	89
Patty Egert	90
Mel Hanson.....	90
Carol Fisk.....	91
Judy Breese	92
Ellen Valmar.....	92
Donald Edwards	93
David Shale.....	93
Carrie Hull.....	94
Violet Stevens	95
Lucy Riebe.....	96
Theory Related to the LBPC.....	96
V. THEMES AND INTERPRETATIONS.....	98
Introduction.....	98
Motivation for Piano Study.....	99
Childhood Events.....	99
Admiration for a friend or neighbor.....	99
Prompting by family members or friends	100
Awareness of talent.....	100
Piano in the home.....	101
Music present in the home.....	101
Music available in school and church.....	102
Music as a form of socialization	102
Overt artistic expression.....	103
Purchasing a Piano	104
Life Changing Events.....	107
Death of a loved one	107
Retirement from a job.....	107

CHAPTER	Page
Change in home environment	107
New opportunity	108
Musical catalyst.....	108
Hobby Replacement.....	109
Joining the LBPC.....	110
Interpretations.....	110
Factors Influencing the Commitment to Piano Study	111
Previous Piano Study.....	111
The Desire to Recapture Childhood	115
Self Confidence.....	116
Extrinsic Motivations.....	118
Intrinsic Motivations.....	120
Interpretations.....	122
The LBPC as an Organization in Transition.....	124
Club Rules	124
Group Dynamics	127
Interpretations.....	129
 VI. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	131
Summary	131
Conclusions.....	133
Themes and Interpretations.....	133
Theory Related to Persistence in Piano Performance.....	135
Recommendations	138
 BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	140
 APPENDICES	
A. PATTON'S DESIGN OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PROJECTS.....	147
B. PERMISSION FORM.....	150
C. NAME AUTHORIZATION.....	152
D. PERMISSION FOR INTERVIEW	154
E. CONFIRMATION OF INTERVIEW TIME	156
F. THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING	158
G. REQUEST FOR CORRECTIONS.....	160

APPENDICES	Page
H. FOLLOW UP LETTER.....	162
I. ATTENDANCE REMINDER.....	165

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Tables

1. Observation and Informal Interview Schedule.....	22
2. Interview Schedule	23
3. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.....	76

Figures

1. Lucy and Ken Riebe's living room arrangement for the LBPC	47
--	----

THE LATE BLOOMERS PIANO CLUB:
A CASE STUDY OF A GROUP IN PROGRESS

BY: J. MICHELLE CONDA

MAJOR PROFESSOR: E. L. LANCASTER, Ph.D.

The Late Bloomers Piano Club (hereafter called LBPC) is a piano performance group that meets bimonthly on the first Sunday of that month in the outskirts of Toledo, Ohio. Its membership consists of twenty adults between the ages of thirty five and eighty five. The purpose of this study was to examine the LBPC and its members to discover: why the club exists, what changes and strategies have occurred in the development of the organization, and how interrelationships have changed and developed between the club members and founder.

To gain insight into the existence of the LBPC, members were asked questions that provided data about: what motivated them to attend the organization and what they had to overcome to continue attending, the role of socialization in the club's existence, the importance of piano in the members' lives, what motivated the members to play the piano, and what kept them from quitting the organization.

The investigator utilized qualitative/naturalistic research techniques for collection and analysis of data. Data were collected through:

1. Structured, semi-structured and non-structured interviews with the LBPC members

2. Perusal of pertinent documents, such as newspaper articles, club notices, diaries, music manuscript, and letters
3. Direct observation of the LBPC.

After examination of the LBPC and its participants, three categories of study emerged—motivation for piano study, factors influencing the commitment to continue piano study, and the LBPC as an organization in transition.

The motivation to study piano was traced to five phenomena: (1) childhood events, (2) purchasing a piano, (3) life changing events, (4) hobby replacement, and (5) joining the LBPC.

Five factors were found to have an effect on the commitment level of the participants: (1) previous piano study, (2) the desire to recapture youth, (3) the level of self-confidence, (4) extrinsic factors, and (5) intrinsic factors.

Existing motivation theory, transitional theory, ego identity and small group theory were found to explain motivation to start piano study, but did not address the issue of persistence of piano study. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs most adequately explained the human condition that motivated all the members of the LBPC.

The following areas of further investigation were recommended: a follow-up study of the LBPC and its members to discover if the same conclusions found in this study could be drawn, further studies focusing on attritional theory as it relates to dropping out of piano study, a follow-up study focusing on subjects who dropped out of the LBPC an assessment of the influence of piano teachers on adult piano students in terms of motivation and continued commitment to piano study, the application of the conclusions of this study as a guide for developing a program similar to the

LBPC, and research that uses the themes and interpretations of this study to determine if they are quantifiable beyond the given study.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I think creative people are often long-lived because we are always re-inventing life: what we did yesterday we create anew tomorrow. Inherent in this process is *hope*.

Edna Eckerd
(Weisberg & Wilder, 1985, p. 17)

No teachers allowed!

Lucy Riebe, *The Late Bloomers Piano Club*

For the first time in our society, adults outnumber youth (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991). As a result of changing demographics and economics, adults are choosing to be active learners, as seen by the numbers of adults participating in some form of structured education. In a study sponsored in part by the College Board and conducted by Carol B. Aslanian and Henry M. Brickell (1980), of the two thousand Americans over the age of twenty five that were polled, almost fifty per cent revealed that they were involved in some sort of structured learning activity. This is a modest number, as it does not reflect those who are learning independently of a structured organization.

Although primarily adults enter learning situations because of economic necessity (Aslanian & Brickell, 1980; Merriam & Caffarella, 1991), there is more than one reason for an adult to initiate learning.

Houle (1961) has offered an explanation in his analysis of three classes of adult learners and what motivates them to learn. The first and largest class of observants is *goal-oriented*, those who initiate formal instruction to achieve certain objectives. People initiating career changes or advancements are members of this class. Women reentering the work force or entering it for the first time are also important members of this group. Goal-oriented learners are participating in the educational system usually out of economic necessity.

The second class of observants includes *activity-related* learners, those who enter a learning situation to develop social contacts and relationships. People who are divorced or widowed and seek social outlets are members of this class. Other members are people who have moved and adults whose children have grown and left home.

The third and smallest class is the *learning-oriented*, those who engage in formal learning situations simply for the pleasure of the learning experience. Typically, these are the life long learners who engage in one learning situation after the other. This could be learning to garden, to cook, to study art—any situation where the product may not be as important as the process. Some members of this class may be trying to improve their self esteem. Others may find it important to be competent in a chosen skill.

A small percentage of adult piano students may be *goal-oriented*, especially if they are trying to enter the teaching market. However, because it is nearly impossible to develop a career in music without extensive and long term training, this number is limited. Adult piano students are more typically *learning-oriented* or *activity-related* learners.

Regardless of the reasons people enter the educational forum, the number of people who drop out is astronomical. Traditionally, attrition by students in higher education ventures is estimated at around fifty percent (Kowalski, 1977). Considering the number of adults (87%) who enter the education arena out of economic necessity, this is indeed a high number.

Very little research focuses on attrition rates in leisure time pursuits. Most is in the field of recreational exercise adherence (see Dishman, 1988, for extensive research findings in this area). Other attrition studies have focused around collegiate education, which is the formal educational arena that most adults enter (Astin, 1975; Astin, 1977; Astin, 1993; Cross, 1972; Hilterbran, 1990; Tinto, 1987).

Aslanian (1980) notes that recreational piano programs for adults have extremely high attrition rates, with the drop out numbers well over the fifty percent considered standard. Although there has never been conclusive data that explain the high rate, some studies link artistic endeavors with leisure time, resulting in student discontinuance when other parts of their lives take precedence (Aslanian & Brickell, 1980). However, a more powerful phenomena that needs to be examined is reasons adults *persist* in their pianistic endeavors, and specifically, in playing the piano.

Rationale

If an experience arouses curiosity, strengthens initiative, and sets up desires and purposes that are sufficiently intense to carry a person over dead places in the future, continuity works in a very different way. Every experience is a moving force. Its value can be judged only on the ground of what it moves toward and into (Dewey, 1939, p. 31).

The Late Bloomers Piano Club (hereafter called LBPC) is a piano performance group that meets bimonthly on the first Sunday of that month in the outskirts of Toledo, Ohio. Its membership at the time of research consisted of twenty adults between the ages of thirty five and eighty five. It is advertised as “ . . . a support group open to all adult piano students who wish to improve their skills at playing for a small audience” (Toledo Blade, “Peach” Section, Oct. 1994).

The pianistic requirements of group members is to perform two pieces at every meeting. This is a huge learning responsibility that the members have chosen to undertake. There is little grumbling over the requirement, which appears to be motivation for the students to keep improving their piano skills.

The members of LBPC come from diverse life and economic backgrounds. Their choice of the type of music to perform is just as diverse, performing classical, pop and rock music. Some students read music well while others can only read chord charts. Some students are studying with a piano teacher while others are on their own. Some have played the piano for several years while others are just beginning.

There are two common denominators that are evident in the LBPC; there is a desire to come together in some sort of piano related experience, and all are over the age of 35.

The LBPC has several unique characteristics:

1. The members persist at performing. It is often said that adult piano students do not want recital or performance opportunities (Dillon & Shapiro, 1991). Learning to play the piano is an internal motivation, and needs no outward manifestation.

2. Even though some of the members do not take piano lessons, they perform at the LBPC. The piano teacher is not necessarily the motivating factor in influencing students to be a part of this organization. In fact, several teachers were against having their adult students join.

3. The members consider this a support group. Performing for each other is a way of gaining experience and perhaps reducing nervousness during the performance act. The members of the LBPC have formed a support group to accomplish a behavior that they elect to do.

4. Practicing and playing the piano is the primary goal of the group. Leisure pursuits are often not so aggressively educational in nature. The members of the LBPC have chosen a recreational activity that requires hard work.

According to Dewey (1939), "It is easier to walk in the paths that have been beaten than it is, after taking a new point of view, to work out what is practically involved in the new point of view" (pp. 20-21). The adage "you can't teach an old dog new tricks" still prevails among adult students and teachers alike (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991). This statement is supported by research that adults show a decline in performance abilities as they age

(Kidd, 1973). Despite these obstacles, adult learners persist at exploring new learning opportunities. Elderhostel offers more than 250 music courses throughout the United States (Bojanowski, 1990), evidence that some adults are willing to believe they are capable of continuing to learn. It is also thought adults learn for their own pleasure, and do not wish to perform (Brown, 1989). This is not the case of the members of the LBPC. It is the researcher's opinion that it is important to find out why the members of the LBPC have chosen to go beyond the beaten path, not only evidenced by choosing to learn how to play the piano as adults, but also by performing for each other in a formal environment.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the Late Bloomers Piano Club and its members to discover:

1. Why the club exists
2. What changes and strategies have occurred in the development of the organization
3. How interrelationships have changed and developed between the club members and the founder.

Because the study followed a perspective-seeking path, the focus of the study evolved as it progressed (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 41). Questions to participants focused around issues that emerged during the interviews.

Procedure

The club members granted permission (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982) to do preliminary observations of the LBPC prior to submitting the dissertation

proposal. These observations were non-invasive, meaning that the observer did not perform or offer performance suggestions. As the study progressed, it became evident that performing at the LBPC by the researcher would be in direct violation of the club's purpose: to give performance opportunities for those who need support in performing in front of a small audience. This necessitated a change of research direction from an emic point of view to an etic point of view.

Informal discussions with club members took place after the preliminary observations. These discussions were arranged by the club founder, Lucy Riebe, primarily for the purpose of introducing the researcher to the club members. As the study progressed, data were collected through focused interviews, which were conducted with individual members and by focus groups (Merton, 1956).

Because relationships, interactions, and perceptions are difficult to measure quantitatively, this study used the phenomenological perspective in the form of a case study. Data were collected through:

1. Structured, semi-structured and non-structured interviews with LBPC members
2. Perusal of pertinent documents, such as newspaper articles, club notices, diaries, music manuscript, and letters
3. Direct observation of the meetings of LBPC.

The membership of this organization is separate from any piano instruction the members might be receiving. At the time of the study, some members were not undertaking formal instruction. Although piano teacher characteristics were discussed at length by the LBPC members, many preferred that their piano teachers not be included in the study.

To gain insight into the existence of the LBPC, members were asked questions that provided data about:

1. What motivates them to attend the LBPC, and what they have to overcome to continue attending
2. The role of socialization in the club's existence
3. The importance of piano in the members' lives
4. What motivates the members to play the piano
5. What keeps them from quitting the organization.

Because of the nature of phenomenological research, questions in the structured and semi-structured interviews resulted from outcomes of the non-structured interview data that were collected. According to Fetterman (1991), "Ideally, the qualitative researcher begins with informal interviews to learn the appropriate questions to ask. Later, as the researcher gains a basic working knowledge of the social setting, the questions become more refined, focused, and structured. The practice of asking structured questions prematurely, before gaining adequate grounding in the social system, runs against the methodological grain of qualitative research. This kind of *a priori* approach is insensitive to the participants' perspective and typically results in systematic but useless information for program personnel and policymakers" (p. 2).

Because of Lucy Riebe's attention to detail, the researcher was able to collect data from various sources, including newspaper articles, club notes, and personal diaries. This allowed triangulation of data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Goetz & LeCompte, 1984) among these sources and the interviews.

As suggested by Bogdan (1982), a form that contained the researcher's description of the study, what will be done with the findings, as well as

other pertinent information, signed by the participant, was taken as evidence of informed consent (Appendix B). Names and locations have been changed to assure anonymity of the participants. An exception to this is the name of the organization and its founder, Lucy Riebe, who has asked that the research include her real name and the actual name of the group (Appendix C).

Limitations

The results of this study are not necessarily applicable to other situations. As stated by Patton (1980), "Generalization--how much can be expected to hold true for every situation? Social phenomena are too variable and too context-bound to lend themselves to generalization. Any generalization is a working hypothesis, not a conclusion" (pp. 279-280).

Participants may have changed their behaviors because of the presence of the researcher. This necessitated discounting some data and interpreting other in context with the situation (Bogdan, 1982, p. 43).

The researcher may have biases that affect what is asked or how information is interpreted. Research inevitably involves personal perspective (Patton, 1980, p. 270), and therefore is a place for judgment error.

The study is limited to the time frame that was spent in the research situation. Initial contact with Lucy Riebe was made in April 1995. Observations of the LBPC began in May 1995 and concluded in July 1996. Interviews with club members began in May 1995 and concluded in July 1996.

Definition of Terms

Because this study is phenomenological in nature and some of the terminology and procedures may be unfamiliar, the following terms require definition. Except where noted, definitions are based on the research of Langenbach, Vaughn and Aagaard (1994).

A priori. Latin term which indicates "before." Refers to pre-existing theory.

Case site. The place the observation is to take place. Includes the home of Lucy Riebe, as well as other interview locations.

Case study. A research design focusing on one person or thing to be analyzed. Designed to provide limited information that focuses on a single issue, individual, or organizational behavior.

Consistency. Equivalent to *reliability*, found in quantitative studies. Measures the likelihood that the same or similar data would be collected from the same participants in a naturalistic study.

Constant comparative method. Process of: continuously checking and cross-referencing new data with data previously obtained; checking data with other sources; checking the data with the categories developed in qualitative analysis.

Contamination of data. Occurs when an external factor affects the observations (data) and interpretations of them.

Content analysis. Examination of qualitative data by quantitative or qualitative means, such as counting how many times a word is used, or noting the impact of a certain repeated gesture.

Credibility. Refers to the believability of the information obtained.

Data. Information that is collected and analyzed in a research project.

Data reduction. Process of narrowing the research question, or sorting the information collected.

Data Saturation. Point at which the information received becomes redundant, repeating what are now common patterns in the research study.

Demographics. Compilations of numbers relating to race, ethnic background, income, genre, occupation, and so forth.

Design. Arrangements of procedures and methods of a research project that typically includes case site, sample, data collection, and analysis.

Emergent design. Change in the design of a research project during the course of the project that facilitates data collection and reframing of the research question.

Emic. Anthropological term meaning native description, using the words and language native to a culture. "The evaluator shares as intimately as possible in the life and activities of the program under study" (Patton, 1980, p. 127).

Ethics. Conduct and moral judgment as related to the research.

Ethnology. Research tradition that analyzes qualitative data. Usually seeks perspective about the culture of individuals, groups, or systems. Often used interchangeably with naturalistic and phenomenological research design.

Etic. Way an outsider observes a culture. Using the researcher's criteria to try to understand emic perspectives.

External validity. Estimate of the degree to which results demonstrated in a research project are generalizable to the population.

Field notes. Gathering of data at the location of the research site.

Grounded theory. Research tradition related to naturalistic philosophy. Derives models or explanations (generates theory) from patterns in the data, rather than testing *a priori* or preconceived theory.

Informants. People in an ethnographic research project from whom data are gathered.

Key informant. Primary informant in ethnographic research. Subjects who are more willing to talk, have greater experience in the setting, or are especially insightful.

Naturalism. Research philosophy that structures studies to seek perspectives of participants or informants, usually by collecting qualitative data analyzed through qualitative means.

Observer affect. Degree to which the researcher affects the data by interactive participation at the research site. As stated by Patton (1980): "Evaluators should strive to neither overestimate nor underestimate their effects, but to take seriously their responsibility to describe and study what those effects are" (p. 335).

Of importance are: (Patton, 1980, p. 334)

1. Reactions of program participants and staff to the presence of the evaluator
2. Changes in the evaluator (the measuring instrument) during the course of the evaluation
3. The predispositions or biases of the evaluator

4. Evaluator incompetence.

Participant observer. Researcher who both collects data from and becomes involved in a certain case site.

Perspective-seeking. View of reality that a research study takes. Presumes that no one reality exists. The phenomenon under investigation can be as varied as the number of persons who interact with it.

Phenomenology. Search for understanding about how participants experience and give meaning to an event, a series of events, a concept, or phenomenon.

Qualitative data. Non-numerical information collected to answer a research question. Frequently are textual, also can be historical, sociological, or anthropological.

Qualitative methods. Techniques by which qualitative data are obtained and analyzed. Examples are: interviews, participant observation. Seek patterns or themes within textual data.

Semi-structured interview. Researcher guides the subject or informant by asking questions within broad categories. Includes open-ended questions.

Structured interview. Sometimes called "formal" interviews. Specific questions are asked, often demographic in nature. Involves general

questions about that which is being studied, such as intended purpose for a facility, when the subject attended a function, etc.

Subjects. Another name for informants or participants.

Theory-generating research. Begins with the assumption that hypotheses for further study cannot adequately be derived from existing theory. Researcher collects and analyzes data from which hypothetical theory is generated.

Triangulation. Technique in which at least three independent sources are used to verify the trustworthiness of qualitative data. "Triangulation is a form of testing the data. It involves comparing one source of data with another to test hypotheses and to probe more deeply into a group or culture, producing cross-validating evidence. The general concept is basic to establishing validity in qualitative research. Like the behavior patterns that the researcher observes in the field over time, patterns of evidence exist that make a conclusion more or less convincing and compelling. The general concept is basic to establishing validity in qualitative research. Triangulation is one of many important tools used to document and describe what is going on in a community." (Fetterman, 1991), p. 2.

Unstructured interview. Used when the researcher does not want to sensitize the interviewee as to the nature of the research question.

Organization of the Study

The study is organized into five chapters, a bibliography, and appendices. Following the introductory chapter, the remaining chapters are adapted from Patton's (1980) design for a qualitative research project, found in Appendix A. Chapter II describes the research procedure. Details about actual implementation of the research, how the data were collected (interviews, observation and videotape procedures), and any departures from the procedure are reported. Also included is a discussion of the credibility of the findings, including analysis of deviant cases, triangulation procedures and evaluator (researcher) effect.

Chapter III contains the presentation of descriptive data, with the purpose of transporting the reader into the situation being evaluated. It is sub-divided into two categories: (1) descriptive information about the program (LBPC), and (2) descriptive information based on observations and/or interviews organized around the questions, issues and concerns that were generated by the researcher.

Chapter IV is an analysis of data that links motivations of the participants and interpretations about the LBPC with existing adult learning, participation, small group, transitional, and motivation theory. Chapter V is a presentation of recurring themes and interpretations that emerged from the data. A summary, evaluation, and recommendations for further study comprise Chapter VI. Following the bibliography, the appendices include Patton's qualitative research design, permission to use the name of *The Late Bloomers Piano Club* and its founder, letters to prospective participants, response form, and follow up letters to participants.

CHAPTER II

RESEARCH PROCEDURE

The investigator utilized qualitative research techniques for collection and analysis of the data. Consistent with qualitative or naturalistic inquiry, procedures for collecting data included identifying and interviewing members of the LBPC. Also crucial to the study were observations of LBPC meetings. Videotaped interviews, audiotaped interviews, researcher notes, and supplemental materials (key informant reports, newspaper reports, researcher notes, researcher questions) provided multiple data sources for analysis and conclusions.

The study was organized using Patton's (1980) design for a qualitative research project. Descriptive information about the program (LBPC) and descriptive information around the questions, issues and concerns generated by the researcher, were discussed. Second, themes and interpretations about the LBPC were linked with motivational theory, transitional theory, ego identity and small group theory. Finally, emergent patterns were reported as substantive theory that explained participation in the LBPC.

Selection of Subjects

Because this is a case study researching the phenomena of a program (*The Late Bloomers Piano Club*), the number of subjects was limited by

membership to the organization. Lucy Riebe was the sole authority on who was considered a member and who was not. Lucy defined membership to the LBPC by attendance at club meetings. Two criteria were used to determine someone leaving the club: calling her and declaring this intention, and non-attendance for two consecutive club meetings without notifying her. Lucy provided a notebook reporting information about current club members as well as about those who had dropped out of the club. Two members who attended only the first meeting in May 1994 were not reported by Lucy. The researcher did not know about this until after the research was completed.

At the time of the interviews, there were twenty-one club members. Only four members were not interviewed: one requested not to be interviewed, two were out of town and did not return interviewer phone calls requesting the interview, and one had a family emergency that precluded the focused interview portion of the study.

Of the eight members who had officially dropped from the organization, three granted interviews, one was out of town, one asked not to be interviewed, one did not return interviewer phone calls requesting an interview, and two were not reported to the researcher. Therefore, the interview data are limited to seventeen current members and three former members. A schedule of meetings and open-ended interviews is found in Table 1.

Observation Procedure

The researcher requested permission to observe the LBPC in April 1995. Lucy decided not to grant the request until talking to club members. On

April 22, 1995, Lucy Riebe granted the observer permission to attend and observe the LBPC.

The researcher attended meetings bi-monthly between May 1995 and July 1996. The number of members in attendance and the dates are found in Table 3. The observer attended an interim meeting in April 1996 that involved only five members of the LBPC. This meeting was for those who had not been able to attend the March meeting.

Informal interviews occurred after select meetings with various club members. These interviews were held while having dinner or snacks. A schedule of meetings and open-ended interviews is found in Table 1.

Interview Procedure

In June 1996, the researcher sent letters (Appendix D) asking members permission to be a part of focused interviews. A follow up phone call was made during the week of July 8 to schedule the time and place for each interview. A follow up letter (Appendix E) was sent to each member confirming the interview time and place.

Interviews were done individually and in focus groups (Merton, 1956; Lincoln 1985), depending on the wish and time constraints of the participants. A form (Appendix B) requesting permission for the interview was signed and submitted to the researcher as permission to proceed with the interview. Two members submitted correspondence at the request of the researcher because they could only meet briefly in person. A schedule of interviews is found in Table 2.

A thank you letter (Appendix F) for participating was sent the week following the focused interviews. In the letter, participants were advised of when the transcripts of their interview would be transcribed and sent to

them for additions and corrections (Merton, 1956; Lincoln, 1985; Langenbach, 1994). A letter asking for corrections (Appendix G) was sent with the transcripts and a postage paid envelope. A deadline was suggested for returning transcripts.

The researcher noted from comments included in the returned transcripts that participants were concerned about their grammar in the transcripts and the confidentiality of the information found in the transcripts. The researcher sent a letter addressing this concern (Appendix H) to the participants.

Focused interviews were videotaped, except when permission was denied. Tim Jenson and Carrie Hull requested notes be taken only during their interviews.

The purpose of the interviews was to determine issues of importance to LBPC members. Because of the ambiguity of the information to be researched, questionnaires were not piloted by the researcher.

"We have already noted the reasons that, within the naturalistic paradigm, designs must be emergent rather than preordained: because meaning is determined by context to such a great extent; because the existence of multiple realities constrains the development of a design based on only one (the investigator's) construction; because what will be learned at a site is always dependent on the interaction between investigator and context, and the interaction is also not fully predictable; and because the nature of mutual shapings cannot be known until they are witnessed. All of these factors underscore the indeterminacy under which the naturalistic inquirer functions; the design must therefore be 'played by ear'; it must unfold, cascade, roll, emerge." (Lincoln, 1985, p. 208).

The focused interviews were open-ended interviews, initially structured around the original research questions. This is typical of a quasi-ethnographic research design.

Prior to beginning the set of interviews, the researcher develops a protocol of general questions that needs to be covered; however, the researcher is free to move in any direction that appears interesting and rich in data (Goetz, 1984 p. 9).

Supplemental Data

In addition to observations, focused interviews and informal interviews, Lucy Riebe, the key informant, supplied information to the researcher (Bogdan, 1982; Goetz, 1984; Patton, 1980). Lucy provided the information through diaries, newspaper articles, club notes, and telephone conversations.

Data was supplemented by researcher notes about the LBPC. Common themes and patterns that could be explored in the focused interviews were identified from the notes.

Table 1

Observation and Informal Interview Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>No. of LBPC attendees</u>	<u>Informal interviewees</u>
5-7-95	16	Lucy Riebe Ken Riebe
7-9-95	11	Ellen Valmar Lucy Riebe Ken Riebe
9-10-95	17(researcher did not attend meeting)	
9-17-95	(no meeting—interview only)	Ken Riebe Lucy Riebe Donald Edwards
11-12-95	16	Lucy Riebe Peter Bench Carol Bench Tim Jenson Ken Riebe Frank Park
1-14-96	12	
3-10-95	12(researcher did not attend meeting)	
4-14-96	("make-up" group—no meeting)	Frank Park Ellen Valmar Mary Brighton David Shale Peter Bench Lucy Riebe Ken Riebe Donald Edwards
5-19-96	14	Debbie Davis David Shale Sheila Shale Mary Brighton Lucy Riebe Ken Riebe
7-14-96	18	

Table 2

Interview Schedule

<u>Interviewee</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Site</u>
Mel Hanson	July 8, 1996	His home
Carol Fisk	July 9, 1996	Her home
Carrie Breese	July 9, 1996	By phone
Mary Brighton	July 10, 1996	Her home
Lucy Riebe ¹	July 10, 1996	Holiday Inn
Frank Park ¹	July 10, 1996	Holiday Inn
Peter Bench ¹	July 10, 1996	Holiday Inn
Darla Brinks	July 11, 1996	Holiday Inn
Debbie Davis ²	July 11, 1996	Holiday Inn
Ellen Valmar ³	July 11, 1996	Holiday Inn
Donald Edwards ³	July 11, 1996	Holiday Inn
Janice Cambdon	July 12, 1996	Holiday Inn
Harriet McRay	July 12, 1996	Holiday Inn
Marty Dove	July 12, 1996	His office
David Shale	July 13, 1996	His home
Tim Jenson	July 13, 1996	His home
Carrie Hull	July 13, 1996	Her home
Patty Egert	July 14, 1996	Her home
Violet Stevens	July 14, 1996	Lucy's home and by letter
Robert Shaw	July 14, 1996	Lucy's home and by letter

¹ Focus group² Focus group³ Focus groupResearch Analysis

Consistent with naturalistic inquiry, the researcher utilized methods of data analysis that included constant comparison as advocated by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and content analysis as defined by Patton (1987).

Commonalties between members of the LBPC and their insights into the organization were found through constant comparative analysis.

Inductive content analysis was used to find patterns, themes and categories from the data (Patton, 1980). Existing theories in motivation

theory, transitional theory, ego identity and small group theory were examined to explain participation in the LBPC and persistence in piano studies.

Credibility of Findings

As with naturalistic case studies, the information found is not generalizable beyond the research situation. To check reliability, the researcher used triangulation (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) for strengthening research findings. Triangulation involves using multiple methods of collecting data, and:

1. Compare observational data with interview data
2. Compare what people say in public with what they say in private
3. Check for the consistency of what people [in the situation] say about this situation over time
4. Compare the perspectives of people from different points of view
5. Check program documents and other written evidence that can corroborate what interview respondents report.

(Patton, 1980, p. 331)

Multiple Sources of Data

The researcher used observational field notes, informal interviews, focused interviews, key informant, newspaper articles and the LBPC diary as multiple sources of data. Information received during interviews was typed and returned to the participants for corrections and changes.

Observational Data Compared with Interview Data

The comparison of observational data with interview data were significant in the subsequent findings of the study. For example, the

researcher observed when members performed at the LBPC, they would report the length of time that they had studied piano. From the observers point of view, some of their declarations could not be accurate, as it would be nearly impossible to play at the level some of them played without more training. Each member of the LBPC seemed to have a different definition of what "training" meant. As an example, when David Shale performed for the LBPC, he reported he had taken only one lesson. During the interview, the researcher found that although he had only taken one formal lesson, in actuality he had studied French horn as a child for many years, and had diligently taught himself how to play the piano ten years before he started formal training. This discrepancy was significant in that it uncovered a theme prevalent throughout the membership: the members changed their definition of "piano training" to inflate the training/performing excellence ratio.

Private Conversations versus Public Conversations

There were no private conversations with members of the LBPC. Informal interviews after club meetings were audiotaped, and the focused interviews were videotaped. Because of the conversational nature of the focused interview, members often would forget that what they were saying was being videotaped. Several members expressed concern when they checked their statements for accuracy. One participant said, "I am not proud that I said this, please do not use this." Another asked for certain comments to be kept private. A follow up letter Appendix H) assuring anonymity and that only helpful statements would be used was necessary to keep the participants from withdrawing from the study.

Consistency of Information

Informal interviews took place over the course of one year's time. The researcher used notes from the informal interviews and compared them to what was said during the focused interview. Throughout the time frame, the researcher noted elements of consistency. As an example, Ellen Valmar said in July 1995 that she did not like to perform in front of an audience. In the July 1996 interview, she again reported her distaste for performing in front of an audience, even though she has stayed with the group for the year and continues to perform.

Lucy Riebe and two other club members told the researcher that one of the members, Tim Jenson, had dropped out of the club. When interviewing Tim, he stated that he had decided to take a break for a while from the organization, and indeed had not dropped out. When the interviewer received the corrected transcripts, Tim wrote that he was planning on continuing with the LBPC.

Comparing Perspectives from Different Points of View

Two members of the club, Donald Edwards and Carrie Hull, were friends with Lucy before she started the group. Lucy, Donald and Carrie would play for each other informally, which led to Lucy starting the LBPC. Both Donald and Carrie were interviewed for their perspective on the start of the club, and the direction they saw it taking. In an informal interview, Lucy and Donald discussed the club's beginnings and how they differed in the concept of the group. When asked if they preferred listening to others play over playing themselves, Lucy expressed her dislike for people talking when she played.

Lucy: I'd rather play. I can't play when people talk. I expect sound at restaurants, etc. When [I was] with just Donald and Carrie, they would talk when I played. I'd quit when they did this.

Donald: But we had fun! You may not have liked some of the things we did, but a lot of this was informal stuff.

Excerpted from field notes, April 14, 1995

Donald was open about his perspectives as they differed from Lucy's. He found it easier to report his different point of view because he viewed his relationship with Lucy as very strong.

Donald: Lucy and I are crazy about each other.

MC (researcher): You are honest with each other.

Donald: We fuss a little bit, we fuss a little bit, because I don't agree with everything."

Excerpted from interview, July 11, 1996

Former members of the LBPC were interviewed to get perspectives of people with other points of view. Transcripts were returned to the former members for clarification and accuracy, along with a return postage paid envelop.

Check of Program Documents and Other Written Evidence

Lucy has kept meticulous records of each LBPC meeting, including who attended, what they played, if they were new members, meeting time and date. This information was checked against the reports of the respondents.

Deviant Cases

Two members of the LBPC do not fit the criteria of membership. Sheila Shale, who has been a professional musician, participated in informal interviews, but was not part of the focused interview. The researcher has documented performances of Sheila and has included them

in the research notes. Because Sheila was a professional musician, she did not consider herself a member of the organization, although she attended meetings and performed for the LBPC occasionally.

Lucy's daughter, Nancy, attended and performed during the final observation opportunity in July 1996. Nancy performs regularly in her church and town, and only performed during this meeting as a special guest of Lucy. Lucy has asked that she not be a regular member of the group. The researcher documented Nancy's performance, and has included it in the research notes.

Evaluator Affect

Lucy introduced me during the first meeting I attended, saying I was doing my dissertation on the group. Lucy told the group that I am an administrator, and that I do not teach as my occupation. I again stressed my administrative duties over my teaching duties when I stood to tell about myself. It was noticed that I might have an affect.

I am aware that people are a little nervous that I am here. This person didn't smile when done with the first piece. I should have told them I am not listening to notes but finding out about discipline and motivation.

Excerpted from observer notes, May 7, 1995

It was apparent through observing the LBPC that performing on the piano was a struggle for most of the participants. Lucy reiterated the fact that it is a "support group to help those needing experience playing in front of a small audience" many times. Marty Dove left the group because he performs professionally. Because of these circumstances, the researcher decided that performing as a member of the LBPC would not be advantageous to the group and in reality would change the direction and

purpose of the club. The research focus changed from being an emic point of view to an etic point of view because of these difficulties.

Subsequent observations were found to affect members in differing degrees. Some members found no affect, such as Tim, who said he hears from his wife, who is Lucy's piano teacher, anything that goes on in the group, which is similar to having an "outsider" in the group.

Some members reported feeling compelled to do better when I came to the group.

Frank: I think it will be worse this time because she's going to be listening (points to me).

Peter: No, that's all right, Michelle doesn't bother me. It doesn't bother me that she is there at all.

MC: I'm curious—I've been going for onto two years. Does it bother you?

Peter: No. I'm glad to have you there.

MC: Frank, does it bother you?

Peter: I think it did at first. Once or twice maybe. But I don't think so now. If I don't try to impress you I don't have a problem. But if I sit there, I really want to play this good for her, then I would probably be bothered. But if I don't think about it, which is what I try to do, you know, I don't.

Excerpted from interview, July 10, 1996

Some members reported finding the value of the club increased because of my participation.

David: Your presence has increased the importance of the group a notch. That's in terms of the idea that you are there and writing the dissertation, and just being there. The groups [when] you are there are a little different than when you are not there.

MC: When I'm not there, is there a feeling of relief?

David: No, it's like we're missing an important part of the audience. Because in theory you are more critical or discerning even though we don't see the results of your criticisms.

David, excerpted from interview, July 13, 1996

Mary found she was more nervous at first, but ultimately thought it had a positive affect on the group.

Of course I have been very interested over the fact that we are the basis of your dissertation. Who wouldn't be fascinated? And I'm glad I came into the group to be a part of it. What more can I say but that, really. I don't know that it would change anything, yet, I wouldn't want to disappoint you either. I'm here, I play as me, but I feel as I am part of your dissertation. So, yes, it probably affects me, the very fact that you are sitting here has some part of doing that. I can't say I played any differently because I was scared to the death the first few times I was there. I didn't know who you were, where you were, or what you were, but when I finally found out I thought it was a good concept. I hope you will let us know the outcome.

Mary, excerpted from interview, July, 10, 1996

Summary

The study was organized using Patton's (1980) design for a qualitative research project. After initial analysis of data, descriptive information about the program (LBPC) and descriptive information around the questions, issues and concerns generated by the researcher, were discussed. Second, the data were scanned for patterns, themes, tendencies and trends. Third, themes and interpretations about the LBPC were linked with existing theory. Finally, emergent patterns were reported as substantive theory that explained participation in the LBPC.

The researcher used triangulation to strengthen research findings. Examples of the use of triangulation were given to substantiate reliability.

Deviant cases described were questionable members of the group, as they do not fit the criteria of the group. Notes to this affect were put in the researcher file, as well as notes observing their performances.

The researcher was found to have a profound affect at the LBPC. Because of this, it was decided that performing as a member of the club would be detrimental to the club members. Other affects included heightening the value of the organization, nervousness of performers, a compelling drive to perform for the researcher instead of the club members, and no affect at all.

CHAPTER III

DESCRIPTIVE DATA

It always seems to be raining as I drive the five hours to northern Ohio for the bi-monthly meeting of the Late Bloomers Piano Club. This week is no exception. There is no sign of spring except a red haze around the trees. As I cross the Miami River, I notice a sign announcing the opening of the Annual Walleye Festival. Fishermen are crowding up and down the river. I turn off the expressway and onto Lucy's road. The houses are far apart, yet rim the country road, separating it from the large empty fields behind them. Lucy has the flag out! I notice the sun has popped out, just as it has on my previous journeys to the meeting.

Observations excerpted from field notes, April 14, 1996

Program Origins and History

Lucy Riebe founded the LBPC on May 15, 1994, when she and her husband Ken, first opened their house to ". . . adult piano students who wish to improve their skills by playing for a small audience" (Toledo Blade, "Peach" section, May 12, 1994).

Lucy was searching for adults she could play for and with as early as the spring of 1988, when she first met Donald Edwards at a piano recital given by Donald's and Lucy's teacher, Mrs. Bonnie Rankin. Unfortunately, Mrs. Rankin was hospitalized at the time and not able to attend her own students' recital.

I saw Don [Donald] at the recital. And when the brother [of Mrs. Rankin] said that Bonnie wouldn't be there, I heard Don say "Oh, my, what am I going to do without Mrs. Rankin!"

And I thought, I'd kind of like to meet this man! [Lucy snickers]

Lucy, excerpt from field notes, May 7, 1995

In January 1989, Donald and Lucy played in another recital. This time Lucy saved room for Donald to sit with her after he was done performing. Lucy's daughter tape-recorded both Donald's and Lucy's performance. Later that month, Donald went to Lucy's home to hear the recording of the recital. It was Donald who first mentioned getting together to play for one another. Lucy agreed, but no arrangements were made at that time.

In March of 1991, Lucy met Carrie Hull at an informal get together of adult students. They arranged to play for each other at Carrie's apartment in August. In November, Lucy invited both Carrie and Donald to her house to perform. Thereafter, all three would get together every six or eight weeks at one another's home to play for each other. But Lucy's idea of a performance group differed from Donald and Carrie.

Well, then these two changed it! You'd get there, and they'd say, "Well, we don't know why we're doing this, we don't have anything ready." So they would paw through one another's music, and sightread until it got difficult and then they would quit, and then they got into duets, and they'd sit there and practice their duets, and I said, "I think they're great, but I've got enough to do with my lessons. I don't want to do duets right now." So I was just sitting there listening to them do this stuff, and I said "I'm not getting anything out of this any more because you guys aren't performing." They said, "Well, what do you want to do about it?" I said, "I'll think about it," and thought, "Umph, I'll start my own group." [Lucy laughs]

Lucy, excerpted from field notes, May 7, 1995

Lucy contacted forty seven piano teachers, asking them to post notes and tell their adult students about the new bi-monthly club she had formed. According to Lucy, the teachers were very negative about their adults participating in this organization.

I told [one teacher] about it, and what I wanted to do with the group, and she said, "Oh, that's great, that's marvelous, but all my adult students are professionals and they do not have time for this Another teacher said "You will never be able to do this. You cannot pull this off."

Lucy, excerpted from field notes, May 7, 1995

Although the local piano teachers were not persuaded a group like this was valuable, Lucy's piano teacher, Mrs. Shaw, shared Lucy's enthusiasm for forming a piano support group for adults. Two of Mrs. Shaw's students agreed to participate at her suggestion. Mrs. Shaw also suggested Lucy put up a notice at a local music store. Lucy received one call from this notice, although the gentleman could not make the first meeting.

With only two people who were willing to form the group and a third who could not make it, Lucy felt she had exhausted her resources for finding participants. At this point, Lucy's teacher suggested she put a notice in the Toledo newspaper.

I said, "Well, that would be quite expensive," and she said, "No, in the Peach section [public announcements section of the local newspaper] it's free."

Lucy, excerpted from field notes, May 7, 1995

Lucy submitted the announcement, which was edited by the newspaper, during the first week of May, 1994. It read: "The Late Bloomers Piano Club, an organization of adult piano students who wish to improve their skills by playing for a small audience, will have its bi-monthly meeting at 7 p.m. Sunday at 8847 Monclova Rd. Open to all adult pianists interested in listening or playing. Information: 865-6930"

(Toledo Blade, "Peach" section, May 12, 1994).

The first meeting of the LBPC was May 15, 1994. Lucy had managed to gather three people for this first group. One had read the notice in the newspaper and two were Mrs. Shaw's students. Donald and Carrie had

not yet decided to join the club. The second meeting was July 10, 1994, with four people attending.

Deciding to announce meetings in the newspaper was important to the development of the LBPC. Even though only one person attended the initial meeting that had read the announcement, Lucy started receiving calls from interested adults. The July notice was omitted, but the September announcement was put in the newspaper. The wording for this announcement was changed subtly but significantly. The LBPC was advertised as a support group, and there was no mention that one could attend to simply listen without performing.

The Late Bloomers Piano Club, a support group open to all adult piano students who wish to improve their skills at playing for a small audience, will have its bi-monthly meeting at 7 p.m. Sunday at 8847 Monclova Rd. Information: 865-6930
(Toledo Blade, "Peach" section, September 11, 1994).

In November 1994, Lucy received a call from Willa Conrad, the music critic from the Toledo Blade. The editor had decided the LBPC would make a good human interest story. Although there were nine members of the group at the time, only five were available for the interview with Ms. Conrad. The article appeared in the "Living" section of the newspaper in November 26, 1994. The article included three very large pictures of the group, and covered the complete first page of the "Living" section. With the article, the group "sort of snowballed," according to Lucy. Carrie and Donald had decided to start coming to the group in November, and were featured in the article.

Program Activities, Processes and Goals

The LBPC meets at 2:00 P. M. the second Sunday of every other month, starting with January. The only exception to this is May, when it is moved to the first Sunday to avoid conflicting with Mother's Day.

Lucy sends out reminders to all participants two weeks before the meeting. The reminder evolved from a hand-written letter to a form note with a filled in name (Appendix I). Members are asked to contact her if they are not planning to come. There is no deadline on this request, and Lucy inevitably gets phone calls the day of the meeting.

There are no written rules or dues. The only firm rule is "no teachers allowed" (field notes, April 1995). Research was granted only because the researcher's primary work at present is administration instead of teaching, and because no one in the group is a student of the researcher.

The meetings start the same—Ken stands in the driveway to direct people to the correct parking spot and to give them a welcoming "chat." Lucy waits impatiently inside the front door for Ken to finish his colloquy. As the guest comes up the front walkway, Lucy swings open the door, and with a smile, ushers the guest in quickly to take her post again. Members start appearing approximately ten minutes before the LBPC is to begin, with the majority pulling in the driveway at 2:00 P.M.

Precisely on the appointed hour, Lucy stands in front of the room and makes announcements. First is the welcome and introduction of new members. When the group was small, all members re-introduced themselves at this point, but as the group got larger, members introduced themselves immediately prior to performing. Lucy's announcements include information about members who are not present, when the next meeting will be, and an introduction of new members. She also uses this

time to bring up problems that have occurred, such as reminding members to be on time and not to talk during performances. In July 1996, Lucy reminded members of the purpose for the club:

There is one purpose only to this club. This is a support group to get used to playing comfortably in front of people with ease. We are here to help each other play comfortably."

Lucy, excerpted from field notes, July 14, 1996

Lucy is usually the first to perform, although often people who are nervous find that playing first "gets it over with," and will play first if Lucy doesn't object. There is no order of performance. Members simply say "I guess I'll go next," or "I guess I'll get this over with" as their announcement to perform.

Lucy sits tall in a chair close to the piano where she can watch the audience and performer. If someone has problems continuing, Lucy will urge them to continue, or if a participant loses their nerve at the last second, Lucy will talk them into performing.

Often a performer will give a short story about the piece they perform, or will tell of the difficulties they have had learning a particular selection. Most mention the fact that they are extremely nervous.

After each member performs once, Lucy asks if there is anyone who would like to perform a second piece. Lucy's original idea was to have all that participate play two pieces separated by other performances. After conversations with members, she decided to give members the option to play a second piece or to play their pieces consecutively.

New members are not required to perform on their first visit. After that, Lucy makes it clear that performance is a requirement.

MC: Do you think you could be part of the group if you only listened?

Peter: Not as much. I think you have to participate.

Lucy: Oh, yes.

Peter: It's not fair to just sit there. It's very easy to just sit there and be critical, even. I think if you just sat there and never played you would be more inclined to be critical.

Lucy: Because you don't realize what it's like until you actually get up there and spill your guts right in front of everyone else.

Excerpted from field notes, July 10, 1996

After everyone has had a chance to play, Lucy invites anyone interested to stay and chat with other members. When the group expanded to over twenty members, Lucy stopped offering coffee and cookies to members. In the September 1996 meeting, Lucy reinstated this practice because members were asking for more social contact.

There are no dues or fees to participate in the LBPC. Lucy pays for all piano tuning, correspondence and refreshments. She feels this is her charity.

"I consider, what I'm spending on this, I consider the same as if I were volunteering for something. If I were volunteering for "Meals on Wheels," I would have transportation to pay for. If I went to a hospital and worked, I would have clothes I would have to buy. No matter what you do you'd have to put some money into it."

Excerpted from field notes, May 7, 1995.

Membership Characteristics

The membership to the LBPC fluctuates from week to week. After the article in the newspaper, the membership exploded. In May 1994, there was a membership of four, including Lucy. By July 1996, twenty members were on the roster, with seven more joining and consequently leaving the

group. Between thirteen and nineteen members attend the bi-monthly meeting. Lucy was concerned that she did not have enough chairs to allow spouses to attend, so she put them on "standby." Now she has learned it is okay to "overbook" the meeting because approximately five people whom she is expecting will not show.

Seventeen members agreed to be interviewed. The following are descriptions and comments of these seventeen people.

Patty Egert

Patty is a tall, willowy woman who looks much younger than her age, which is the mid-forties. A member since September 1995, she drives forty minutes from another town to participate in the LBPC. She recently remarried after being widowed for about 10 years. She is a teacher who excels with children who have learning disabilities.

I think everyone can learn. I think it is in the process and the practice. Even if you don't do it for anyone else. I teach at risk kids, generally. I don't like snobbery or elitism and I would never teach the gifted program. I believe it is hard work and its not innate ability.

Patty, excerpted from field notes, July 14, 1996

Darla Brinks

Darla is an active, petite and attractive woman in her early fifties who also looks much younger than her age. She loves to travel, evidenced by her trips to Portugal and Germany. She works as a secretary at an all boys Catholic Jesuit High School. It is hard to pin Darla down; she travels most weekends with her fiancé and spends lots of time with her very large family. Darla first attended the LBPC on March 12, 1995.

Peter Bench

Peter is a tall, energetic man in his early sixties. He has worked for a major stock firm for thirty seven years, where he manages over one hundred million dollars of assets for clients. Peter is studying jazz keyboard. He gets up at 5:30 A.M. to get the first hour of his two hours of daily practice. First joining the LBPC in March 1995, Peter is a cheerleader for the group. He calls members who seem to be flagging, offering encouragement. He is the first to offer complements to those who have just performed. Still working full time, one wonders where he gets the energy for piano study and performance.

So I would say I put piano over on this side as a corollary activity that has become a challenge for me because I like challenges. I like challenges, no matter what it is. I've always been that way.

Peter, excerpted from field notes, July 10, 1996

Judy Breese

Judy joined the LBPC in July 1996. Judy is a fifty-one year old guidance counselor in the public schools, who will retire in two years after thirty-one years of service. She played the piano as a child and is hoping the LBPC will help her find out if she can regain her talent. Although piano is a major interest to her, she was a nursing major in college, being told by her family to think more about learning to "take care of yourself" than playing the piano.

Donald Edwards

Donald is a tall, active man who is a Professor of Educational Psychology at the local University. An avid tennis player, Donald has always thirsted for new adventures, taking numerous classes through his

university fee waivers, including piano, tennis and jogging. Donald first joined the group in November 1994, and got together with Lucy informally before that time.

Debbie Davis

Debbie is a soft-spoken woman who works part time for a doctor's office. She is very nervous to perform in front of the group, but never misses a meeting. She is truly an adult beginner, who has only studied piano for five years. She joined the LBPC in January 1995.

Frank Park

Frank recently retired from an internationally known manufacturing company where he was a supervisor for forty two years. He attended the LBPC for the first time on May 15, 1994, after reading the announcement in the newspaper, and has only missed one time since. He tends to be reflective in nature, quiet yet open with his thoughts when asked. He has played the piano for about six years, but has only worked with a teacher for about three years. Frank has had many hobbies, but piano to him is more than that.

One time automobiles was a hobby. I got into automobiles with my son, and we were racing cars up at the drag strips. We got into that kind of heavy for a while. But the piano has not turned out to be that. Those things all seemed to fade with time, but with the piano, here is something that is almost like food. There's a staple there.

Frank, excerpted from field notes, July 10, 1996

Tim Jenson

Tim is a CPA with his own accounting firm. His wife is Lucy's piano teacher, but Tim does not study with anyone. In his late forties, Tim is one of the younger members of the group. He likes to play pop, jazz and big band music. He is also an avid golfer and builds model ships. Tim joined the group in January 1995, after hearing Lucy discuss it with his wife. Tim also tends to be highly critical of himself.

[If a piece goes poorly] I'm frustrated when I get home. If I butcher a piece here I never pick it up again.

Tim, excerpted from field notes, November 11, 1995

Robert Shaw

Robert is a tall man in his early fifties who attended his first LBPC meeting in September 1995. He is the treasurer for a large international corporation, and often misses meetings because he is out of the country. He tends to be quiet and business-like, not staying to be acquainted with the other members. He is more apt to correspond by e-mail than in person, and he is straightforward with his ideas.

[About piano performance jitters] Recalling that my ease at speaking was not always the case and that I became more comfortable with practice it seemed that I needed practice performing. Thus, the piano club.

Robert, excerpted from letter dated July 22, 1996

Mary Brighten

Mary is an attractive, gracious woman of seventy six, but looks and has the energy of someone much younger. She is incredibly active, volunteering for one of the local hospitals, is secretary of her women's

group at church, sings in the church choir, and lends her time at a local museum. She joined the group in January 1995, and attends regularly.

Violet Stevens

A retired but extremely active woman in her early seventies, Violet has been driving fifty miles to attend the LBPC since March 1995. She still manages time to volunteer for her church, sit on the board for a hospice, and care for a household she shares with her widowed brother. Violet has a great sense of humor. When the researcher noticed she was wearing a piano watch and piano earrings, she responded with a laugh, "I have music in my ears" (Excerpted from field notes, November 12, 1995).

Mel Hanson

Mel is a self-described "jack of all trades, master of none." Although he is a retired math teacher, he continues to work as an announcer for car races, and has a printing shop at his house. Mel does not study with a teacher, and plays jazz for the club. Attending since May 1995, he always has a story to tell about the pieces he plays, sometimes having the group do a "name that tune" guessing game. He likes to speak for public engagements, and likes to play piano for guests at his home.

Lucy Riebe

Lucy is the driving force of the LBPC. Retired from United Airlines where she did "everything but fly," she is eighty one years old, but not close to sitting back in her rocking chair. To Lucy, the LBPC is her charity work.

. . . a lot of people, when they retire, do a lot of volunteer work. I'm not good helping sick people—I can help sick animals, but I don't help sick people [very] good. I think you can volunteer to help people who don't have to be sick, blind, disabled or crippled . . . there are other people who need the help who have money, but they need some help. This is my volunteer work . . . I see that there is a need for this, because nothing is offered other adults.

Lucy, excerpted from field notes, July 19, 1995

Lucy feels she was not afforded the education in life to do the things she would have liked.

I always wanted to do something in the arts. I would have been a great comedian, but I'm no Lucille Ball because I couldn't sing or dance. I tried writing. I wrote some fiction for the Kennel Club but it was stupid. I never went to college. What can someone with no education and 60 years out of high school do? I wrote a couple of other stories and poems. I even bought books about how to learn to write. What can you do with only a high school education?

Lucy, excerpted from field notes, September 15, 1995

Carrie Hull

Carrie is a soft-spoken genteel woman in her early fifties. She works as a secretary for a high-powered law firm, which is taking a toll on her arms and fingers. She likes to stay active mentally when she is not working. She likes to read, discuss world affairs, and religion. She stays physically active as well, walking three times a week all year round, and swims in the summers. Carrie joined the LBPC in November 1994, but got together with Lucy and Donald informally before the official LBPC.

Carol Fisk

Carol is a busy OB/GYN and, in her late thirties, one of the youngest members of the group. She seems to burst with energy, as she juggles

delivering babies, caring for her two children, and studying piano. She is one of the newest members of the group, first attending in January 1996, and has one of the highest performance levels in the group.

Ellen Valmar

Ellen, a retired and extremely attractive woman of sixty five, travels around the country with a tap dancing group. She also finds time to take aerobics every morning, seven days a week. Because of her interest in music, Ellen signed up for a Music Theory course given at the local university during the summer of 1996, and received an "A." Ellen first attended the LBPC in July of 1994.

David Shale

David is a child psychiatrist specializing in difficult cases. David likes being part of the group, yet tends to be introverted. He attended the LBPC for the first time September 16, 1995 after only one formal lesson. In the last six months, David has discovered he likes to write piano music. One of the pieces he wrote is called "Nighttime," a programmatic piece about children at bedtime. David is in his late forties.

Sheila Shale

Sheila, an energetic woman in her early forties, is as extroverted as her husband is introverted. Sheila does not attend the group regularly, as does her husband, but has been coming irregularly since November 1995. She is also the only member of the group with formal music training, with a college degree in voice. Sheila was interviewed informally, and did not

take part of the focused interview because her children were ill the day it was scheduled.

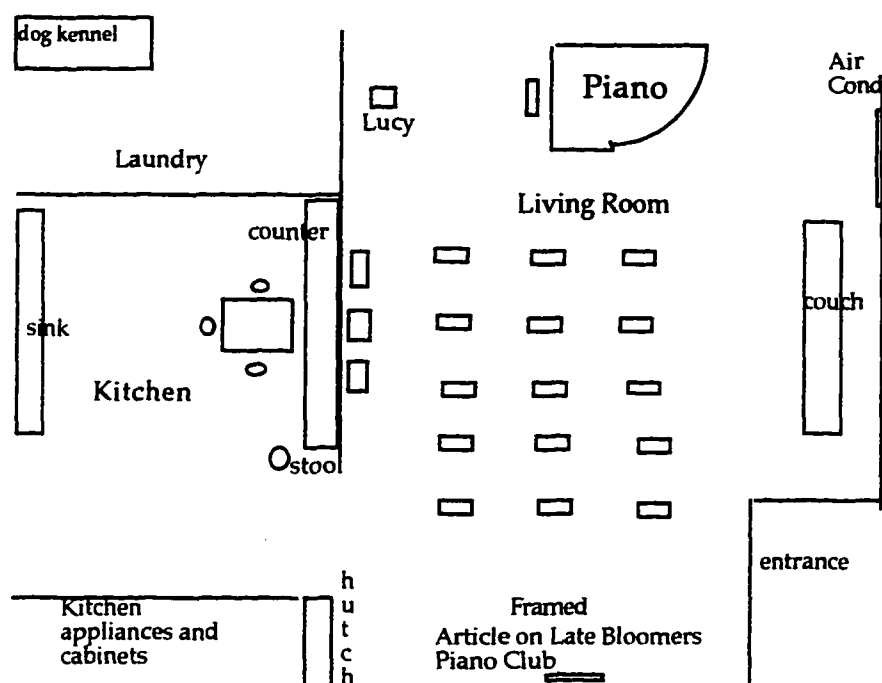
Lucy's House—Home of the LBPC

The Riebe residence is on a country road outside a small town in northwestern Ohio. The small ranch style house sits back from the road. There is a long driveway by the side of the house that continues back past the house to a large workshop that Ken uses for woodworking. On LBPC days, Lucy flies a bright blue pennant with a pink border on a pole by the street. The logo on the pennant takes the form of a g clef and grand piano, and serves two purposes. It helps guests find the driveway, and serves as a reminder of the purpose for the meeting. Lucy has a dog kennel connected to the back of the house, evidenced only by the dog run in the back yard. At the back of the property, edging the large open field, is a dwarf conifer garden. This is a peaceful setting, with leafy trees around the parameters of the home. The large field in back is sometimes used as a landing spot for hot air balloons. The researcher witnessed a balloon so close that conversation was made between the passengers and the researcher.

The LBPC meeting is held in the Riebe living room, which is directly inside the front door of the residence. The 7 foot Yamaha grand piano dominates the room, which is set up with as many chairs as can possibly be squeezed into the available space. The room is a study in eclecticism, although oriental themes dominate. The wall behind the piano is covered with white and gold wallpaper printed with the Chinese symbol for "good luck." There is a window air conditioner that Lucy turns off when people start to play. The kitchen is not divided from the living room area except

by a half wall up from the floor. Occasionally the refrigerator hums loudly. When the room has not been set up for the LBPC, part of the living room serves as a formal dining area. On the back wall is a framed article with photos that the local music critic published about the LBPC, with Lucy's hands shown in the center of the photograph.

Figure 1. Lucy and Ken Riebe's living room arrangement for the LBPC. Square figures in living room represent chair setup.



Description of the Findings

The LBPC exists because of various motivations and needs of the club members. The following information describes insights into the club and its membership by answering these questions:

1. What motivates members to attend the LBPC, and what do they have to overcome to continue attending?
2. What is the role of socialization in the club's existence?
3. What is the importance of piano in the members' lives?
4. What motivates members to play the piano?
5. What keeps members from quitting the organization?

Motivations for Members to Attend the LBPC

Membership in the LBPC is defined only by deciding to attend a meeting. The present members heard about the club through their teacher, through the article in the newspaper, or through the club announcement in the newspaper. Darla was attracted to attend because of the idea that it was advertised as a "support group."

MC: How did you hear of the Late Bloomers?

Darla: Through the paper. I saw the article and the picture and I just, I thought, because I had been in a couple of divorce support groups, I thought you would go and talk about it How you feel, and what keeps you going, and not the actual playing.

Darla, excerpted from interview, July 11, 1996

Patty, who was widowed while in her late thirties, also found the "support group" idea appealing, as she had attended support groups for widowed spouses. Her teacher and Lucy's support motivated her to attend her first meeting.

Patty: First of all, when the article was in the newspaper, I took it to my piano teacher and shared it with her, because I didn't know if she'd seen it. And that was [looks towards her piano], I still have the article in my piano bench, that was some time agoThen Lucy called me.

MC: How did Lucy get your name?

Patty: I think my piano teacher must have called her. I never really asked, but I just got that impression.

Patty, excerpted from interview, July 14, 1996

Carol's piano teacher suggested she attend.

MC: Why did you join [Late Bloomers Piano Club]?

Carol: Susan suggested it. There was another student of hers that was going, and she mentioned it. She said I thought this might be something that would be good to do, and I was really excited about it.

Carol, excerpted from interview, July 9, 1996

Tim heard about the club during the planning stages, as Lucy is a student of his wife. Seeing his interest, his wife suggested he attend, and Lucy subsequently invited him.

Frank and Peter were focusing on their piano studies when they saw the article in the newspaper. Both had family and colleagues who pushed them to attend.

MC: Was it the article that made you attend?

Frank: No, the little advertisement, and I thought boy, that would be nice, but I didn't say too much. My daughter calls up on the telephone and says, hey, I've got something for you. I said what? She said, well they've got this piano group that is starting and I think it's just what you're looking for! She kept after me for a couple of days. So then I called Lucy, just like you did, and we talked so I went over then.

Frank, excerpted from interview, July 10, 1996

I got started because I'd been taking lessons, and I was sitting at my desk, and the guys at office knew I'd been taking lessons and how hard I'd been working at it. Somebody dropped the article that was in the newspaper on my desk. Then the second person put it on my desk and said, this is the kind of thing you ought to be doing. So I called Lucy, and told her what I was doing and where I was at in my lessons. Lucy was very encouraging and said come on out, even if you don't play come out and listen. Sit in and see what we're like.

Peter, excerpted from interview, July 10, 1996

Mary had also read the article, but was spurred to attend by her love for opera and admiration for the singer, Placido Domingo.

I did what I'm sure what the majority did—I picked up the Sunday paper one day. I saw this perfectly marvelous article about Lucy Riebe and the little group that she had formed called the Late Bloomers. I cut it out, and I studied it and I read it, and finally after two weeks or so I said if you don't go pick up the phone it will do you no good. So, I went into the breakfast room and called up Lucy Riebe and nothing has been the same ever since.

. . . And it all fell into place. I suddenly fell in love with Placido Domingo's singing, the music, the operas, and I played them. Some of my friends who are very fond of music came over for dinner, and we would have lunch together, put on Placido Domingo and we would sit here—which we still do. And all of sudden, doing that, and seeing the piece in the paper [article about LBPC], it all came together.

Mary, excerpted from interview, July 10, 1996

Robert was motivated to attend as a logical solution to performance anxiety during his teacher's performance classes.

At my first couple performance classes I was very surprised at my nervousness and my inability to play as well as I did in a non-performance setting. This was a surprise since I typically give speaking presentations to large groups without the slightest concern. Recalling that my ease at speaking was not always the case and that I became more comfortable with practice, it seemed that I needed practice performing. Thus, the piano club.

Robert, excerpted from letter dated July 22, 1996

Members also joined because they were comfortable joining organizations that centered around hobbies. David had been in a photography club where he had lived before, and also in a club that worked toward mastering of the game "Go." He joined the LBPC as another group that centered around his new hobby, playing the piano.

When David has a hobby, he really “gets into it.” He is motivated to do whatever it takes to excel. He feels to excel at piano one has to perform.

Well, Sheila [David’s wife] had seen the newspaper ad, and I feel like a very important part in learning to play is you have to perform. To learn to perform you have to perform. So this seemed ideal. I had performance classes with my piano teacher, but I needed other avenues to perform.

David, excerpted from interview, July 13, 1996

In summary, the original idea to join the LBPC came from the article members had read in the newspaper and/or from teachers’ suggestions. The actual motivation to attend was spurred by teachers’ suggestions, Lucy’s invitation, family and co-worker suggestions, inter-musical inspiration, the need to beat performance anxiety, the need to perform, and familiarity with joining clubs or support groups.

Factors Members Overcame to Attend the LBPC

Members encounter numerous problems that make participation in the LBPC difficult. Even though the members may look in perfect health and have a plenitude of energy, illness sometimes makes it difficult to attend.

Mel called me when he saw it [the announcement about the club], he said well, I just retired, I just got out of the hospital, if I can make it I will. His wife drove him, cause he just couldn’t do it, because he was really hurting. He is hurting again, because since he’s had another operation and he’s gotten hepatitis. Now he went back, and they operated again, he’s still hurting. I could see today he kept dozing, sort of dozing off. He’s still hurting.

Lucy, excerpted from field notes, July 9, 1995

Members are often busy with other activities that keep them away from attending the club. Ellen, the active tap-dancer, is often away dancing at a

competition. Mary enjoys traveling, and works her traveling schedule around the LBPC.

Family obligations may cause anxiety and guilt about attending. Carol, a physician, feels guilty about leaving her family on weekends when she is not working.

Carol: Well, like for example, it's [LBPC] this weekend. Last weekend I was on call, and I'm up all night delivering babies, so I'm not with the kids like I should have been. We have a place on the lake. This weekend is the weekend for the lake, so I will have to come back Sunday morning or Saturday night, but I do want to go [to LBPC].

MC: So you have to go through . . .

Carol: A little bit of guilt. If it happens to fall on the weekend I was on call, I'd have to miss it. There are some times I just couldn't go. But that doesn't happen so far.

Carol, excerpted from interview, July 9, 1996

Patty has a step son who lives with her and her husband on weekends. Sometimes it is difficult to maneuver family plans around the LBPC. It is difficult for Darla, as her work hours conflict with those of her fiancé. Weekends are the only times they have to spend together.

Piano performance anxiety is a very real threat to the members of the LBPC.

MC: How do you feel the day you go?

Mel: Nervous.

MC: Why?

Mel: I'm wondering how badly I'm going to screw it up!
[chuckle]

Mel, excerpted from interview, July 9, 1996

I don't like performing. It's too nerve racking for me.

Ellen, excerpted from interview, July 11, 1996

MC: Now tell me about your first Late Bloomers. How did you feel when you played?

Mary: Terrified.

MC: What was the walk up to the piano like?

Mary: The longest I've ever made in my life. I'm sure I took possibly eight steps, but you were there, but you know what a long walk that can be. If I could have stopped my knees from shaking, I probably would have felt a little better. But I was scared, I was absolutely terrified.

MC: What were you thinking?

Mary: If I can just get through this, I'm never going to do this to myself again! [she laughs]

Mary, excerpted from interview, July 10, 1996

So I went out and sat down. There were just a few people when I got there, six or seven. Frank was there and Don was there, and Tim Jenson was there and the gal who plays nicely—Ellen. I thought this isn't bad, it's a small group. All of a sudden more people come in, there were about 34 there, and I said oh my gosh!

I brought my music and thought I would just listen. So we got to about 31, and three hadn't played, where I had been relaxed I noticed my hands were getting wet. My palms were getting sweaty.

Lucy said, Peter, why don't you try it. Okay, I'll try it. I didn't even use my music, there were two or three songs I could play without my music. So I started to play "Polka Dots and Moonbeams" which I can play standing on my head, and I got nervous. So I said, no I'm not going to play this. So I played "What's New," and I played it fairly well. That was all I was going to do, but I was still like this [stiff], gripping my chair when I sat down.

I thought this isn't like me. I speak to groups of hundreds of people. I've been doing this for many years. I'm used to being up and talking that sort of thing. Why am I nervous in front of this group? They're all nice people.

I got in my car, got home. I'm gripping the steering wheel, I'm still like this [tight], I was like that all the way home. I went in the house and my jaw must have been taunt. Carole [Peter's wife] said, man, do you ever look stressed out! [we laugh]. What happened! I just played, that's all.

I ate the meal, I fumbled around, I was absolutely nervous.

Peter, excerpted from interview, July 10, 1996

I'll tell you what, my heart just keeps pounding, pounding, pounding down. . . .

Ellen, excerpted from field notes, July 9, 1995

The anxiety of performing turns inward for Carol and Tim. Carol tends to degrade herself for a bad performance, where Tim's anxiety manifests itself in anger.

While you're playing instead of listening to the music you start criticizing yourself and thinking how worthless you are [laugh].

. . . when you perform you have to get rid of those voices. And I thought, that's exactly it. Like there is this little person talking to me in my head saying, "Oh, that measure is just round the corner, you know you're going to blow it."

Carol, excerpted from interview, July 9, 1996

I'm frustrated when I get home. If I butcher a piece here I never pick it up again . . . I get mad at myself. I know I can do it, I've done it before.

Tim, excerpted from field notes, July 9, 1995

Ellen finds the large group much more intimidating than the four other people that attended when she first started.

When you see all those people. And I think that the group, when it was small, we all kind of knew each other. I feel like I'm kind of playing for strangers, which I am. I don't know these people, I really don't.

Ellen, excerpted from interview, July 11, 1995

Debbie, who started piano as an adult and is still in the beginning stages, is intimidated by the others.

I think that if all these people were just like us, where we are, we would feel better. [It would be better to have] all adults who never played as kids, all green. This might feel better. You know, the people know all this stuff and we're—struggling.

Debbie, excerpted from interview, July 11, 1996

While some are struggling to play, others find it difficult to listen to those who are struggling.

And the gal that sat next to me at the last one, she was so nervous. I wasn't a bit nervous, but I sat next to her and she was like that [shaking hands], that she made me nervous!
[chuckle]

Peter, excerpted from interview, July 10, 1996

. . . some people struggle so much that you almost feel pain for them [laugh]. Some people are so nervous . . .

Carol, excerpted from interview, July 9, 1996

I try to listen to the music, but personally it is a struggle when players are struggling, and their hands are shaking.

Donald, excerpted from field notes, September 17, 1995

Both Darla and Carol found out the club wasn't exactly the way they expected it to be.

I saw the article and the picture and I just, and I thought—because I had been in a couple of divorce support groups—I thought you would go and talk about it, like this. How you feel, and what keeps you going, and not the actual playing.

Darla, excerpted from interview, July 11, 1996

Carol: . . . actually, what it was and what I thought it would be are just a little different. Most of the people are older than I am. Some are about my age but most are older. And most have more time to practice than I do.

MC: Does that bother you?

Carol: No, I was just kind of hoping that there were more people like me, that I would get to know and we could compare notes on how we did the whole thing, how we practiced, or how we learn . . .

Carol, excerpted from interview, July 9, 1996

In summary, there were nine deterrents in continuing to attend the LBPC: member health, family obligations, travel or other obligations, anxiety with performing, self-inflicted anger and doubt of ability, fear to

play in front of a large group, fear that others are better, listening to others struggle with their performance, and finding out the group did not meet initial expectations.

The Role of Socialization in the Club's Existence

The members of the group have exceedingly full lives outside of their club membership. No members reported that the LBPC was their primary source of socialization. Although the purpose of the club states it is a support group, the goal of the group remains clear: to offer a supportive environment for those who wish to gain experience playing in front of a small audience.

I didn't feel a big sense of camaraderie within the group. A few isolated people knew each other, but it seems to me perhaps this group is in its infancy as far as getting to know each other.

Observer note, May 7, 1995

When the group grew to over fifteen members, Lucy stopped inviting people to stay after the meetings for discussion. She reinstated this at the request of a few members who had asked her to do so. David, who often stays to talk after performances, is not concerned about the social aspects of the club or members' effects on the organization.

I feel like I would have limited success in doing that [affecting direction of the LBPC], but I haven't had the urge at all. As long as I get to perform, I don't really care.

David, excerpted from interview, July 13, 1996

The members who stayed after the meeting to talk varied. Usually Peter and Mel would stay to play their latest jazz selection. Lucy often invited several members to stay for dinner or coffee to facilitate the researcher in obtaining interviews.

There were obvious changes between May 1995 and July 1996. Lucy, Ellen and Donald went together to a library outside of the metropolitan area to "research music" in August 1996. Donald meets weekly with Mary, his duet partner at the LBPC. Lucy and Violet went peach picking in August 1996. Mel and Peter, along with their wives, often have dinner together and attend jazz concerts. Mel is helping Peter in his quest for a new piano.

The members have formed a coalition by virtue of their united interest in performing and music. They consider themselves "friends" while at the LBPC, and count on each other for support.

I like listening to what I consider to be our little family now. We've got an inner core of these people at this thing now, and I think we all understand each other and all appreciate what we're trying to do We have a nice camaraderie now, particularly, there's a group that's been pretty constant, that is sympathetic, that is understanding, and that's patient. They realize we are all learners.

It isn't like we're there saying I wonder how many mistakes this guy is going to make? I don't think that happens. I think it is a great chance to get out amongst your contemporaries and do this.

Peter, excerpted from interview, July 10, 1996

And it's fun to see them progress, too. There are a few of them, when you listen to them, are moving right along and they have such a burning love for music, which I feel I do too. They're progressing along real well.

Mel, excerpted from interview, July 9, 1996

Members offer words of encouragement before and after performances. Comments such as "sounded good" and "nice alto line" are said when people are done, and everyone always claps. Peter and Donald are the "cheerleaders" of the group. They will be the first to say how much one has improved, or congratulating one on "doing your best."

Mary is an example of someone who likes people, and being around people with music as a common interest.

I like the idea—it's something new and different in my life. And I'm fascinated by the people who are coming. [One member] is in his eighties somewhere. And we have people of all ages, and the Chinese girl. I thought she was nice. She's having a baby so she's not coming now. But I like the idea, it sort of runs the gamut from all ages, all types, all sizes. I think it's fascinating myself.

Mary, excerpted from interview, July 10, 1996

In summary, socialization does not seem to be of great importance to members of the LBPC. The members count on each other for support as they perform, receiving positive reinforcement from other members when they are done playing. Gradually, the club is changing, as some members are seeking each other out between meetings. The two social issues that were described by members were support for each other as they performed and the desire to be around others who have a shared interest in music.

Member Motivations to Play the Piano

Without exception, all members cited that part of their motivation for playing the piano is their love for music, especially the piano.

I wanted to take piano more than any other instrument, because I love the sound of a piano. In pieces, CDs, the pieces I like best are the pieces that have piano, because I like the sound of the instrument.

Patty, excerpted from interview, July 14, 1996

I've always loved music, even when I gave it up to play sports. I never lost my love for music.

Peter, excerpted from interview, July 10, 1996

Eight members cited the purchase of a piano as their primary motivation for starting piano study. David started piano shopping with his wife, who wanted a better instrument in their house. He was reluctant at first, but "it just sort of snowballed."

I had the philosophy that if I was going to spend this much on a piano, I was going to learn how to play it.

David, excerpted from interview, July 13, 1996

Mel was in the process of moving to a new house, and was having trouble "matching" the old piano with the new decor.

So I started investigating painting the old piano so it would match what we had. In the process of that, I was going around talking to these places, I kept seeing these grand pianos, and the old toll coming back, wouldn't it be nice

Mel, excerpted from interview, July 9, 1996

Carol had completed medical school residency about four years ago, and for the first time in her adult life, was settled into one place for a longer time period.

So my schedule eased up a little bit and the children were getting older. My youngest one is six, and she was in school. We had moved around a lot in the last ten years, and we had been at this house for a little while—you know, when you first move in to a house there are a lot of things you need to change I always wanted to buy a nice piano, and we finally had a little money [laugh] so we bought the piano. I thought if I had a nice piano I might be able to play it better

Carol, excerpted from interview, July 9, 1996

Debbie found an ad in the newspaper about lessons and pianos. Her husband suggested she look into it. The ad was for Lake Erie Music Store, so she went there to look into the cost and got phone numbers of potential teachers. This started her searching for better prices. She found a different brand electronic piano elsewhere for much less money. She bought it, and started taking lessons soon thereafter.

Peter had been telling his wife that he wanted to play piano for years. She “called his bluff” and bought him a piano for his sixtieth birthday.

Carrie had been thinking about studying piano for a while, but the time it took to purchase the piano seemed terrifyingly short.

After work on a Tuesday, Carrie stopped at a local music store. After looking at a piano, she went home and said to herself “what are you going to do that for!” But she knew she wanted it. She went back and looked again, not committing to a purchase. She knew buying the piano was an important commitment. She also knew she loved the piano. She questioned herself to see if she was ready for this commitment. A half hour later she called the salesman and got the piano. Within a week she had the piano delivered.

Excerpted from researcher notes, July 13, 1996

The motivation to purchase a piano came from others purchasing a piano in two instances. Lucy bought a piano in response to a purchase made by her daughter. In 1987, her daughter came to visit with a digital piano. It could play lots of different timbres, and the headsets appealed to Lucy. She bought her first digital piano in December of that year. Later, she traded up to a better digital. This prompted her to purchase an adult piano book, which she used to teach herself how to play.

Unlike Lucy, Darla was motivated to study piano after seeing someone’s new piano. Purchasing a piano came later.

It was a year in January. I was down to my daughter-in-law and son’s home in Cincinnati. And we were at her mother’s house and a cousin was there who had just gotten a piano for Christmas. We were talking about the piano, and Sherry’s mom had a piano, and I said I had always loved the piano—loved the sound of it—and that I always wanted to do it [play piano].

So I worked at an all boys catholic school and I asked the band teacher there how do you go about finding a teacher? He said go to Lake Erie Music Store

So I called [a teacher from there] and it took a couple of phone calls before she got back to me before we started in on our lessons.

Darla, excerpted from interview, July 11, 1996

Mary, who had played as a child, was inspired to renew her piano playing after listening to an opera production.

. . . Actually, Placido Domingo had a lot to do with this. I saw him in Othello, on the television, and I was so taken with the music, and the beautiful singing and the whole opera scene, that it suddenly got me thinking of all the opera pieces I had [as a child]. So I went over to the piano bench and I dug out some of my operas—some of the pieces from Faust, some from Aida—just name it, I have the whole specter.

Mary, excerpted from interview, July 10, 1996

Violet was motivated to pursue the piano about a month after the death of her sister-in-law, who was under her care.

For some reason I awoke in the middle of the night and something told me, now is the time to pursue my piano wishes.

Violet, excerpted from letter, July 13, 1996

The motivation to continue piano playing is often not what motivated the members to start in the first place. The strength of their motivation was also a variant. However, each member was using piano study to fill at least one void in their life.

Patty had a tremendous void in her life after the death of her husband. Learning to play the piano was a way to help fill some of the emptiness created by his death. This is only one reason Patty decided on piano study. Patty enjoys art of all kinds. She realized piano playing was a way to fulfill her need for artistic endeavors.

I can't draw, but I've taken art, and I have a real appreciation for the arts. And since music was a void, I wanted to fill that out a little bit, even though I'm not a performer.

Patty, excerpted from interview, July 14, 1996

Patty remarried recently, and her husband and stepson enjoy music immensely. The family shares music with each other as a recreation they all can enjoy. She considers her stepson quite talented, and realizes that if she quits piano study, it might cause her stepson to quit also.

Darla also started piano study to fill a void after her divorce. The subsequent friends she met were proud of her piano study, and often discussed music with her. Darla had taken piano for a short time at age eighteen, but quit when she married. Playing the piano after her divorce helped her finish something she had started.

Well, you know, it's funny because I went to the funeral of the mother of my ex-husband, and . . . he came up to me and said, "I hear you took up the piano. I'm so happy for you." He said he felt so bad when I gave it up before, because that's when we were dating. He was real encouraging. And all the guys I've dated have encouraged me to play the piano.

Darla, excerpted from interview, July 11, 1996

Peter found it relaxing to play the piano after a busy day at the large brokerage firm for which he works. He is also planning for his retirement in two years. Peter, who is learning jazz piano, also likes the camaraderie that is associated with piano playing. He likes to play with jazz ensembles and to perform background music for parties and events. It makes him feel good about himself and his accomplishments.

Robert, a treasurer for a major corporation, also plays the piano to relax. He has no illusions about being a great pianist, but he does believe he can continue improving.

Carol uses piano as a way to relax at the end of the day after her medical practice. Carol is also motivated by her desire to perform. She is shy in front of groups, but would like to be able to be "center stage."

Donald likes the fellowship and personal recognition playing the piano makes possible. He likes to perform, and finds numerous opportunities in addition to the LBPC to play for others. Besides the personal satisfaction of being "in the limelight," Donald is motivated to continue his piano studies because he wants to learn how to improvise.

Ellen, like Donald, has as her motivation to play the piano the desire to learn new things. She has no desire to play for others—performing is not fun for her. Ellen likes taking on new tasks, such as studying music theory at the local university.

Debbie is not sure what motivates her to play the piano—in fact, frequently her motivation fluctuates. She heard friends play when she was a child, and always wanted to be able to play like they did. She also likes to play familiar songs, often sitting to play for her own enjoyment.

Frank is motivated by the sound of the piano, the pure love of music. When he was a youngster, he sang in the school and church choir. Now, according to Frank, his voice is "not what it used to be," so he likes to make the piano "sing." He would like to perform publicly on the piano, and is motivated by reaching this goal.

I had it in my mind that I would love to go to old folks homes and play for the people if I ever get good enough. I would like to play for someone.

Frank, excerpted from interview, July 10, 1996

Violet feels the same way as Frank about performing.

Strange as it might seem, I would love to be able to sit down and play in a restaurant or bar????????? That is a little ways off.

Violet, excerpted from letter dated July 13, 1996

Mel is motivated by his enjoyment in playing for others. He is also motivated by the purchase of his new piano. He enjoys the beautiful sound it makes.

Tim always had some form of music in his life. When he was a child, he learned piano for a short while, but then switched to the drums. He played drums actively for a long time, but quit when he moved to his home in northwest Ohio. Tim is motivated to play the piano because he misses having music in his life. He also finds it a stress reliever from his busy job as a CPA.

David decided to take up piano as a hobby, and he is motivated to do well in any of the hobbies he undertakes. He likes to perform, enjoying the satisfaction of doing a performance well.

Lucy always wanted to do something in the arts. Because she felt she couldn't do other artistic skills well, she found piano to be a challenge she could take. Before studying the piano, Lucy bred championship Lakeland Terriers. After deciding to give them up, she needed something to fill the void in her life. Lucy is also motivated by her responsibility as founder of the LBPC. She realizes that she must be prepared to perform each of the meetings.

In summary, there were thirteen reasons members were motivated to play the piano: a change in life situations, the purchase of a piano, inspiration by hearing good music, a void that needed filled, the need to relax, the need to be in the "limelight," the desire to learn new things, the

desire to play for self pleasure, the love of music, the desire to play for others, the need to bring music back into one's life, the need for a hobby, and the desire to do something in the arts. The members' motivations fluctuated and changed with time and level of ability.

The Importance of Piano in the Members' Lives

The piano is a hobby for the members of the LBPC. The importance of the hobby depends on what other hobbies are in their lives, and how much effort it takes to do this hobby well.

The members who have families and are still working find that the importance of the piano is lower in their lives.

But those [missed meetings], but I can't help those things. And it was a family thing out of town, and that's what has to come first, and that's what I find with the piano: for me, all work and family commitments come first, then the time I can squeeze in to play piano.

Patty, excerpted from interview, July 14, 1996

You're thinking of laundry, or you're thinking of dinner, or you're thinking of all those other things that are on the back of your mind. You hear a noise, and you run out and think well, who's coming now, what's that truck coming by. That's me, anyway.

Debbie, excerpted from interview, July 11, 1996

Darla is not progressing rapidly in her study at present. Also, her original motivation for piano study has weakened since she met her fiancé.

Darla: I have a guy, and we're going to get married. He works different hours than I do—his hours are 4:00 to 12:30, and mine are 8:00 to 3:00 or 8:00 to 4:00. I still try to practice in the morning, and on the weekends we try to spend that time together, so its not first priority right now.
MC: Where does it fit right now?

Darla: You see, my teacher thinks it should be number one all the time. But I want, I love to travel, we just went away for the weekend. I have a big family, we have parties, I have family I have friends, I love other things. I love to do fun things. Not that the piano isn't fun, but it's not my whole life.

Darla, excerpted from interview, July 11, 1996

Mary, who has extremely busy schedule, is finding piano playing more important in her life.

It's becoming more and more important to me, I think if I had to give up something else now, I think I would give it up so I could continue studying with my teacher and play the piano now. I feel now that I'm probably able to term what I'm doing as study I've never had a background in studying music, it's important to me.

Mary, excerpted from interview, July 10, 1996

Piano is the center of Lucy's life at the present. When interviewed, Lucy was coming out the other side of an impasse with her piano.

I tell everybody I'm going to stay with it as long as I have three "ables"—financially able, physically able, mentally able.

Lucy, excerpted from interview, July 10, 1996

In summary, the importance of piano in the members lives is in proportion to what other obligations they have, if their original motivation has remained, and if they feel they are still making progress in their learning.

Factors that Keep Members from Quitting the LBPC

Lucy is diligent in her quest not to let people quit the organization. Lucy says "If everyone quits, than I have to quit! This has affected Ellen, who does not like to perform for a large group.

Lucy: You have to be interested in playing, or why would you come?

Ellen: Because you made me! [everyone laughs]

Excerpted from field notes, April 14, 1996

Ellen also continues because she likes the push it gives her. This is a learning environment for the members.

I don't think of it as supporting your playing, but as giving you inspiration. You know, to do better.

Ellen, excerpted from field notes, September 17, 1995

To get better, you must be challenged to play. You can't improve when you sit at the piano and feel like a fumble finger and your hands are going to fall off.

Peter, excerpted from field notes, April 14, 1996

I missed half a dozen notes. I don't worry about that, because I know I'm not great. I'm trying to improve. You have to make mistakes when you are learning.

Frank, excerpted from field notes, September 17, 1995

I like setting a goal to play a piece in eight weeks, I then practice to prepare for the club.

Tim, excerpted from field notes, September 17, 1995

Related to treating this as a learning environment is the desire to conquer fear.

Why am I doing this? Then I say to myself, to conquer fear.

David, excerpted from field notes, January 14, 1996

How do you feel when you are done? I feel terrible. I want to say don't even clap, that was horrible. Why do you put yourself through it? Because I keep hoping it will get better every time.

Carol, excerpted from interview, July 9, 1996

I need the experience of playing in front of people to develop the self confidence. Everyone says, "I play better when I'm home than when I'm here in the presence of someone else." I think that is generally true for all of us. I think we can reduce that differences so that we can play about the same in both places.

Donald, excerpted from interview, July 11, 1996

The challenge is to get up there and get through it. When you do go home, you feel good about yourself that you've met the challenge There is something about forcing yourself to

go and perform. It's one more mile I've passed along the road that's really nice. I worked hard for this and it feels good.

Mary, excerpted from field notes, April 14, 1996

The members find that receiving positive reinforcement from each other helps to keep them coming.

People reward you when you play well. You work hard, make beautiful music. It's a bonus. Successful music is played like art.

Donald, excerpted from field notes, September 17, 1995

A person started talking to me and said they really enjoyed it, listening to the type of music I played, and it was really encouraging. So I thought, okay, I'll stay, it's kind of interesting.

Mel, excerpted from interview, July 9, 1996

Lucy encourages those who may be waning in their enthusiasm to attend the LBPC.

I enjoy going to the Late Bloomers—and I think, maybe, each time that I go that I am a little more comfortable. Especially since Lucy made her little speech—that we are a "support" group and not trying to show up one or the other. I can see sticking with the group . . .

Violet, excerpted from letter dated September 1996

The people are really nice. And I really like Lucy. I just can't believe someone her age would take up the piano. I'm really inspired by her. She knows a lot about music.

Darla, excerpted from interview, July 11, 1996

Performing is anxiety ridden, but members who continue attending count on the fact that they know they can do, and enjoy it.

I know I can do it, I've done it before.

Tim, excerpted from interview, September 17, 1995

There are certain mixed feelings about performing. On one hand it's very anxiety provoking, on the other hand, there are certain gratifications you can't get any other way. The gratifying part is showing people you can do it. It's not even that, it's like, just doing it.

David, excerpted from interview, July 13, 1996

The love of music keeps some members coming.

I love music, I've always loved music. If you love music, this is what you want to do.

Peter, excerpted from field notes, September 17, 1995

There is a sense of admiration that can be obtained by participation in the LBPC.

I like being admired. Others admire me, they think I'm accomplished.

Donald, excerpted from field notes, September 17, 1995

I am going to be opening my soul here, Michelle. I'm a show off. Not exactly a showoff, but I do enjoy playing the piano with people that I feel are about the same level in many ways And I do enjoy performing I guess the limelight, you know.

Mel, excerpted from interview, July 9, 1996

I find it kind of fun to what you might say, show off, a little bit. But I don't think that's all bad. There's got to be a little ham in all of us, that we like to get up and play well. Like Frank says, you play, and maybe that part of your psyche says "Hey look, I've worked hard, I want to show people what I've accomplished."

Peter, excerpted from interview, July 10, 1996

When Lucy was asked why she put herself through this, she answered kiddingly, "Nuts!"

In summary, Lucy has a strong effect in keeping members from quitting the LBPC, both by exhibiting her accomplishments and by offering moral support to those who are waning in motivation. The members have personal goals they are motivated to reach that are facilitated by the

LBPC. It offers a forum for members to conquer their performance anxieties as well as offer positive reinforcement for their accomplishments. The bi-monthly meetings place a deadline on members that motivates them to reach a musical goal. The meeting also offers a place to garner admiration from others.

Some members were motivated to continue in the LBPC because of reasons totally unrelated to the group: they had the personal satisfaction that they were improving as pianists and were not discouraged by less stellar performances; and, they love piano music.

Why the LBPC Exists

Lucy, the founder of the LBPC, has a strong effect on the existence of the LBPC. She motivates members to attend, advertises the organization routinely, makes phone calls to flailing members, and puts in her own time and money to make it a success.

The members attend to practice their newly learned piano skills. The bi-monthly meeting gives them a goal in their preparation of new music.

The LBPC allows members an opportunity to practice performing. This is a different skill than playing the piano, and can not be obtained by practicing or playing for a piano teacher. The only other performing practice some members have is the recital, which can be too nerve racking.

The performance opportunity at the LBPC allows members who already enjoy performing an opportunity to "show off." The members are amateurs, and by not permitting professionals, they are less intimidated to be in the "limelight."

The format of the LBPC allows members with a common interest in music and piano playing to get together. With no teachers allowed, the members find it easier to talk and play for each other.

Changes and Strategies that have Occurred in the Development of the LBPC

Lucy started the club with strong convictions and unwritten rules. This was to be a classical organization, and all members were to have teachers. By July 1996, the membership included four people who concentrated on jazz. Seven members did not have teachers.

When one member of the group tried including singing along while she played the piano, Lucy objected. This member subsequently quit.

Members are not supposed to be professional musicians. One of the early members, Marty Dove, was asked to quit the group because he played professionally. Another member, Mel Hanson, is allowed to continue the group, because Lucy thinks some of the members enjoy his ideas. He also is trying to learn to play a piece in the classical style to appease Lucy.

The format of the meeting has changed over the year. The time was changed from 7:00 P.M. to 2:00 P.M. so members could drive home before dark. When Lucy conceived the group, members were required to play two pieces separated by other performers. In July, 1996, members had a choice of playing one or two pieces, and could play them consecutively if they so desired.

After a time of not wanting people to stay after the group, Lucy started inviting people for coffee and cookies. The researcher had an effect on this policy, as often Lucy would invite certain members to stay to talk about the project. At the final meeting including the researcher in July, 1996, Lucy

invited all to stay for a reception. Members enjoyed this so much they have asked to continue this procedure.

Changes and Developments of Interrelationships Between the Club Members and Founder

The original membership of the LBPC was very small. This was very comfortable and comforting to the original members. They became good friends, although only within the confines of the meeting time. When the article appeared in the newspaper, membership skyrocketed. There was not much sense of camaraderie when the membership was so large. The number of members has reduced slightly, to around twenty members. The member personnel has also stabilized. Between May 1995 and July 1996, only three new members joined, with two of them joining before the end of 1995. Members are starting to get to know each other, and the sense of camaraderie is returning.

Some members of the group have started socializing outside the confines of the LBPC. Donald and Ellen often get together to play the piano and to research music. Mel and Peter have attended concerts together and have introduced their wives to each other. Mary meets with Donald to practice duets.

The LBPC is starting to form subgroups within the larger organization. Several have asked to be a part of a smaller, more intimate group that meets in the months in between the LBPC meetings. The researcher attended one of these meetings, and the camaraderie was evident.

People are discussing the various trips they've taken. They are chatty, and seem to be renewing friendships. They change seats so they can talk more efficiently with each other. Ellen mentions she wants to stay with the little group.

Lucy talks about strawberry season, which will be any time from June 1st to June 30.

It is 12 minutes after the hour. Everyone is still chatting. The atmosphere is extremely relaxed. They talk about when they are going to play. Mary doesn't want to play after Ellen. But Peter says "we're all friends here." Mary comments how nice it is to relax with the group. Donald thinks the summer groups will be smaller. He says this to reassure!

Excerpted from researcher comments, April 14, 1996

One member of the group has interpreted the small group as a type of "elitism," and a form of a clique.

But Lucy only does this for a handful—was never called about playing in this small group. He called Lucy about playing in it. This left a sour taste in his mouth. Is this turning into a sub-group? If so, it seems as though cliques are forming.

Excerpted from field notes, anonymous

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Related Theory

Reasons for participating in the LBPC can be found in motivational theory, transitional theory, ego identity, and small group theory. Since these theories have evolved through the years but are still viable, it is appropriate to trace different theories before applying the theory to each person in the organization.

Motivational Theory

Cyril Houle (1961) formulated a typology that identified three types of adult learners. The first is *goal-oriented*, the second is *activity-related*, and the third is *learning-oriented*.

Houle's research stimulated a number of studies that attempted to refine his typology. The most extensive work was developed in New Zealand by Boshier, who developed an Education Participation Scale (Boshier, 1973). This resulted in six factors that affect motivation:

1. Social Relationships—Participation to make new friends and develop contacts of the opposite sex
2. External Expectations—Participation because of the wishes of someone else who is in authority
3. Social Welfare—Participation because it benefits the community, or because it helps others

4. Professional Advancement—Participation to advance in one's job or profession

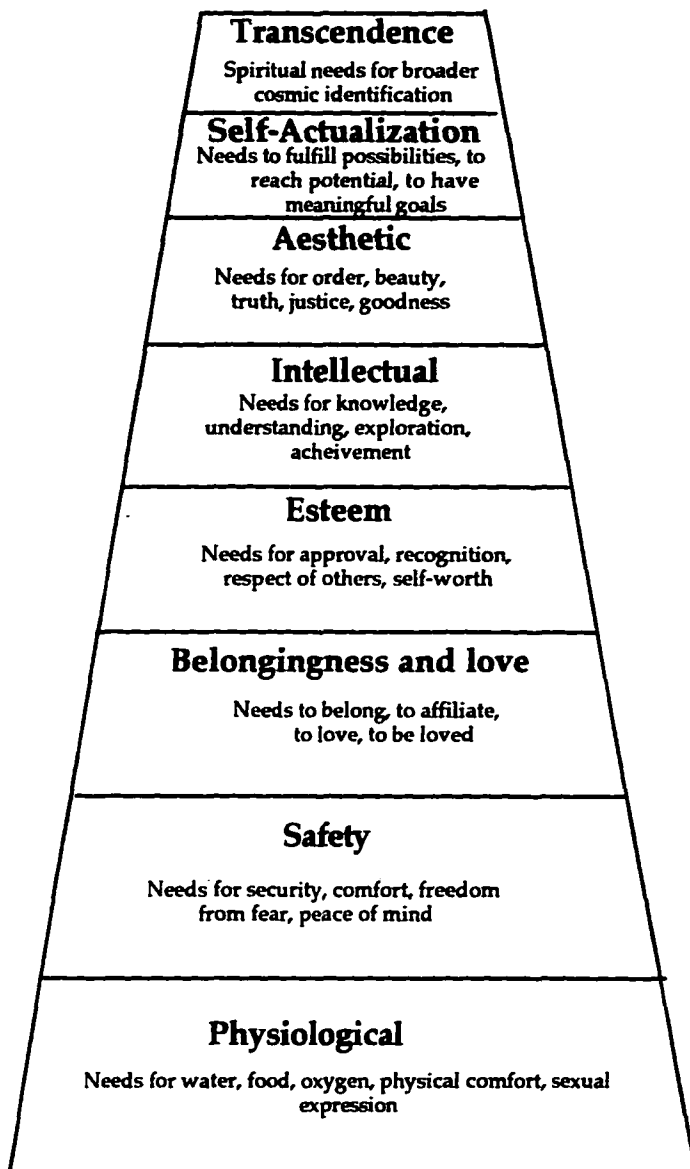
5. Escape/Stimulation—Participation to escape boredom at home or work

6. Cognitive Interest—Participation for the sake of learning.

Apter (1982) developed a theory that attempts to explain the way in which the individual experiences his own motivation and the implications this has for his behavior. Called reversal theory, it is concerned mainly with a particular aspect of subjective meaning, namely the way the individual interprets his own motivation. In reversal theory, a behavior does not necessarily have to have a social meaning for the person who engages in it to be described as an action—the meaning may be purely personal. According to reversal theory, two people may perform the same behavior and interpret what they are doing and its significance in totally different ways. An important aspect of this theory is that it treats the central problem of human behavior as unrelated to biological needs. A behavior does not have to aid survival, and often is associated with art, entertainment, sports, and humor.

Abraham Maslow (1968) proposed a theory of human motivation based on a hierarchy of needs (Table 3). The lower level needs, such as need for water and food, must be attended to before one can deal with the next level, the need for security and comfort. Self-actualization, the need to fulfill one's own potential, is one of the highest levels of need, and is addressed only by those who have been able to secure the needs lower on the chart. Even though these needs are not age specific, often adults have been afforded the time to realize the lower level needs and are able to address their higher goals.

Table 3. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Malcolm Knowles (1979) adapted his list of needs from Maslow. He states that there are six basic human needs: physical needs, growth needs, the need for security, the need for new experiences, the need for affection, and the need

for recognition. Mankind spends his life fulfilling these needs. Knowles believes an ultimate need of an individual is to achieve complete self-identity through the full development of his potential. He states that "even in old age there is apparently a need to keep growing. Studies of retired persons reveal that those who have found a new purpose in life toward which they can continue to strive tend to make a better adjustment than those who have not mapped out new directions to explore" (1970, p. 82).

Atkinson and Feather (Cross, 1972) developed a theory of achievement motivation that points out that the typical achievement-oriented person works hardest at a task of intermediate difficulty, where the chances of success are 50-50. One is not challenged by a task that is too easy because there is no intrinsic reward, nor a task that is too difficult where there is little chance of success. If one approaches a new skill in which success is predicted (past batting averages point to this), one develops self-confidence and is willing to take risks.

More clues to reasons for motivation can be found in exercise adherence literature (Dishman, 1988). In a typical supervised exercise setting, about 50% of clients or patients will drop out of the program within six months to a year. It has been postulated that self-motivation is a learned set of skills and habitual responses that function to assist individuals to adhere to activities that are not adequately cued and reinforced by the environment or that may even be punished. Individuals high in self-motivation may have a greater desire for closure (Dishman, 1988 p. 220).

Another set of clues for motivation can be researched in the relationship between job, performance and motivation. According to a review of literature for his dissertation, Kraus (1992) found performance is equal to motivational multiplied by ability. He reviewed a model by Wanous (1992, p.

18) that postulates four theories on why Realistic Job Previews reduce turnover:

1. Employees will cope better when problems are encountered on the job if they are forewarned.
2. An "air of honesty" makes individuals feel they have a greater degree of freedom in their organizational choice.
3. If a job is described as not meeting their needs, they will not accept it. Therefore, only those who would be satisfied with the job would take it and be more likely to stay voluntarily.
4. A realistic job preview would lower initial job expectations.

Transitional Theory

An important feature of the LBPC is that the participants have chosen to take on a new or renewed learning experience in adulthood. Transitional theory offers explanations of why adults pursue learning in adulthood. According to Schlossberg (1984), all the adults who have entered the educational network are experiencing a "transitional phase:"

Adults returning to school are changing their way of seeing themselves. They are altering their roles, routines, and relationships at home, in the community at large, and in the educational setting. A transition is thus an event (such as returning to school after working for many years) or a nonevent (staying in school over an unusually long period of time without completing a degree) that alters one's roles, relationships, routines, and assumptions. (1984)

Schlossberg defines three phases to this transition: moving into the learning environment, moving through it, and moving on. The first phase is when the adult must become familiar with the rules and norms of the new

system. In this orientation phase, the adult must learn to become comfortable with the organization.

The second phase, moving through, begins after the student is comfortable with the situation. This is a crucial phase when motivation and commitment can wane.

The third phase, moving on, is when one set of transitions is over and the ability to start a next set begins. In a job situation, this could be when the worker has received the proper training and is ready to use the information learned in the field. It could also be the next step of change, where again one has moved, changed jobs, or changed goals.

Aslanian and Brickell have explored transitional theory more fully in America in Transition: Life Changes as Reasons for Adult Learning (1980). Transitions in life are influenced by social and economic change. Something or someone has activated, or "triggered" the need to return to the educational setting. For women, family changes rank first in triggering the desire to return to school. For men, career considerations are the prime motivators for resuming the educational process. These triggers that motivate adults to seek education happen at important points in their lives. A trigger to return to an educational setting could be getting fired from a job or having a heart attack. Eighty three percent of the learners surveyed by Aslanian and Brickell described some past, present, or future change in their lives as reasons to learn. Only seventeen percent were motivated to learn more intrinsically, describing themselves as continuous learners or to improve self image.

Of more historical relevance is the research on tribal societies by Gennep (1960), who observed tribal societies and concluded that life is a series of passages from birth to death. To complete the transition process successfully,

an individual must move through three distinct stages: separation, transition, and incorporation (Gibson Ross, 1989).

As stated by Gennep, "The length and intricacy of each stage through which foreigners and natives move toward each other vary with different peoples. They must stop, wait, go through a transitional period, enter, be incorporated. The particular rites may include actual contact (a slap, a handclasp), exchange of gifts of food or valuables, eating, drinking, smoking a pipe together, sacrificing animals, sprinkling water or blood, anointing, being attached to each other, being covered together, or sitting on the same seat" (p. 28).

Ego Identity

Erikson (1959) developed a model of adult development that emphasizes the individual's inner capacity to adapt to the tasks for each stage of life. This is an ego-centered model, which centers around the self's response to other people, groups, or expectations. Young adulthood is the time for developing the capacity for intimacy. Middle age is a stage in life in which ego development is associated with social interaction. Each stage is dependent upon the outcomes of the previous stage. The mature man accepts "one's one and only life cycle and of the people who have become significant to it." (p. 139) It is in the later years that one accepts the fact that life is one's own responsibility.

Small Group Theory

Small groups often work as a culture, which change and transform as an entity as well as affect the individuals that are members. To understand this phenomena, research needs to be reviewed in the area of small group theory.

According to Mills (1967), there are six models for studying and analyzing small groups:

1. Quasi-Mechanical model—the group is like a machine. All behavioral acts in a group are seen as functions that can be categorized. Each act (question) calls for a reaction (answer). This assumes all problem-solving groups will exhibit many of the same behaviors.

2. Organismic model—this assumes the groups are like biological organisms. They have a period of formation (birth), a life cycle, and eventually a death. Different people in the group become differentiated in their behaviors (as in task leader, recorder, social leader) just as bodily systems carry on different functions (digestive, respiratory, muscular). The emphasis is upon the group's *natural* evolution and development.

3. Conflict model—this assumes that the small group is a context for an endless series of conflicts. Members of groups have to face the conflict of being truly independent versus conforming to some extent to the group norms and expectation. Since there are many possible affiliation groups, individuals feel conflicts in deciding which to join (as in choosing a fraternity). Conflicts arise between groups as well.

4. Equilibrium model—this assumes that groups and group members have a need to maintain some sort of balance or equilibrium. Conflicts between group members tend to be followed by attempts to smooth over hard feelings and return to a state of interpersonal harmony.

5. Structural-functional model—this assumes that the group is a goal seeking system which is constantly adapting to meet new demands. It assumes that goal attainment is the primary source of satisfaction to its members. It also assumes that some members will take on the function of keeping the group functioning. These so-called group/maintenance

functions will serve to help keep interpersonal relations from breaking down so that the group would cease functioning.

6. Cybernetic-growth model—this model shifts the emphasis from group survival to group growth. It assumes the existence of group agents that help the group adapt to new information (or feedback). Thus, growth and development are attained by the group's responding to feedback from its earlier performance. The three types of feedback that are required to help the group grow and develop are: (1) goal-seeking, (2) group restructuring, and (3) self-awareness.

Tubbs (1978) also developed a model of small group interaction that identifies three categories of variables:

1. Relevant background factors—refers to attributes within the individual participants that existed prior to the group's formation and that will endure in some modified form after the group no longer exists. The background of the participants—personality, attitudes, and values—influence the groups functioning and vice versa.

2. Internal influences—include the type of group, the style of leadership used, the language behavior, interaction roles, and the decision style employed by the group.

3. Consequences of the small group interaction—vary with the background of the participants as well as with the nature of the internal influences. Consequences may include solutions to problems, interpersonal relations among group members, the amount and quality of information sharing, the level of risk taking, the amount of interpersonal growth of participants, and possibly the amount of change in any larger organization of which the group may be a part. The consequences of the small group interaction are the reason people form the group in the first place.

Theory Related to LBPC Members

Debbie Davis

Debbie was motivated to start piano lessons during the transition in her life when her children were grown and she switched to part-time employment. According to Aslanian and Brickell (1980), she is still trying to find the comfort one seeks in the moving in phase of a transition. Playing for the LBPC is still new and exciting. Every time she performs, she is unsure if she will falter or succeed. When she succeeds, she is very pleased. When she has problems, she looks towards the next meeting to "redeem herself." Eventually, the newness of the LBPC and the feeling she gets playing for others may become more commonplace. This is moving through a transitional period. Motivation and commitment can falter.

Debbie has a secure home life, and has good self esteem. Her reasons for studying the piano and attending the LBPC are intrinsically related to how she feels about music. She loves the sound of music, and desires to make beautiful music. According to Maslow, she is motivated by the Intellectual and Aesthetic principals found in his Hierarchy of Needs.

It is interesting, given the feelings of insecurity Debbie has towards playing the piano for her teacher and for the LBPC, that Debbie has not quit studying the piano or attending the LBPC. However, the members of the LBPC offer encouragement and support every time Debbie performs for the club. There are comments such as "great job," and "you've come a long way" from members when Debbie finishes. Club members are very friendly to Debbie, and engage her in conversation after the performances are over. Lucy, the club founder, often asks Debbie to stay for coffee or to chat. All these positive reinforcements help to motivate Debbie, who, according to Dishman (1988), may not be adequately reinforced by her performing environment.

Debbie is motivated by her realistic view of her performance ability. By setting a limit of two pieces a week to study, Debbie has found a comfortable middle ground that results in successful outcomes. According to Atkinson and Feather (Cross, 1972), she is developing her self-confidence by accurately predicting her success in her piano studies.

Darla Brinks

There is no doubt that Darla's divorce was the catalyst for Darla to start piano study. According to Aslanian and Brickell (1980), family changes rank first in triggering the desire to return to school. For Darla, piano study is equivalent to returning to school.

Darla found in her piano studies positive reinforcement. According to Knowles (1979), she may have been fulfilling a need for recognition. Her friends and family expressed pride in her commitment to study the piano and the improvements she made. Darla was proud of herself for accomplishing something that she gave up on when she was eighteen.

According to Boshier (1973), Darla joined the LBPC for two reasons: to develop social relationships, and because of external expectations. Darla is familiar with and comfortable with support group associations, and was hoping the LBPC would fulfill part of her social needs. Darla also found extrinsic rewards by studying the piano. All of Darla's past boyfriends were interested in music, and were very encouraging of her piano studies. Her family also encouraged her to study the piano. When Darla met her current boyfriend, who is not as music centered as friends in the past, Darla's motivation to study waned. Her family was upset about this, and pushed her to continue studying piano.

In spite of Darla's waning interest, she continues attending meetings of the LBPC, and she continues her piano studies. She has expressed to Lucy her concerns about performing in front of the group at this early age in her musical life. Lucy has adjusted her "rules," and has asked Darla to attend the smaller "in between" meetings that are given during alternate months. Darla finds these meeting easier to attend, finding they are closer to her wish to have a piano "support group." Darla has successfully taken elements of the club that are positive for her and incorporated them into the reasons she attends. She has asked Lucy to "bend the rules a little" and not force her to perform at every club meeting. By attending the "in between" meetings, she gets to talk more personally with other club members. According to Mills (1967), Darla has found an equilibrium, which has successfully smoothed over the conflict of the group rules Darla's needs without interrupting the harmony of the group.

Frank Park

Using Houle's typology, it is difficult to pinpoint Frank's orientation to the learning process. He sets goals of expert knowledge in each of the hobbies he undertakes. He also likes hobbies that are activity based. He is a "doer" instead of a "watcher." Frank loves to learn new things, and never fears the unknown. Frank enjoys the socialization he gets out of the LBPC, but is perfectly happy playing the piano for his own pleasure.

Frank is secure in his abilities to accomplish whatever goals he sets. He does not need the approval of others, including his wife, to strive for his goals. Frank is searching for self-actualization—reaching his fullest potential. Playing the piano well is a goal Frank would like to reach, although the accomplishment is only part of his goal. Frank finds playing the piano more

than a hobby because it fulfills an aesthetic need. He finds beauty in playing the piano and listening to music.

Even though Frank was retiring near the time he started piano study, this was not his primary motivational reason for resuming study. Frank had been searching out pianos for several years before he retired. His retirement simply afforded him extra time to practice and concentrate.

Frank has succeeded in every hobby he has previously tried. He came to his piano studies with high self confidence. He feels there is no reason he can not accomplish playing the piano successfully. Unlike many adult learners, Frank does not expect immediate results from his efforts. He is willing to take the time and put in the effort needed to get to the level he desires. According to Atkinson and Feather (1972), he is willing to take risks because his past experience has shown success at other risk taking tasks.

Frank is a very friendly person, but socialization is not the primary reason Frank attends the LBPC. The group offers Frank an opportunity to practice performing. It is also an opportunity for Frank to hear piano music, which he truly loves.

Peter Bench

Peter is a highly motivated person in all his accomplishments. He has reached a high level in his profession, and has gotten tremendous recognition for participation in charity and art fund raisers. Playing the piano is his new avenue to gain accomplishment and recognition.

Even though Peter takes an active role in his learning, he relies heavily on advice from his teacher. He does not follow Roger's (1969) model of the adult as learner and the teacher as facilitator. Peter's teacher is more his mentor and giver of knowledge.

According to Boshier (1973), Peter's motivation level can be traced to four of the six factors that influence motivation:

1. Social relationships. Peter loves meeting new people and making new friends. The LBPC has afforded him the opportunity to meet people who are focused in music. This helps motivate him to perform and continue music study.
2. External Expectations. Peter does not participate in the LBPC because he is forced by someone of authority. However, the "cheerleader" role he has taken on gives him responsibility to the group as a whole.
3. Social Welfare. Peter's positive attitude toward piano study influences the others in the LBPC. His advice to the group benefits the other members.
4. Cognitive Interest. Peter has always enjoyed learning new things, and accepting new challenges.

Peter admits that both he and his wife are looking for activities for Peter to take the place of his job when he retires. However, Peter has many activities with his family and charities that would fill his calendar. Even though it may have motivated him to start playing the piano, it is not the complete reason he continues to play and perform.

Peter more fully fits Knowle's (1979) description of basic human needs. He likes the growth piano study affords him, he likes the new experience of performing in a variety of situations, and he enjoys the recognition he receives for his accomplishments.

Tim Jenson

Tim is a goal-oriented learner. He would like to get to the point that he can perform well and easily in front of others. He believes he has talent in

music, and would like to reach the point that he can show off his ability. He needs to be recognized for his hard work.

The search for recognition is depressing sometimes for Tim, because when he performs at the LBPC he does not get the positive feedback that he needs to fulfill his desires. However, he is self motivated enough that he can continue with the group even though his behaviors are not adequately reinforced (Dishman, 1988).

Tim is looking to fully develop his musical potentials. His self image has been linked with music since he was a child—first as a talented pianist and then as a talented drummer. It is more difficult now because Tim lacks the reinforcement from his peers that he is looking to get.

Tim seems to blame the LBPC for his musical woes. According to Rotter (1969), Tim believes his problems with piano playing are externally influenced. There is a conflict between what Tim needs to get from the group and the group norms and practices. Tim would like to see the group change and grow closer to his wishes.

Tim does not seem to get much personal satisfaction or recognition by attending the LBPC. He gets angry at himself and with the group when he performs badly. However, he does not quit. This could be because Tim is looking for the direction the group will take in the future, and hopes to have a role in that development.

Robert Shaw

Robert participates in the LBPC because it is a learning opportunity, as postulated by Houle (1961). He discovered that he needed practice performing, so he found a group that could fulfill the need. A chance to practice performing is the only purpose that the LBPC fulfills for Robert.

Robert does not regularly attend the meetings, as often he is out of town. When he attends, he does not socialize with the other members of the organization. Robert's comments to the researcher were brief and to the point. Robert did not want to search for any underlying reason for learning to play the piano or for participating in the LBPC. Robert participates in the LBPC for the sake of learning the skill of performance, similar to the *goal-oriented* type of learner described by Houle (1961). However, his reasons for learning to play the piano are harder to grasp. It may be a cognitive interest—learning the piano for the sake of learning. It may be to finish what he started as a child—reaching his potential, as Knowles would postulate. It could also be a form of self-actualization, as Robert tries to fulfill the potentials he felt were present as a child, and gain peace by doing such.

Mary Brighten

According to Houle, Mary is a *learning-oriented* person. She always asks “why,” and searches herself for the answers. She is also a bit of a perfectionist, which helps in her quest to answer her own questions.

The LBPC fills a social role in Mary's life, as postulated by Boshier (1973). She enjoys being around people with similar interests. The socialization aspect is important to her, although Mary does not need to see the members outside of the function of the group.

Membership in the group took place during a time in Mary's life when she was ready to expand her knowledge base and social base. There was no transitional event that took place, however her husband had died a few year before taking a renewed interest in studying the piano.

Patty Egert

Patty was motivated to play the piano for three reasons: the need to fill the void of her late husband's death, the need to fulfill a dream to play the piano, and an increased interest stimulated by dating her future husband. The first reason is part of a life transition, triggered by the death of her husband. The second motivation, fulfilling a lifelong dream, is based in the humanistic philosophies of Rogers (1969). Patty believes playing the piano is significant for herself. It involves both her thoughts and her feelings.

Finally, Patty started learning the piano as a part of her new relationship with her now husband and step son. Even though they were not pushy about her learning the piano, Patty felt left out of their musical world. Learning to play the piano was a way she could be a part of "the group." In Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, this places her working towards the need to belong and to be loved.

Patty likes to learn new things. She is reaching for intellectual goals, according to Maslow. Playing the piano is one way to achieve this level. According to Knowles, she has the need to keep growing. Houle would call her a *learning-oriented* person.

Patty's understanding of musical learning is not based in talent education. Just as Maslow theorizes, she believes anyone can learn. It is the speed of cognition that changes with age.

Mel Hanson

Boshier (1973) describes external expectations as one of the motivations for participation. Mel is motivated to attend the LBPC because another member of the organization expects him to attend.

I always go. One of the members—Peter—plays and he always calls me [chuckle] a few days and goes, "Well, Late Bloomers is Sunday, I'm counting on you to be there." And I say "Why are you counting on me?" and he says, "Well, you know, I need your support. You'll be there won't you?" And I always say, "Yes, I'll be there, Peter." So I go, I don't think I've missed one.

Mel, excerpted from interview, July 8, 1996

Mel also looks at the group as way for getting recognition (Maslow, 1979) for his pianistic abilities. He likes to "show off" somewhat.

A person started talking to me and said they really enjoyed it. Listening to the type of music I played and whatnot and it was really encouraging. So I thought, okay, I'll stay, it's kind of interesting.

Mel, excerpted from interview, July 8, 1996

It is hard to tell the strength of Mel's motivation to remain a member of the LBPC. According to Atkinson and Feather (Cross, 1972), the ambiguity of his motivation could be because of the lack of difficulty of the task he is performing. Mel rarely practices for the LBPC. The morning before the club meets, Mel searches through his music to find something to play. This points to the fact the task is too easy for intrinsic reward. Lucy wants Mel to learn something classical for a meeting. Mel is not sure he can accomplish this, and therefore may choose not to stick with the LBPC because the tasks asked of him may be too difficult for him to complete.

Carol Fisk

Carol admits she wishes that she had stayed with her piano studies. She feels that she could be at a fairly high level of performance now if she had adhered to her studies. She would like to be a virtuoso, and thinks that she may have been if she had taken the opportunity. She says she likes to be in

the "limelight," and her husband says she would have made a good screen actor.

Carol is searching for self-actualization. Since she did not reach her potential, she is trying to get as close to it as possible now that she has the opportunity.

Carol also is trying to complete her self-identity. She identified herself with music from the time she was young, and now she wants to be identified with the field again. She is goal-oriented, with the goal being becoming the best pianist she is capable of becoming.

Judy Breese

Judy's circumstance is similar to Carol. She too is trying to reach her potential in an activity in which she excelled when she was young.

Judy also is searching for an artistic activity to receive recognition. She tried writing, but found she has little potential in that field. She remembered that she was at one time talented musically, and now wants to explore that fully. Judy is looking for a way to be recognized for her talents.

Ellen Valmar

Ellen has no desire to perform for the LBPC or anyone else. She participates in many activities, although she considers playing the piano her number one priority at present. Ellen, according to Houle (1961), is a *learning oriented* person, with the goal of improving herself.

Ellen also links her piano studies to her retirement. This is a transitional phase for Ellen, although she is now comfortable with the activities she has chosen.

Ellen is searching for self-actualization, as described by Maslow (1968). Her goal is to do the best she can do and learn the most she can learn. Time is not an issue or factor. She chooses the activities she finds the most valuable to achieve her goal.

Donald Edwards

Donald counts tennis and piano as the two activities in which he likes to participate and excel. He enjoys reaching a level of excellence that can be appreciated by others around him. This points to a need for recognition, as described by Knowles (1979). Donald also likes to research his activities and find out how to do them better. His cognitive interest stimulates him to continue with his piano studies.

Donald enjoys membership in the LBPC, but does not consider it one of his life's priorities. He would find another way to collaborate with others in making music if the club did not exist. Donald could be classified by Houle as an *activity related* person. He likes doing things that stimulate his mind and body. He is also a social person, and enjoys making friend. He participates in the LBPC because he likes to socialize with the membership.

Lucy plays a part in Donald's involvement in the club. She has pushed him to come since the inception of the club. Donald would feel guilty if he did not attend. This points to external expectations (Boshier, 1973) as one of the motivations for Donald to attend the LBPC.

David Shale

David joined the LBPC solely for the opportunity to perform on the piano. He sees the need to perform to improve his playing. He also sees the goal of the club meeting as a way to add the "fear factor" in his practice. David

describes the “fear factor” as the fear of an upcoming event as motivation to learn and perform better and faster to better oneself.

David likes to excel at any project he chooses. When he reaches a point of excellence or where there is no growth or change, he will look for another activity in which to participate. David likes to belong to organizations with others having a common interest. He enjoys excelling within the organization and getting approval for his efforts.

David is a *learning oriented person* (Houle, 1961). He likes to learn new things, but he also has a need for recognition, as described by Maslow (1968). Without that recognition, David will cease participation in any activity in which he participates. His interest in piano is waning as he finds he can not perform better than others in the group. He has decided to take up music writing, which is a skill that he still is improving, and which fewer people have expertise. He would like to have his music performed, which again points to the need for recognition.

Carrie Hull

Carrie does not like to be idle mentally. When she is not working, she is reading or walking or swimming. She likes to stay active mentally. Playing the piano was one way she was able to do this, however, now her hands hurt. Her hand problems have halted her piano lessons as well as caused her attendance to the LBPC to become sporadic. Her injuries are work related, so she hopes to return to playing again when they are cured.

The reasons she attends the LBPC are:

1. She wants to hear others play
2. She likes relating with others about how they got to music as an adult
3. She likes the non-judgmental approach a peer organization has

4. She likes to see other members progress and share in their progress.

Even with these reasons, Carrie does not like the social aspect of the group. She is tired from work and does not like to waste time with lots of talk and commotion.

Carrie would be described by Houle as a *learning oriented* person. The social aspects of the organization appeal to her only to the extent that they help her learn more about playing the piano. She takes an intellectual approach (Maslow, 1968) to her piano studies, as well as her other activities. Her work is strenuous because of deadlines that she must make, but she does not find her work intellectually stimulating. She finds stimulation in her non-work activities.

Violet Stevens

Violet started her piano studies because of a transition in her life. She was caretaker for her sister-in-law, who died of cancer. Violet recently retired from her job of many years. Piano playing was a way to "fill the gap" of losing her sister and functioned as a substitute for her job.

Violet is also a social person. She is on the Seneca County Hospice Board. She socializes with the volunteers of this group, often joining them for meals and recreation. "People ask me what I do. I say, well it depends on what day you are talking about" (excerpted from letter, August 1996). She sings in her church choir. She volunteers to help with arrangements for church funerals, as well as sings in the choir at the funeral services.

Violet is motivated by the social welfare (Boshier, 1973) of her community. However, playing the piano is strictly for her own enjoyment. It relaxes her and makes her happy. The LBPC and her piano studies fills Violet's growth needs. It "... gives her a new purpose in life" (Maslow, 1970, p. 82).

Lucy Riebe

The LBPC is an organization Lucy formed as a "support group for those needing experience performing for an audience." Lucy considers the club her "charity." Lucy participates in it to benefit the other members and give them inspiration. This points to motivation for the social welfare of the community (Boshier, 1973).

Lucy also uses the group as a way to gain recognition by the other members and by the community. The "Monday Musicale," a music group to which Lucy belongs, has often commented about the success of the LBPC and of the recognition it has obtained. The members of the LBPC are inspired by Lucy's pianistic capabilities at her age. Lucy is looking for esteem, according to Maslow (1968).

Lucy started her piano lessons during a transition in her life. She had decided to quit breeding and showing dogs, which had been her central activity for many years.

Theory Related to the LBPC

The LBPC is a group in progress. It is still in its infancy of forming a solid set of rules and values that define its existence. The LBPC follows Tubbs' model of small group interaction (1978).

1. Relevant background factors. The members of the LBPC came to the club for a variety of reasons. Some wanted to perform, others were looking for social interaction, others were looking for a support group. These factors have influenced the direction the club has taken thus far, most noticeably in "the rules." Darla Brinks would prefer not to play every meeting. Even though performance is still expected, Lucy has let this rule slide to some extent by occasionally letting people listen and not perform. Some members

have expressed a desire for more socialization. Lucy has acquiesced by having an informal gathering after the official part of the club is over.

2. Internal influences. The LBPC is Lucy's organization. She listens to club members when they express opinions, but Lucy makes the decisions for the group. This affects the way people relate to one another in the group. The members often enter the meetings without speaking, awaiting their turn to play. Peter Bench works on trying to personalize the group. As the cheerleader, he often motivates and energizes the other performers. His influence helped start the "in between" club and the informal gathering after the formal performance is complete.

3. Consequences of the small group interaction. When the group grew suddenly, the group lost some of its original identity. Members continued to participate, taking in stride the larger group. However, smaller sub-groups formed within the bigger group. People often sit in the same place at every meeting, and those around them became a part of their social group. With this development, the enormousness of the group seems to have gotten smaller.

The researcher interviewed some of the members of the LBPC in small groups. The participants tended to open up and tell their feelings about playing and performing to each other during the interview. The next meeting of the LBPC seemed friendlier. The people that were together for small group interviews tended to gravitate towards each other.

CHAPTER V

THEMES AND INTERPRETATIONS

"If an experience arouses curiosity, strengthens initiative, and sets up desires and purposes that are sufficiently intense to carry a person over dead places in the future, continuity works in a very different way. Every experience is a moving force. Its value can be judged only on the ground of what it moves toward and into."

Dewey, 1939, p. 31

Introduction

The members of the LBPC have varying backgrounds in music. Several members came from very musical backgrounds and families. Others had no musical stimulation in their home environment. Some members started piano lessons as a child and quit while still in their childhood years. Others started after they were mature adults and are still continuing while being members of the LBPC. A few members are not studying piano formally at the present time.

However, all the adults in this study made a decision to practice the piano, either with formal instruction or by self-instruction, to the extent that they feel is acceptable for membership in the LBPC. All the members of the LBPC take their piano playing seriously enough to have decided to make a commitment to a performance organization. After examination of the LBPC and its participants, three categories of study emerged—motivation for piano study, factors influencing the commitment to continue piano study, and the LBPC as an organization in transition.

Motivation for Piano Study

The members of the LBPC described five basic phenomena that motivated the study of piano: (1) childhood events, (2) purchasing a piano, (3) life changing events, (4) hobby replacement, and (5) joining the LBPC.

Childhood Events

Most of the participants in the LBPC could point to an event or environment in their childhood that fueled their desire to make piano a part of their adult life. Eight different events or environments were noted by the researcher from the data.

Admiration for a friend or neighbor. Debbie Davis first got the idea that she wanted to learn to play the piano when she was in grade school and many of her friends were taking lessons. She remembers hearing a friend play "Heart and Soul." The friend would say, "It's simple, just do this and this," and Debbie would say, "Gosh, to be able to do that!"

Frank Park wanted to study piano from the age of ten. He loved the sound of the piano. When he was ten, his family moved to a small town in Michigan, and he met a boy who made a life long impression on him.

I became close friends with a young boy about my age. I went over to his house one day, and he walked over to the piano and started banging a scale. Unbelievable! His mother came in and gave him a new record. She put it on the record player and played it. He listened to it, and he walked over to the piano, and he played it just like that. He wasn't Bill Evans or somebody like that, but I thought he was really good. It sounded great to me at the time. He had a lot of talent, and we moved, but I often wondered if that boy ever got music lessons because he really had the talent for it.

Excerpted from interview, July 10, 1996

Ellen Valmar started taking lessons because a neighbor girl was taking piano lessons. "I was really interested in it because she was taking piano

lessons, and I wanted to, so that's how I got started" (excerpted from interview, July 11, 1996).

Prompting by family members or friends. Several members decided to study the piano after their family or friends encouraged them. Darla Brinks started piano lessons when she was a teenager after starting to date her future husband. His family encouraged her to start lessons, discussed the possibility with her, and gave her the name of a reputable teacher.

Mary Brighten started piano lessons after her mother decided it would be a good thing for a young girl to learn. The mother was adamant that her daughter get the teacher, and decided that only the owner of the reputable music conservatory could personally teach her daughter. "Actually, my mother saw to it that Lina Keith taught me [owner of music school]. Mother wasn't about to have some 'minion' teach her daughter [chuckle]" (Excerpted from interview, July 10, 1996).

Mel Hanson got started taking lessons after his uncle noticed the interest Mel was taking in the instrument. The uncle would listen to him "pound" on the piano, and offered to pay for his lessons.

Awareness of talent. Some participants were aware that they had musical talent as a youngster, which motivated piano study. Mel Hanson knew he had talent when he formed a five piece band in the ninth grade. "We were all in high school, and we would play, and we got paid for it. We got three dollars each a night" (Excerpted from interview, July 9, 1996).

Tim Jenson started taking lessons when he was around eleven. His twin brother took at the same time. By the time they had taken about a year, his brother lost interest because he found it difficult. Tim did not find it difficult at all. He realized then that he had musical talent.

Piano in the home. When Mel Hanson was nine years old, his uncle moved to a smaller home, and gave Mel his piano. This allowed Mel to play more often.

Carrie Hull always had a piano in her house. She lived next door to an aunt who also had a piano. Carrie's great grandparents gave each of their four daughters a baby grand as a gift. She feels a home wouldn't "feel right" without a piano.

Patty Egert family was storing the grandmother's piano when Patty was growing up. Patty used this opportunity to sit down and try playing on her own.

Debbie Davis' family did not have a piano, nor did she have access to one regularly. One of her aunts had a player piano that she really enjoyed playing, but it "disappeared" soon after she was ten. From the short time her aunt had the piano, Debbie developed a love for the piano's sound.

Music present in the home. Often the members of the LBPC came from musical families or music was an important feature of home life. Tim Jenson's mother played the flute and sax in an all girl's orchestra during the depression.

Mary Brighten's parents were not particularly musical, but there was music around the house on a regular basis.

My mother sang around the house all the time. She had a lovely soprano voice. And my father loved marches and things like that. I remember sitting between the two of them at Trinity Church. We would be singing father's favorite hymn, "Onward Christian Soldiers." My mother would be singing it beautifully and my father would sing it all on one note [laugh]. But he loved it.

Mother used to put on the old records on the victrola that you have to crank. She loved operas and musicals and my father loved marches. So in between the two of them I had a fairly decent background in music.

Excerpted from interview, July 10, 1996

Carol Fisk's family could not afford a piano, but music was present in the form of recordings.

My mom and dad had one of these series of classical music, a twelve volume collection, and there were a bunch of piano music, and I would listen to it over and over and over. I begged for a piano when I was a kid. My parents didn't have much money, so it was a big thing to play the piano. And I just begged

Excerpted from interview, July 9, 1996

Peter Bench's family loved music.

I come from a musical family, my mother played the piano very well. My uncle played the piano—in fact, he played in the theater when they used to have silent movies, he played the piano for it. So as I say, we go way back musically.

Excerpted from interview, July 10, 1996

Violet Steven's mother was a music lover.

My mother did play the piano—enough for her own enjoyment. I don't really know if she would have taken lessons. I am sure she would have had to. So I think it was something that sort of rubbed off from her to me.

Excerpted from letter, August 1996

Carrie Hull's father was a member of a big band ensemble when they lived in Florida. He loved playing the piano. Carrie remembers going to sleep at night hearing her father play. The family had a big upright piano that Carrie felt was part of the family.

Music available in school and church. Carol Fisk played the double bass in her high school orchestra. She also listened to others at school playing the piano. She often compared herself to the other players. When she was in the

eighth to tenth grade, she played all the rehearsals for her parish musicals. The director was an opera singer for whom Carol had great respect.

David Shale played french horn in his high school concert and marching bands for about six years. He highly respected some of the other players—one of his classmates was first chair for the New Jersey All State Band.

Peter Bench took trumpet lessons and played in his high school marching band. Robert Shaw played string bass in his high school orchestra and dance band. Judy Breese played clarinet in her high school band.

Tim Jenson took up drum lessons while in high school, studying with an upperclassman. He joined the "Rhythm Teens," a high school group of sixteen musicians and singers, that toured around Cleveland and throughout Ohio.

Music as a form of socialization. David Shale studied the french horn predominantly because he wanted to be in the marching band. Ellen Valmar joined her high school marching band because it was the only way her mother would let her go out in the evenings, as she was very strict.

Overt artistic expression. Lucy Riebe was searching for a way to find some artistic self identity.

From the time I was a little kid I always wanted to do something in the arts. Other kids in school got piano lessons and of course I didn't. There wasn't any money for a piano anyway. And I just always had a desire to do something in the arts. Dance? I couldn't dance. Sing? I can't sing, I can't carry a tune. Write? Well, I don't know enough to write. I tried that and couldn't do that.

Excerpted from interview, July 10, 1996

Purchasing a Piano

For some members buying a piano gave them the motivation to start lessons. Violet Stevens recalls awakening in the middle of the night and something telling her now is the time to pursue her piano wishes.

I went to an auction a mile south of Bascom and they had a piano for sale. I bid on it for \$525.00. It wasn't in the best of condition but for a beginner I thought it would suffice. I immediately contacted the teacher of one of my dearest friends, and luckily she had an available slot.

Excerpted from letter, July 13, 1996

Mel Hanson had a piano for many years "that mostly just sat around," but finally decided to invest in a grand piano.

I really got interested in playing for longer periods of time when I got this piano. . . . For some reason I picked up the phone and called Doerfler [piano technician and Yamaha dealer]. I hadn't been in touch with him for years and years. He told me there was going to be a warehouse piano sale up in Livonia Michigan, and why didn't I go up there and look and see what interested me. My wife saw the Disklavier and said "this is what we need," which was news to me. I didn't know that we needed a Disklavier but I thought, well, that's nice. If that's what she wants, that's my way into a grand piano."

Excerpted from interview, July 9, 1996

Carrie Hull surprised herself with a purchase of a piano. After work one day she stopped at a music store. She went home after finding a possible instrument, saying to herself "What are you going to do that for!" She knew buying the piano was an important commitment. She knew she would have to do something with it. But she knew she would get it if she wanted it. She called the salesman, and within a week she had it delivered. She thought it was an impulse buy, but decided it was "just meant to be."

Carol Fisk finished her medical residency about four years ago. She finally had the money, so when out and bought a grand piano. "I thought if I had a nice piano I might be able to play it better. I always loved playing the piano

and for many years didn't have the time" (excerpted from interview, July 9, 1996).

David Shale had started to learn the piano on his own when he lived in New York City. However, he didn't take it up seriously until purchasing a new piano.

MC: When did you start taking up piano again?

David: Last June, actually. We were shopping for a grand piano, what happened is that Sheila [David's wife] drove passed Lake Erie Pianos because she had been in there the year before when I think she had to sell her family's piano when her father died. She wanted to look at some piano she had seen when she was in there. Well, they didn't have that piano, but they had a six foot Kawai for six thousand dollars, and she got interested in that and

Then things sort of snowballed, and I reluctantly started shopping with her, and once I started shopping with her it became obviously that we were going to buy a piano.

MC: Did you get excited about this?

David: Yes. It was fun shopping for it. So basically I started playing again about a month before we got this piano in preparation to have this piano. I didn't start formal lessons until September.

MC: Was it easier this time to pick it up on your own?

David: Much easier.

MC: Why?

David: Number one, I was motivated. I had the philosophy that if I was going to spend this much on a piano, I was going to learn how to play it.

Excerpted from interview, July 13, 1996

Patty Egert decided to get advice about buying a piano first from a colleague at work. She was very excited about her new purchase.

It was wonderful. I was so excited. My now husband and step son came to pick me up to go to the movies, and I said "I'm getting a piano, I'm getting a piano!" I was so excited. And it was there on Monday when I got out of school. I ran out of the building to let them in, I was really excited."

Excerpted from interview, July 14, 1996

Debbie Davis started lessons after seeing an ad in the newspaper about a place that sold pianos and gave lessons. Her husband suggested she look into it. She got the costs from the establishment, but saw a different brand keyboard for less money elsewhere. She started lessons soon after buying it.

For twenty eight years Frank Park did not have access to a piano and did not play the piano at all. In 1988, Frank started looking for a piano. He talked about it often with his wife, and took her with him on his shopping trips.

My wife bought me a keyboard for Christmas. She knew that I was looking at a piano and a keyboard and she got tired of listening to it. We were out looking and she said "Why don't you buy that keyboard?" So I bought myself a keyboard. I started teaching myself on the keyboard first. It wasn't very long—three months—before I decided I had to have a piano. So I bought my first piano then.

Excerpted from interview, July 10, 1996

Lucy bought a keyboard after seeing the one owned by her daughter.

My daughter came down in the fall of '87. She brought a digital piano, without any legs or anything, and it played everything, the seashore, the wind, birds, just all kinds of stuff, and she thought it was great. I talked to my daughter afterwards a little bit and she said you know, they have those same things on a regular piano with a bench and with legs and everything, and you can put a headset in it. I thought, I could do that, and get a teacher and start playing the piano, and I could practice and no one would hear me practice. So I went into this music store, and walked out, and bought the piano. That was in '87. I bought some Alfred [piano lesson] books, adult books, and I started teaching myself.

Excerpted from interview, May 7, 1996

Robert Shaw's wife gave him a guitar for Christmas one year. This started him taking guitar lessons, but he found he was not satisfied with chord playing without the melody (he considers himself a poor singer). He decided to take piano lessons because the piano is capable of melody and harmony.

Life Changing Events

Most members could point to events in their lives that prompted starting or returning to piano study. Five types of events were evident from the data.

Death of a loved one. Violet Stevens was caring for her cancer-stricken sister in law in 1986. She died in 1989, the year that Violet started piano lessons. "It has been a great pleasure and wonderful therapy for me. It has helped to fill in the 'gap' of loosing my sister-in-law" (Excerpted from letter, July 13, 1996).

Patty Egert's husband died in 1990. For about a year and a half she felt a void in her life. Her family helped her through this time, as well as attending grief support groups. But "... there were lots of voids, [it was] a time of my life of lots of voids." She took up the piano soon afterwards.

Retirement from a job. Peter Bench calls playing the piano his "pre-retirement challenge." He plans on playing more after he retires. Peter's wife encourages him to play the piano partially because she feels he will need something to do that is as time-consuming and thought consuming as his work presently is. She sees it as a work substitute.

Debbie Davis started taking lessons after she cut down her work to part time. Mel Hanson started playing the piano more after he retired from teaching, although he still owns a printing business and is an announcer for car races. Lucy Riebe had been retired for a while, but had a side business of showing and breeding dogs. When she decided to give up this business, she took up piano lessons. Ellen Valmar took up piano studies when she retired from her work about five years ago.

Change in home environment. Darla Brinks decided to start piano when she was divorced from her husband of many years.

I was down to my daughter in law's and son's [house], who live in Cincinnati. We were at her mother's house and a cousin was there, and she'd just got a piano for Christmas. We were talking about the piano, and I said I had always loved the piano. At that time I was divorced so it was like what other time to do it, now that you have the time.

Excerpted from interview, July 11, 1996

Changing financial situations helped some participants to decide to pursue piano study. Frank Park wanted to study the piano when his children were young, but soon realized it was financially impossible to budget for piano lessons for both him and the children. After the children grew up and moved away, Frank bought a piano and eventually started formal lessons.

Carol Fisk also was able to afford lessons for her children and for herself after finishing her residency as a physician. Her family—who moved often as she and her husband were attending school—had finally settled in one place for an extended period of time.

Debbie Davis' children had grown and moved out of the house. "It's our time now," is how Debbie feels about her own piano studies.

New opportunity. Donald Edwards had the opportunity to take piano classes free of charge through the university at which he was employed. In addition to piano, he also took tennis lessons and a jogging class.

Musical catalyst. Mary Brighten's interest in the piano started again when she saw Plácido Domingo in a television production of Othello.

I was so taken with the music, and the beautiful singing, and the whole opera scene, that it suddenly got me thinking of all the opera pieces I had. So I went to the piano bench and dug out some of my operas. Strangely enough, this was the catalyst.

Excerpted from interview, July 10, 1996

Mary thought that listening to the opera recordings was a catalyst to start playing music again. However, she also said it was the right time in her life.

Hobby Replacement

Frank Park has always been interested in a multitude of hobbies. Ten years previous to learning the piano, he became interested in computers. He started programming, and became quite accomplished. After a time, he lost interest. He also went into radio television, owning a service business in this industry. Automobiles became a hobby for a while. With his son, he raced in the drag strips in Milan, Ohio. After his son grew up, this interest faded. He considers himself "a doer." He would rather get interested in doing a hobby than watching sports on the television.

He considers the piano a little different than hobbies of his past.

But the piano has not turned out to be that. Those things all seemed to fade with time, but with the piano, here is something that is almost like food. There's a staple there.

I plan on sticking with it as long as I can improve. If I stop improving, then I'll stop taking lessons. But as long as I keep improving—I feel like I'm accomplishing more—I'll keep at it.

Excerpted from interview, July 10, 1996

Besides piano, Ellen Valmar is involved in a multitude of hobbies. She studies and performs tap dancing with a local group. She takes aerobic classes daily, and studies music theory at a local university.

David Shale has had other hobbies besides playing the piano. Previously, he became an avid photographer, winning awards with the local photography club. Recently, David has found an interest in music writing. David gives his complete energies to each hobby in which he has found interest. He rarely participates in more than one hobby at a time. With his new interest in music writing, his interest in piano playing has diminished proportionately.

Joining the LBPC

Tim Hanson recalls “tinkering around” the piano for about ten years. When his wife told him about the LBPC, Tim decided to see if it was something he would like to join. The performance activity of the organization started Tim taking the piano seriously, instead of just half heartedly “fooling around” with it.

Interpretations

The members of the LBPC were motivated to study piano because of environmental changes and conditions. Without the presence of these environments, they may have never had the desire to start piano study.

Childhood environment played a major role in motivating the members to study the piano. Most of the members pointed to some event from this time in their life that they never forgot which formed a lasting impression that translated into the desire to play the piano.

Life changing events gave members the push to start piano study. These events were based on changes in their environments, from the death in the family or divorce, to the stabilization of financial resources. These circumstances were out of the control of the participants. The decision to study piano was a way the participants could regain control and power over their lives. Voluntarily joining the LBPC was another way the participants took charge of the direction their lives would take. It was a way to “ground” their decision for serious piano study in a physical environment, helping to motivate them to practice and achieve their new objective playing the piano. This is similar to activities such as dieting and exercising, which may be easier to accomplish with others who are in the same condition. The need to have

others who are experiencing the same difficulties is why Lucy refers to the LBPC as a "support group."

Most of the participants were involved with hobbies throughout their adult lives. Playing the piano became a hobby for some, often the replacement of a hobby that they quit or in which they could no longer participate. As with any hobby, there is the requirement of purchasing the tools needed to participate. Purchasing a piano became an important event for the LBPC members. As they matured, the participants had the financial stability to participate in a hobby that demanded such an aggressive output of capital. The purchase of the "toy," a piano, became interchangeable with the desire to learn how to play it.

Factors Influencing the Commitment to Piano Study

Regardless of what motivated the participants to start or resume piano study, there were five factors that were found to have an effect on the motivation to continue piano study: (1) previous piano study, (2) the desire to recapture youth, (3) the level of self-confidence, (4) extrinsic factors, and (5) intrinsic factors.

Previous Piano Study

Most of the members of the LBPC studied piano at an earlier time in their lives and quit. There were numerous reasons why they quit. One of the reasons given was other activities, such as sports and jobs, were more important at the time.

Peter Bench took piano lessons for four years as a child. He stopped when he started high school sports. He started again after his sixtieth birthday.

I still have a long way to go, I wish I had never quit. I wish I had never quit. My mother swore up and down that I would look up at heaven someday and say she was right. And I do that about every other day.

Excerpted from interview, July 10, 1996

Carrie Hull does not recall how she first started to play the piano. She did not take formal lessons, but she remembers learning how to read music, and remembers learning to play hymns. Her father was a musician, and possibly showed her the basics of music reading. But in high school she went to work, so she didn't take the time to play anymore.

Ellen Valmar took piano lessons for three years when she was a child. When she entered high school, she quit because she went to work and lacked the time for practicing. She started again about ten years ago.

My only regret is that I didn't continue lessons for all these years. But that happens when you're young and foolish.

Excerpted from interview, July 11, 1996

Robert Shaw quit lessons as a child after only one year. He kept up with musical activities, however, until leaving for college. All his musical activities ceased in college because he was too busy with school work. He resumed piano study about five years ago.

Tim Jenson quit taking lessons as a child when it became "unmasculine" to study the piano. Approximately ten years ago he started reteaching himself to play. Tim regrets quitting lessons. His wife is a piano teacher, and he makes a point of telling her students not to quit playing or they'll regret it later.

Another reason given for quitting lessons was that the participants felt they were not coming up to their own expectations. A sense of failure caused Darla Brinks to quit. She studied piano when she was eighteen but felt discouraged after a short time and quit. She does not want to quit now

because she feels she would be “failing” a second time, and she has progressed to the point that it would be a great loss to give up now.

Carol Fisk started lessons when she was eleven. She really wanted lessons, but she was a perfectionist and could see that there were other children who could play better than her. Her motivation waned by the time she was in college, because she found she excelled more in “book work” that involved facts and advanced concepts. She felt like she never learned to “emote” at the keyboard. Since resuming piano study, she makes musical interpretation her top priority in performing.

Financial obligations caused Frank Park to quit after a short time of piano study when he was a young adult. He gave up his lessons so that his lesson money could go towards his children’s lessons. He started lessons twenty eight years later when the children were gone and he was financially secure.

Two participants cited interference by their parents as the initial reason they quit piano study. Mary Brighten took piano as a child during the depth of the depression. It was her mother’s idea to study, so eventually she was permitted to quit. She continued playing a little on her own, and then resumed lessons in the 1950s when she was first married. She again quit, as it became more difficult to juggle a growing family with practicing.

Judy Breese started piano lessons in the second grade. She took until she was around fifteen before she quit. She wanted to change teachers to someone who could teach her more of a “pop” style, but her mother would not let her switch, so she quit. Now she wishes she had stayed with the piano and double majored in piano and nursing in college.

Several members quit piano lessons after problems with their teachers. Violet Stevens took lessons briefly when she was around twenty five years

old. She quit when her teacher had health problems and had to suspend her studio.

Mel Hanson started lessons as a child, but when he was in the ninth grade, he quit.

I took from him [his teacher] in the seventh and eighth grade and part of the ninth when he told me he couldn't teach me anything anymore, so we parted ways. I thought that meant I had learned all that he knew, but what I think it really meant was that he just couldn't teach me [laugh]!.

Excerpted from interview, July 9, 1996

Donald Edwards took piano for a year and a half while he was in the armed forces stationed in Germany. He quit lessons because he was reassigned to another location, thereby losing his teacher. He learned two pieces while in Germany, mostly by rote, which he continued to play for the next "twenty or thirty years." He says that getting tired of these pieces prompted him to resume lessons.

Lucy Riebe started piano lessons when she was a young adult after getting married. As a condition for receiving lessons, Lucy's piano teacher required that Lucy teach her own student. Lucy complied, but felt insecure about teaching. Her teacher told her "never tell your student everything you know." When Lucy heard this, she felt betrayed. She thought, "What is she holding back from me?" This prompted Lucy to lose motivation and quit.

Three members of the LBPC, Debbie Davis, Patty Egert, and David Shale, started piano as an adult and have been studying without quitting. All three have been studying for a short time, and have high and low moments of motivation. Debbie feels only about 50% motivated to continue lessons at this time. It was discouraging when she realized how hard it is. Patty feels the same way. The commitment level required is higher than she thought it would be when she started lessons.

To say you are going to take for the rest of your life, you know, is kind of crazy, but I'm sure there will be times when I can concentrate, like during the summer, because I don't teach. So I probably will go on, there will never be great progress on my part. But I will continue.

Excerpted from interview, July 16, 1996

David Shale was highly motivated to learn the piano until he felt he had come to the point where he was not progressing as fast as he could. He decided to start composing, which didn't take the physical dexterity as piano playing. Now he is more motivated to compose than he is to practice, although he hasn't quit lessons yet.

The Desire to Recapture Childhood

One theme that reoccurred throughout the interview process was the reemergence of childhood thoughts and ideas into present performing. Mel Hanson brought it up when explaining the nervousness of people playing in the LBPC.

Mel: But I understand it, because that's the child in us still talking. And I'm sure that it is the child in us that's doing the playing too and the interest level. It's probably not the adult part of us that's doing it, it's the kid that always wanted to learn to play and now has got his chance.

MC: So you seem to think that adults learn to play the piano because they wanted to learn to play as a child and never had a chance?

Mel: I think that may have lot of truth to it.

Excerpted from interview, July 9, 1996

Debbie Davis eluded to the same thing when she was talking about her feelings when she takes her piano lessons. She blames her feeling of insecurity during her lessons to "that child mentality," even though she never took lessons as a child. When asked why she thinks this is a child mentality, she said,

... because it is. An adult shouldn't feel that way. If I'm doing something that I want to do, I'm not forced to do it, I'm doing it because I want to do it for my own pleasure. I'm not aiming for Carnegie Hall or anything. I'm just doing it for me, not for a bunch of people, and I shouldn't feel intimidated. I feel I'm past the age of being intimidated. But in a situation like that [lessons], I do [feel intimidated]. I'm trying to get over it. Even piano club is really intimidating. It truly is.

Excerpted from field notes, July 11, 1996

Ellen Valmar says that adults who are studying the piano now are trying to make up for the time they didn't put in as a child. She says children are young and foolish. Now she has an opportunity to make up for lost time, to finally "follow through."

Self Confidence

Both high and low self image as a pianist affect motivation to attend the LBPC and to study piano. Some of the members of the LBPC are intermediate to advanced piano players. The members who are at the elementary level have the most difficulty staying motivated to play the piano and continue with the group.

Darla Brinks was not confident playing the piano when she was a teenager. She still finds playing the piano difficult.

Well, I've never ever been musical, so everything seems twice as hard for me. People [at the LBPC] at least know how to read the music, but it seems to me, I just have a terrible time I think.

Excerpted from interview, July 11, 1996

Debbie Davis has her peaks and valleys of motivation, but believes that it is harder to stay motivated to perform because she feels her playing is at a lower level than the rest of the members of the LBPC.

I think that if all these people were just like us, where we are, we would feel better. All adults who never played as kids,

and all there green, you might feel better. Maybe they've just gotten back with lessons, okay, but you've played before. You know where middle C is, you know all this stuff, where we're—struggling.

Excerpted from interview, July 11, 1996

High self-confidence in playing ability motivates some members to keep playing the piano. Mel Hanson admits he likes to "show off" his abilities.

Now I am going to be opening my soul, here, Michelle. [looks at MC]. I'm a show off. Not exactly a showoff, but I do enjoy playing the piano with people that I feel are about the same level in many ways and that I'm not going to get drowned by some Oscar Peterson who shows up at the place or something.

And I do enjoy performing. Even my race track announcing, which I'm considered one of the best in the county. I just enjoy that. I guess the limelight, you know. I always think of the guy that was the janitor in the little community theater, and they were going to give him a job offer in something else than being the janitor, and they said why don't you do that, take that job and make more money and leave being a janitor? And he said, what, and give up show business [we laugh]? Well, I feel a little bit of that way with playing, I'm in show business.

Excerpted from interview, July 9, 1996

On the other hand, Mel has not taken up formal study again, although he feels it would improve his playing. He is insecure and feels that he will not be able to play well enough to keep up his confidence level.

There are a couple of guys in town who are excellent modern piano teachers. I guess maybe what I'm really doing is getting loosened up again and whatnot before I go, because I know if I start taking lessons they are expensive [pause], and it is discipline and they would expect me to know what they gave me last week when I come back next week. I know I would be under the gun to perform. They won't mess around with me.

Excerpted from interview, July 9, 1996

Donald Edwards wonders if he is vain because he likes to show off his piano playing.

The second reason [I like to play], if you haven't had it, I think you will, I like being admired. Who admires me? My non-playing friends. They think I do the most wonderful things, you know how it goes

Excerpted from interview, July 11, 1996

Peter Bench's self image is related to his ability to be the "cheerleader" of the LBPC. He calls members and reminds them to attend, invites them out to musical outings, and is the first to complement others when they finish playing. This ability allows him to separate himself from the performing situation to some extent. He still likes the idea of "showing off" what he has learned.

I find it kind of fun to what you might say, show off, a little bit. But I don't think that's all bad. There's got to be a little ham in all of us, that we like to get up and play well. And like Frank says, when you play maybe that part of your psyche says, "Hey, look, I've worked hard, I want to show people what I've accomplished."

Excerpted from interview, July 10, 1996

Tim Hanson is deeply affected by his feelings about how he performed for the LBPC. In the May 1996 meeting, he felt like he played horribly. He did not touch the piano from that date until his interview in July, and considered quitting the LBPC as well as abandoning his piano playing efforts.

Extrinsic Motivations

Socialization plays an important role in members attending the LBPC. Mary Brighten likes meeting new people and hearing their accomplishments. Mel Hanson likes to listen to what others are doing, and would like to offer help to those who want to play in a more "modern" style. Peter Bench, the "cheerleader," of the group, likes to talk and socialize. Peter, Violet Stevens, Mary Brighten and Frank Park often stay after the club meeting time to talk. Two members joined because they thought the club would be more social

than performance oriented. Patty Egert had been in grief support groups and Darla Brinks had been in divorce support groups. Both looked at the LBPC as a support group organization.

The LBPC plays its role in motivating members to continue. David Shale enjoys the complements he gets from other members. He started coming when he had taken for just a short time, and the club was in awe of his fast memorization and advancing literature.

Lucy Riebe, the founder of the club, has used the club as a way to keep from quitting herself.

I told my teacher around April that if I didn't have the group I would quit the whole thing. If it weren't for the group, I would quit everything. Get rid of everything, the piano, the music, everything, lessons, everything. I was so unhappy with how my playing sounds. I think it sounds terrible. Well, I was into some more difficult things, and I'm not happy with how it sounds.

So I went home and I thought, well, what do I have to do? If I quit playing, I lose the group. And I don't want to lose the group. How many times would you [looking at another member] come and I say I can't play, I can't play—I wouldn't even have a piano for you! I don't want to do that.

Excerpted from interview, July 10, 1996

Lucy Riebe has kept several members from quitting. Darla Brinks credits Lucy's support with keeping her motivated to attend the LBPC. Ellen Valmar feels guilty if she fails to attend the LBPC. She knows Lucy will call her and ask why she did not attend. Violet Stevens felt discouraged because she thought the group is more knowledgeable in music than she is. But "Lucy has a way to make all feel comfortable" (excerpted from letter, July 13, 1996).

Some of the members get support from family and friends. Debbie Davis' husband is very supportive of her playing. He listens to her sometimes and gives her complements. He is "in her back pocket," as she puts it. Peter Bench gets support from his wife, who often compliments his efforts. His

children also enjoy his playing. Friends ask him to play for parties, which Peter thoroughly enjoys.

The desire to gain recognition from others plays a part in motivation for some. Ellen Valmar would like to play in a lounge. Frank Park would like to play in old people's homes. Violet Stevens would love to play at a sing-a-long or restaurant. Carol Fisk would like to play well enough to perform publicly. Darla Brinks would like to play in church. David Shale likes the idea of inviting friends over for mini-concerts.

Intrinsic Motivations

Patty Egert believes that if she would practice more, she would improve more. She realizes she does not have the time to play as well as she could, which reduces the stress of thinking she is not able to play the piano. She points to her stepson, who needs trophies and accolades for doing well. She does not need external reinforcers.

But I'm not doing it for anyone else. And I'm not making progress, if I sit and listen to the kids at a recital who have played the same time I have. But that's okay, because I'm learning music, and I'm doing—for me a big reward was, we went to see "Amadeus" at Stratford this spring. I felt good that the character Amadeus was ranting and raving about Salieri's piece just being the tonic, just the tonic. I felt good that at least I had a frame of reference for knowing what that meant. For me that was rewarding.

Excerpted from interview, July 14, 1996

Frank Park is content with a job done to the best of his ability. His wife does not seem responsive to his efforts, and he tries to practice when his wife will not be bothered with the sound. Frank decided to study the piano without any outside motivation, and continues primarily because of the artistic expression.

I get a lot of things out of music that I think some people don't get. It almost feeds me. When I listen to music it makes me feel good. Playing makes me feel good. I know I'm not a great piano player, but when I play the piano, it sounds beautiful. Even if it isn't, I know it's not great, but surprisingly it sound great to me.

Excerpted from interview, July 10, 1996

Ellen Valmar does not enjoy playing for the LBPC, but she likes to do a multitude of activities. She dances in a traveling group, takes music theory, and does aerobics daily. Her reason for making piano a priority is because it helps her feel better about herself.

MC: Why is it important that you know how to play the piano?

Ellen: For my own self esteem, I guess. It's an accomplishment. I like playing, but just for myself. I don't want to become a concert pianist.

Excerpted from interview, July 11, 1996

Mary Brighten is rediscovering the wonderful music she knew as a child. She likes to learn about everything, and lately became fascinated with opera after listening to Placido Domingo in Othello. Mary believes she would give up another of her activities before giving up piano lessons. Her focus in her lessons has changed in the last six months. Now she terms herself as a studier of music. She likes to read books about music, and is always asking why. She researches translations for opera librettos, and now she is focusing on reading about pianistic subjects and lives of composers.

It's because I want to research it. I have to get a tape [opera tape], watch it, then go to the library and try to dig everything out. Because it enhances what I know.

Excerpted from interview, July 10, 1996

Interpretations

Members who studied piano previously have a more realistic view of what is expected to learn to play the piano well. Their previous experience has "warned" them that they will be required to practice. It also warned them that playing the piano is not "instant" gratification and takes time and work.

The piano teacher is important to the participants. When the participants studied piano as a child and lost their teacher, they did not go out and look for another teacher. Sometimes the blame was turned inward, such as believing the teacher was not pleased. The ultimate result in all the situations in this study was the student did not resume lessons.

The time frame for starting piano lessons for a second time at some point in adulthood seemed ideal for most of the participants. Lives were not changing as rapidly, since schooling was over and the home and family were well developed and stable. The participants often learned through their working situations to schedule their time wisely, and were able to schedule practice time.

Adults can deal with frustration more objectively than children. What may have caused them to quit as a child is not an issue now.

There's no sense of me thinking I'm going to be a virtuoso. I can now find middle C, I can play some songs which I couldn't before. That's okay. Progress from there. That's what I am trying to put into my mind up there.

There are three or four levels that you reach where you feel like you are just treading water. You can't get anywhere. I've reached those before a lot of times and that's when I stop for a while and just sort of step back and look back through some of the songs that I like that I found difficult [at one time].

Debbie, excerpted from interview, July 11, 1996

Adults tend to reflect positively on piano playing and improvement. Even after a bad experience playing in a recital, Patty Egert is pragmatic.

So I told him [Patty's step son] I really flubbed the piece—badly, and I came back and said “Well, Nathan, if that is the worse that happens, then that's not so bad, because I know a wonderful piece of music by heart. I just couldn't play it today!” [laugh]

Excerpted from interview, July 14, 1996

An interesting correlation can be drawn between studying piano as an adult and studying as a child. The members who studied as children seem to be trying to finish what they started. Carol Fisk felt she never reached her potential because she did not continue her lessons. When she heard a friend of her son play, it brought back a feeling of what she could have accomplished if she would not have quit.

Oh, gosh, I'd love to play like that. I mean, that's why I wanted to play as a child. I'd see these pianists play on TV, and I'd think, gosh, that would be—if I could have done it, I would have never been a doctor. I realized it would be easier to be a doctor than be a pianist [laugh].

Excerpted from interview, July 9, 1996

Judy Breese felt she had potential as a child, and is beginning piano lessons again to see if she still has potential. She feels as though she was never given the opportunity to finish what she started as a child, which was to exhibit talent at the piano.

Darla Brinks was frustrated with lessons as a child. She felt she was unable to accomplish what was expected of her. Now she is continuing lessons to prove she does not give up, and to prove she was wrong about herself playing poorly as a child.

Feelings of high or low self-confidence were not indicators for continuing or abandoning piano studies. Both Debbie Davis and Darla Brinks feel insecure about their playing, but both continue attending the LBPC on a regular basis, as well as continue with their piano lessons. Donald Edwards, who likes to “show off,” only attends meetings when he has something to

perform, and does not take piano lessons regularly. Tim Jenson, whose ego was badly bruised by one of his performances, is still attending meetings.

The LBPC as an Organization in Transition

The participants of this study think the LBPC is changing constantly. Most do not plan on leaving the organization in the foreseeable future, however some of them are curious to see what will happen to the organization over time. Two major factors contribute to the transitional nature of the group: club rules and group dynamics.

Club Rules

Lucy sets the tone of the club as well as the club rules. She runs a "tight ship," as one club member points out. Most of the rules were formed by request of club members, even though the rules have never been discussed or voted on by club members. Lucy is the rule maker and the rule keeper, yet her rules usually are made at the request of members. Most are unaware that the rules were formed by membership request. Even though some grumble about the rules, they say "it's Lucy's club," which gives Lucy the right to make whatever rules she finds appropriate.

Lucy keeps it more like a —I always relate her to a school teacher. A really strict school teacher, because she doesn't want you to talk, she doesn't want you to have the back and forth . . .

Anonymous, informal interview, July 1996

One of the rules of the club is one has to perform to attend. This is difficult for some, because they sometimes feel ill-prepared. This causes the dilemma of whether to go to the meeting or stay at home. Donald Edwards does not attend club meetings if he is not prepared to perform. Darla Brinks

told Lucy that she will play when she is ready, but would like to come at other times to listen. Lucy allows this.

Most feel that performance is the integral reason for having the group, and membership to the group is defined by the willingness to perform. David Shale entered the group because of the need to find a performance opportunity.

I feel like a very important part in learning to play is you have to perform. To learn to perform you have to perform. So this seemed ideal. I mean, I had performance classes with Susan Gillespie, but I needed other avenues to perform.

Excerpted from interview, July 13, 1996

Robert Shaw also entered the group for its performance opportunity.

As part of my piano lessons, my teacher requires attendance at performance classes. At my first couple of performance classes I was very surprised at my nervousness and my inability to play as well as I did in a nonperformance setting. As I say, this was a surprise since I typically give speaking presentations to large groups without the slightest concern.

Recalling that my ease at speaking was not always the case and that I became more comfortable with practice, it seemed that I need practice performing. Thus, the piano club.

Excerpted from letter, July 22, 1996

Patty Egert believes performing for the LBPC is important in defining what makes you a member.

I enjoy hearing them [the members] play, and I feel the need to reciprocate. You can't just all take, you have to give.

Excerpted from interview, July 14, 1996

Peter Bench agrees with Patty that performing is an integral part of the LBPC.

Because I'm an old marketing major in college, I want to point out to you something about the group of people you are interviewing. We are here because we all want to learn to play

in front of each other. This is an isolated group, maybe others aren't like that. But if I sit here and tell you I don't want to learn to play in front of people, I don't belong in the Late Bloomers Club. So that group is a selected group of people who have chosen to do that. Not a group out here that doesn't want to play. They won't come, like I did the first time and see 34 people sitting there. I wouldn't have played that day if I didn't feel the way I did.

Excerpted from interview, July 10, 1996

Another rule of the club is that one is expected to come to meetings. Lucy gets overtly upset when people choose not to come, often announcing the reason for their absence to the rest of the club. The members are nervous that if they are not able to attend, Lucy will announce their absence (with the reason) to the rest of the group, and embarrass them for not being in attendance.

Talking is not allowed during performances or between performances. This rule resulted after some members complained to Lucy about being distracted by the talking. The result of this rule is the performance time has taken on a formal, recital like characteristic. Some members object to this formal atmosphere, and would like to have more socialization. Lucy responded by asking people to stay after the formal meeting for informal talk and playing.

Members are not permitted to arrive late. This rule resulted after the meetings started to run overtime because of starting late. This rule has a positive and negative side—the members appreciate ending the meeting on time, but are embarrassed if they arrive late.

Members must not be professional musicians. One member was asked to leave the group because he performs professionally as a musician.

Piano music is the only form of performance that is allowed at the LBPC. Lucy received requests from people who wanted to perform art songs or

played other instruments, but Lucy refused to admit them to the LBPC. One woman did a sing-a-long as her performance. Lucy asked her not to do this again. The woman subsequently quit the club.

Lucy: How do you all feel about Annie singing?

[Others say they don't mind]

Lucy: I don't want this. I turned down a violinist. It was okay once, but no more.

Frank: I understand. This gets away from your real purpose of the organization. It pulls away from the goal.

Lucy--A club in Michigan folded because they got too diverse. I will tell Annie that it is not acceptable to sing.

Excerpted from informal interview, Nov. 12, 1995

Lucy's preference is that the club be classically oriented. This has been a problem, because three members play pop/jazz. She decided not to make an issue of this, although she asked them to prepare something more classical in style at least once.

Spouses are not invited to the LBPC. The main reason for this is there is no room to seat them.

No piano teachers are allowed. Lucy is afraid they will use it as a way to compare how their students play with others. She is apprehensive they will use the group to recruit students. The members of the LBPC never wanted teachers in attendance—their presence would change the character of the group from playing for peers with the same anxieties to playing for teachers who are listening for mistakes.

Group Dynamics

The group was intimate and close when it was small. With the addition of twenty new people, some of the members are more nervous to perform. Some of the older members feel overtaken by the new members. This was "their club," and now they are only a part of a bigger group.

Lucy formed a small "in between club" so people who were not able to attend the larger club would not have to wait four months to perform. Most of the members who have attended the smaller club like it better. They like the friendly, relaxed atmosphere and closer ties with others. The small group is by invitation only. Some members are afraid that this might form a "clique." The smaller group has not been publicly announced by Lucy, so members may not be aware of the reason people are permitted to attend it. Lucy's rule is that participants must attend the main club most of the time, and can not substitute the "in between club" for the main club. At one point, Lucy wanted to divide the LBPC into two smaller groups, meeting alternate months. The reaction from the club members was that they preferred not to be split from their new friends. This feeling may be changing as the club grows larger and more impersonal.

Some members mentioned Mel Hanson's role in the club as the "professional." "Mel gets up there and entertains us all," was the response one person gave. Mel's ability frightens some of the members of the club who are newer to piano study. There is a dichotomy in the group, with the elementary pianists feeling separate from the more advanced players. Both groups get nervous performing in front of others. The more elementary members want to "just get through it without blowing it," while the more advanced members want to perform in such a way that others may be impressed. Support is given to all members after they perform. There is always someone saying "good work" or "congratulations, you did it." The more elementary members are pragmatic about the more advanced players. They realize that although they are "Late Bloomer," they actually have played for years and are just coming back to study.

Interpretations

Since the LBPC is a new organization, the members are not sure of the direction it will take in the future. All of those interviewed were planning to remain members and see the direction the club would take. Some feared Lucy would quit offering her house for the club and it would fold. Tim Jenson feels the group would continue somehow if Lucy couldn't run it anymore. He likes many of Lucy's rules, although he would like it if the club was more peer-driven. He likes the idea of changing the meeting location from month to month.

The rules set the tone for the LBPC. The individuals who belong do not necessarily agree with all of the rules. They see changes in the future to accommodate their differing philosophies. Mel Hanson would like the opportunity to teach some of the members jazz chording. He knows this type of instruction would interfere with the goal of the LBPC, because no teachers are allowed. He would not mind having teachers attend to get new ideas. Carol Fisk has similar feelings. She would not mind a person who is a pianist lead the group, with someone like Lucy to guide it. If the LBPC were for some reason disbanded, Carol would volunteer her home for meetings. There are rules that she would make to fit her concept of what the group should be. One rule would be only classical music could be played.

The need for a group such as the LBPC is not in question. If the LBPC folded, some other similar outlet for performing would take its place. Donald Edwards plans on collaborating with others musically for a long time. He gets together informally once a week with two other people for more playing opportunities. He would miss Lucy and the other members if the club folded, but he already has other opportunities to play that he would continue.

David Shale would hate to see the club fold, but feels the performance situation is too important to stop if that happens.

MC: Do you foresee the group continuing if Lucy were to leave us?

David: 50-50. I'm sure it wouldn't continue in the current format.

MC: How would it change?

David: Well, it would adjust to whoever is putting the energy into keeping it going. This is not a group that governs itself. Lucy rules it with an iron hand [we laugh], you know.

MC: Do you mind that she rules it with iron hand?

David: No, I think that's useful. I think we've lost one member from her doing that, but . . .

MC: Do you feel free to talk and try to talk to Lucy and adjust the club, do you feel like you can do that?

David: I feel like I would have limited success in doing that, but I haven't had the urge at all. As long as I get to perform, I don't really care.

Excerpted from interview, July 13, 1996

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the *Late Bloomers Piano Club* and its members to discover:

1. Why the club exists
2. What changes and strategies have occurred in the development of the organization
3. How interrelationships have changed and developed between the club members and the founder.

To gain insight into the existence of the LBPC, members were asked questions that provided data about:

1. What motivates them to attend the LBPC, and what they have to overcome to continue attending
2. The role of socialization in the club's existence
3. The importance of piano in the members' lives
4. What motivates the members to play the piano
5. What keeps them from quitting the organization.

Because the study followed a perspective-seeking path, the focus of the study evolved as it progressed (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 41). Questions to participants focused around issues that emerged during the interviews.

Analysis of the data followed the grounded method of Glaser and Strauss (1967). At the end of the study, patterns and themes emerged that were

substantiated by existing theory. Emergent patterns were reported as substantive theory that explained participation in the LBPC. Because of the nature of phenomenological research, questions of the structured and semi-structured interviews resulted from outcomes of the non-structured interview data that was collected.

Informal discussions with club members took place after preliminary observations. Data were collected through:

1. Structured, semi-structured and non-structured interviews with LBPC members
2. Perusal of pertinent documents, such as newspaper articles, club notices, diaries, music manuscript, and letters
3. Direct observation of the meetings of the LBPC.

The study is organized into five chapters, a bibliography, and appendices. Following the introductory chapter, the remaining chapters are adapted from Patton's (1980) design for a qualitative research project. Chapter II describes the research procedure. Details about actual implementation of the research, how the data were collected (interviews, observation and videotape procedures), and any departures from the procedure are reported. Also included is a discussion of the credibility of the findings, including analysis of deviant cases, triangulation procedures and evaluator (researcher) effect.

Chapter III contains the presentation of descriptive data, with the purpose of transporting the reader into the situation being evaluated. It is sub-divided into two categories: (1) descriptive information about the program (LBPC), and (2) descriptive information based on observations and/or interviews organized around the questions, issues and concerns that were generated by the researcher.

Chapter IV is an analysis of data that links motivations of the participants and interpretations about the LBPC with existing adult learning, participation, small group, transitional, and motivation theory. Chapter V is a presentation of recurring themes and interpretations that emerged from the data. A summary, conclusions, and recommendations for further study comprise Chapter VI.

Conclusions

Themes and Interpretations

After examination of the LBPC and its participants, three categories of study emerged—motivation for piano study, factors influencing the commitment to continue piano study, and the LBPC as an organization in transition.

The motivation to study piano was traced to five phenomena: (1) childhood events, (2) purchasing a piano, (3) life changing events, (4) hobby replacement, and (5) joining the LBPC.

Childhood events played a significant role in the desire to study piano. Music in the home and school had a tremendous impact on the participant's desire to resume piano study.

The catalyst to take piano lessons could be traced to events in the participants' lives. These events centered on changes in environments, from the death in the family or divorce, to the stabilization of financial resources. Most circumstances were out of the control of the participants. By choosing to study piano, the participants were exerting control over their own lives. Voluntarily joining the LBPC was another way the participants took charge of the directions their lives would take.

Most of the participants were involved in various hobbies throughout their adult lives. Playing the piano is a hobby for some. The “tool” of their hobby is the piano. Buying a piano seemed to be significant in the members’ lives. The purchase of the piano became interchangeable with the desire to learn how to play it.

After making the initial move to start piano study, five factors were found to have an effect on the commitment level of the participants: (1) previous piano study, (2) the desire to recapture youth, (3) the level of self-confidence, (4) extrinsic factors, and (5) intrinsic factors.

Members who studied piano previously had a more realistic view of what was expected to learn to play the piano well. Their previous experience “warned” them of the practice required as well as the lack of “instant” gratification. Members who studied as children seemed to be trying to finish what they started. Some believed they had not fulfilled their potential, others were trying to prove to themselves that they could follow through this time with their studies.

Feelings of high or low self-confidence were not indicators for continuing or abandoning piano studies. Instead, intrinsic or extrinsic rewards were more important. Even when self-confidence was low, the members who were given positive reinforcement from the LBPC continued participating in their studies and in the group. Other members with low self-confidence were intrinsically satisfied with the decision to study piano. They enjoyed the sound of the instrument, and looked toward long-range results.

The LBPC is one of the few forums where adults can perform for peers in a non-judgmental situation. In contrast with the existing belief that adults do not like to perform, the members of the LBPC searched out this group for this opportunity. The members of the LBPC look at this organization as a way to

practice performing—not actually performing. This is a subtle but significant difference.

Strong leadership is the basis of this organization. To grow, it took support from piano teachers and the local media. A special interest story in the local newspaper “legitimized” the group.

The LBPC is still in a state of transition. Since it is a new organization, the members are not sure of the direction it will take in the future. When the membership was small, it was possible to find common goals for all the participants. As it grew, it became harder to find common ground that pleased all the participants.

The need for a group such as the LBPC is not in question. If the LBPC folded, some other similar outlet for performing would take its place. Toward the end of the study, the participants were searching out alternate places to perform as well as continue membership in the LBPC.

Theory Related to Persistence in Piano Performance

The members of the LBPC are unique because they persist in the voluntary activity of piano performance, contrary to research that postulates adults do not want to participate in recital situations (Dillon & Shapiro, 1991; Bliss, 1989). The researcher found that the reasons for persistence in piano study were based primarily in motivation theory. Transitional theory explains initial interest in piano study, but does not explain persistence. Small group theory explains the dynamics of the LBPC as a group, but does not explain the motivations of the individuals within the group. Erikson's (1959) ego-centered model evolves around the self's response to other people, groups, or expectations. Middle age is a stage in life in which ego development is associated with social interaction. The researcher found, however, that the

social aspects of the LBPC played only a minor role in the motivation to persist with piano studies.

Motivational theory, as formulated by Cyril Houle (1961), explains the motivation for adults to initiate learning situations. Each member of the LBPC could be classified as a *goal-oriented*, *activity-related*, or a *learning-oriented* individual. Although this explains the motivation to initiate the learning situation, it does not explain persistence by the members. It also does not account for members who changed their goals after joining the organization.

Boshier (1973) more adequately defines persistence of the members by stating six factors that affect motivation. When interest waned, at least one of the six factors helped to keep the member motivated to continue in the LBPC. The first factor, the development of social relationships, is not as strongly apparent in the data. Most members of the LBPC consider the social elements of the club as a side benefit of membership. None of the members are looking for contacts with the opposite sex. The second factor, external expectations, is a stronger motivational factor, primarily because Lucy is adamant about club attendance and participation. The third factor, social welfare, is apparent internally between members of the LBPC. Several members, including Lucy, persist because they believe it motivates others to persist. The fourth factor, professional advancement, is not a motivational factor with any of the members, as the LBPC is a leisure-time activity that does not affect the livelihood of its participants. The fifth factor, escape/stimulation, is evident in members who have stressful jobs and are looking for a way to escape temporarily from their stressful condition. None of the members are trying to find a way to escape boredom at home, as all are active both socially and personally. The sixth factor, participation for the sake of learning, is found in

most of the members. The need to learn a new skill and the realization that learning is valuable, kept many of the members involved when their motivation slipped.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1968) most adequately explains the human condition that motivates all the members of the LBPC. As the lower level needs (such as physical needs and safety needs) are attained, higher level needs (such as the need for knowledge and self-actualization) take their place. The study of piano is unique in that it can fulfill needs from those as basic as the need to belong or affiliate, to the highest level of self-actualization. The members of the LBPC fall in the wide range between these extremes, yet piano is helping them fill their needs, wherever they fall on Maslow's hierarchy.

Transitional theory often explains why adults pursue learning in adulthood. According to Schlossberg (1984), adults who enter educational networks are experiencing some transition in their life. Some of the members of the LBPC fill this criteria, as they had recently experienced death of a loved one or had recently finalized a divorce. Several had recently retired. Overall, however, this was not as fundamental in pursuing participation in the LBPC as the researcher originally anticipated. Many of the members had been retired for many years, and some of them have no plans to retire in the near future. The members of the LBPC are an unusually stable group, with little evidence of traumatic events that fuel their desire to learn a new skill. According to transitional theory, there is a moving on element that occurs when motivation and commitment wane. This was not apparent in the research data, as none of the members at the time of the study were moving on, and most considered piano a long-term pursuit.

Recommendations

Consistent with most qualitative inquiry, this study focused on a single organizational group. Research that replicates this study using other adult piano groups would contribute to a more conclusive knowledge base of what motivates adults to study piano and join a piano-based organization. In addition to repetitive studies, and based on the findings from this study, the following recommendations should be considered.

- (1) The focus of this study was during a two year growth period of the LBPC when it grew from a membership of five to over twenty members. Since the conclusion of the study in July 1996, the researcher was informed that the membership roster has changed significantly, with some members dropping and new members joining. Future studies should examine the LBPC and its members to discover if the same conclusions found in this study could be drawn.
- (2) The focus of this study was the motivation for adults to start and continue piano study. Conversely, little research is available that explains why adults quit piano study. Future studies may wish to focus on attritional theory as it relates to dropping out of piano study.
- (3) Similarly, this study focused on the members of the LBPC, looking for explanations on why they were motivated to attend the organization. Further studies may wish to focus on subjects that dropped out of the LBPC, basing their study on attritional theory as it relates to dropping out of an organization.
- (4) The LBPC is a peer driven group, with "no teachers allowed." Because of the exclusion of teachers from the organization, the researcher did not focus on the role the piano teacher has on motivation for adult students. Further studies could focus on the influence of the teacher on adult piano students in

terms of motivation and continued commitment to piano study.

(5) The themes and interpretations identified in this study relate specifically to organizations that form to bring adults together in an piano performance situation. It is hoped that the conclusions serve as a guide to those who wish to design a program similar to the LBPC.

(6) Since qualitative studies are based on substantive theory, it is not generalizable beyond the situation presented. Quantitative studies need to be performed based on the themes and interpretations of this study to see if they are quantifiable beyond the given study.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aagaard, L. J. (1989). The Bagby Human Resources Center: A case study in unrealized potential (Doctoral dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1989). Dissertation Abstracts International, 50-09, 2747A.
- Apter, M. J. (1982). The experience of motivation: The theory of psychological reversals. New York: Academic Press.
- Aslanian, C. B. (Ed.). (1981). Improving educational evaluation methods: Impact on policy. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.
- Aslanian, C. B., & Brickell, H. M. (1980). Americans in transition: Life changes as reasons for adult learning. New York: College Entrance Examination Board.
- Astin, A. W. (1971). Predicting academic performance in college. New York: The Macmillan Company.
- Astin, A. W. (1975). Preventing students from dropping out. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Astin, A. W. (1977). Four critical years: Effects of college on beliefs, attitudes and knowledge. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Astin, A. W. (1993). What matters in college? San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Barsky, M. (1985). The creative powers within us: A philosophy and rationale. In N. Weisberg & R. Wilder (Eds.), Creative arts with older adults (pp. 145-148). New York: Human Sciences Press, Inc.
- Bell, R. (1984). The virtuoso pianist. Piano Quarterly, Summer, 19-22.
- Bennett, H. T. (1989). An adult student strikes back. Clavier, 28, 26-27.
- Blades, Z. E. (1993). Vocal pedagogy in the United States: Interviews with exemplary teachers of applied voice (Doctoral dissertation, Eastman School of Music, 1993). Dissertation Abstracts International, 54-03, 0854A.
- Bliss, R. (1989). It always goes better at home. Clavier, 28, 24-28.

- Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (1982). Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.
- Bojanowski, N. (1990). Elderhostel: New horizons for music teachers. American Music Teacher, 39, June-July, 16-19.
- Boshier, R. (1973). Educational participation and dropout: A theoretical model. Adult Education, 23, 255-282.
- Brookfield, S. D. (1986). Understanding and facilitating adult learning. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Brown, A. M. (1989). Teaching piano to adults. Clavier, 28, 24-25.
- Cath, S. (1985). Introduction: Empathic connections. In N. Weisberg & R. Wilder (Eds.), Creative arts with older adults (pp. 19-21). New York: Human Sciences Press, Inc.
- Chickering, A. W. (1974). Commuting versus residential students. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Cole, T. R., & Gadow, S. A. (Eds.). (1986). What does it mean to grow old? Durham: Duke University Press.
- Collins, M. (1984). Phenomenological perspectives: Some implications for adult education. In S. B. Merriam (Ed.), Selected writings on philosophy and adult education (pp. 185-189). Malabar: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Co.
- Conrad, W. (1994, November 26). Elderly and ivories. Toledo Blade, p. 31.
- Cross, P. K. (1972). Beyond the open door. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Cross, P. K. (1976). Accent on learning. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Darkenwald, G. G., & Merriam, S. B. (1982). Adult education: Foundations of practice. New York: Harper & Row.
- Dewey, J. (1928). Democracy and education. New York: Macmillan.
- Dewey, J. (1939). Experience and education. New York: Macmillan.

- Dillon, B., & Shapiro, E. (1991). What kind of playing opportunities do you plan for your adult students? Keyboard Companion, 2(4), 42-43.
- Dishman, R. K. (Ed.). (1988). Exercise adherence: Its impact on public health. Champaign: Human Kinetics Books.
- Dyal, E. I. C. (1991). An examination of factors which associate with a successful outcome in piano lessons. (Doctoral dissertation, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1991). Dissertation Abstracts International, 52-07, 2453A.
- Erikson, E. H. (1959). Identity and the life cycle. New York, International Universities Press.
- Fetterman, D. M. (Ed.). (1991). Using qualitative methods in institutional research. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Fuller, J. W. (1979). Continuing education and the community college. Chicago: Nelson-Hall.
- Gibson Ross, C. S. (1989). The effect of the interactive influences of student entering characteristics and academic and social integration on voluntary persistence/withdrawal decisions at Oklahoma State University. (Doctoral dissertation, Oklahoma State University, 1989). Dissertation Abstracts International, 50-09, 2801A.
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies of qualitative research. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co.
- Goetz, J. P., & LeCompte, M. D. (1984). Ethnography and qualitative design in education research. Orlando: Academic Press, Inc.
- Grabowski, S. M. (Ed.). (1983). Strengthening connections between education and performance. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Graziano, V. (1991). A descriptive analysis of various relationships between home environment and success in piano study. (Doctoral dissertation, Teacher's College, Columbia University, 1991). Dissertation Abstracts International, 52-11, 3853A.
- Hilterbran, S. L. (1990). Persistence and non-persistence of underprepared students. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1990). Dissertation Abstracts International, 52-02, 0497A.

- Houle, C. O. (1961). The inquiring mind. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Houle, C. O. (1972). The design of education. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Jarvis, P. (Ed.). (1987). Twentieth century thinkers. New York: Croom Helm.
- Kaminsky, M. (1985). Invocations of group process and leadership. In N. Weisberg & R. Wilder (Eds.) Creative arts with older adults (pp. 158-163). New York: Human Sciences Press, Inc.
- Kidd, J. R. (1973). How adults learn (rev. ed.). New York: Association Press.
- Knowles, M. S. (1970). The modern practice of adult education. New York: Association Press.
- Kowalski, C. (1977). The impact of college on persisting and nonpersisting students. New York: Philosophical Library.
- Krause, E. (1992). The moderating effects of realism of course expectations on motivation, satisfaction, performance and attrition. (Doctoral dissertation, Hofstra University, 1992). Dissertation Abstracts International, 53-11, 3850A.
- Kuhl, J., & Atkinson, J. W. (1987). Motivation, thought and action. New York: Praeger Publishers.
- Langenbach, M., Vaughn, C., & Aagaard, L. (1994). An introduction to educational research. Needham Heights: Allyn and Bacon.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). Naturalistic Inquiry. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Maslow, A. H. (1968). Toward a Psychology of Being. Princeton, New Jersey: Van Nostrand Press.
- Merriam, S. B. (Ed.). (1984). Selected writings on philosophy and adult education. Malabar, Florida: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Co.
- Merriam, S. B., & Caffarella, R. S. (1991). Learning in adulthood. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Merton, R. B. (1956). The focused interview. Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press.
- Miller, F. E. W. (1993). Ego identity status and attrition among first-semester students in a college of applied arts and technology. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto, 1993). Dissertation Abstracts International, 54-09, 3303A.
- Mills, T. (1967). The sociology of small groups. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall.
- More, W. S. (1974). Emotions and adult learning. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, D. C. Heath & Co.
- Mouse, M. M. (1994). The effect of gender on the perceptions of collegiality between principals and assistant principals. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1994). Dissertation Abstracts International, 55-03, 0434A.
- North, M. L. (1988). The relationships among selected faculty characteristics and instructional methods and successful course completion rates of students at two community colleges. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1988). Dissertation Abstracts International, 50-05, 1181A.
- Oppenheim, A. N. (1966). Questionnaire design and attitude measurement. New York: Basic Books, Inc.
- Palmer, M. (1985). Older adults are total people: Music therapy with the elderly. In N. Weisberg & R. Wilder (Eds.), Creative arts with older adults (pp. 108-110). New York: Human Sciences Press, Inc.
- Pascarella, E. T. (Ed.). (1982). Studying student attrition. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Patton, M. Q. (1980). Qualitative evaluation methods. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.
- Pinar, W. F., & Reynolds, W. M. (Eds.). (1992). Understanding curriculum as phenomenological and deconstructed text. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Rogers, C. R. (1969). Freedom to learn. Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company.

- Rotter, J. B. (1954). Social Learning and Clinical Psychology. Englewood Cliffs, J. J.: Prentice-Hall Press.
- Rugh, M. M. (1990). The Etiology of visual arts expression with an older woman: Patterns of meaning and metaphor in late life learning. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1990). Dissertation Abstracts International, 52-01, 0060A.
- Schlossberg, N. K. (1984). Counseling adults in transition. New York: Springer Publishing Company.
- Schlossberg, N. K., Lynch, A. Q., & Chickering, A. W. (1989). Improving higher education environments for adults. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Sigel, G. (1985). Why do some older persons disconnect? In N. Weisberg & R. Wilder (Eds.), Creative arts with older people (pp. 23-25). New York: Human Sciences Press, Inc.
- Stewart, C. (1991). Who takes music? Investigating access to high school music as a function of social and school factors. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, 1991). Dissertation Abstracts International, 52-10, 3554A.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Tierney, W. G. (1991). Utilizing ethnographic interviews to enhance academic decision making. In D. M. Fetterman (Ed.), Using qualitative methods in institutional research (pp. 8-21). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Tinto, V. (1987). Leaving college. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Tubbs, S. L. (1978). A systems approach to small group interaction. Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.
- Usher, R., & Bryant, I. (1989). Adult Education as Theory, Practice and Research: The Captive Triangle. London: Rutledge Press.
- van Gennep. (1960). The rites of passage (M. Vizedom & G. Caffee, Trans.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- van Manen, M. (1990). Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy. London, Ontario: State University of New York Press.
- Weiner, B. (1972). Theories of motivation: From mechanism to cognition. Chicago: Markham Publishing Company.
- Weiner, B. (1985). An attributional theory of achievement motivation and emotion. Psychological Review, 92(4), 548-573.
- Weisberg, N., & Wilder, R. (Eds.). (1985). Creative arts with older Adults: A sourcebook. New York: Human Sciences Press, Inc.
- Yin, R. K. (1984). Case study research: Design and methods. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

APPENDIX A
PATTON'S DESIGN OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PROJECTS

PATTON'S DESIGN OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PROJECTS

Presentation of the data

- I. Descriptive information about the program
 - A. Program origins and history
 - B. Program activities, processes and goals
 - C. Client and staff characteristics
- II. Description of findings organized around evaluation questions, issues, and concerns generated by decision makers and information users.
 - A. Descriptive information based on observations and/or interviews.

What happened? What was said?
 - B. Provide whatever information is needed to take the reader into the situation being described and evaluated.

Analysis of the data

- I. Presentation of patterns, themes, tendencies, trends, and motifs that emerge from the data.
- II. Presentation of categories, classification systems, and typologies
 - A. Participant-generated typologies to explain their world
 - B. Evaluator-generated typologies
- III. Interpretations and explanations
 - A. Linkages between categories and dimensions
 - B. Relationships, things that appear to go together, interdependent parts
 - C. Notions about causes and consequences, including hypotheses about the relationship between program processes and program outcomes

Validation and verification of findings

I. Details about actual implementation of methods and reporting on any departures from expected procedures. How was the study done? How were the data actually collected?

II. Credibility of the findings

A. Discussion of rival hypotheses and alternative explanations

B. Analysis of negative or deviant cases

C. Triangulation

1. Of methods

2. Of sources

3. Of investigators

D. Evaluator—effects the evaluator's personal role and perspective

E. Transcriptions of any recorded reactions from participants or others who have examined the study

Conclusions and recommendations

I. What are the basic findings?

II. What are the implications of the findings?

III. What are the recommendations?

A. Recommendations from program participants, staff or others

B. Recommendations of the evaluator

APPENDIX B
PERMISSION FORM

Dear Friend:

The Late Bloomer's Piano Club is a unique organization that interested me after reading a newspaper article. Lucy Riebe gave me permission to visit so I could see what is involved with the group.

Since then, I have been granted permission to write my dissertation about you and this organization. It will involve interviewing you, tape recording your responses, and obtaining other data from you, such as notes you've taken about the club, letters you have written, or diaries you keep. I am interested in your responses to the organization as well as your interest in playing the piano. I will also ask some background information to put things into perspective.

It is important for the study that you are forthright in your responses. Therefore, all names are changed to assure confidentiality, and you will be asked to check my information for accuracy.

I am not approaching this project as a piano teacher. I am not interested in the way you play the piano or your performance in the meetings. I am interested in your responses about playing the piano and the organization.

Thank you in advance for participating in this project.

Sincerely,

Michelle Conda, observer

Permission grant

I have read and understand the above, and wish to participate in this project.

Name _____

Date _____

APPENDIX C
NAME AUTHORIZATION

To Whom This May Concern:

We hereby give permission to Michelle Conda to use our legal names in the process of writing her dissertation for her Ph.D in Piano Pedagogy from the University of Oklahoma.

Also, I, Lucy (Lucille) give her permission to use the name Late Bloomers Piano Club, a support group composed of adult piano students, and the locality where the group meets to perform, which is my home.

This is entirely voluntary on our part and Michelle Conda in no way has coerced us in this decision.

Lucille (Lucy) Riebe

Kenneth (Ken) Riebe

APPENDIX D
PERMISSION FOR INTERVIEW

(Name)
(Address)
(City, State, Zip)

Dear (Name):

As you probably know, I have been observing "The Late Bloomers Piano Piano Club" as my dissertation topic as I finish my Ph.D. at the University of Oklahoma. I have been observing for over a year, and now it is time to interview members (past and present) individually for their valuable insights into the group.

I will be in the Toledo area the week of July 8. Could you spare an hour of your time for an interview? I will ask questions about your involvement with music and the group. I will also ask questions about your background as it relates to playing the piano. I would like you to tell me any thing you think is relevant to what motivates you to play the piano, or what motivates you to quit.

It would be very helpful to my project if you allowed me to video or audio tape your interview. I would also like to take a picture of you to help me keep names and faces straight. I will need your written consent for this. Even though I would like a video or audio record, your identity will remain anonymous. You can even choose your "alias" for my dissertation, if you would like!

After writing and transcribing my notes, you will be given an opportunity to review them to make sure my information is accurate. I should be completing this part of the project in early to middle August.

I will be following up this letter with a phone call during the week of June 24th. During this time, you can let me know if you will consent to an interview. If you consent, we will set up the time and place for the interview.

I am looking forward to our talk! If you have any questions, please feel free to call (collect) or write me at the address below.

Thank you for being a part of my project.

Sincerely,

Michelle Conda
2704 McKinley Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45211
(513)556-9525

APPENDIX E
CONFIRMATION OF INTERVIEW TIME

Group Data Base»Dear «title» «last name»:

This letter is to confirm our appointment for «time». I appreciate your willingness to participate in my study, and I am looking forward to our time together!

All my interviews will be held individually or in very small groups. Your personal input into the session will be extremely valuable. I will ask questions about your interests and general questions about your life. If you have any issues you would like to address, please feel free to bring them up at the interview.

At the time of the interview I will ask you to sign a form giving permission to participate and to be videotaped for this interview. As a reminder, the video tape is only to help me transcribe the materials and is completely confidential. Neither the videotape nor any pictures will end up in my dissertation. Also, you will be given the opportunity to preview information you have submitted before the final dissertation has been submitted.

In case you need to get in touch with me, my phone number is 513-661-2313. Feel free to call collect. Starting Monday, July 8, I will be at a friend's house in the Toledo area at 419-898-1082. On Wednesday afternoon I will be moving into the French Quarter Holiday Inn in Perrysburg. The number there is 419-874-3111. I will be returning to my friend's house on Friday evening and will be there until Sunday at Lucy's house.

Thank you again for your participation. I know your time is valuable, and I appreciate the effort you have made towards my project.

Sincerely,
Michelle Conda

APPENDIX F
THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING

(Date)

Dear (Name):

Thank you so much for participating in my dissertation project! Your input was invaluable, and I am confident my dissertation will be on the cutting edge of adult piano learning.

My apologies for the delay in this note—my computer has been in the shop for the last week in order to have a video card installed. I am able to watch the videos of interviews on my computer screen and type at the same time. However, this delay in starting the transcriptions has put me behind on my schedule. It will probably be late August before I am able to get the transcribed tapes done for you to review. Please forgive me for my tardiness.

My address for the month of August will be: 112 Hillside Dr. #22
Lafayette, LA 70503
phone: 318-234-2154

Please do not hesitate to call or write. Thank you again for your help. The warmth and kindness I felt will go with me always.

Sincerely,

Michelle Conda

APPENDIX G
REQUEST FOR CORRECTIONS

(Date)

Dear (Name):

I have completed the transcript of your interview with me on (date). Could you take a few minutes to look it over? If there is anything you would like to clarify or expand upon, please write it in the margins or on the back.

I have included a self-addressed stamped envelop in order that you could return it to me easily. I will be at my husband's address for the month of August, which is why you see it going to Lafayette, Louisiana.

Could you also include a brief description of yourself? I would like to know more about you, such as how many children you have, your marital status, your occupation, information about your retirement, how long you've worked, been retired, etc. Please add any information that you think may help me understand you and know you better. More is good!

If at all possible, could you return this to me by (date)? If I do not receive it by August 31, I will assume everything is okay, and there are no changes or corrections.

Thank you again for participating in my project. I have enjoyed it immensely!

Sincerely,

Michelle Conda

APPENDIX H
FOLLOW UP LETTER

(Date)

Dear (Name):

I finished my transcripts this week! My apologies to the final recipients—it took at least eight hours to transcribe each videotape.

I have been concerned that you may “worry” about the content of the videotapes. Therefore, I decided to write you with an update of their use.

First, I will probably give all of you an “alias.” Don’t worry—you still will be able to recognize yourself! But I think it is better to retain a little confidentiality.

Second, I know you may be concerned with the grammar in the transcripts. Keep in mind when you videotaped I urged conversational style. Your personality and the “way” you said things were important to me. I transcribed all the videos without help, writing down exactly what was said. I must point out the tapes are confidential—I had no help transcribing them because of this.

The outcome was grammar was not “textbook” correct. Also, sometimes thoughts did not seem clear to you in retrospect. With your permission, I will “clean up” any grammar that seems incorrect. I will only include statements that are clear to the readers. But I will at the same time try to retain your sense of personality. The idea is to let people know who you are without compromising your intelligence and dignity.

Lastly, my dissertation is to help future teachers of adult piano students by broadening their knowledge base. It would not help these teachers to give negative statements about existing teachers or people. Your private teachers have not granted permission to be a part of my study, so they will not be included personally. If you said things about them you thought was truly

beneficial to your growth, I will include that information anonymously. If you had some areas of concern, I will put them under a section that talks about characteristics that make a good teacher. Using an example that was not brought up but for the sake of understanding my point: "John Doe's" teacher swore often in lessons. "John" didn't appreciate this and felt it was a detriment to his lesson. I would say "John" feels it is important that a good teacher uses proper language and grammar with students. Teachers should stay away from slang language, because it is often misunderstood (something like this, but I would double check it with "John" to make sure I put this okay).

I promise not to include anything that would embarrass, degrade or dishonor you in my dissertation. I understand this concern: I was newly divorced and therefore interviewed by the Toledo Blade (supposedly anonymously) about nine years ago in an article about the slim chances of remarriage after divorce. Many people asked me about it, as I was only thinly veiled in the article. Unfortunately, my ex-in-laws also had read the article and were embarrassed for themselves and their son. This was not the most pleasant situation!

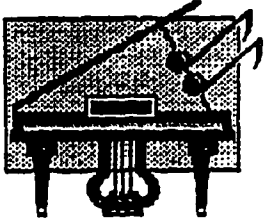
My hope is you will be proud of yourself in my dissertation. I decided to do my dissertation on this group because of the pride and distinction of the group. You are terrific!

Sincerely,

Michelle Conda

APPENDIX I
ATTENDANCE REMINDER

1996



Lucy Riebe

8847 Monclova Rd.
Monclova, Ohio
43542

Ph: 865-6930

Dear *Michelle*,

The Late Bloomers Piano Club's next meeting is scheduled for 2 pm July 14 at the above address.

Please plan on staying after the meeting for a Supper Buffet. Since this will be Michelle Conda's last visit, it gives her a chance to talk to everyone as a group.

Please let me know if you will not be able to attend or stay over.

Lucy