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By

CHRISTOPHER C. FISHER
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APPLICATIONS OF SELECTED COOPERATIVE LEARNING TECHNIQUES TO GROUP PIANO INSTRUCTION

A DOCUMENT APPROVED FOR THE
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

BY

_____
Dr. Edward Gates, Chair

_____
Dr. Barbara Fast, Co-Chair

_____
Dr. Teresa DeBacker

_____
Dr. Roland Barrett

_____
Dr. Thomas Landers

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Soli Deo Gloria

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ABSTRACT

University of Oklahoma

Applications of Selected Cooperative Learning Techniques to
Group Piano Instruction

by Christopher C. Fisher

Chairpersons of the Supervisory Committee:
Professor Edward Gates, School of Music
Professor Barbara Fast, School of Music

The educational concept of cooperative learning is not a new one. The instructional model has existed for centuries and has been thoroughly researched and developed as reflected in the professional literature. Yet this vast body of research has been mostly limited to the "academic disciplines," while the implications of these methodologies have been largely ignored in the area of music education and, more specifically, piano teaching. The author contends that cooperative learning strategies may be effectively employed in group piano instruction as utilized in university group piano programs for music majors, and may potentially produce more solid learning and a more thorough understanding of basic keyboard musicianship concepts and principles.

An examination of the history and development of group piano teaching is presented followed by a review of the literature surrounding cooperative learning theory, theorists and techniques. A variety of applications of cooperative learning theory to group piano teaching are detailed, as they relate to the instruction of keyboard skills for university music major courses. A tournament activity based on Robert Slavin's Student Teams-Achievement Divisions and Teams-Games-Tournaments is presented to encourage student practice of technique. Sight Reading

Drill Pairs with Eye Check, based on Spencer Kagan's Pairs Check, is used to improve student sight reading skills and to examine eye activity. Based on Spencer Kagan's Think-Pair-Share, Harmonization Think-Pair-Share, is designed to improve student understanding and application of principles involved in harmonizing melodies. Styles Improvisation Investigation is adapted from Shlomo and Yael Sharan's Group Investigation and used to teach various styles of piano playing and improvisation. Designed on David and Roger Johnson's concept known as Cooperative Base Groups, Practice Partnerships are used to motivate student practice and preparation.

APPLICATIONS OF SELECTED COOPERATIVE LEARNING TECHNIQUES TO GROUP PIANO INSTRUCTION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Need for the Study

The educational concept of cooperative learning is not a new one. The instructional model has existed for centuries and has been thoroughly researched and developed as reflected in the professional literature. Yet this vast body of research has primarily existed in the "academic disciplines." While group teaching has been used in both music education and piano teaching for decades, the specific application of cooperative learning theory to these disciplines remains relatively new. The author contends that cooperative learning strategies may be effectively employed for group piano instruction as utilized in university group piano programs for music majors, and may potentially produce more solid learning and a more thorough understanding of basic keyboard musicianship concepts and principles.

Purpose of the Study

Prompted by the lack of research and application of cooperative learning strategies to group piano teaching, the author seeks to present five applications of selected cooperative learning techniques that are particularly effective in the university group piano learning environment. The demonstration project will present a series of detailed teaching strategies based on cooperative learning principles, will survey the general learning goals of a typical university class piano program for music

majors, and will define the typical pianistic objectives required of piano secondary music majors. Also included will be surveys of literature related to group piano teaching and cooperative learning. The author has generated strategies, including activities and materials, which work to facilitate specific cooperative learning goals.

Though basic principles of cooperative learning are generally accepted across disciplines, it is crucial that curricula and instructional techniques are designed and developed to teach specific kinds of content to students of specific ages. The applications presented are intended for undergraduate university music majors whose primary instrument is not piano (secondary piano students), but who must attain a certain level of piano proficiency upon completion of their degree program. The representative student age ranges from 17 to 21 years. Keyboard proficiency standards used by the Ohio University School of Music are outlined in the Keyboard Skills Proficiency Requirements list found in Appendix A.

Throughout the United States, university music programs mandate that graduates of their programs attain a required level of piano proficiency. According to the National Association of Schools of Music Handbook, "the content of traditional course work in musicianship such as…keyboard harmony…is important" (p79). Furthermore, NASM demands that curricula leading to teacher certification must require students to acquire keyboard competency (p.83).

The proposed cooperative learning strategies for university music major class piano programs could serve as a foundation for implementation in other university class piano programs, both for music majors and non-majors. The application of these principles may also be employed in other university music courses, piano

classes in preparatory programs for pre-college students, or for independent piano studios that have a group piano component as part of their curriculum.

Organization and Procedure

Chapter one presents a rationale for the study based on the viability of the application of cooperative learning techniques to university group piano learning environments. The author presents the argument that such settings are particularly appropriate for the application of cooperative learning strategies. Chapter two is a discussion and literature review of group piano learning environments, university class piano programs, and typical curricula taught in such programs. Chapter three offers a literature review of cooperative learning theory, theorists, and techniques. This chapter also highlights those procedures that lend themselves particularly well to the instruction of certain keyboard skills and musical concepts.

Chapter four presents five applications of cooperative learning theory for use in the teaching of keyboard skills in group environments, including technique, sight reading, harmonization, improvisation/creative activities, and solo and ensemble repertoire. The author has adapted applications based on pre-existing cooperative learning structures specifically for use in group piano teaching. Also presented is a rationale for each application and its use, a demonstration of how the application was designed and implemented, and a discussion of the results and conclusions. Each application was employed and informally tested by the author in the Class Piano Program at the Ohio University School of Music in the course of a year. Typical class sizes ranged from six to twelve students. The results described are merely descriptive in nature, and are not the result of controlled experimental research.

Chapter five provides a summary of the study as well as conclusions that were drawn. A bibliography and appendices conclude the document. Appendix A presents a set of keyboard proficiency requirements used in the Ohio University School of Music Class Piano Program. Appendix B presents Technique Tournament guidelines and requirements. Appendix C presents Practice Partnership Session Report Forms. Appendices D, E, F, G, and H provide questionnaire results.

Desired Outcomes of the Study

As a result of the research related to this study, the author desires the following outcomes:

1. To structure five applications of cooperative learning techniques for university music major class piano programs based on cooperative learning theory.
2. To reveal successes and difficulties in the implementation of such cooperative learning instructional strategies, as well as practical suggestions.
3. To encourage piano pedagogues to experiment with cooperative learning strategies.

Definition of Terminology

Applied Piano: An instructional medium used for teaching piano in an individual, one-on-one tutorial format.

Class Piano or Group Piano: An instructional medium used for teaching piano in a group rather than in an individual or one-on-one tutorial format. This system

is most often used to teach functional keyboard skills for the non-keyboard music major or secondary piano student.

Functional Keyboard Skills: Those keyboard skills necessary for a student to be successful in a music profession and specifically for music educational purposes. These skills include, though are not limited to, the following: sight reading, harmonization, transposition, improvisation, score reading, technique, chord progressions, playing by ear, solo repertoire, duet repertoire, accompanying, critical listening, and score analysis.

Secondary Piano Student: A non-keyboard music major student whose primary instrument is not piano.

Electronic Piano Lab or Digital Piano Lab: A term used interchangeably to describe the physical learning environment that is equipped with digital piano or electronic keyboard technology and communication devices. In such, the instructor is capable of talking directly and listening to students as a class or individually, pairing students with students, or combining students as a group for ensemble work. Some piano labs also utilize computer-based instructional software.

Cooperative Learning: The instructional application of small groups in which students work together and assist each other in learning tasks. The goal of this methodology is the achievement of optimal individual and corporate learning.

Group Dynamics: The manner in which people work or behave in group environments.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW FOR GROUP PIANO INSTRUCTION

Definition and History of Group Piano Instruction

According to Robert Pace (1978), group piano instruction can be defined as follows:

> Group piano instruction denotes a learning situation in which two or more students interact under the guidance of the teacher in a dynamic learning complex. Each person in the group is constantly involved, whether in performance, aural and visual analysis, or constructive criticism of self and peers. Each member feels responsibility to the others for adequate preparation and all have a real sense of personal involvement (p.1).

Piano teachers have long recognized the potential of teaching in groups, as represented in its history. The application of group piano teaching first appeared in Dublin around 1815 when the German musician, Johann Bernhard Logier, began instructing piano solely in classes. He argued that the setting was ideal for the introduction of musical theoretical concepts and their subsequent application at the keyboard. (Kim, 2000) Thus, group piano and keyboard harmony classes were born. Piano teachers from America as well as from many European countries attended Logier's classes and returned to introduce group teaching to their respective countries. The first appearance of such piano classes in America can be traced to girls' schools in the south around 1860 (Richards, 1962). Furthermore, famous European pianists of the nineteenth century, such as Franz Liszt, Frederic Chopin and Clara Schumann taught their pupils in groups.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Calvin Cady, a leading music educator and leading proponent of group piano in the United States, strongly advocated class

piano as a viable means of instruction. In 1889, the United States Office of Education officially endorsed and promoted class piano instruction as a desirable teaching procedure (Richards, 1978). By the turn of the century, the United States had become the world leader in the production of pianos. As a result, the piano found its way into thousands of American homes (Skroch, 1991). Because of this, many elementary schools in the United States saw the establishment of class piano programs, due also to the high cost of private instruction. The inclusion of piano in the broad curriculum was an effort of the educational system to enhance cultural and artistic awareness (Kim, 2000).

Pioneers of these early years of class piano teaching included classroom music educators such as Thaddeus Giddings, Hazel Kinscella, Otto Miessner, Helen Curtis, Charles and Gail Haake, Polly Gibbs, Ada Richter, Raymond Burrows, Ella Mason Ahearn, and Fay Templeton Frisch (Uszler, 2002). As a result of their efforts, numerous method books and texts emerged, designed explicitly for the purpose of teaching piano as a core component of public, general music education. Examples of early class piano texts include the *Young Student's Piano Course* (1918) by Earhart and Boyd, *Public School Class Method for Piano* (1919) by Giddings and Gilman, and *Steps for the Young Pianist* (1919) by Hazel Kinscella. Central to these methods were the foundational principles of musical notation and repertoire (Skroch, 1991). The text by Giddings and Gilman served additionally as a teacher's manual in that it included chapters on pedagogy as well as classroom organization and management (Monsour, 1963).

The inclusion of piano classes as part of the general public school education showed slow but steady growth from 1920 through 1930. By the end of 1929, a

survey by the National Bureau for the Advancement of Education indicated that piano classes were being offered in 873 towns or cities across the United States (Skroch, 1991). As piano classes gained popularity, the need for specific teacher-training courses for this instructional format became a necessity. These Normal Courses in piano, as they were called, were being offered as early as 1920, when T. P. Giddings offered a course titled "Children's Classes in Piano" at the Chautauqua Institute. Hazel Kinscella offered two teacher-training certificate programs at the University of Nebraska School of Music in 1920 and 1921. Otto Miessner, author of *The Melody Way* piano method, began a vigorous teacher-training campaign from 1924 through 1930 in which he lead seminars from New York to California (Monsour, 1960).

In 1925, Columbia University Teachers College initiated a program that taught the essential principles of teaching piano classes for children (Wagner, 1968). By the beginning of the next decade, over 150 colleges and universities followed suit by offering coursework in class piano pedagogy (Richards, 1962). Public school piano classes continued to thrive until around 1930 when factors such as financial depression and deficiencies in teacher training and interest contributed to a significant decline (Skroch, 1991).

At the same time, Raymond Burrows offered a successful piano class for adult beginners at Columbia University Teachers College. Because of its success, adult courses were incorporated into the college's regular course offerings. Burrows became a leader in the field of group piano instruction for adults, breaking new ground in the development of college piano classes and coursework to train the class

piano instructor. Burrows advocated the inclusion of piano classes in all public schools across the United States (Wagner, 1962).

In 1952, Burrows reported in the *Handbook for Teaching Piano Classes* that 256 colleges and universities across the United States offered group piano classes and 157 offered pedagogy courses in group teaching. The proliferation of group piano programs in colleges and universities during the late 1950s and early 1960s sought to educate the beginning piano student, which often included the music education major, non-music major, and adult hobby students (Richards, 1962). Such programs were designed according to the philosophy that all music students, regardless of area of emphasis, should receive piano training as a part of their comprehensive music training. Therefore, these course sequences were intended to educate students with fundamental functional keyboard skills such as sight reading, harmonization, transposition, and score reading.

The advent of the electronic piano laboratory had a profound impact on the future and direction of group piano teaching. First installed and implemented at Ball State University in 1956, the electronic piano laboratory quickly became the ideal equipment scenario for college group piano programs due to the smaller instrument size, the capacity for both individual and class work, and its relative lower cost as compared to an acoustic piano laboratory (Richards, 1978). Due to these technological advancements, in addition to standards mandated by the National Associations of Schools of Music that encourage all graduates to acquire keyboard proficiency, group piano teaching at the college and university levels increased dramatically.

As developments in group piano teaching were being realized in the college classroom, new advancements were taking place concurrently in the private studio. Robert Pace, a student of Burrows and later faculty member at Teachers College, began advocating the use of one partner lesson and one larger group lesson per week for the average age beginning piano student. Building upon this format, Pace developed a comprehensive group piano method titled *Piano for Classroom Music* (1956), which stressed music fundamentals, playing in all keys (multiple-key approach), harmony, ear-training, sight reading, and improvisation, among other functional skills. Pace further developed the idea of comprehensive musicianship—a sequentially organized and spiral curriculum that makes transfers of broad music fundamentals to highly related concepts/principles—in *Music for Piano* (1961) and *Skills and Drills* (1961).

Other influential piano pedagogues have made strong cases for group instruction in the private studio or preparatory program curriculum. James Bastien, in his book *How to Teach Piano Successfully* (1977), contends that young children function especially well in group environments and stand to gain a great deal from this format during their early training (p.129). James Lyke, a student of Robert Pace at Teachers College, advocated teaching children in small groups of four students, twice weekly: one lesson for repertoire and technique and one lesson for musicianship training (Steigerwald, 2004). Richard Chronister (1999), co-founder of the National Conference on Piano Pedagogy, promoted teaching piano only in groups with no private lessons (p.15). Guy Duckworth (1999), who established the D.M.A. degree in Group Environments at the University of Colorado, Boulder,

endorsed the philosophy of group lessons, with no private instruction, for advanced students (pp. 57-59).

Frances Clark, founder of the New School for Music Study in Princeton, NJ and co-author of the *Frances Clark Library for Piano Students,* advocated a combination of both a group and private lessons for beginning piano students. New concepts and literature are to be introduced in the group, while the private lesson is devoted to review of group lesson concepts as well as polishing technique (Clark, 199; Goss, 1978). Louise Bianchi, creator of one of the countries earliest preparatory piano programs at Southern Methodist University in 1965 and co-author of *Music Pathways*, developed her program based on the model of two group lessons per week for three months for beginning students. From here, students progress to a partner lesson together with one group lesson per week. During the second year, students attend a one-hour group lesson and a half hour private lesson weekly (Bianchi, 1978).

Resources for the Group Piano Teacher

In recent years there has been a proliferation of new resources for the college/university group piano teacher along with conferences and seminars devoted to the group piano teaching format. One such conference, The National Group Piano and Piano Pedagogy Forum (GP3), first held in 2000, continues to meet biannually. This conference was designed as a platform for college and university group piano teachers to share teaching strategies and related research, along with ideas for shaping the direction of the profession in the future. One day out of the two-day forum is devoted solely to group piano teaching at the collegiate level. Additionally, the Music Teachers National Association focused discussions on group

teaching by devoting the entire 1999 Pedagogy Saturday workshop explicitly to this issue. More recently, MTNA and the National Piano Foundation have created a joint endeavor called the Group Piano Teaching Track offered during MTNA national conferences. These specialized sessions, which are devoted to group piano teaching at all levels, are a continuation of seminars both organizations have sponsored across the United States in recent years.

The resurgence of attention to group piano teaching is illustrated in an increased volume of scholarly research. January 1998 marked the inaugural issue of *Piano Pedagogy Forum*, the first online keyboard journal. Published three times per year, the publication devotes at least one article per issue specifically to the area of group piano teaching and related topics. A recent article by Alejandro Cremaschi (2000) presents a basic overview of how cooperative learning theory may be applied to group piano teaching. Additionally, *Piano Pedagogy Forum* makes available online proceedings from the National Group Piano and Piano Pedagogy Forum conferences.

A review of the literature reveals only a small number of books that are devoted solely to the subject of class or group piano teaching, many of which are dated. Four important books written before 1980 with a focus on group piano teaching for children are: *Group Piano Teaching* (1965) by Norman Mehr, *Piano Classes for Everyone* (1969), *Group Piano Teaching* (1974, reprint 1978) by Yvonne Enoch, and *Successful Group Piano Teaching* by Gloria Hopper (1977). Additionally, an article by Hazel Ghazarian Skaggs titled "Group Piano Teaching" appears in Denes Agay's *Teaching Piano* (1981), again targeting the younger student. Three books from the same period present single chapters devoted to college/university group piano

teaching: *Teaching Piano in Classroom and Studio* (1967) by Helene Robinson and Richard Jarvis, *Creative Piano Teaching* (1977) by Yyvonne Enoch and James Lyke, and *How to Teach Piano Successful* (1988) by James Bastien. More recently, Marienne Uszler presents a brief overview of the history of group piano teaching in her book *The Well-Tempered Keyboard Teacher* (2000).

Group Piano Programs for the University Music Major

In accordance with standards set forth by the National Association of Schools of Music and the Music Educators National Conference, group piano programs for the university music major have been designed to provide keyboard training for secondary piano students, arming them with the essential keyboard skills necessary to be effective in their professional careers as music educators, performers, theorists, historians, or therapists. These programs most often serve students who have had little or no previous piano training. As a result, group piano program directors and instructors have the task of developing these important keyboard skills typically in a two- or three-year sequence (Skroch, 1991). To accomplish these goals, a significant number of group piano textbooks have been written specifically for the university music major and non-major.

Though a specific listing of curricular competencies and proficiency standards has yet to be codified and employed in every music school, a majority of university group piano program for non-keyboard music majors teach the following functional skills: sight reading, harmonization, transposition, basic piano technique that includes scales and arpeggios, chord progressions; solo, duet, and ensemble repertoire; improvisation, score reading (choral and instrumental), instrumental

transposition, and accompanying (Skroch, 1991; Johnson, 1987; Robinson & Jarvis, 1967). According to a 1991 study by Diana Skroch in which 174 institutions were surveyed, a majority (85.07%) of such programs administer a keyboard proficiency examination upon the completion of the group piano sequence to assess each student's keyboard competency in the functional skills listed above.

Following the introduction of the electronic piano laboratory in the late 1950's, most university group piano programs are now equipped with digital piano labs that have individual headphones as well as connection to a teacher's instructional console. Such technology permits the instructor to speak and demonstrate to the entire class or to an individual student. Students may also be combined or grouped into dyads or small groupings for ensemble practice or for other group work. Some keyboard laboratories are additionally equipped with computer stations at which students may utilize software for the purpose of reinforcing curricular elements such as sight reading. Other equipment often found within the modern piano laboratory includes Visualizers, document cameras or overhead projectors, as well as other instructional technologies.

Benefits of Group Piano Instruction

As group music instruction has gained acceptance throughout the profession, educators have accepted this instructional model as a viable and effective format for teaching. In 1982, the International Society of Music Educators met in Bristol, England and adopted a document entitled, "Group Instrumental Instruction" which makes the following assertions:

> Group instrumental teaching can provide a musical environment where good learning may take place beyond what is usually possible in individual

> instruction; further, a group can provide a social environment in which a student is supported and motivated, even challenged by peers. A group can provide a wider range of experience – discussion, critical listening, the study of historical contexts, structural analysis and collective decision-making; further, a group can be a performing medium for each member in it (Duckworth, 1999, pg. 17).

In regard to group piano teaching specifically, teachers who have adopted this strategy are constantly adding to the list of its merits. Shockley (1999) and Burkett (1982) contend that piano students who learn in groups have greater opportunities for performing experiences, which becomes a natural part of the learning process. Furthermore, because students in group lessons often learn individual repertoire, they are exposed to a wide variety of repertory through hearing their peers perform. In a 1974 study, Rogers examined group instruction as compared with individual instruction among elementary school piano students age seven to nine years, concluding that those who studied only in groups performed better on playing tests than those who received only individual instruction.

Johnson (1981) and Burkett (1982), writing as proponents of group teaching for both beginners as well as intermediate and advanced students, assert that students develop improved listening skills in groups. As students listen critically to their peers' performances, they are challenged to listen for correct notes, rhythms, tempi, dynamics, phrasing, pedaling, and the myriad of other elements involved in piano playing. Burkett (1982) suggests that following these performances, as students are encouraged to articulate their critiques or suggestions for improvement, they deepen their own understanding of the basic concepts and principles involved. The mere act of explaining their thoughts clarifies thinking (Friedmann, 1989). When not being pressured to perform unfamiliar repertoire, but rather critically focusing on

others' performances, the student's cognitive load is perhaps reduced, freeing him up to focus better on the learning task at hand. Here, students can also share common problems that they may be encountering in their own repertoire. Furthermore, they are able to make transfers to highly related issues in their own music in regard to questions of style, interpretation, and technical issues, among others. As a result, small groups foster a form of discovery learning as opposed to receptive learning found in typical lecture-demonstration procedures.

Because students bring a variety of different abilities to a group, the environment is one rich in individual differences. Pace (1999), an advocate of both a partner lesson and group lesson each week for the younger student, suggests "individual differences and varying degrees of expertise of group members reveal both strengths and areas that need improvement" (p. 40). According to Shockley (1999) "One might excel in sight reading, another in playing by ear, another in technical skill and another in expressivity. Each provides a different model for learning and contributes something unique to the mix" (p. 62). Students are challenged to take an active role in the construction of their knowledge and skills, and are encouraged to share their insights with their peers.

Thus, groups foster prime conditions for problem solving. Multiple ideas from several students generate many possible ways of exploring a concept and discovering how to apply the concept (Coats, 2000). The teacher assumes the role of facilitator rather than lecturer. Consequently, learning is derived from thought provoking questions posed by the students or facilitator. These questions or problems guide the group's conversations and motivate them to discuss, explore, and analyze the concepts at hand. Therefore, students are not simply told to do

something, but rather, they are conceptually directed to understanding through group discussion, discovery, experimentation, and implementation. Through both individual initiative and stimulation from their peers, students actively participate in the problem solving process. By experiencing this in a social setting, students are exposed to a wider variety of possible solutions and are more likely to take risks by exploring alternate ways of solving musical problems (Fisher, 2000).

In the introduction to their method titled *Alfred's Basic Piano Library Group Piano Course* (1997), Gail Kowalchyk and E. L. Lancaster present the following summary list of the advantages of group piano teaching:

1. Provides confidence in playing for others.
2. Aids students in developing rhythmic security.
3. Provides opportunities for supervised practice.
4. Stimulates critical listening as students hear other students perform and comment on these performances.
5. Allows students to broaden their musical experiences.
6. Exposes students to a variety of piano materials.
7. Provides a friendly-competitive atmosphere.
8. Allows the teacher to present music fundamentals in a shorter time than if he/she were making the presentation to individual students.
9. Fosters an atmosphere that is conducive to effective teaching of functional skills such as sight reading, transposition, harmonization, improvisation and composition.
10. Facilitates the performance of ensembles including duets, trios, quartets and multiple piano ensembles.
11. Encourages students to develop skills in solving their own problems.
12. Establishes a sense of group spirit and group dynamics that increases motivation.
13. Fosters the development of communication skills.
14. Allows students to learn from peers as well as from the teacher.
15. Provides a setting where drills and exercises can be more interesting and motivating.
16. Increases attention span allowing the lesson time to be longer than a private lesson (p. 5).

CHAPTER III

LITERATURE REVIEW OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

The study of group dynamics, or how people cooperate in groups, initially appeared at the outset of the twentieth century in the United States with the work of educator John Dewey. Subsequent development by gestalt psychologist Kurt Lewin stressed the importance of personal involvement within the dynamic whole of a group as a result of his attempt to generate high productivity within group environments (Cartwright and Zander, 1960). Herbert Thelen (1981) built upon the concepts set forth by both Dewey and Lewin in an educational methodology constructed on the use of small, cooperative groups for the instruction of academic subject areas.

Deutsch (1968) contends that a group "may be tentatively defined as being composed of a set of members who mutually perceive themselves to be cooperatively or promotively interdependent in some respect(s) and to some degree" (p.412). Immediately the cooperative nature emerges as an integral attribute of these dynamic settings. This cooperative nature manifests itself in the social interaction that transpires among its members. Members share common and contrasting goals and experiences, which contribute to the rich variety of knowledge and ideas that are present.

Duckworth (1999) suggests that groups typically grow and develop within five dimensions. (1) *Membership* is a stage where individual members assess their involvement in the group and the involvement of others. (2) *Influence* expresses itself as members become comfortable with their specific roles and begin to share in the

decisions that must be made. Each member feels he can contribute something to the overall outcome. As membership and influence are attained (3) *feelings* become important as the members gain confidence that they can express themselves freely. Importantly (4) *individual differences* emerge as members begins to convey their own unique experiences, skills, and knowledge, and come to recognize and value the individual differences that each group member possesses. Finally, and perhaps most importantly; (5) *productivity* is achieved as the singular ideas of individuals are analyzed, combined with others, and synthesized, generating new ideas that few would have thought of alone (pp. 78-79). Over time, groups develop an identity of their own, as well as a stable structural framework. As individual and cooperative roles are developed, the group begins to produce normal operating behaviors and coping mechanisms to deal with external threats (Kim, 2000).

Because of the potentially high levels of productivity groups can produce, they are prime environments for learning. Piaget (1969) and Vygotsky (1978), among others, contend that one's knowledge and intellectual development is socially constructed through interaction with one's physical and social environments. Consistent with Piagetian theory, Johnson and Johnson argue that "during cooperative efforts participants will engage in discussions in which cognitive conflicts will occur and be resolved, and inadequate reasoning will be exposed and modified" (Johnson & Johnson, 1994, p. 39). Furthermore, Johnson and Johnson suggest that "groups members exchange information and insights, discover weak points in each other's reasoning strategies, correct one another, and adjust their understanding on the basis of others' understanding" (Johnson & Johnson, 1994, p. 40).

Groups also provide a habitat for motivation. Johnson and Johnson (1994) propose that groups "create relationships that can motivate students to work hard and do their best, and hold them accountable for doing so" (p.136). These relationships are even powerful enough to change attitudes toward the tasks set before them, providing incentive to strive for success. Deutsch (1968) and Slavin (1990) suggest that even when an individual is rewarded within a cooperative group, all personnel will consequently challenge each other to do their collective best because it is in the group's best interest.

Furthermore, Glasser (1986), among others, contends that cooperative learning environments can produce a sense of belonging that can generate high levels of motivation. Johnson and Johnson (1987), following a survey of the research, suggest that cooperative learning produces significantly higher levels of intrinsic motivation than do other models, at least under some conditions. According to Kim (2000), Slavin "stressed that the critical element was a combination of group rewards and high-level 'elaborated, cognitively involving' peer interactions; simply having one student give another the "right" answers was not effective" (p.33). Roberson (1992) suggests that feedback from peers as well as the instructor serves to motivate and challenge students as long as it is honest and non-judgmental.

Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec (1993) define cooperative learning as "the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning" (p.9). Evelyn Jacob (1999) suggests that cooperative learning is "a diverse group of instructional methods in which small groups of students work together and aid each other in completing academic tasks" (p.13). Bruffee, proposes three basic principles that define the nature of collaborative

learning: "(1) knowledge is socially constructed as 'a consensus among the members of a community of knowledgeable peers' (p.xii), (2) the authority of knowledge is shared among the members of the community, and (3) interdependent personal relationships shape a community of knowledgeable peers" (Bruffee, 1999 as cited in Luce, 2001, p. 21).

Pre-Instructional Planning

Planning for the implementation of cooperative learning is crucial. The instructor must make multiple pre-instructional decisions that will have a significant impact on the success of the cooperative lesson. First, he must generate a clear list of objectives, both academic objectives as well as those involving social skills.

In terms of academic objectives, the instructor must decide if the lesson will be used to introduce new concepts or if it will be used to review material or make a transfer to related material. Elizabeth Cohen (1994) proposes two types of learning and the subsequent types of interaction that may result in each. *Conceptual learning* is that which introduces and processes abstract, conceptual ideas, and usually involves the application of higher order cognitive skills. Here the participants contribute and exchange ideas to be thoughtfully considered and analyzed by the group. The result of such learning is typically the articulation of "strategies, deductions and reasoning." *Routine learning* occurs when concepts and principles are reviewed through the process of drill, fact recall, or demonstration. During this type of learning, those participating usually interact through question asking and answering, and by providing helpful and patient explanations of their responses.

According to Johnson and Johnson (1999) it is also important to specify which social skills are desired to be emphasized in each lesson. The instructor may accomplish this by monitoring groups over a period of time noting specific social skill deficiencies. He should continually ask students to identify those social skills that could improve their teamwork and efficiency. Perhaps most obviously, he must consider those social skills that are imperative for the successful completion of the given assignment or task.

Duration of Groups

Johnson and Johnson (1994) contend that three types of cooperative learning may occur in an integrative way. *Formal cooperative learning* involves students working together from a short to long term, to achieve shared learning goals and to complete given tasks and assignments. These might include composing a report, conducting a survey or experiment, or reading a chapter and answering questions. Second, *informal cooperative learning* are temporary groups that last no longer than a class period and are used to focus attention on lesson material, ensure the processing of lesson material, or provide a summary of the given lesson. Finally, *cooperative base groups* are long-term, heterogeneous groups consisting of a stable membership who provide encouragement and support to each other, constantly influencing members toward consistently high levels of achievement (pp. 53-54).

Group Size and Composition

After both academic and social skills objectives have been clearly established, one must carefully consider the formation of each group. Throughout the literature,

most researchers agree that the smaller the group the better. Johnson and Johnson (1999) suggest that the typical cooperative learning group should be from two to four, where Cohen (1994) suggests four to five members as optimal for group discussion. Johnson and Johnson (1999) propose the following list of suggestions to consider when forming groups:

1. With the addition of each group member, the resources to help the group succeed increase.
2. The shorter the period of time available, the smaller the learning group should be.
3. The smaller the group, the more difficult it is to hide and not contribute one's share of the work.
4. The larger the group, the more skillful the groups members must be.
5. The larger the group, the less the interaction among members.
6. The materials available or the specific nature of the task may dictate group size.
7. The smaller the group, the easier it is to identify any difficulties students have in working together.

A further grouping suggestion by the aforementioned authors is to consider the acronym TEAM which stands for Time, Experience, Age, and Materials.

Heterogeneous groupings are considered to be the most preferred type of group composition. The advantage to this configuration is the resulting diversity of personalities, abilities, experiences, interests, perspectives, and reasoning strategies. Random assignment is the easiest method for assigning heterogeneous groups. This may be accomplished by dividing the number of students in the class by the desired group size. Students are then given a number based on the result. A variation on the aforementioned method is stratified random assignment. This method permits the instructor to organize groups based on one or perhaps two student characteristics such as learning style or personality type. Also, using this format, the instructor is able to build groups based on achievement levels, assigning members of both advanced and remedial skill levels to each group (Johnson and Johnson, 1999). The

instructor must also consider issues of race, ethnicity, and gender when formulating groups.

Characteristics of Successful Groups

The simple act of organizing groups and instructing them to work together does not necessarily produce results. Cooperative learning must be structured for success. According to their methodology titled "Learning Together," Johnson and Johnson (1994) suggest that there are five essential components or criteria that must be met for the successful operation of cooperative learning groups. (1) *Positive interdependence* is a mindset that results in each student's promotion of the others' learning and achievement. This may be facilitated with mutual learning goals (ensuring each member learns assigned materials), joint rewards (receiving bonus points for collectively high scores on individual examinations), divided resources (each member presents a part of the total information necessary to complete an assignment), and complementary roles. (2) *Face-to-face promotive interaction* involves communication among group members in order to explain how to solve a given problem, offer a personal insight, present an analysis of lesson concept, or make connections and transfers from past to present learning. (3) *Individual accountability* holds each student responsible for his own contributions to the group and to his individual, personal growth. Ways to structure such accountability include randomly selecting one student's work to represent the entire group or by having each student explain or teach a concept to his peer. (4) *Social skills* are essential for progress in groups. As such, leadership, decision-making, and communication are most effective when they are participatory. (5) *Group processing*, serving as a jointly executive

function, occurs when members assess their progress and develop techniques to maintain and enhance their progress (Johnson & Johnson, 1994, pp.58-59; Johnson & Johnson, 1994, pp. 81-82).

Explanation of the Task and Criteria

Harriet Cohen (1994) contends that establishing a solid groundwork for the academic task is essential to the success of the cooperative lesson. During the orientation, the instructor presents a thorough yet concise introduction of the central concepts, objectives and desired outcomes for the cooperative lesson or task. An explanation of specific procedures that should be followed to successfully complete the task may be offered. Cohen (1994) further suggests the distribution of activity cards to all groups which lists a clear and sufficiently detailed explanation of the task. This step may be omitted if the instructor desires the students to be creative in their problem-solving efforts to compete the task. Here, the instructor must convey the expected standard of performance listing specific criterion for the successful completion of the task while noting implications for both the individual and the group. Also he may choose to remind the students of their productive cooperative roles during this phase.

It is during this stage that the instructor must foster a central element for the success of cooperative work: positive interdependence. He must establish a "mutual or joint goal so that individuals perceive they can attain their goals if and only if their groupmates attain their goals" (Johnson and Johnson 1999, 1992a, 1992b). Students must know they are responsible for individually learning the material and for insuring all members of their group and entire class have learned the central concepts as well. This may be supplemented with some form of positive reward such as bonus points

or special recognition. An example of such a group reward would be awarding five bonus points to each group who scores individually and collectively 95 percent or better on a given assignment.

A central precept of positive interdependence is the structuring of individual accountability. In cooperative work, students challenge each individual member of their group to higher levels of learning and comprehension. Such accountability can be promoted through the administration of individual tests and evaluations or requesting students to teach or summarize a given concept to a peer (Johnson and Johnson, 1999).

Cooperative Learning Approaches Presented by Instructional Tasks and Goals

Grounded on the philosophies of John Dewey, Kurt Lewin and Herbert Thelen, "Group Investigation" is a cooperative learning strategy designed by Shlomo and Yael Sharan that "integrates interaction and communication in the classroom with the process of academic inquiry" (Sharan, 1992, p. ix). According to their philosophy, students become actively engaged in establishing and carrying out their learning goals. Students form groups according to common interests in a given topic. They internally organize the research, analysis, synthesis, and presentation of their finding. As a collective whole (the entire class), students plan a research study of a particular problem or issue. Then students form small groups according to their common interests and subsequently engage in research of a subtopic. When all groups have completed their inquiry, students present their findings to the class, summarizing how their information regarding a subtopic connects to the broader subject.

Fundamental to this philosophy is the idea that students will invest their energies to explore and learn a topic that is of personal interest and curiosity. Constructed with the purpose of addressing issues of scaffolded learning and problem solving, this approach is seemingly most effective and useful for large, complex, and open-ended projects. Such projects typically require considerably longer periods of time in which to unfold.

Spencer Kagan and Miguel Kagan (1994), in their "Structural Approach to Cooperative Learning," stress the importance of various social interaction sequences they call structures. Spencer Kagan (1994) writes:

> "…In the Structural Approach there are Elements which combine to form Structures which organize the social interaction of students over subject matter. When Content is placed into a Structure, a learning Activity is created. A lesson is merely a series of Activities designed to reach teacher determined objectives."

Therefore, a structure is the content-free means or "how" of instruction that organizes all social and interactive patterns of those involved. The content is what is being taught, and the combination of both equals a class activity. Activities carry defined objectives and are bound to content. The "Structural Approach" is therefore designed to bring together a clearly defined instructional goal with an appropriate group structure. These instructional tasks are typically more delimited than those that might be employed in "Group Investigation."

In *Cooperative Learning* (1994), S. Kagan presents an extensive collection of structures by type and target goals, such as mastery, thinking skills, communication skills, information sharing, class building, and teambuilding. Following is a selected descriptive list of such structures: "*Roundrobin* is a structure that encourages teambuilding as each student shares in turn with his/her teammates. By doing so,

they express their ideas and opinion through equal participation. *Think-Pair-Share* develops conceptual knowledge. Students first think to themselves on a topic given by the instructor and then pair up with students to discuss their ideas. They then share their thoughts with the class. This structure stimulates participation and involvement. *Pairs Check* is a method for practice and review of concepts. Students work in pairs within groups of four. Within pairs, students alternate – one solves a problem while the other coaches. After every two problems, the pair checks to see if they have the same answers as the other pair" (p. 120). These structures may be effectively used to encourage student sharing (especially in the initial stages) as well as developing more creative interaction. Additionally, they have implications for both the acquisition of knowledge and the promotion of a positive social environment. For instance, *Pairs Check* would be most useful to test students' knowledge of a particular skill or basic lesson concept. By coaching each other, each student may solidify his own understanding of that particular skill or concept.

In *Co-op Co-op* (Kagan, 1985), students are placed in heterogeneous groups. Each group is assigned a particular segment of the learning unit, and each group member is given a specific sub-segment to complete individually and then present to their groups. The groups gather and assemble their findings and present the results to class at large. The *Jigsaw Method* (Aronson, 1978) involves all groups being assigned the same broad topic, while each member is appointed one unique part of the topic to learn and teach the other members of the group. The groups combine their findings to create a complete understanding of the topic. As such, group personnel cannot gain an inclusive knowledge of the material unless each member thoroughly completes his given task (Johnson & Johnnson, 1994). Each of the preceding

procedures encourages students to take ownership in their specific area of a larger learning objective. These organizational formats are perhaps most applicable for the discovery, collection, and synthesis of information to complete a significant long-term learning unit.

According to his methodology "Student Team Learning," Robert Slavin explores the use of teams and team rewards in cooperative learning environments. Assuming somewhat of an oppositional stance to Johnson and Johnson's "Learning Together" theory, most particularly in regard to rewards, Slavin contends that cooperative groups can be used as teams in a competitive manner to produce higher levels of learning and comprehension as a result of higher levels of motivation. These competition-based structures are primarily used for learning fact-level material. Regarding team rewards, Slavin (1982) writes: "If students want their team to earn team rewards, they must help their teammates learn the material. They must encourage their teammates to do their best, expressing norms that learning is important, valuable and fun." (p.12)

As part of "Student Team Learning," Slavin has designed and researched a variety of instructional techniques. *Teams-Games-Tournament* (TGT) (Slavin, 1991; DeVries & Edwards, 1974) combines "in-group cooperation, intergroup competition, and instructional games" (Johnson & Johnnson, 1994, p. 113). Here, the teacher directly teaches through lecture or discussion. Following, teams (consisting of four to five members of mixed levels of achievement) play academic games or compete in tournaments that cover the lesson materials. Teams scores are figured and the students are recognized for their achievement, though grades are designated on an individual basis of performance. Similarly, in *Student Teams-*

Achievement Divisions (STAD) (Slavin, 1991), students take a weekly quiz instead of playing games. Recognition is granted for the shared improvement of the scores of team members. The amount each student contributes to the collective team score is determined by the degree to which his quiz score exceeds his past quiz average (Slavin, 1991). The highest-scoring teams are recognized by the inclusion of team member names in a newsletter or by some other form of reward.

Building upon the *Jigsaw* technique originally designed by Elliot Aronson, Slavin created a modified version he calls *Jigsaw II*. As in TGT and STAD, students work in four to five member teams of mixed skill levels. Instead of each student having an individual assignment, they all study and prepare the same materials. Following, however, each student is given a target topic on which they must become an expert. All members of an expert group meet to discuss their given topic and then return to their teams to teach and instruct their teammates about their area of expertise. Following individual quizzes, students are recognized for achievement based on the scoring system of STAD (Slavin, 1991). Other programs designed by Slavin that do not contain applicable features to this research include Team Assisted Individualization (TAI) and Cooperative Integrative Reading and Composition (CIRC).

Cooperative Learning and Group Piano Teaching

By the very nature of its structure, the teaching of piano in groups lends itself well to the application of cooperative learning theory and techniques. Joseph Goliger in his 1995 study titled "Implementation of a Program of Cooperative Learning in an Urban Secondary Piano Laboratory" developed and realized a group piano program

curriculum for high school students based on cooperative learning theory. Within the study, Goliger (1995) summarized a list of the potential outcomes of cooperative learning set forth by Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec (1988):

1. Higher achievement and increased retention.
2. Greater use of higher level reasoning strategies and increased critical reasoning competencies.
3. Greater ability to view situations from others' perspectives.
4. Higher achievement and greater intrinsic motivation.
5. More positive, accepting, and supporting relationships with peers regardless of ethnic, sex, ability, or social class differences or handicapping conditions.
6. More positive attitudes toward subject areas, learning, and schools.
7. More positive attitudes toward teachers, principals, and other school personnel.
8. Higher self-esteem based on basic self-acceptance.
9. Greater social support
10. More positive psychological adjustment and health.
11. Less disruptive and more on-task behavior.
12. Greater Collaborative skills and attitudes necessary for working effectively with others. (Goliger, pg. 37)

Based largely on Slavin's "TGT" and Johnson and Johnson's "Learning Together" models, Goliger's study declared many positive results including "indicators of caring within family groups, the development of a 'we' feeling, the growth of acceptance (in most cases) of positive interdependence, as well as some very refreshing and surprising musical and creative outcomes" (p.370). He further states that there was demonstrated a "dramatic improvement in grade results" found in final exam scores (p. 372).

Piano teachers have long recognized the positive merits of studying piano in group environments. Such validating remarks from piano pedagogues confirm a common perception that the format can indeed be a most effective mode of teaching. The author maintains that, supported by these assertions, a specific methodology of group piano teaching for university group piano programs could be

adapted and developed based on the principles and desirable outcomes set forth by cooperative learning theorists.

CHAPTER IV

SELECTED APPLICATIONS OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING THEORY TO GROUP PIANO INSTRUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The following activities and exercises are created to demonstrate the applicability of cooperative learning theory to selected curricular competencies for secondary piano instruction conducted in group piano learning environments. What follows is not a comprehensive listing of applications, but is rather an introduction of selected examples. It is the desire of the author that the following will inspire the reader to experiment with these activities, and invent additional applications of cooperative learning principles to specific group piano teaching scenarios.

Skill competency areas are divided into individual units: technique, sight reading, harmonization, improvisation, solo and ensemble repertoire. Each unit includes a succinct description of the cooperative learning structure from which the activity is derived, followed by a thorough explanation of the activity design and detailed procedures for its implementation. A rationale for each exercise is given with a discussion of the application's educational merits and values. Each unit also provides the demonstrated results found in the author's teaching. The cooperative learning activities were tested by the author at the Ohio University School of Music, and were applied to varying classes, class sizes, and student groups.

TECHNIQUE

Title: Technique Tournament

Piano Competency: Technique (scales, arpeggios, etudes, etc.)

Cooperative Learning Theory Source:

The Technique Tournament is designed largely on the principles of Robert Slavin's structures titled Student Teams-Achievement Divisions (STAD) and Teams-Games-Tournaments (TGT). Drawing upon the major components of both STAD and TGT, the Technique Tournament uses many of these elements (some in modified form) which include the following: class presentations, teams, games/quizzes, individual improvement scores, tournament, and team recognition. Following direct presentation of class material by the instructor, teams of mixed levels of achievement play games or compete in tournaments that deal with the lesson content.

Application Design and Procedure:

A complete listing of all technical exercises and studies (including scales, arpeggios, etudes, etc.) to be studied throughout the ten-week quarter was distributed to students at the outset of the term (Appendix B). Each technical skill or exercise was systematically presented and demonstrated by the instructor during regular class time throughout the quarter. All requirements and specifications were thoroughly discussed at this time. A final technique tournament was held at the close of the

quarter, at which point students were required to have mastered each technical element and were asked to demonstrate competency of each skill. Following are the technical skills evaluated at the Technique Tournament by the author in both second and third-year courses:

MUS 243 (Second-Year Course)

Round	Technical Skill	Requirements
1	All Major Scales/Arpeggios	Two Octaves, Hands Together
2	All White Key Harmonic Minor Scales/Arpeggios	Two Octaves, Hands Together
3	Hanon Exercise	Two Octaves, Hands Together
4	Any Warm-Up from *Technical Skills*, Book 4 by Jane Magrath	Demonstrate Technique Play with Continuity

MUS 361 (Third-Year Course)

Round	Technical Skill	Requirements
1	All Major Scales/Arpeggios	Four Octaves, Hands Together
2	All White Key Harmonic Minor Scales/Arpeggios	Four Octaves, Hands Together
3	Hanon Exercises Nos. 1, 2 and 6	Two Octaves, Hands Together Transpose to G and D Major
4	Any Etude from *Burgmuller, Czerny, and Hanon* by Ingrid Jacobson Clarfield	Demonstrate Technique Play at Indicated Tempo

The class was divided into two heterogeneous teams of mixed ability at the beginning of the quarter. These teams were carefully constructed by the instructor so that each team represented a cross-section of the class in terms of demonstrated proficiency and competency levels, sex and race/ethnicity. To accomplish this, the instructor evaluated student grades from previous quarters and reflected on each student's strengths and weaknesses. The size of each team varied depending on the

number of students in each class. Teams consisting of three to five student members were used in this study.

Each team was required to meet outside of class to prepare for the tournament. Teams were asked to schedule a weekly or bi-weekly meeting in which they practiced and assisted team members with any difficulties or concerns. In-class practice time was also provided. During this time, usually five or ten minutes, the instructor targeted a specific technical skill or exercise for the teams to practice or review.

A Practice Technique Tournament was held mid-way through the quarter during week five. This event was constructed on a smaller scale and was much less formal than the final tournament. The Practice Technique Tournament contained only a few of the overall technical skill competencies. Additionally, weekly match-ups such as round robin tournaments (comparable to the weekly games and quizzes of TGT and STAD) were played, giving students an opportunity to assess their individual and collective progress. During the round robin tournament, students were assigned a scale by their peers. While a student played the scale out loud, his peer partner observed and offered feedback following the performance regarding fingering or missed notes. The other students played the scale silently, off headset, with their digital pianos turned off. This gave them the opportunity to review each scale as it was played by the target student. This procedure also gave the instructor the occasion to monitor group and individual progress, and intervene with suggestions for improvement when necessary. Unlike TGT and STAD, the Practice Technique Tournament and weekly match-ups did not function as individual point-earning opportunities.

The Final Technique Tournament was conducted near the close of the term during the first class period of week ten. The prescribed technical elements were divided into tournament rounds (i.e. Round One – Major Scales and Arpeggios, Round Two – Harmonic Minor Scales and Arpeggios, Round Three – Hanon Exercises, Round Four – Czerny Exercises, etc.). Scales and arpeggios were evaluated on the basis of consistent tempo and the use of correct fingering. Etudes or studies were assessed with consideration of the specific technical concept involved, in addition to continuity. Advanced classes (third-year) were required to render each component with metronome at a given tempo.

A representative from each team was asked to play a given scale or technical exercise individually. The instructor/judge determined if the scale or etude was acceptable and awarded one point for a correctly played performance. No points were granted to performances deemed unacceptable. The instructor recorded points privately rather than announcing them publicly following each performance so as not to embarrass student participants. The instructor also chose to separately grade each performance, and assigned a letter grade to be recorded as part of a quiz. Therefore, points and grades were separate entities. At the close of the tournament, all points were tallied and the team with the most points was awarded a prize consisting of various candies. In one case, a play-off round was necessary. The winning teams were additionally awarded bonus course points to be applied to their overall final exam technique grade. The instructor was particularly careful to structure these bonus points so as not to radically inflate the student's overall grade.

Rationale:

The Technique Tournament is designed to stimulate excitement as well as both individual and group accountability in the learning and development of piano technique. Because teams consist of students from all levels of playing ability, all members stand to gain something. Students who possess a more advanced technique solidify their understanding as they encourage and assist the less advanced students. Less-advanced students benefit as they receive support and tutoring from their more advanced peers. A variety of ideas and approaches to a given technical problem are exchanged among members. As a result, students may find an alternate manner in which to approach a technical issue that they may not have discovered on their own. For example, the instructor observed a student explaining to his team members how to use wrist rotation to negotiate a particular passage in Czerny, Op. 599, No. 18. Of course, the instructor should monitor this closely, advising students when their discoveries and advice are not appropriate as well as giving them credit when they are valuable.

Here, positive interdependence is a critical element. Team members recognize that in order to achieve bonus points and ultimately, and most importantly, develop their technical skills, they must assist each other in learning and mastering the required materials. As a result, students begin to challenge each other to higher levels of playing, acknowledging that their individual performance has a direct impact on the collective achievement of the team.

Demonstrated Results:

The Technique Tournament proved to be a particularly effective means for the teaching of early and intermediate level piano technique, as well as for motivating students to practice. Student questionnaire responses indicated that all students felt that the tournament was beneficial, while twelve out of thirteen students (93%) stated that they felt their technique had developed as a result of the exercise. Exam scores indicated that most students who participated in the Technique Tournament demonstrated better technical proficiency at the end of the class than at the beginning. These students displayed a noticeably greater feeling of confidence at the keyboard than what they had previously demonstrated. Furthermore, many of the Technique Tournament teams developed a sense of group spirit and pride. What once was a task of drudgery for many of the students, the study of technique became recognized as an essential element of their piano training and resulted in a highly motivated personal and cooperate challenge.

Most of the teams demonstrated a strong sense of positive interdependence, and worked to motivate team members to higher levels of achievement. All students indicated on the post-activity questionnaire that the tournament was fun and motivational, while twelve out of thirteen students (93%) wrote that the tournament challenged them to higher levels of playing. Nearly every student willingly offered and accepted advice from his peers. Some students were naturally more reluctant to offer feedback at first, but later freely participated. For the most part, the ideas exchanged by students were pedagogically and technically sound. Students offered specific fingerings for scales and arpeggios as well as more abstract technical advice such as good hand position and the proper use of wrist rotation. Intervention by the

instructor was at times necessary in order to control radical or unproductive suggestions and to direct students to alternative ideas or approaches to a given technical problem. For instance, the instructor had to intervene when a student suggested inserting a break or hop between the right hand finger crossings for arpeggios.

The following are remarks from students regarding the Technique Tournament as found in the Faculty/Course Evaluation and a follow-up questionnaire:

> "I think the Technique Tournament is very fun and beneficial!"
> "Good learning techniques!"
> "I feel my piano skills have grown tremendously!"
> "I think the Technique Tournament would be beneficial to all. It will improve your skills and allow you to work very well with others."
> "I think that it was a FANTASTIC idea. Even though my team did not practice together as often as we should have, it still forced technical practice. I enjoyed the friendly competition and the chance to "show off" to one another. Don't take that the wrong way, but in a tournament like this, your "musical pride" is on the line. You have to do well in front of your peers. I think that is one thing that motivated me to practice individually."
> "If members of my team had been more willing to practice together outside of class, I believe I would have gained even more from the tournament."

A few students offered a more negative response to the Technique Tournament. Only five out of the thirteen student questionnaire responses (38%) indicated that the team met consistently to practice and assist each other. Many of the negative responses articulated the struggle to meet with team members outside of class due to schedule conflicts. One student wrote, "We all practiced on our own. I felt that it was just like any other assignment. I believe that musicality is just as important as technique." Another student wrote concerning the issue of

competition, "Students like me get very down on themselves when they feel behind other students and are not motivated by competition." Many of these students who made negative verbal remarks regarding the Technique Tournament consistently demonstrated a lack of preparation and practice. In follow-up conversations, these students stated that they did not like the activity, did not practice regularly, and felt that learning piano was a waste of their time. Their grades additionally reflected such lack of preparation, as well as their negative attitude toward the class and the instrument.

The following tables report composite technique grades from both the first quiz and the final examination. Table 1 represents results from second-year classes and Table 2 represents results from third-year classes. All but one class demonstrated an improvement in technique scores from quiz one through the final exam. The class which produced lower technique scores may have been graded subjectively more intensely by the author due to higher expectations. The decline in the class technique averages from quiz one (87.1%) and the final exam (85%) is therefore relatively insignificant, and may fall within a margin of error. Because no comparison group was used, the following statistics are merely descriptive and can only demonstrate a grade trend.

Table 1

Second-Year Classes – Technique Grades

Class (Spring 2005)	Class Size	Quiz One – Technique Class Average	Final Exam – Technique Class Average
Class One	6	81.2%	87.5%
Class Two	10	91.0%	94.7%
Class Three	7	83.2%	90.7%

Table 2

Third-Year Classes – Technique Grades

Class (Spring 2005)	Class Size	Quiz One – Technique Class Average	Final Exam – Technique Class Average
Class One	8	87.1%	85.0%
Class Two	5	95.0%	98.7%

The following tables show the results of the Technique Tournament in regard to team points per class by level:

Table 3

Second-Year Classes – Technique Tournament Team Points

Class (Spring 2005)	Class Size	Team One	Team Two
Class One	6	11	8
Class Two	10	19	20
Class Three	7	13	12

Table 4

Third-Year Classes – Technique Tournament Team Points

Class (Spring 2005)	Class Size	Team One	Team Two
Class One	8	9	10
Class Two	5	12	11

Reflection and Conclusions:

The Technique Tournament appears to be a viable activity to motivate group piano students to higher levels of technical preparation. Positive related outcomes include advancement in technical proficiency, increased levels of confidence at the

instrument, and motivation to practice technique. Most teams also demonstrated a strong sense of positive interdependence.

Many of the students who did not favorably respond to the Technique Tournament to be those who consistently displayed a lack of preparation as well as a negative attitude toward the class and to the instrument. Because groups have the potential to positively influence and motivate such students, more intervention by both the team and the instructor to reverse this negative response should have been attempted. To affect such positive change, the instructor must monitor in-class group activity carefully, noting any unconstructive or socially harmful activity as well as identifying any student who seems unable to keep up. The instructor must also be willing to address such issues with the group first and then individually when the situation warrants. He may wish to speak to group leaders to discuss ways in which they may successfully encourage and spur on their colleagues to higher levels of productivity and achievement. This exercise may not be successful in motivating some students to practice technique and may be a possible limitation of the structure.

Scheduling periodic outside practice sessions often became a problem and many of the teams failed to meet consistently. Only thirty-eight percent of student responses suggested that their team met consistently to practice and assist one another. For some, the requirement to meet outside class generated a sense of ill will. Conversely, others commented that if members of their team had been more willing to practice together outside of class, they would have gained even more from the tournament. The author suggests that further subdivision of teams into practice partners may alleviate some scheduling problems and facilitate more consistent

practice outside of class. Additionally, the use of more, highly structured, in-class practice time in which teams can meet to encourage and challenge each other. Here, the author again stresses the need for detailed instructions during in-class practice. It is important that team members are cognizant of their specific roles in order to facilitate organized and efficient practice. Beyond this, the author suggests that a more clearly defined scoring rubric be designed and implemented during the Tournament.

Also, the author acknowledges that unsupervised practice among early level students may reinforce mistakes and bad habits. Therefore, it becomes especially important that the instructor closely monitor student technical suggestions during team and individual practice in class. The author suggests students explain any suggestions made outside class to the instructor by submitting a brief report that details his ideas. These reports can be as simple as a hand-written note detailing a specific problem the team encountered and a description of the suggestion to solve it. The instructor may additionally wish to follow-up on these written reports by asking students to provide a verbal and physical demonstration of his suggestion. An alternative may be to permit only more advanced students to practice outside of class, while earlier levels practice solely in class. This arrangement would allow the instructor to carefully monitor student exchanges.

Other Applications:

The Tournament concept may be easily adapted to other group piano curricular competencies such as sight reading and harmonization/transposition. An instructor of group piano might adapt and implement skill tournaments on a

rotational schedule, for example, Fall Quarter – Sight Reading Tournament, Winter Quarter –Harmonization/Transposition Tournament, Spring Quarter – Sight Reading Tournament.

Title: Sight Reading Drill Pairs with Eye Check

Piano Competency: Sight Reading

Cooperative Learning Theory Source:

Sight Reading Drill Pairs with Eye Check is a strategy based on Spencer Kagan's structure titled Pairs Check. Pairs Check is a method used for practicing or reviewing certain concepts or skills employing teams consisting of two pairs. Within each pair, one student takes a turn at completing a task or solving a problem while the other student coaches. The pair then alternates roles. Following the completion of two or more problems, the pair compares their responses with the other team pair. When both pairs agree on the answers, both pairs receive positive reinforcement. If there is disagreement, teams must engage in discussion in order to come to a consensus.

Application Design and Procedure:

Thirty-eight second-year class piano students representing four sections participated in Sight Reading Drill Pairs with Eye Check. During a regular class period, the students were paired up (Student A and Student B) and given a sight reading example, *Melodic Tune*, Op. 218, No. 20 by Louis Kohler, that was divided into two halves, one half for each partner. They were asked to examine their portion of the example individually, noting all details such as key and time signatures,

melodic/intervallic movement, harmonic progression, accidentals, fingering, etc. Students were asked to prepare their score by marking potential problem spots. After this pre-analysis, Student A explained to Student B potential problems in his portion of the score and how he planned to negotiate them effectively. Student B then provided additional comments or suggestions Student A may have overlooked. Following this exchange, a tempo was established and the metronome was set. The instructor challenged students to select a tempo that would facilitate continuity and fluency. Student A then played his exercise under the headphones while counting. As he played, Student B was given the responsibility of marking how many times Student A looked down at his hands (eye check), as well as taking note of specific problems and reasons why they occurred.

Following the performance, Student A provided an evaluation, taking into account his initial explanation of potential problems and the effectiveness of his strategies to play the example well at sight. Student B then offered his assessment of the reading, adding any additional insights or suggestions for improvement. Student B also provided a tally of how many times the performer looked at his hands during the reading. Students were asked to discuss how looking at their hands may have impeded a fluent reading of the example. The roles were then switched and repeated. After each student had played his portion of the example, the same strategy was used to learn the other student's part. Finally, the partners played the entire example together using the metronome and counting out loud.

After the pair felt confident with the reading of their example or after seven minutes, whichever came first, they were joined together with another pair that had completed the same example using the same procedure. The pairs exchanged insights

about the sight reading example, discussing problematic sections and specific difficulties, as well as methods they used to play these passages successfully. The groups then set the metronome and played the example together, counting as they played. Finally, the entire class played the example together out loud.

Rationale:

In Sight Reading Drill Pairs with Eye Check, students are functioning in two roles: thinker/player and coach/motivator. Students work together to preview and analyze a score prior to playing. This provides a broader perspective than what is possible with a single student. Collectively the dyad is able to conduct an exhaustive preview of the example.

Because students will ultimately play the sight reading example with their partners and with a metronome, they are challenged to maintain a given tempo and are forced to read ahead despite any missed notes or mistakes. This requires students to look at the score and not their hands. Additionally, students are given immediate feedback on how many times they looked at their hands, as well as an explanation of how this may affect the overall continuity in their reading.

The structure may be effectively used to encourage student sharing, generating a more creative interaction scenario than simply sight reading individually. Furthermore, the structure strengthens the acquisition of knowledge and promotes a positive social environment.

Demonstrated Results:

Sight Reading Drill Pairs with Eye Check proved to be an effective strategy for the practice of sight reading. Students responded to the exercise positively in several ways. First, students said that the strategy helped them to realize the number of times they take their eyes off the score to look at their hands, and how this impeded upon accuracy and continuity in their reading. One student wrote, "I was definitely surprised at how often I looked down when I play. Now I will watch for that when I practice." Another student stated that the activity "revealed that looking down is bad for flow!" One student echoed this sentiment by saying, "It is very hard to not look down, but when you don't, sight reading improves."

Students also articulated their appreciation for the opportunity to preview the example jointly and the chance to discuss potential problem areas and suggestions to deal effectively with these concerns. Thirty-seven out of thirty-eight student responses (97%) indicated that the exercise was beneficial, and that the student felt better prepared to read the sight reading example because of the activity. Of this benefit one student wrote, "Working with partners helped me work out a problem with a solution I would not have seen otherwise." Other students remarked that previewing the example with a partner helped them to learn new techniques for sight reading. Thirty-one out of thirty-eight (82%) students said that their partner offered useful suggestions. A few students wrote positively of the use of the metronome and counting out loud while they played. One student wrote that the slow but steady pulse gave him "a sense of structure" for their reading.

The author noted that explaining the exercise initially took a significant amount of time in its first application. The author also found that careful selection

and leveling of sight reading examples is critical for the success of the structure. A few students felt that the example was "extremely easy" and "fairly simple." One student wrote, "It is hard when the partners are at different playing and sight reading levels. One person could have challenged themselves with the tempo but the other couldn't play it that fast."

Reflection and Conclusions:

Sight Reading Drill Pairs with Eye Check appears to be an appropriate addition to individual sight reading activities. Positive related outcomes include higher levels of motivation as well as advancement in sight reading proficiency. Additional positive merits include the following: recognition of eye movement and concentration on score; a more thorough, joint preview and discussion of potential problems and solutions; and the internalization of a steady sense of pulse by playing with a partner.

In response to issues related to the selection of sight reading examples, the author suggests that instructors carefully consider the level of each student in the class with an attempt to find materials that are appropriate for each pairs' reading ability. Students can then be paired up according to their specific sight reading levels and can be assigned reading exercises that are commensurate with these levels.

Although the initial presentation of the structure was somewhat time-consuming, the author noted that efficiency improved dramatically during subsequent applications of the activity. It is important to mention that longer and more complex sight reading examples may require more time in order to allow students a sufficient period to analyze, discuss, and play.

Other Applications:

Drill Pairs may be easily adapted and used to reinforce other keyboard skills. The structure can be used to drill various reading scenarios, ranging from the intervallic movement of a simple melody to more complex readings in a variety of different clefs. Drill Pairs may also be used to drill technical skills such as scales and arpeggios. The structure can also be adapted for use in learning and polishing repertoire.

Title: Harmonization Think-Pair-Share

Piano Competency: Harmonization

Cooperative Learning Theory Source:

Harmonization Think-Pair-Share is based on Spencer Kagan's structure called Think-Pair-Share. Students first think individually about a given problem and then formulate an answer. Next, students are paired with a partner to discuss and compare their answers. If their answers differ one from the other, they must engage in discussion in order to create a single team response. Students are required to fully justify their responses. Think-Pair-Share works particularly well for the development of conceptual knowledge. It is most appropriate for short tasks rather than long, open-ended projects.

Application Design and Procedures:

Thirty-four second-year class piano students representing four sections participated in Harmonization Think-Pair-Share. During a regular class period, students were assigned a melody to be harmonized ("Shalom, Chaverin" – Israel from *Alfred's Group Piano for Adults*, Book 2), and were supplied with a list of potential chords and their inversions to be used. The available chords choices were the following: i, V6/5, V7/III, and III 6/4. In order to acclimate students to the melody, the class sight-read the melody together under headphones. Students were

then given approximately five minutes to individually select appropriate chords that complimented the melody. Students were initially prohibited from testing their chord choices by playing, and were challenged to select harmonies based solely on an assessment of the melodic notes using their theoretical knowledge.

After the students had completed the harmonization individually or following the five-minute time allowance, they were paired with another student and were asked to compare and rationalize their chord selections. Should any disagreement arise, students were challenged to reach a compromise and also provide an explanation as to why they chose each chord. Once all pairs settled upon a final version or following the five-minute time allowance, the instructor rotated through the class, requesting a single representative from each pair to share one or two chords from the complete exercise and explain their justification for each chord. The instructor also requested alternate suggestions from the class. When the appropriate answer did not surface from the class on two chords, the instructor interjected with the correct response and explained why it was appropriate and necessary.

When the class had reached a collective agreement on the exercise, each pair was asked to prepare the example for performance. The instructor suggested that each pair first play the scale and chord progression of the piece together in order to acclimate themselves to the key. Responsibilities were then divided between the pairs: one student was asked play the melody while the other student provided an appropriate accompaniment type. The roles were reversed and the new parts were rehearsed. Finally, the pairs rehearsed playing both the melody and the accompaniment together. The instructor then called upon each group to demonstrate its rendition for the class.

Rationale:

Harmonization Think-Pair-Share is advantageous in many ways. First, students are given time to think individually about which chords most appropriately compliment the melody. This challenges each student to formulate independently an answer and justify his choice, which in turn requires him to be knowledgeable of the concepts and principles involved.

Ultimately, students work together to find the best possible chord choices for the given melody. Working together rather than alone gives students a broader perspective of potential chord choices. After students are paired together, any disagreements in terms of chord selection must be thoroughly discussed and resolved. Collectively the students must construct a composite rationale for their chord choices.

Students learn both parts of the harmonization example (right hand and left hand/ melody and accompaniment) together and perform their rendition for the class. When playing together, students are challenged to maintain a set tempo and continue playing despite any missed notes or rhythms. Also, students may be potentially less nervous when playing the harmonization example with a partner rather than giving an individual performance.

Demonstrated Results:

Harmonization Think-Pair-Share demonstrated many positive advantages for teaching and reinforcing the basic principles of keyboard harmonization. Thirty-two out of the thirty-four participating students (94%) expressed that the structure assisted them in selecting the most appropriate chord choices for the given melody.

One student wrote, "I liked this way of learning a lot because sometimes I am not as comfortable [making] chord choices, and having someone else to help me and add their suggestions is truly beneficial." Another student echoed this praise by adding, "It helps my mind to work faster and to get things thought out." As a result, students seemed more confident and better prepared in their chord selections. This is perhaps in part due to the requirement that students must provide a justification and explanation for their answers. Along these lines, one student wrote, "I generally am not a group-oriented person, but I found this particular exercise helpful as I could bounce ideas off my partner."

Ninety-one percent of participating students said that, as a result of the structure, they felt overall better prepared to play the example, while eighty-two percent indicated that they felt less anxious and nervous when performing. Because the exercise culminated in students playing the example with their partner, many students felt less "on the spot." One student wrote, "I thought it was easier to play this with a partner. I wasn't alone in the spotlight. It would be helpful to do this with a partner to prepare for an exam." Conversely, one student wrote, "The technique, I feel, is useful [for] finding the best chords, but stressful when trying to play together with a partner."

A review of the questionnaire responses revealed that some students desired more time to complete each step of the exercise while a few needed much less time and felt bored while waiting for others to complete the task. One student wrote, "Honestly, it was kind of boring to spend that much time on it since it doesn't take me that long to work through this, but it's helpful still and I'm sure it is good for other people." Another student added, "This exercise was helpful but I personally

find it easier to rehearse alone. I believe I could then focus and fix my own mistakes."

Reflection and Conclusions:

Harmonization Think-Pair-Share appears to be an effective strategy for the teaching and drilling of harmonization skills. Positive related outcomes include higher levels of motivation and increased understanding of the procedures involved in harmonizing melodies. Additional positive merits include the following: a broader perspective of potential chord choices; a steady sense of pulse as a result of practicing and performing with a partner; decreased anxiety due to performing with a partner; a strong sense of positive interdependence among pairs; an increased level of confidence in basic principles of keyboard harmonization.

Following the application of Harmonization Think-Pair-Share, the author noticed more solid preparation, as most students also appeared to be more confident when performing. During the discussion of chord choices, most students developed excellent justifications for their decisions, which demonstrated a solid understanding of the concepts and principles involved. The procedure also proved to be beneficial for those students who felt less confident making these decisions. Students acknowledged that part of their joint responsibility was not only to choose appropriate chords, but to also understand why their choices were better than others.

Written questionnaire responses revealed that some students needed more time to complete the exercise, while others finished the exercise early. The author recommends maintaining the time guidelines as listed above, if not increasing the time allowance by one minute. For those students who finish individually

harmonizing the example, the instructor should assign additional tasks such as creating and preparing an original accompaniment pattern or orchestrating the example with various timbres using the digital piano resources.

Other Applications:

Think-Pair-Share may be applied in the teaching of other keyboard skills, including issues related to selecting appropriate fingerings for passages in reading materials or repertoire. The structure may also be used in critical listening exercises. Here, students listen to two or more performances of a given work for piano by different artists, and then answer questions about what they heard, first individually and then with a partner. Finally, students may discuss their answers with the entire class.

IMPROVISATION/CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

Title: Styles Improvisation Investigation

Piano Competency: Improvisation

Cooperative Learning Theory Source:

Styles Improvisation Investigation is based upon the principles of Shlomo and Yael Sharan's structure titled Group Investigation, which contends that students will engage in research and activity that is related to personal interests. For example, students form groups according to common interests in a given topic. Together they formulate a plan to research, analyze, synthesize and present on their given subject. Each group's final presentation must summarize how their findings relate to the broader topic. Group Investigation works particularly well in the development of problem-solving skills, and it addresses issues of scaffolded learning. This structure is especially useful for large, long-term projects that require a significant amount of time to unfold.

Application Design and Procedures:

Following an overview lecture presentation given by the instructor on various styles of piano playing (i.e. jazz, blues, rock and pop, folk and country, etc.), students were asked to form groups according to a common interest in a given style. In a class which consisted of seven third-year class piano students, two groups were formed, one consisting of three members and one of four. Group A chose blues as

their style and Group B selected jazz. No specific criteria were employed in forming groups. Rather the groups were formed based solely on the student's interest in a given style.

Each group was responsible for conducting further research on their selected style of piano playing, and was asked to explore the intricacies of how it is performed. The groups were given the task to create an ensemble improvisation based on a simple melodic or rhythmic cell which represents their chosen style. Students were encouraged to use their melodic or rhythmic cell as an ostinato accompaniment pattern. Each member of the group was challenged to play the accompaniment parts as well as an improvised melody at some point during the performance.

The groups were given the assignment to present a twenty-minute, detailed lecture-presentation on their selected style. They were challenged to teach their classmates the salient features of their style of piano playing during this time. As part of the presentation, groups were asked to provide a handout to the entire class that listed the prominent elements of their piano style. They were strongly encouraged to use audio and video resources during their presentation. Each presentation was to culminate in a performance of their stylistic ensemble improvisation.

The project was introduced the week following the midterm examination during week six. Groups were given two weeks to prepare their projects, and they presented their work during a regular class period in week eight of the term. Each group met primarily outside of class to prepare its project, though five minutes of each class meeting prior to the presentation was reserved for students to

communicate about their next meeting time or other project-related issues. The instructor monitored in-class meetings and assisted with any questions that arose.

Group A presented first by offering an overview of the history of the blues as well as important pioneers of the style. The group played recordings by both legendary blues artists as well as current pop artists whose work is strongly influenced by the blues. Significant time was spent detailing the 12-Bar Blues pattern and ways it can be manipulated in performance. The presentation concluded with a performance of their ensemble improvisation which was based on the 12-Bar Blues pattern. Three parts, including a bass ostinato, chord/harmonic pattern, and improvised melody, were distributed among the three group members. The 12-Bar Blues pattern was played three times which permitted all members to demonstrate each part.

Group B presented their discoveries related to the jazz style. The group began by discussing the origins of jazz and continued with an explanation of the many varieties of jazz styles (i.e. classic jazz, hot jazz, Chicago style, Swing, Kansas City style, gypsy jazz, bebop, vocalise, mainstream, and cool jazz). Next, the group discussed jazz improvisation and three common methods, which included melodic, harmonic, and motivic. Following, the group presented a list of important jazz figures and elements of their style, and additionally played recordings of each. A discussion of common jazz chords and harmonic progressions was followed by mention of important web resources related to the topic of jazz piano playing. The group concluded with a performance of their improvisation, which included four parts: an original bass ostinato, a complimentary harmonic progression, an additional

rhythmic pattern, and an improvised melody. The ensemble was performed four times to permit all four members an opportunity to play each part.

Rationale:

Styles Improvisation Investigation is an effective instructional activity because it gives students an opportunity to explore, in detail, a particular style of piano playing that is of both personal and collective interest. At the heart of this structure is the idea that students will invest their energies to investigate a topic that is of personal curiosity. By collaborating with peers who share their particular interest, students are likely to delve more deeply into all facets of the topic and address areas that might otherwise be passed over. Members of the group come to the project with varying strengths and experiences, and are able to contribute something unique to the collective whole.

The project seeks to generate mutual excitement in a given topic per group. Each group is responsible for becoming resident experts in their given style of piano playing, and such a task should, theoretically, create a sense of group pride and camaraderie. Additionally, the requirement for personal and collective creativity in the creation of original ostinato patterns and improvisation of stylistic melodies is inherent to the project.

Furthermore, positive interdependence plays a vital role. Group members must embrace a strong sense of accountability in order for the project to be successful. Groups decide and assign specific roles for each group member (i.e. history of jazz, common chords and harmonies, pioneers and their music, etc.). All parts must therefore be well-researched and presented in order for the project to be

effective as a whole. Additionally, all members are responsible for learning and performing all parts of the ensemble (i.e. bass ostinato, harmonic progression, rhythmic pattern, melody, etc.). Students are also given the opportunity to share their learned knowledge, as well as a chance for the entire class to learn from their peers' expertise. When teaching others, students must be knowledgeable of the subject matter and be able to organize and present the material effectively. As a result, the student teacher's personal learning is strengthened.

Demonstrated Results:

Styles Improvisation Investigation proved to be an effective method for the introduction and exploration of various styles of piano playing for the intermediate level pianist. All students who participated stated in the post-activity questionnaire that the project was beneficial, and that it helped them to better understand each style studied. Four of the six participating students (67%) articulated that, as a result of the Styles Improvisation Investigation, they feel they can now successfully improvise in the given styles on a basic level. The author witnessed a sense of confidence and excitement from all students by their willingness to improvise melodies in a more creative manner. A music therapy student expressed her appreciation of the project, and stated that she could not "wait to take this into the field and use it in the hospital."

All teams demonstrated a strong sense of positive interdependence and accountability. As expressed in the questionnaire, all students agreed that their group worked well together, and that all members participated equally. The questionnaire also revealed that each group worked an average of three hours total on the project.

Reflection and Conclusions:

The Styles Improvisation Investigation proved to be a valuable project-based strategy for the exploration of various piano styles. Positive related outcomes include the opportunity for students to gain an understanding of the basic elements of various piano styles, including the history, pioneers, and recordings from each style. Additional positive merits include the following: improvisational experience in a given piano style; development of collaborative skills that results from participation in an ensemble; positive interdependence as required for a successful group presentation and ensemble performance.

The author noted that two students expressed that, after completing the Styles Improvisation Investigation project, they felt they could not improvise in their given style even on a basic level. Along these lines, one student commented that he would need much more time to feel comfortable with stylistic improvisation. In response, the author notes that this project was designed merely as an introductory exercise for the exploration of piano stylistic improvisation rather than a thorough course of study. To this end, the author suggests the use of subsequent improvisation activities and projects based on the knowledge learned as a result of the Styles Improvisation Investigation.

Other Applications:

The Group Investigation structure may be easily adapted and used to teach a variety of keyboard skills, and has been modified by the author in the creation of several student projects. One such project, titled "Piano: An Integral Part of My Profession," is an assignment in which first-year group piano students are divided

into groups according to their major (i.e. choral music education, instrumental performance, music therapy, etc.). Each student is asked to interview a professional in their field regarding the application of keyboard skills in their daily work, and discover specific ways these skills are used.

Another such project targets choral music education majors during the third year of piano study. Students are asked to explore how various piano technical exercises can be modified to create choral warm-ups. Students must compose four choral warm-ups and learn to play them in all keys. The students must produce a computer-generated version of their exercises, as well as provide an annotation as to what skills they develop for the singer. The group then generates a compilation notebook, which includes each member's warm-ups, and a copy is distributed to all members of the group for their future use. The project culminates in a student-lead demonstration of the warm-ups from the keyboard, with the class serving as the rehearsal choir.

Title: Practice Partnerships

Piano Competency: Solo and ensemble repertoire, among other competencies

Cooperative Learning Theory Source:

Practice Partnerships are based on a concept known as Cooperative Base Groups, articulated in Johnson and Johnson's Learning Together model. These groups are typically heterogeneous in membership and often reflect mixed levels of ability and achievement motivation. Cooperative Base Groups meet on a regular basis, and exist for extended periods of time, frequently for the duration of the class over the course of a semester or a year. The primary responsibilities of these groups are to provide support, assistance, and encouragement to their partner on various levels, including academic and personal tasks, as well as routine activities related to class issues. The partnerships are responsible for holding each other accountable to learn course materials to the best of their ability.

Application Design and Procedures:

At the outset of the academic year, second-year group piano students were paired in Practice Partnerships. These partnerships were self-selected, and were formed by the students with little or no intervention by the instructor. The instructor did suggest that students secure a partner with whom their schedule is compatible, and with whom they would enjoy working throughout the quarter. The instructor

helped to arrange partnerships or small groups consisting of three members for those classes that contained odd numbers of students. The Practice Partnerships met for the entire academic term of ten-weeks.

Students were required to meet outside of class weekly for a minimum of thirty-minutes. During this time, they were assigned to practice and perform class materials for one another. The weekly meeting was also a time for them to assist each other with difficulties, solve problems, both technical and theoretical, and to answer questions. The time could also be used to practice assigned duet literature. Other partner assignments included Technique Tournament preparation and repertoire performance analyses.

Each partnership was required to complete a Practice Partnership Session Report form (PPSR) weekly for each meeting. Examples of these forms can be found in Appendix C. The PPSR forms were submitted to the instructor by 12:00PM every Friday in order to be accepted for credit. Forms could be left in an envelope outside the instructor's office door. The form requested a detailed description of what transpired during each practice meeting. Students were also asked to list specific problems that were addressed, methods they used to correct the problems, and whether or not this approach resolved the issues. Students were additionally requested to notate any new discoveries that were made during their meeting. Additional forms were used to provide feedback following solo and duet repertoire performances, and for critical listening exercises. These forms included various performances aspects that were to be considered in the critique (i.e. accuracy, articulation, balance, dynamics, phrasing, etc.).

Participation in this program was required of every student. A partnership grade was weighed in the composite course grade through weekly credit. Credit was awarded to each student partnership that submitted a PPSR form weekly. The Practice Partnership Grading System follows:

Practice Partnership Grading System

Requirements	Points
Meet Nine (9) Weeks and Submit Nine (9) PPRSR Forms	20 Points = A
Meet Eight (8) Weeks and Submit Eight (8) PPRSR Forms	14 Points = B
Meet Seven (7) Weeks and Submit Seven (7) PPRSR Forms	8 Points = C
Meet Six (6) Weeks and Submit Six (6) PPRSR Forms	2 Points = D
Meet Five (5) Weeks or Less and Submit Five (5) PPSR Forms or Less	0 Points = F

Joint rewards in the form of bonus points (ten additional points) were offered to student partnerships, and were granted to those teams who demonstrated exceptional improvement.

Students were informed that, if during the course of the quarter student partners experienced difficulties in their working relationship, they must first make every attempt to resolve the situation. Should the problem persist, they were instructed to schedule a meeting with the instructor to discuss the situation.

Rationale:

Practice Partnerships was a response to the common lack of practice and preparation by group piano students. It was therefore designed to stimulate excitement and motivation in student practice. Though students were asked to

consistently practice individually outside of class, they must also meet weekly with their practice partner. The joint practice session is a low-pressure situation for students. Although students should come prepared to the meeting, the joint practice session is intended to be a place where students can exchange ideas and make new discoveries, as well as a time to provide practice solutions for various keyboard skill-related problems they may be facing.

Practice Partnerships may also generate a sense of accountability and positive interdependence. Students are given the task to encourage and assist each other in mastering course materials with the intent of improving their overall keyboard skills. They are also called to challenge each other to higher levels of performance. Because student partnerships are of mixed ability, they come to the rehearsal with varying strengths and weaknesses. For instance, some students may be more proficient at sight reading while others are better at harmonization and transposition. Because of their individual strengths, students stand to learn and grow from the coaching they receive from one another. Students also are aware of the partnership grade that is weighed in their overall course grade, as well as the potential to receive bonus points for partnerships that demonstrate exceptional improvement.

Demonstrated Results:

Practice Partnerships demonstrated many positive advantages as evidenced from its use in the class piano program at Ohio University. A majority (87%) of student participants said that they felt Practice Partnerships were beneficial for motivating one another to practice, and to be better prepared for class and exams. To this end, one student wrote, "It is good to have to play through your assignments

and have to get them prepared." Another student echoed by saying, "I think that this is a motivational activity," while another student stated that Practice Partnerships "forces and ensures practicing." All participating students, save one, indicated that practicing with a partner was a low-pressure situation.

Of the merits of Practice Partnerships, one student wrote, "It is beneficial to me to have somebody listen to my playing because they can notice mistakes that I have overlooked." Twenty-seven out of thirty-one participating students (87%) indicated that helpful comments and suggestions were exchanged among partners. Students also acknowledged that practicing with a partner affords them an opportunity to assess and compare their progress with their classmates. One student wrote, "It lets me know how I am doing in relation to my peers and what I need to work on." Another student articulated the truth that learning is strengthened when one is called upon to teach. Students are given this opportunity weekly during their partner practice when coaching their peers on various course-related topics.

Perhaps the most valuable benefit of Practice Partnerships was the sense of accountability that was generated between most partners. Eighty-four percent of students said they felt a sense of accountability with their partner. One student wrote, "It helped with accountability outside of class" in preparation for both class assignments and exam material. Students were aware that participation in the program was required, and that a small portion of their final grade was based upon their participation. Additionally, students recognized that when both individuals of a partnership demonstrated exceptional improvement, they would be rewarded with bonus points. In this regard, not all students were motivated by the grade contingency associated with this activity. The author noted that two outstanding

students' grades were penalized because the required number of forms were not submitted.

Interdependence was also illustrated by students' preparation and performance of duet repertoire. The Practice Partnerships served as an automatic duet team in which students could gain valuable collaborative music-making skills. In order for the duet to be a success, students were aware that both players must be fully prepared. Also, artistic decision-making was necessary throughout the rehearsal stage of the duets, calling on students to decide on a mutual interpretation.

Many students complained of the difficulty in coordinating schedules with their partner. Music majors' schedules are very full, and finding a time to meet to practice with their partner seemed to be a constant struggle. One student wrote, "It is very difficult to find the time to get together. So when we plan our weekly time, it is usually rushed."

Only fifty-one percent of students stated that they felt challenged to higher levels of learning and playing. Of this, one student wrote, "I like the partners, but it doesn't help when they don't want to practice or do their part. I spend more time helping them with their problems [and] with technical things." Another issue appeared to be the large disparity of levels of playing ability between partners. One student wrote, "I feel I'm at a higher skill level [than my partner] due to my [previous] experience, and I really haven't benefited from partners."

Reflection and Conclusions:

Practice Partnerships appear to be a viable method to motivate practice and preparation for secondary piano students. Positive related outcomes include the

following: increased levels of motivation to practice; a strong sense of accountability and interdependence between partners; higher levels of student preparation; a routine, low-pressure practice environment; peer coaching and constructive feedback from student partners; assessment and comparison of student progress with peers; solidification of learning by teaching.

Establishing partnerships of equal playing ability is an issue that must be considered. To this end, the author contends that students should be paired according to a standard of relative equality in terms of playing ability, and pairs should not involve two students of vastly differing abilities. Structuring an arrangement of relative equivalence will likely facilitate balanced interaction among partnerships and contribute to the exchange of information and feedback.

Because some students did not feel challenged to attain higher levels of preparation and performance, instructors must emphasize the reward of bonus points for those partnerships that demonstrate exceptional improvement. The instructor must also periodically remind students of their responsibility to challenge one another to achieve higher levels of preparation and understanding. Without such reminders, students can become complacent in their roles of accountability.

Instructors must also encourage the development of roles in each practice partnership. Each partnership must devise their own rules and procedures for practice and establish deadlines to complete specific tasks. Roles may include clarifying and summarizing concepts and new discoveries and completing the Practice Partnership Session Report Form.

The instructor may also facilitate a cooperative and interdependent spirit, both between partners and among partnerships, by reserving a small lesson segment

each week during which students discuss new discoveries and practice suggestions that were made during their partner practice. This conversation also gives the instructor an opportunity to assess student ideas that were exchanged during unsupervised practice and to address any unproductive or harmful suggestions made by students that might reinforce mistakes or bad habits.

Regarding scheduling issues, the author acknowledges the intense schedule of most music majors. Notwithstanding, the author contends that, at the outset of the term when partnerships were formed, students were encouraged to select a partner based on the compatibility of schedules. Moreover, the author asserts that the time commitment of thirty-minutes weekly is relatively minimal when compared to the potential benefits. Furthermore, in the event that the instructor would assign partnerships, such action would inevitably generate the potential for even more conflicts when scheduling a weekly meeting.

Other Applications:

The concept of Cooperative Base Groups may be easily used for activities like the previously mentioned Technique Tournament. Because student partners would be scheduled to meet and practice weekly as part of their Practice Partnership responsibilities, the format would negate the need to form separate teams for the tournament. Practice Partnerships would be combined to form teams, and the collective teams would meet only periodically. This arrangement would eliminate the challenge of scheduling a time for multiple team members to meet simultaneously on a weekly basis to practice for the tournament.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this demonstration project was to present and informally test five cooperative learning strategies that were adapted by the author from general education applications specifically for use in group piano learning environments. The cooperative learning activities were created specifically for undergraduate university music major classes whose primary instrument is not piano. Following each activity, students completed a questionnaire. The structures were employed and evaluated as part of the author's teaching in the Class Piano Program at the Ohio University School of Music.

The Technique Tournament, based on Slavin's Student Teams-Achievement Divisions and Teams-Games-Tournaments, was developed to motivate students toward stronger and more solid preparation of technical skills (including scales, arpeggios, etudes, etc.). Student teams met both outside of and during class to prepare the given requirements. The final Technique Tournament was held during the last week of classes, and included four rounds, each used to assess a different technical skill. During the tournament, each team member played a given scale or etude, and were awarded one point for a correctly played performance. The team with the most points at the conclusion of the tournament won a prize, and was awarded bonus points to be added to the final exam technique grade of the member students.

As a result of the Technique Tournament, the author noted increased levels of student motivation to practice technique, higher levels of confidence at the instrument, and an overall advancement in technical proficiency. Because of the nature of this study, it is impossible to attribute these positive outcomes to any one factor. Student responses were mixed. Several students said they did not like the activity, did not practice regularly, and felt learning the piano was a waste of time. In these situations, the author found that the groups should have been used more proactively in an attempt to positively influence and encourage these students, which might have reversed their negative feelings toward the activity. Perhaps the most problematic issue surrounding the Technique Tournament was scheduling outside team practice time. To alleviate this problem, the author suggests dividing the teams into practice partnerships consisting of two students, which would lower the number of schedules to be coordinated. Also, the author suggested more highly structured, in-class practice time for the collective teams.

Sight Reading Drill Pairs with Eye Check, based on Kagan's Pairs Check, was designed to provide students with an interactive sight reading experience. During a regular class period, students jointly previewed and analyzed a reading example, noting potential problem areas as well as solutions for dealing with them. One student played his portion of the example with the metronome, counting out loud, while the other student counted the number of times the performer looked at his hands. An assessment of the reading followed, as well as a discussion of the performer's eye-to-hand activity.

The Sight Reading Drill Pairs with Eye Check activity provided students with valuable information regarding the number of times they looked at their hands, and

how this negatively impacted accuracy and continuity in their reading. Ninety-seven percent of participating students expressed appreciation for the cooperative preview of the reading example, while eighty-two percent appreciated the opportunity to receive sight reading tips from their partner. Some students also noted the benefit of playing with the metronome while counting out loud, and how this helped provide a sense of structure for their reading.

Though a somewhat time-consuming activity, the author is confident that the benefits are worth the class time. The activity became more time efficient with subsequent applications of the structure. The author suggests that lengthy sight reading examples be given a longer amount of time for the activity to unfold. The author also noted that careful selection and leveling of reading examples is crucial. Students should be paired according to a relative standard of equivalence in sight reading ability, and should be assigned reading exercises that are commensurate with their level.

Harmonization Think-Pair-Share was adapted from Kagan's Think-Pair-Share to challenge students to independently harmonize a melody and justify their selections with a partner, and ultimately achieve the best possible solution based on their collective knowledge of the theoretical principles involved. Students were assigned a given melody to be harmonized individually. They were then paired with a partner and asked to decide on the best possible chord choices for the given melody. Following, the pairs discussed their choices with the class, and reached an agreement on the most suitable harmonization. Finally, each pair prepared and performed their rendition for the class.

Ninety-four percent of the student questionnaire responses praised the structure because, by working with a partner, they were able to select and understand the most appropriate chord choices for the given melody with a sense of confidence. Additionally, eighty-two percent felt less nervous when performing the example due to joint preparation with their partner. Some students desired more time to complete the exercise, while others needed less time. For those pairs who complete the activity early, the author suggested that in the future additional tasks be assigned involving the use of different accompaniment patterns or orchestrating the example with various timbres using the digital piano resources.

Styles Improvisation Investigation, based on Shlomo and Yael Sharan's Group Investigation, was created on the idea that students will invest the necessary energy to fully explore a topic that is of both personal and collective interest. Following an introductory lecture on various styles of piano playing, groups were formed based on stylistic topics. One group chose the blues and another group selected jazz. Each group conducted further research on their topic, and created an ensemble improvisation based on a melodic or rhythmic cell that represented their style. Groups met largely outside of class to prepare the assignment. The project culminated in a class presentation in which the groups detailed the salient features of their style and performed their ensemble improvisation. Because of the collective interest in the topic, student groups shared a mutual excitement for their style and explored in more detail facets that might have otherwise been overlooked. Ultimately, students applied their accumulated knowledge by creating and performing an ensemble improvisation.

All students who participated felt the project was beneficial, and that it helped them to more thoroughly understand the style studied. A majority (66%) of the students also felt better prepared to improvise in their chosen style as a result of the project. All students agreed that their group worked well together, and that members contributed equally. Because of the shared praise of the structure by the entire class, the author contends that students appreciated the freedom and flexibility inherent to this project to select, research, and present on a topic that was of both individual and collective interest.

Designed upon the concept known as Cooperative Base Groups, the Practice Partnership structure was created to stimulate motivation and sharing in student practice. Partnerships were self-formed with little or no intervention by the instructor. The instructor did encourage students to consider their schedules when forming pairs. Students met weekly for thirty-minutes outside of class to practice class materials, exchange helpful information, assist one another with difficulties, and solve problems. Student partners also used this time to prepare duet literature and critique solo repertoire. Students completed a session report form weekly in which they stated what transpired during their meeting, problems that occurred and solutions offered, as well as new discoveries. A partnership grade was weighed into the composite course grade, and was granted based on the number of weekly forms submitted.

Although students were required to practice individually on a consistent basis, the joint session was a low-pressure situation in which they could exchange insights, provide tips for improvement, and challenge each other to higher levels of playing. The students felt that the structure motivated them to be better prepared in

their weekly assignment, and also generated a sense of accountability in eighty-four percent of the partnerships. Eighty-seven percent of participating students indicated that helpful comments and suggestions were exchanged between partners. All students, save one, indicated that practicing with a partner was a low-pressure situation. The weekly meeting also provided students with an opportunity to assess and compare student progress with their peers.

Coordinating student schedules appeared to be the most problematic issue surrounding Practice Partnerships. The author noted that an announcement was made at the outset of the term that partnerships should be constructed in consideration of schedules. The author also suggested that partnerships be created on a standard of relative equality in terms of playing ability. Some partnerships consisted of two students of vastly differing abilities, which resulted in imbalanced exchange. It was noted that relatively equal partnership arrangements would likely facilitate a balanced interaction scenario in which students are more comfortable giving and receiving feedback.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Many positive outcomes were evidenced as a result of this study. First, a cumulative sense of cooperation was informally noted among most participating students in all activities, which was marked by positive growth in socially constructive behaviors. The author also noted numerous well-thought-out musical and technical discoveries, which emerged from cooperative group work. Though difficult to link with any one factor, the researcher did observe noticeable growth in playing levels in second and third-year class piano students enrolled in the Ohio

University Class Piano Program during the course of this study. Also evident was an increased sense of dedication to the instrument. Perhaps most importantly, many of the weakest students were likely spared from failing due to the kind nurturing and support of their peers through group accountability.

Many important discoveries were made as related to the implementation and operation of cooperative group work. First, the author recognized the importance of clearly articulating the goals and procedures at the outset of any cooperative activity. Beyond this, the instructor must continually reinforce a spirit of accountability and positive interdependence among students, for such an attitude is often not a natural disposition. Students must also be reminded of the specific roles and responsibilities that must be fulfilled in order to complete the task that is set before them.

The author recommends that a pre-term assessment and questionnaire be administered to all students, if at all possible. An assessment would permit the instructor to evaluate student skill levels as well as their understanding of basic concepts that are relevant to keyboard study. Included should be a learning style inventory as well as an appraisal of the student's attitude toward the instrument. The information obtained from these assessments would help guide the instructor in properly placing students in groups or classes that are commensurate with their ability and experience.

As a result of this study, the author acknowledges that many cooperative activities require more time to unfold when compared to direct instructional techniques like the lecture format. The development of social-skills necessary for effective cooperative group work often takes time to mature. During cooperative learning, the instructor is called upon to relinquish some of his control of the

learning process, and rather assume the role of facilitator in an attempt to direct students to discover knowledge. For many teachers, this may prove to be a challenge.

The author is convinced that, despite these minor issues, the benefits of cooperative learning far out-weigh the challenges. Because of its very nature, cooperative learning is characterized by principles of discovery and experiential learning. Students are actively involved in the learning process, often times from the outset to the conclusion of the activity. Students directly and immediately apply information and knowledge. Therefore cooperative learning is participatory and not passive. The result appears to be a very thorough and solid educational experience.

Need for Further Research

The author suggests that further research be conducted on these applications in order to produce more clearly defined inferential statistics regarding their effectiveness. Such research should not be limited to short-term and disconnected studies, but should rather focus on the application of cooperative learning-based activities over longer periods of time. As part of such longitudinal investigations, the author suggests that the researcher be eliminated from any instructional responsibilities when conducting the studies so as to avoid any potential bias. Furthermore, the author recommends additional research be conducted in an attempt to evaluate the potential benefits and effectiveness of cooperative learning theory and its application to group piano teaching in the independent piano studio involving pre-college students.

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APPENDIX A

KEYBOARD SKILLS PROFICIENCY REQUIREMENTS
OHIO UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Ohio University – School of Music

Keyboard Skills Proficiency Examination
Instrumental Performance Majors

Keyboard Requirements for Instrumental Performance Majors
• Completion of MUS 243 with a grade of C or better, OR • Completion of Piano Classification 6 AND the KSP Exam

Keyboard Proficiency Examination Required Materials

1. Harmonize and transpose six melodies. Students should use blocked chords in close position, proper voice leading and inversions for ease of movement. Appropriate accompaniment styles must be used.

- Copies of six (6) melodies are on reserve in the Music/Dance Library under "Fisher—KSP Exam—Melodies for Harmonization/Transposition—Music Education—Instrumental." Students must prepare all melodies first in the original keys as well as the indicated keys for transposition. Always use the indicated accompaniment styles, afterbeats, etc.
- Additional melodies to be harmonized AND transposed AT SIGHT will be provided during the examination.

2. Transpose AT SIGHT various single instrumental lines to concert pitch. Melodies will be provided during the examination.

- B-flat Instruments: Play melody a Major second below written pitch
- E-flat Instruments: Play melody a Major sixth below written pitch
- F Instruments: Play melody a perfect fifth below written pitch

**Use *Music for Score Reading* by Melcher and Warch (MT85.M34) for practice.

3. Prepare and perform an instrumental accompaniment with soloist. Repertoire must be pre-approved by Mr. Fisher.

4. Sight read selected fragments of a band or orchestral condensed score.

Ohio University – School of Music

Keyboard Skills Proficiency Examination
Music Education/Choral

Keyboard Requirements for Music Education – Choral Majors
• Completion of MUS 361 with a grade of B or better, OR • Completion of MUS 361 with a grade of C- or better AND the KSP Exam, OR • Completion of Piano Classification 9 AND the KSP Exam

Keyboard Proficiency Examination Required Materials

1. Harmonize and transpose six melodies. Students should use blocked chords in close position, proper voice leading and inversions for ease of movement. Appropriate accompaniment styles must be used.

- Copies of six (6) melodies are on reserve in the Music/Dance Library under "Fisher—KSP Exam—Melodies for Harmonization/Transposition—Music Education—Choral." Students must prepare all melodies first in the original keys as well as the indicated keys for transposition. Always use the indicated accompaniment styles, afterbeats, etc.
- Additional melodies to be harmonized AND transposed AT SIGHT will be provided during the examination.

2. Prepare and perform a vocal accompaniment with soloist. Repertoire must be pre-approved by Mr. Fisher.

3. Prepare a four-staff choral work from an open score. This work will be placed on reserve in the Music/Dance Library under "Fisher—KSP Exam—Open Score—Music Education—Choral" ONE WEEK prior to the examination.

4. Perform your choice of TWO (2) popular/community songs. These may be selected by the student and approved by Mr. Fisher. High level of performance is expected, i.e. appropriate tempo, musicality, fluency, etc. You are encouraged to sing along as you play.

Ohio University – School of Music

Keyboard Skills Proficiency Examination
Music Education/Instrumental

Keyboard Requirements for Music Education – Instrumental Majors
• Completion of MUS 243 with a grade of B or better, OR • Completion of MUS 243 with a grade of C or better AND the KSP Exam, OR • Completion of Piano Classification 6 AND the KSP Exam

Keyboard Proficiency Examination Required Materials

1. Harmonize and transpose six melodies. Students should use blocked chords in close position, proper voice leading and inversions for ease of movement. Appropriate accompaniment styles must be used.

- Copies of six (6) melodies are on reserve in the Music/Dance Library under "Fisher—KSP Exam—Melodies for Harmonization/Transposition—Music Education—Instrumental." Students must prepare all melodies first in the original keys as well as the indicated keys for transposition. Always use the indicated accompaniment styles, afterbeats, etc.
- Additional melodies to be harmonized AND transposed AT SIGHT will be provided during the examination.

2. Transpose AT SIGHT various single instrumental lines to concert pitch. Melodies will be provided during the examination.

- B-flat Instruments: Play melody a Major second below written pitch
- E-flat Instruments: Play melody a Major sixth below written pitch
- F Instruments: Play melody a perfect fifth below written pitch

**Use *Music for Score Reading* by Melcher and Warch (MT85.M34) for practice.

3. Prepare and perform an instrumental accompaniment with soloist. Repertoire must be pre-approved by Mr. Fisher.

Ohio University – School of Music

Keyboard Skills Proficiency Examination
Music Theory, History, Composition

Keyboard Requirements for Music Theory, History, and Composition Majors

- Completion of MUS 243 or 361 with a grade of C- or better AND the KSP Exam.
- Note: If a student does not pass the KSP after completing MUS 243, the student must continue in the third year of the Class Piano sequence (MUS 359, 360, 361) until the KSP is successfully completed.

Keyboard Proficiency Examination Required Materials

1. Harmonize and transpose seven (7) melodies. Students should use blocked chords in close position, proper voice leading and inversions for ease or movement. Appropriate accompaniment styles must be used.

- Copies of the seven (7) melodies are on reserve in the Music/Dance Library under "Fisher—KSP Exam—Melodies for Harmonization/Transposition—Theory,History,Composition." Students must prepare all melodies first in the original key as well as the indicated key for transposition. Always use the indicated accompaniment styles, afterbeats, etc.
- Additional melodies to be harmonized AND transposed AT SIGHT will be provided during the examination.

2. Prepare and perform an instrumental or vocal accompaniment with soloist. Repertoire must be pre-approved by Mr. Fisher.

3. Prepare and perform a chorale texture from a standard hymnal or the Bach *Choralebuch*.

4. Prepare and perform a simple band, orchestral or choral score. The scores are on reserve in the Music/Dance Library under "Fisher—KSP Exam---Band/Orchestral/Choral Scores." Students will select one example from this collection to prepare for the exam.

Ohio University – School of Music

Keyboard Skills Proficiency Examination
Music Therapy Majors

Keyboard Requirements for Music Therapy
- Completion of MUS 361 with a grade of C- or better AND the following KSP Exam

Keyboard Skills Proficiency Exam Materials

1. Harmonize and transpose melodies found in fake books. Block chords in close position as well as appropriate accompaniment styles should be used.
    - Copies of SEVEN (7) melodies have been placed on reserve in the Music/Dance Library under "Fisher-KSP Exam-Melodies for Harmonization-Music Therapy". Be prepared to play ANY of these melodies. Play them first in the ORIGINAL KEY and TRANSPOSE to the keys indicated. Always use the indicated accompaniment styles, afterbeats, etc.
    - Additional melodies to be harmonized AND transposed at sight will be provided during the examination.

2. Sight Read a hymn and perform a prepared instrumental accompaniment with soloist.

3. Perform your choice of TWO (2) popular songs. These may be selected by the student and approved by Mr. Fisher and the Music Therapy Faculty. High level of performance is expected, i.e. appropriate tempo, musicality, fluency, etc.

Ohio University – School of Music

Keyboard Skills Proficiency Examination
Piano, Organ and Voice Performance Majors

Keyboard Requirements for Piano, Organ and Voice Performance Majors
• Completion of MUS 361 with a grade of B or better, OR • Completion of MUS 361 with a grade of C or better AND the KSP Exam, OR • Completion of Piano Classification 9 AND the KSP Exam

Keyboard Proficiency Examination Required Materials

1. Harmonize and transpose six melodies. Students should use blocked chords in close position, proper voice leading and inversions for ease of movement. Appropriate accompaniment styles must be used.

- Copies of six (6) melodies are on reserve in the Music/Dance Library under "Fisher—KSP Exam—Melodies for Harmonization/Transposition—Music Education—Choral." Students must prepare all melodies first in the original keys as well as the indicated keys for transposition. Always use the indicated accompaniment styles, afterbeats, etc.
- Additional melodies to be harmonized AND transposed AT SIGHT will be provided during the examination.

2. Prepare and perform a vocal or instrumental accompaniment with soloist. Repertoire must be pre-approved by Mr. Fisher. Students will also sight read a simple vocal or accompaniment during the exam.

3. Prepare a four-staff choral work from an open score. This work will be placed on reserve in the Music/Dance Library under "Fisher—KSP Exam—Open Score—Music Education—Choral" ONE WEEK prior to the examination.

4. Perform your choice of TWO (2) popular/community songs. These may be selected by the student and approved by Mr. Fisher. High level of performance is expected, i.e. appropriate tempo, musicality, fluency, etc. You are encouraged to sing along as you play.

APPENDIX B

TECHNIQUE TOURNAMENT GUIDELINES AND REQUIRED MATERIALS

OHIO UNIVERSITY – SCHOOL OF MUSIC
CLASS PIANO PROGRAM
LEVEL TWO – MUS 243

TECHNIQUE TOURNAMENT
May 31, 2005

GUIDELINES

ROUND ONE
All Major Scales and Arpeggios
Two Octaves
Hands Together
Correct Fingering

ROUND TWO
All White Key Harmonic Minor Scales
Two Octaves
Hands Together
Correct Fingering

ROUND THREE
Hanon Exercise No. 1
Increased Speed

ROUND FOUR
Any Warm-up Studied in Class from *Technical Skills*, Book 4 by Jane Magrath

Tournament Procedure

- Students will be divided into teams
- Teams will meet together to practice, prepare, challenge, and encourage
- Each team will devise a team line-up or order
- All students from each team will play a given scale or exercise as indicated by the judge/instructor
- The judge/instructor will determine quality of performance and will either grant or deny points
- Students will receive grades for each scale/exercise examined.
- The team with the most points at the conclusion of the tournament will win a prize

UNIVERSITY – SCHOOL OF MUSIC
CLASS PIANO PROGRAM
LEVEL THREE – MUS 361

TECHNIQUE TOURNAMENT
May 31 and June 1, 2005

GUIDELINES

ROUND ONE
All Major Scales and Arpeggios
Four Octaves
Hands Together
Correct Fingering

ROUND TWO
All White Key Harmonic Minor Scales and Arpeggios
Four Octaves
Hands Together
Correct Fingering

ROUND THREE
Hanon Exercises Nos. 1, 2, 6
Transpose to G and D

ROUND FOUR
Any Etude Studied in Class
At Indicated Metronome Marking

Tournament Procedure

- Students will be divided into teams
- Teams will meet together to practice, prepare, challenge, and encourage
- Each team will devise a team line-up or order
- All students from each team will play a given scale or exercise as indicated by the judge/instructor
- The judge/instructor will determine quality of performance and will either grant or deny points
- Students will receive grades for each scale/exercise examined.
- The team with the most points at the conclusion of the tournament will win a prize

APPENDIX C

PRACTICE PARTNERSHIP SESSION REPORT FORMS

Ohio University – School of Music
Class Piano Program
Christopher Fisher, Coordinator of Class Piano

Practice Partnerships
(Cooperative Base Pairs/Groups)

Requirements:
Student practice partners will be required to meet weekly for a minimum of thirty minutes. During this time, students will practice and perform assigned materials for each other. It is also a time for students to assist each other with difficulties, as well as a time to solve problems (both technical and theoretical) and answer questions. Such Practice Partnerships or Cooperative Base Pairs/Groups promote positive goal and reward interdependence.

Each partnership will be required to complete a Practice Partnership Session Report (PPSR) Form weekly for each meeting. PPSR Forms must be submitted by 12:00 (noon) each Friday to be accepted for credit. Only one form per partnership is required. These may be left in the envelope outside Mr. Fisher's office door.

This program is not optional, but is rather required of each student. A partnership grade will be weighed in the composite course grade through a weekly grade. Additionally, joint rewards in the form of bonus points will be offered to student partnerships, and will be granted for those who demonstrate exceptional improvement.

Periodically, student partners will be asked to meet with another pair to complete various assignments. Duet/duo assignments will be frequently assigned to each team for which this time can be utilized to practice such ensembles. Other partner/group assignments may include the following: technique tournament preparation, repertoire performance analyses, critical listening assignments, video/dvd viewing assignment.

If, during the course of the quarter, student partners experience difficulties in their working relationship, students are first asked to make every attempt to resolve the situation with their partner. If the problem persists, email Mr. Fisher so an appointment can be scheduled to discuss the situation.

Practice Partnership Grading System:

Meet 9 Weeks and Submit 9 PPSR Forms	20 points = A
Meet 8 Weeks and Submit 8 PPSR Forms	14 points = B
Meet 7 Weeks and Submit 7 PPSR Forms	8 points = C
Meet 6 Weeks and Submit 6 PPSR Forms	2 points = D
Meet 5 or Less Weeks and Submit 5 PPSR Forms or Less	0 points = F

Ohio University – School of Music
Class Piano Program

Practice Partnership Session Report Form

Student Names:_____
_____
Meeting Date: _____
Meeting Time: _____

Technique:
Solo Repertoire:
Duet/Duo Repertoire:
Sight Reading:
Harmonization:
Transposition:
Improvisation:
Other:

Write a detailed description of what transpired during your meeting.
What problems did you address?
How did you approach correcting the problem?
Did your method resolve the problem?
What new discoveries were made?

Ohio University – School of Music
Class Piano Program

Solo Repertoire Performance Analysis

Write a detailed analysis of each solo repertoire selection performed. Address each of the following areas:

Accuracy
Articulation
Balance of Melody and Accompaniment
Dynamics
Hand Position
Interpretation/Style
Pedaling
Phrasing
Pitch
Posture
Rhythm
Tone Quality

Ohio University – School of Music
Class Piano Program

Duet/Duo Repertoire Performance Analysis

Write a detailed analysis of each solo repertoire selection performed. Address each of the following areas:

Accuracy
Articulation
Balance of Melody and Accompaniment
Dynamics
Ensemble
Hand Position
Interpretation/Style
Pedaling
Phrasing
Pitch
Posture
Rhythm
Tone Quality

Ohio University – School of Music
Class Piano Program

Critical Listening Analysis

Listen to two (2) recorded performances of the following work for piano:_____. Generate a detailed list of differences or similarities you hear. Consider the following: Accuracy, Articulation, Balance of Melody and Accompaniment, Dynamics, Hand Position, Interpretation/Style, Pedaling, Phrasing, Pitch, Posture, Rhythm, Tone Quality.

APPENDIX D

TECHNIQUE TOURNAMENT QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Technique Tournament
Questionnaire Results

Second-Year Classes

Question	Agree	Disagree
1. I felt the Technique Tournament was beneficial.	9	0
2. The Technique Tournament challenged me to higher levels.	8	1
3. My team exchanged helpful comments and suggestions.	6	3
4. This exercise was a waste of time.	0	9
5. I now regard technique as an essential part of my piano training.	9	0
6. My team members participated and contributed equally.	6	3
7. I feel my technique has developed as a result of this exercise.	9	0
8. My team met consistently to practice and assist each other.	4	5
9. The Technique Tournament was a fun and motivational.	9	0

Additional Comments:

- I think the Technique Tournament would be beneficial to all. It will improve your skills and allow you to work very well with others.
- I think that it was a FANTASTIC idea. Even though my team did not practice together as often as we should have, it still forced technical practice. I enjoyed the friendly competition and the chance to "show off" to one another. Don't take that the wrong way, but in a tournament like this, your "musical pride" is on the line. You have to do well in front of your peers. I think that is one thing that motivated me to practice individually.
- I enjoyed the Tournament as healthy competition and felt myself pushed during it, but practice specifically for the purpose of the Tournament was rare. I was already in the habit of using Hanon and other technique exercises to help me warm up daily. The fact that a day was set aside for the Tournament helped to solidify the message that it IS important.
- It was beneficial, especially when your practice partner is a friend and you are comfortable with each other.
- Personally, I think that the tournament should have been either individual or in team of two. I think there would have been more commitment if it was me and my normal practice partner together again the rest of the class.
- Because you have a team, its not only personal motivation, but rather your team is counting on you as well. It was very beneficial, and fun!
- I think the technique tourney was useful to Work on skills that we don't get to do in rep practice. My trouble was, I Thought that it was a good Idea in Theory, but Human failings made it less productive then it could be. Our team met less than it should of. It wasn't for lack of trying (or caring, we won after all), It was just very hard to make our schedules line up. We were given in-class time, but much of that time was spent deciding who was going to

count. I wish our team had chosen a team leader from the very beginning. It would have made what little rehearsal time we had more effective to have someone in charge. I think our group was not able to become as cohesive because we did not all get along. There is also trouble with young musicians and criticism. We need to be reassured that an inferior player can still give good advice. We have often yet to learn that people who struggle have been told different ways of looking at a problem, so they can pass that on. The technique tourney gives a student the opportunity to work as a team. It worked for our class at several levels. One is that students were having fun, and I believe students retain more when they are having fun. Secondly, it served as a way to keep skills like scales and arpeggios fresh in our minds. Lastly, the technique tourney encourages practice. Whether it is the competitive spirit or fear of humiliation, students will practice harder to look good in front of their peers.

Technique Tournament
Questionnaire Results

Third-Year Classes

Question	Agree	Disagree
1. I felt the Technique Tournament was beneficial.	4	0
2. The Technique Tournament challenged me to higher levels	4	0
3. My team exchanged helpful comments and suggestions.	2	2
4. This exercise was a waste of time.	0	4
5. I now regard technique as an essential part of my piano training.	4	0
6. My team members participated and contributed equally.	2	2
7. I feel my technique has developed as a result of this exercise.	3	1
8. My team met consistently to practice and assist each other.	1	3
9. The Technique Tournament was a fun and motivational.	4	0

Additional Comments:

- If members of my team had been more willing to practice together outside of class, I believe I would have gained even more from the tournament.
- We all practiced on our own. I felt that it was just like any other assignment. I believe that musicality is just as important as technique.
- Good!
- Good way to spice class up!

APPENDIX E

SIGHT READING DRILL PAIRS WITH EYE CHECK QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Sight Reading Drill Pairs with Eye Check
Questionnaire Results

Second-Year Class One

Question		Agree	Disagree
1.	This exercise was beneficial.	8	0
2.	I felt better prepared to read the example.	8	0
3.	My partner helped me find patterns.	7	1
4.	This exercise was a waste of time.	1	7
5.	My partner gave me useful suggestions.	6	2

Additional Comments:

- I liked this exercise. It really helped me with techniques for sight reading.
- This was the first time I felt like I actually sight read a piece well. When analyzing with a partner helped a lot.
- I know I look at my hands a lot, but I know for sure the eight measures I played, I looked a lot more than I thought.
- Doing it multiple times helps me feel more comfortable. The steady pulse is very structured and gives us a format. I noticed that I looked at my hands too much.
- This was a good exercise to do. I don't want to say that it was a waste of time, but the song was extremely easy for me so it bothered me that we were moving so slow. But, I know that it would be very helpful if I needed help with a song.
- It is very helpful to look through the song and analyze it first. Knowing the moves and patterns made it easy.
- Perhaps a more advanced piece would help, but it was good.
- It was a fairly easy example, so we didn't' have many problems.

Sight Reading Drill Pairs with Eye Check
Questionnaire Results

Second-Year Class Two

Question		Agree	Disagree
1.	This exercise was beneficial.	11	1
2.	I felt better prepared to read the example.	11	1
3.	My partner helped me find patterns.	8	3
4.	This exercise was a waste of time.	1	11
5.	My partner gave me useful suggestions.	11	1

Additional Comments:

- I realized I don't look at my hands if I concentrate on it. However, sight reading I found easy.
- I think analyzing the piece before hand really helped me be aware of where my hands were going at each point of the piece. Working with partners helped work out a problem with a solution I would not have seen otherwise.
- I realized that I should be more conscious of stepwise and whole step motion in the two parts and that I look at my hands during chord changes.
- I look at my hands quite a lot but once I got the feel of the exercise it was much easier.
- I know I look at my fingers and realize that I have to stop. I'm trying. I like these exercises because I don't feel isolated.
- Working in partners was beneficial. It made me more aware of things I need to work on with regards to sight reading. Luckily, the "whiplash" syndrome isn't my problem.
- The best thing was the group work because everybody had suggestions on how to improve the trouble spots.
- I got a little bored, but the rest of my group seemed to benefit from it. Sight reading just doesn't take that long for me.
- I think this definitely helped with my sight reading skills even though it was easy for me.
- It's hard when the partners are at different playing and sight reading skill levels. One person could have challenged themselves with the tempo but the other couldn't do it that fast.
- It did help to know someone was watching me so when I was tempted to look at my hands I was able to stop myself.
- It was too easy. Not looking at hands was difficult.

Sight Reading Drill Pairs with Eye Check
Questionnaire Results

Second-Year Class Three

Question		Agree	Disagree
1.	This exercise was beneficial.	8	0
2.	I felt better prepared to read the example.	8	0
3.	My partner helped me find patterns.	7	1
4.	This exercise was a waste of time.	0	8
5.	My partner gave me useful suggestions.	8	0

Additional Comments:

- I thought it was much easier to sight read this piece after the exercise. I did not realize I look at the keyboard as much as I do.
- Now if only we had a chance to do that in sight reading for exams. I liked that now I have a method for sight reading because before I just did it kind of mindlessly.
- I was definitely surprised at how often we looked down and how hard it was not looking down.
- Very good. It helped me realize how much I look down when I play. Now I will watch for that when I practice.
- I really liked this approach to sight reading. It freed us to really review the piece rather than just playing it right away. The eye part was surprising. It is very hard to not look down, but when you don't…sight reading improves.
- It revealed that looking down is bad for flow!
- Very helpful. I like being taught. I should stop looking down so much.
- Forcing you not to look down made me think and not let myself look down.

Sight Reading Drill Pairs with Eye-Check
Questionnaire Results

Second-Year Class Four

Question		Agree	Disagree
1.	This exercise was beneficial.	10	0
2.	I felt better prepared to read the example.	10	0
3.	My partner helped me find patterns.	6	4
4.	This exercise was a waste of time.	9	1
5.	My partner gave me useful suggestions.	6	4

Additional Comments:

- The eye-check thing was helpful
- I tried playing without looking down, but I messed up. I played a lot better when I look. I'll make sure to work on that on my own.
- Eye-checking was helpful.
- This helped me more than other exercises we have done because of the larger amount of time we had with our partners.
- The eye-check was very helpful.
- Good exercise. Beneficial to some.
- I kinda figured out where the problems were and corrected them.
- It helped lots.
- The eye-check thing was not very helpful, maybe because your hands didn't need to move in this piece anyway.

APPENDIX F

HARMONIZATION THINK-PAIR-SHARE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Harmonization Think-Pair-Share
Questionnaire Results

Second-Year Class One

Question	Agree	Disagree
1. This exercise was beneficial.	6	0
2. Because of this procedure, I feel better prepared.	6	0
3. Because of this exercise, I was able to understand the best chord choices.	6	0
4. This exercise was a waste of time.	0	6
5. My partner gave me useful suggestions.	4	2
6. I felt less anxiety because I prepared with my partner.	5	1

Additional Comments:

- I think it was very helpful because you get to practice both parts and compare the chords with another person. It helps my mind to work faster and to get things thought out. I would like to use this in preparation for an exam. Even though you have a partner, it helps with playing it for the class. In terms of anxiety: Yes, oh yes! I definitely feel better about it. I felt more prepared and less nervous.
- The only thing this exercise is missing is extra time to practice. I am only able to play one hand at a time. I need to be able to practice a lot in order to get both hands together with correct notes. I feel better about checking chords, especially playing the piano to have a triple-check.
- Yes, I do feel more confident while working with a partner. I like the learning process entirely. I like it when you explain the hand positions beforehand. It is good to know the traditional style. I write out the chords beforehand so I can say to myself, "Which chord uses C and E?"
- It is hard to fill out the chords without being able to experiment on the keyboard. It was good to hear explanations of why each chord went where.
- I could have used more clarification of chords with their names (what to call them) because of less theory experience. Once I know what the chords are, which is which, I'm fine.
- The technique I feel is useful with everyone finding the best chords, but stressful when trying to play together with a partner. I think it would be beneficial to use in preparation for an exam when trying to get the best chord choices.

Harmonization Think-Pair-Share
Questionnaire Results

Second-Year Class Two

Question	Agree	Disagree
1. This exercise was beneficial.	8	1
2. Because of this procedure, I feel better prepared.	8	1
3. Because of this exercise, I was able to understand the best chord choices.	9	0
4. This exercise was a waste of time.	0	9
5. My partner gave me useful suggestions.	9	0
6. I felt less anxiety because I prepared with my partner.	7	2

Additional Comments:

- I thought it was easier to play this with a partner. I wasn't alone in the spotlight. It would be helpful to do this with a partner to prepare for an exam.
- I generally am not a group oriented person, but I found this particular exercise helpful as I could bounce ideas and sounds off my partner.
- I liked this way of learning a lot because sometimes I am not as comfortable with chord choices and having someone else to help me and add in their suggestions is truly beneficial. This would be a great idea for the preparing for an exam.
- It made learning the exercise easier to learn and play. I wasn't nervous at all to play in front of the class today. Playing with a partner benefits my preparation.
- Super-neat!
- I like these kind of opportunities in class because I don't feel as though I'm being put on the spot. As for the exam, I think it would be helpful to use in preparation, but it's just finding the time to meet.
- Honestly, it was kind of boring to spend that much time on it since it doesn't take me that long to work through this, but it's helpful still and I'm sure it is good for other people.
- I wouldn't really feel anxious about playing along. Using this to prepare for an exam wouldn't really make a difference.
- I much prefer working on my own.

Harmonization Think-Pair-Share
Questionnaire Results

Second-Year Class Three

Question	Agree	Disagree
1. This exercise was beneficial.	11	0
2. Because of this procedure, I feel better prepared.	10	1
3. Because of this exercise, I was able to understand the best chord choices.	10	1
4. This exercise was a waste of time.	1	10
5. My partner gave me useful suggestions.	10	1
6. I felt less anxiety because I prepared with my partner.	9	2

Additional Comments:

- I like working together. I can ask questions and we talk things out together. I would like to work with my practice partner on this.
- This exercise has potential.
- Partner playing allows me to feel confident because two partners are playing with me. This allows conscious choice of chord options, and time to get comfortable with them. This might be useful to use with my practice partner.
- I would like to go a little slower, but it definitely helps my sight reading.
- Yes, I think I would be more prepared for an exam if I were to do this exercise with my practice partner.
- It is always good to get together with a partner and practice because you can both share ideas that the other person may not have been aware of. I like this.
- This exercise was helpful but I personally find it easier to rehearse alone. I believe I could then focus and fix my own mistakes.
- It's hard to work with a partner who goes ahead and really doesn't work with the group. If the partners all stayed together, it would be more beneficial.
- Yes, this would help in preparation for an exam.
- Doing it myself I think it would have been pretty much the same.

Harmonization Think-Pair-Share
Questionnaire Results

Second-Year Class Four

Question	Agree	Disagree
1. This exercise was beneficial.	8	0
2. Because of this procedure, I feel better prepared.	7	1
3. Because of this exercise, I was able to understand the best chord choices.	7	1
4. This exercise was a waste of time.	1	7
5. My partner gave me useful suggestions.	7	1
6. I felt less anxiety because I prepared with my partner.	7	1

Additional Comments:

- It was helpful. I would like to do this same thing again with my practice partner.
- We need more time to put hands together.
- I was a little less anxious with a group. Our group wasn't very organized and I had a little anxiety, but not as much as if I played alone. I would feel better if I could use this exercise to practice with my partner before an exam.
- I think we need more time to work before playing again because we didn't have enough time to pay hands together.
- I would be interested in doing longer pieces this way. I would be interested in preparing this with my practice partner.
- I think this would be beneficial for me to use to prepare, with my practice partner, for the final. I think if we had just a few extra minutes to work for not only individual two-hand coordination, but also group coordination, it would be better.

APPENDIX G

STYLES IMPROVISATION INVESTIGATION QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Styles Improvisation Investigation
Questionnaire Results

Third-Year Class

Question	Agree	Disagree
1. This project was beneficial.	6	0
2. This project helped by to understand each style.	6	0
3. My group worked well together.	6	0
4. This was a useless exercise.	0	6
5. I feel I can now improvise in the style on a basic level.	4	2
6. All members of my group participated equally.	6	0
7. My group worked _____ hours on this project.	3 hours	

Additional Comments:

- Great junior level project since we as music therapy majors have to take jazz improv! Can't wait to take this out into the field and use it in the hospital.
- I feel that I would need much more time to feel comfortable and fully be able to improvise within a style even on a basic level however, I did walk away with a better understanding of the style our group did.
- This was a great way to "Think outside the box!" A good way to break the "redundant cycle" that class piano can sometimes feel like, especially in the 9th week of class!
- I thoroughly enjoyed this project as I take a great interest in the styles of blues and jazz. It was also cool because I feel that a lot of third year piano is geared towards therapy majors and this expanded our basis.
- It was enjoyable to research this and find recordings. Also, it was quite enjoyable to come up with a simple, but original cell.
- I feel that this project is beneficial to the beginning pianist. However, with minimal improvising experience, I do not yet feel comfortable improvising freely.

APPENDIX H

PRACTICE PARTNERSHIPS QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Practice Partnerships
Questionnaire Results

Second-Year Class One

Question	Agree	Disagree
1. I felt the Practice Partnerships were beneficial.	3	0
2. My practice partner challenged me to higher levels.	3	0
3. My partner and I exchanged helpful comments and suggestions.	3	0
4. This exercise was a waste of time.	0	3
5. I felt a sense of accountability to my practice partner	3	0
6. My partnership met consistently to practice and assist each other.	3	0
7. Practicing with a partner was fun and motivational.	3	0
8. Practicing with a partner was a low-pressure situation.	3	0
9. Together my partner and I made some excellent discoveries.	3	0
10. My partner and I participated and contributed equally.	2	1
11. What is the average time spent weekly practicing with your partner?	30 minutes	

Additional Comments:

- It is good to have to play through your assignments and have to get them prepared.
- Definitely "forces" or ensures practicing but with an unreliable partner, it can be very frustrating.
- It is beneficial to me to have somebody listen to my playing because they can notice mistakes that I have overlooked.

Practice Partnerships
Questionnaire Results

Second-Year Class Two

Question	Agree	Disagree
1. I felt the Practice Partnerships were beneficial.	9	1
2. My practice partner challenged me to higher levels.	6	4
3. My partner and I exchanged helpful comments and suggestions.	9	1
4. This exercise was a waste of time.	0	10
5. I felt a sense of accountability to my practice partner.	7	3
6. My partnership met consistently to practice and assist each other.	9	1
7. Practicing with a partner was fun and motivational.	9	1
8. Practicing with a partner was a low-pressure situation.	10	0
9. Together my partner and I made some excellent discoveries.	7	3
10. My partner and I participated and contributed equally.	8	2
11. What is the average time spent weekly practicing with your partner?	Range: 30 min to 1 hour	

Additional Comments:

- The only real problem is that it is so dependent upon each person doing their part.
- This quarter, with a different partner, the experience is much more enjoyable.
- It can all depend on who your partner is. This quarter I have a highly motivated partner, so I have found that I feel more serious about our work.
- In general, I work better by myself. I always felt that I am more prepared than my partner and did not accomplish much.
- I like the partners, but it doesn't help when they don't want to practice or do their part. I spend more time helping them with their problems with technical things.
- I think this is beneficial because it keeps me true to myself. It lets me know how I am doing in relation to my peers and what I need to work on.
- It is a great learning too, but is sometimes hard coordinating schedules/times to practice since we are all so busy.
- I think that this is a motivational activity. It seems to help very well.

Practice Partnerships
Questionnaire Results

Second-Year Class Three

Question	Agree	Disagree
1. I felt the Practice Partnerships were beneficial.	9	1
2. My practice partner challenged me to higher levels.	4	6
3. My partner and I exchanged helpful comments and suggestions.	9	1
4. This exercise was a waste of time.	1	9
5. I felt a sense of accountability to my practice partner.	9	1
6. My partnership met consistently to practice and assist each other.	9	1
7. Practicing with a partner was fun and motivational.	8	10
8. Practicing with a partner was a low-pressure situation.	10	0
9. Together my partner and I made some excellent discoveries.	7	3
10. My partner and I participated and contributed equally.	9	1
11. What is the average time spent weekly practicing with your partner?	Range: 30 min to 1 hour	

Additional Comments:

- I thought it was beneficial for both people.
- It can be difficult t find time to meet.
- It helped with accountability out of class, requiring practice before the night before class.
- Hooray!
- It is very difficult to find the time to get together. So when we plan our weekly time it is usually rushed. However, I personally always practice more myself on the days I meet with my partner. It's also hard to depend on the other person.
- Practice partners were a good way of helping.
- I much prefer to work on my own. Also, we know going in what we need to work on. I feel I'm at a higher skill level due to my experience and I really haven't benefited from partners.
- My responses to the above questions were in response to my partner last quarter, but I am excited this quarter about my partner who I know will challenge me.

Practice Partnerships
Questionnaire Results

Second-Year Class Four

Question	Agree	Disagree
1. I felt the Practice Partnerships were beneficial.	6	2
2. My practice partner challenged me to higher levels.	3	5
3. My partner and I exchanged helpful comments and suggestions.	6	2
4. This exercise was a waste of time.	0	8
5. I felt a sense of accountability to my practice partner.	7	1
6. My partnership met consistently to practice and assist each other.	4	4
7. Practicing with a partner was fun and motivational.	5	3
8. Practicing with a partner was a low-pressure situation.	7	1
9. Together my partner and I made some excellent discoveries.	4	4
10. My partner and I participated and contributed equally.	7	1
11. What is the average time spent weekly practicing with your partner?	Range: 30 min to 1 hour	

Additional Comments:

- It's fun to share what you prepare with a friend. It's sometimes hard to find a time to get together, so that reflected in our grades. But when we did get together we had more to share.
- I like that it gets me to practice, however sometimes it is difficult to line-up our schedules.
- I think the concept is great, but it becomes more difficult to participate when a partner does not show up either to class and/or to practices. Last quarter was great though, and I found it very beneficial.
- The hardest part about practicing with someone else is setting a time. My partner doesn't commit very well. Also, my partner loses focus too easily. Overall, I think it's extremely helpful. It's always easier to learn when you are teaching.
- The only thing I really feel the practice partner helps is with duets and sometimes harmonization.
- I think that it would work better if my partner and I were closer in playing ability. I feel slightly intimidated and like my partner is just waiting for me.
- We were at different levels and worked at different paces. It was pointless to wait while they had to practice.