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USAGE AND DEVELOPMENT OF PIANO METHOD BOOKS IN TAIWAN: INTERVIEWS AND OBSERVATIONS WITH PIANO TEACHERS

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By

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USAGE AND DEVELOPMENT OF PIANO METHOD BOOKS IN TAIWAN: INTERVIEWS AND OBSERVATIONS WITH PIANO TEACHERS

A DISSERTATION
APPROVED FOR THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC

by

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I have always believed that teaching beginners is a great challenge for piano teachers. Despite gaining quite a lot of experience teaching beginners when I was in Taiwan, I always doubted myself and questioned if the way I taught was satisfactory. Why did so many students drop their piano lessons? Why didn't they progress as I expected? I am fortunate to have had this chance to conduct this research which involves early piano education. I cannot say that now I am an expert at teaching beginners, however, I believe that I will have more confidence teaching beginners thanks to the more comprehensive viewpoints gained from this study.

I first would like to thank Dr. Barry and Dr. Magrath. They offered me guidelines, suggestions, and most important of all, endless warm support, which made me feel that I could eventually finish this study. I also would like to thank my English editor, Jennifer Connelly, who put a lot of effort editing my paper. Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. Gates, Dr. Enrico, Dr. Rogers, and Dr. Havlicek. They spent a lot of time reading my paper and making corrections for me. I also need to thank my independent reviewer, Dr. Lee, who spent two weeks reviewing my data. I also need to thank all ten Taiwanese piano teachers for being so willing to share their teaching experience with me and for demonstrating how they teach piano lessons. I also would like to acknowledge my parents and family. They gave me complete support, both financially and mentally, in order to allow me to finish this study. Finally, I need to thank my Taiwanese friends who phoned me frequently with encouragement and who urged me to finish this study.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS..... iv
LIST OF TABLES..... vii
ABSTRACT..... viii

CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTION
General Background of Taiwan..... 2
Education in Taiwan..... 6
Music Education in Taiwan..... 9
Piano Education in Taiwan.....11
Need for the Study..... 20
Purpose of the Study..... 21
Research Questions..... 21
Definition of Terms..... 22
Delimitations.....23
Organization of the Study..... 23

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE
Literature on European Method Books..... 24
Literature on Japanese Method Books..... 31
Literature on American Method Books..... 39
Literature on Using and Choosing Method Books..... 65
Literature on Teacher Interviews and Observations..... 70
Summary..... 73

III. METHODOLOGY
Research Design..... 75
Instrument Development.....76
Participants..... 77
Procedures.....78
Data Analysis..... 80
Trustworthiness.....81
Summary.....82

IV. FINDINGS
Description of the Participants.....84
Comparison of Interviews and Observations.....93
Findings of Interviews
I. Teachers' Opinions of Methods.....111

II. Use and Selection of Methods.....130
III. Problems of Using Foreign Methods..... 139
IV. Development of Taiwanese Methods.....147
Summary.....156

V. DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS
Opinions of Methods.....158
Use and Selection of Methods..... 162
Problems of Using Foreign Methods..... 168
Development of Taiwanese Methods.....172
Additional Aspects.....175
Summary and Conclusion.....176

REFERENCES.....179

APPENDICES
A: Informed Consent Form for Piano Teachers (English)..... 197
B: Informed Consent Form for Piano Teachers (Chinese)..... 199
C: Parent/Legal Guardian Permission Form (English).....201
D: Parent/Legal Guardian Permission Form (Chinese)..... 203
E :Assent Form for Children (English).....205
F :Assent Form for Children (Chinese)..... 207
G :Possible Teacher Interview Questions..... 209
H :Codes.....214

LIST OF TABLES

1.1 Taiwan's GNP per capita from 1950 to 2000.....5
1.2 Hours per each weekday children spend performing various activities.....8
1.3 Basic Content of Elementary Music Class in Taiwan.....9
1.4 Curriculum of the Nan-Men Junior High School in MGP in Taiwan.....13
1.5 Standard Piano Teaching Repertoire in Elementary MGPs.....15
1.6 Piano Methods Translated in Chinese and Published in Taiwan.....19

ABSTRACT

The purposes of this research are: (a) to evaluate the use of elementary-age piano methods in Taiwan and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of different methods from an experienced Taiwanese piano teacher's point of view, especially relating to Taiwan's cultural background and structure of society, and (b) to provide a basis for developing future methods suitable for Taiwanese culture. Four categories of research questions were addressed: 1) What do experienced Taiwanese piano teachers think of the methods from different countries? 2) How do they use these methods? 3) Are there any problems for Taiwanese piano teachers in using the foreign methods? and 4) Is it important to develop Taiwanese methods?

This study employed a qualitative methodological approach. Individual, in-depth interviews with ten expert Taiwanese piano teachers and observations of each expert's teaching of two elementary-age students were conducted to collect data. The non-probability, snowball sampling technique was used to select ten participants. After the interviews were transcribed, copies of the transcripts were sent to the participants to assure them of the study's trustworthiness. Afterwards, the researcher searched for patterns and common themes among participant's responses. After coding the data, the researcher discussed and resolved disagreements with the independent reviewer before addressing the findings.

The findings indicate that Taiwanese teachers believe that European methods are technique-oriented and efficient while American methods, in contrast, are more motivational, interesting, and are thoroughly concerned with the development of musical concepts. Therefore, Taiwanese teachers have a strong tendency towards combining the European method *Beyer* with American methods, along with Japanese

anthologies. However, teachers indicate several problems with using foreign methods, including the English alphabet problem, language translation problems, physical problems, and repertoire selection problems. Teachers in this study had a strong tendency towards thinking that the development of Taiwanese methods is not necessary. However, they offered several suggestions for developing future Taiwanese methods, including adding music appreciation materials, Chinese literature and Chinese musical concepts within the mainstream, and western-based classical music content.

Several results imply that Taiwan's piano education circle has gradually changed from pianistic technique-based lessons to emphasizing the integrity of music learning. Teachers' strong tendency of combining different methods and materials implies that Taiwanese piano teachers feel hesitant and insecure to use either American methods or European methods exclusively. Also, Taiwanese piano teachers are not enthusiastic about developing methods because of the existing abundant materials in Taiwan's small market. This result may imply that expert teachers are more independent regarding the use and selection of methods. It may also imply the common attitude of Taiwan's ignorance of innovation. For future development of methods, Taiwan may need to expand its market to other Chinese speaking countries in order to make the development of those methods more price-worthy.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Western music in Taiwan can be traced back as early as the 17th century, when European missionaries taught Christian hymns as a part of missionary work. However, it was not until the mid-19th century that Taiwan was strongly influenced by Western culture and music. From 1895 to 1945, Taiwan, under Japanese colonization, adopted Westernized Japanese songs and employed them as materials for music classes in schools. During this period of Japanese colonization, the best Taiwanese musicians were chosen to go to Japan for further study in Western music. After Japanese colonization, Western music began to dominate Taiwan's musical environment.

After World War II, Taiwan underwent a dramatic change and faced many challenges. Han (2001) states,

> Like all developing countries, Taiwan faced many challenges immediately after World War II. However, by the 1990s it ranked among the developed countries, with a high per capita income, a well-educated and motivated populace, and worldwide trade and networking contacts. Along with these improvements came inner political conflicts, and identity crisis, and tensions between tradition and modernity, native and foreign, Taiwan and China, etc. (p.9)

The musical culture in Taiwan naturally reflected these changes. Piano instruction and other Western instrumental learning that formerly were considered luxurious, became very common. Meanwhile, because of the awakening of an interest in native culture, many Taiwanese musicologists began to collect Taiwanese folksongs and tried to incorporate them, along with Chinese philosophical and aesthetic concepts, into Western-based literature. Taiwanese musicians and performers today are facing the challenge of capturing and assimilating the Chinese musical culture through Western compositional skills in order to recruit and keep the Taiwanese audience.

Because the piano is a product of Western tradition, and the piano methods used in Taiwan are mostly from Western countries, Taiwanese piano teachers sometimes have problems teaching piano using foreign piano methods within Taiwan's unique culture. To illustrate the differences between the cultures and backgrounds of Taiwan and the US, and to understand why Chinese culture is infused in Taiwan's culture, it is necessary to give a brief background of Taiwan. Therefore, in this introductory chapter, information regarding Taiwan's geography, history, economy, and educational systems is provided in order to help readers see the larger picture of Taiwan's cultural environment before proceeding to a discussion of piano methods used in Taiwan.

General Background of Taiwan

Geography and population. Taiwan was formerly named Formosa and is officially called the Republic of China. It is located off the South East coast of the People's Republic of China, next to the small Taiwan Strait (Storey, 2001). The total dimension of Taiwan is 32,260 sq. km (12,456 sq. miles), which is similar to the size of Maryland. The population of Taiwan is about twenty-three million. With such a small space and quite a large population, Taiwan is one of the most densely populated countries in the world. The population density is 688 per sq. km (1782 per sq. mile). Moreover, two-thirds of the areas in Taiwan are covered by mountains, and three-fourths of the people live in the cities (Heritage, 2002), which makes the living areas in Taiwan seem even more crowded, thereby creating a highly competitive environment for attending universities, seeking jobs, acquiring opportunities, etc.

Brief history. The Portuguese arrived at Taiwan around 1517 and named it Formosa, meaning beautiful island. This was the first contact the Taiwanese had

with Europeans (Storey, 2001). Later, the island was occupied and controlled by several European nations, such as Holland and Spain (around the middle of the 17th century when it contained mostly aboriginal people). In turn, Ming dynasty supporters, with the leader Cheng Cheng-kung, successfully forced the Dutch to relinquish the island. Later, in 1683, the Qing Dynasty took control of Taiwan after Ming supporters lost the civil war. It was not until 1886 that the Qing Dynasty declared Taiwan the 22nd province of China, which caused an increase in immigration (Lo, 2000; Storey, 2001).

In 1894 the Sino-Japanese war caused China to cede Taiwan to Japan after China's loss in the War (Heritage, 2002). Taiwan was not returned to China until 1945, after the end of War World II. In general, during the fifty years of Japanese colonization, in spite of being under a harsh and cruel rule, Taiwan underwent a rapid industrialization process. Japan's colonial administration enabled Taiwan to experience faster economic growth and stability than that of Mainland China during that same period of time (Storey, 2001). Moreover, many schools and educational systems developed during this time. Although the main purpose of establishing schools was for the Japanese Empire to train Taiwanese as modern laborers, the establishment of Japanese schools helped Taiwanese receive better education in general, and allowed Taiwanese to study in Japan (due to Japanese language training). In fact, up to the present day, many of the educational systems in Taiwan, such as the curriculum of music education and usage of piano teaching materials, were more or less influenced by Japan. Taiwan's economic and industrial development, however, was decimated by World War II (Luck, 2000; Storey, 2001).

After War World II, the civil war between the Chinese Communist Party and the Nationalist Kuomintang (KMT) government began. In 1949, because of the

victory of the Chinese Communist Party, the KMT government, led by Chiang Kai-shek, with 100,000 Nationalists fled from the Mainland to Taiwan (Luck, 2000; Storey, 2001; Heritage, 2002). After 1949, the Republic of China became limited to the territory of Taiwan. On the other hand, Mainland China, governed by the Communist party, became the People's Republic of China.

From 1949 to 1986, Chiang Kai-Shek's KMT ruling party controlled the political power of Taiwan by using strict martial law. However, the process of democracy began after Chiang Kai-shek's death (Luck, 2000). Chiang Ching-kuo, Chiang Kai-shek's son and successor, began to pave the way for democracy. Since 1986, free multiparty elections have been held. In March of 1996, Lee Teng-hui won the first democratic presidential election. After Chen Shui-bian of the DPP won the presidential election in March of 2000, the KMT's 50-year political monopoly finally ended (Luck, 2000; Storey, 2001; Heritage, 2002).

In 1971 Mainland China joined the United Nations, which forced Taiwan to lose its seat on the Security Council. One of the reasons for Taiwan's losing the seat was Chiang Kai-shek's insistence that there was only one "real" China in the world - the Republic of China (Taiwan) - and that it was impossible for two Chinas to exist simultaneously in the United Nations. After the US switched diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to Mainland China in 1979, most countries recognized the People's Republic of China as the "real" China. In recent years, many Taiwanese began to prefer that Taiwan declare its independence and be recognized by the UN, but Taiwan has not been able to rejoin the UN because Mainland China rejects Taiwan's sovereignty claims and regards Taiwan as a rebel province (Luck, 2000; Storey, 2001; Heritage, 2002). Due to this complicated historical issue, nowadays many Chinese in Taiwan, especially indigenous Chinese, would rather think of themselves as Taiwanese instead of Chinese. Ironically, although in terms

of politics and the military Taiwan is threatened by Mainland China, economically, the Mainland has replaced the US as Taiwan's largest trading partner.

Economy. Despite the recent economic regression, during the past 50 years Taiwan underwent dynamic economic growth. In the 1950s, Taiwan's economy was based on agriculture. However, in the 1970s, Taiwan begun to develop advanced technologies. Because of political stability, after 1970, the economy in Taiwan changed almost completely from agriculture to industry. This made Taiwan one of the fastest changing countries in the world. For about a decade, along with South Korea, Singapore, and Hong-Kong, Taiwan has been classified as a "newly industrialized economy" (Storey, 2001, p.23), and is one of the so-called "Four Asian Tigers" (Storey, 2001, p.11). Today, modern Taiwan's economy is centered around the Information Technology hardware industry and is the world's leading producer of notebook computers, PCs, computer chips, monitors, LCDs, motherboards, scanners, CD (DVD)-ROM drivers, etc. (Kim, 2001).

Lai (1996) indicates that this dramatic economic change allowed the people of Taiwan to improve their standard of living a great deal. According to one report (Ku, 2001), the GNP (gross national product) per capita was about 50 US dollars in the 1950s, but in the year 2000 increased to about 13,000 dollars (Table 1.1). Lin (2001) indicates that growth in the importance of education followed this economic growth. Huang (1993) also indicates that this successful economic change was one of the main contributors to Taiwan's strong music learning environment.

Table 1.1 Taiwan's GNP per capita from 1950 to 2000

Year	1950	1960	1970	1978	1986	1996	2000
GNP per capita (US dollar)	$50	$130	$292	$1,414	$3,468	$11,597	$13,325

Traditional importance of education. Many Chinese see their children's education as a sign of successful social achievement. In ancient China, dating back to the Tang dynasty, the Imperial Examination System was implemented as a method of choosing candidates to serve in government positions. Candidates were chosen based on high scores on the exams given. This competitive method prevailed for many years. Many Chinese have mottos such as "Gold is in your books" and "Nothing is more important than studying." These mottos were generated to illustrate the value of education and to encourage people to study. Currently, this examination policy still dominates the job selection process in governmental as well as non-governmental circles (Lin, 2001).

Educational system. In Taiwan, nine years of elementary and junior high education are compulsory for everyone; however, students who would like to attend senior high schools, colleges, and universities have to pass the Joint Entrance Exam, which is held in July every year. The score of the exam and the student's wishes decide which school the student will attend and what major the student is going to study. If the score is low, a student might end up re-taking the exam the following year. Because admission to a high school or university is determined by the "life-or-death" exams, a lot of "cram schools," called *Busi Ban* (schools that provide preparation for the Joint Entrance Exam), are prevalent in Taiwan (Robert, 1984-5; Storey, 2001). According to a recent survey (Wang, 2002), 80% of senior high and 92% of junior high students join either public or private "cram schools" during summer breaks.

Curriculum. A Chinese philosophy states that in order to be a well-rounded and healthy person, a student needs to be good and balanced in five areas: virtue, intelligence, physical wellness, sociability, and sense of beauty. This teaching

philosophy strongly dominates the design of the curriculum, from elementary schools to high schools. To achieve this goal of being well-rounded in all five areas, students are required to take a variety of subjects. These subjects include academic subjects (Chinese, English, Taiwanese, Math, geography, history, physics, chemistry, biology, computer) and non-academic subjects (virtue education, citizen education, physical education, arts and crafts, Chinese calligraphy, and music).

Educational problems. Although the design of curriculum is based on a well-rounded teaching philosophy, the reality of teaching is quite contradictory to this curriculum because of the dominance of the exam system in Taiwan. The Joint Entrance Exam, the key to entering senior high schools and universities, includes only academic subjects. Therefore, the teaching in schools, especially in junior and senior high, is completely exam-oriented, and the non-academic subjects, such as music and art, are often ignored. In some schools, these "unimportant" classes might be "borrowed" by a math teacher for giving students extra math classes or tests. Ironically, the curriculum design for teaching how to be a well-rounded person is modified.

Under this exam-oriented system, not only are many of the non-academic subjects poorly taught, but students are also under strong pressure. Many educators worry that this heavy academic load may cause problems with the physical and mental health of the students. Also, students may not have time to pursue artistic skills beyond the academic circle. Stevenson and Stigler (1992) indicate that average Taiwanese children spend much more time on school work than average American children, and spend much less time on entertainment (Table 1.2). This recent survey (Wang, 2002) also shows that up to 70% of junior and senior high students feel that they are under strong pressure due to heavy schoolwork.

Table 1.2 Hours per weekday children spend performing various activities

Activity	Taipei	Minneapolis
In School/Homework	10.2	6.8
Reading	0.7	0.6
Playing	0.6	2.4
Watching Television	1.2	1.8

This heavy load of study is probably one of the most important reasons for Taiwanese students having excellent performance in academic work. Murphy (1997) indicates that statistics show that students from Taiwan, along with South Korea and Japan, demonstrate the highest performance in math and science worldwide. However, the truth behind this performance is that Taiwanese students do a lot of memorizing and repetition work and are given many simulative tests in school, which usually generate little creative and critical thinking. Murphy (1997) further claims that Taiwanese students up to about the age of 15 have a relative advantage over students in Western countries; yet, after this advantage diminishes, in the long run, there is no advantage at all. He explains further that if we consider the value of education as an opportunity for developing creative thinking, for learning how to learn, for questioning what we learn, and for being equipped to meet the changes of a wider society, the advantage of Taiwanese education is comparably low (Murphy, 1997).

Piano instruction in Taiwan reflects this educational problem. Taiwanese students under 18 have won many piano competitions for teenagers; however, it is rare that Taiwanese win world-class competitions. This is because, through intensive practicing, young Taiwanese pianists have great advantages over western students, yet, the Taiwanese training system does not provide enough support for

developing personal style or seeing insight into composers' works. These essential aspects of a true musician are usually ignored. Although technique is essential for great performance, it should only be thought of as the servant of making music. Performers who play without expression and a theory-based logical understanding of compositions will only be considered technicians.

Music Education in Taiwan

In Taiwan, two hours of general music classes per week are required for every student from elementary to senior high. The Ministry of Education has published the content of course requirements, teaching goals, and student achievement standards on which music curriculum and music textbooks are based. Since the music class, especially at the elementary level, serves as a strong background for elementary-age piano learners, it is useful to understand the content of the elementary music class. According to the teaching guide issued by the Ministry of Education, three areas—music fundamental training, musical performance, and music appreciation—should be equally addressed and taught. Table 1.3 illustrates the basic content of elementary music classes in Taiwan (Shiu, 1989).

Table 1.3 Basic Content of Elementary Music Class in Taiwan

I. Fundamental Music Training	
(A) Vocalization and Diction	Training of head voice, proper use of diaphragm, and correct mouth shape to articulate Chinese vowels
(B) Aural training	1. Sight singing exercises 2. Play and sing back the melody, and rhythm 3. Identify simple melody, rhythm, and chords
(C) Notation Reading	1. Introduces treble clef with 2 notes: E and A. Then adds G, C, and D. Finally adds F and B 2. Use of solfège singing system combined with Kodaly hand gestures

	3. Use Kodaly's syllabic counting system
(D) Conducting	Basic 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, and 6/8 meter conducting
II. Musical Performance	
(A) Vocal	1. First and Second grades: Sing in Unison 2. Third grade: add canon 3. Fourth and Fifth grades: add two-voice choir 4. Sixth grade: add three-voice choir
(B) Instrumental	1. First & Second grades: Simple rhythmic instruments, such as triangle and tambourine 2. Third to Sixth grades: recorder (requirement), other Orff instruments, Orff instrumental ensemble, keyboard instruments
(C) Compositional	1. Simple improvisation by claping, singing, and playing recorder 2. Simple composition based on fixed rhythm, lyrics, and chords
III. Music Appreciation	
(A) Vocal	1. Various voice types—children's voice, soprano, alto, tenor, and bass 2. Various performance genres—solo, vocal ensemble, and choir 3. Various vocal genres—folk songs, art songs, secular songs, opera, Chinese opera
(B) Instrumental	1. Various instruments—string, woodwind, brass, keyboard, percussion, Chinese instruments 2. Various performance genres—solo, chamber music, orchestral music, Chinese music ensemble 3. Various musical forms and styles
(C) Historical	1. Biographies of composers 2. Background of famous pieces 4. Evolutions of instruments

Despite the de-emphasis on music education in high schools due to the pressure of the Joint Entrance Exams, music education in elementary schools is quite healthy and normal. It is rare to hear of a music class being "borrowed" for other purposes. Also, a lot of musical activities are prevalent in elementary schools, such as children's choir competitions, children's orchestral competitions, wind

ensemble competitions, mother-tongue singing competitions, etc. Thus, when elementary children begin taking piano lessons, they have already had some basic musical experience, such as notation reading and rhythmic counting. This fact is considered by some Taiwanese piano teachers in choosing methods and the way they use them.

Piano Education in Taiwan

Active piano learning environment. As a result of economic success and an emphasis on education, the importance of various extra-curricular activities permeates Taiwanese society in a phenomenon known as the *Busi Culture* (Lin, 2001). This *Busi Culture* usually heavily stresses academic-oriented studies in junior and senior high school. However, for elementary school students, because they are not under much pressure from the Joint Entrance Exams, extra-curricular studies highlight both academic and non-academic subjects. As indicated in Huang's study (1993), these extra-curricular activities not only include academic subjects, such as math, science, and language, but also include computers, art, and music. Among these various non-academic extra-curricular activities, piano learning has become one of the most popular after-school activities among children in Taiwan.

Many children in Taiwan begin their music training in Yamaha, Kawai, Orff, Suzuki, Kodaly, or other similar kinds of music-training programs (Li, 2001). They usually take private piano lessons either simultaneously with pre-school music training programs or one year afterwards. Some students do not go to these pre-school music training programs; however, many kindergartens in Taiwan offer basic art programs, such as drawing, instrumental playing, etc. Therefore, it is very common for many children who do not enter pre-school music training programs

or take private piano lessons at home to still be able to take some piano lessons. However, piano teachers in the kindergartens usually do not have professional training or degrees, so the quality of these music programs is questionable.

Music Gifted Programs (MGPs) and piano instruction in MGPs. Li (2001) indicates that children who take piano lessons and show talent are encouraged to enter Music Gifted Programs. Established in the 1960s by the Ministry of Education, Music Gifted Programs were designed to develop and nurture outstanding performers, so the requirements were extremely high and admission was very selective. However, due to the needs of an enormous music population, many schools have established Music Gifted Programs in the past two decades, so the recruitment of students is not as selective as it once was. In actuality, the quality of students in these programs varies significantly. However, students in MGPs receive better musical training than those who only take private piano lessons at home because in MGPs, the curriculum incorporates instrumental training with other musicianship classes, such as theory, music appreciation, and ear training. (Table 1.4). Also, students are stimulated by the musical environment, so their progress is usually much faster than students who do not attend MGPs.

There are three levels of the Music Gifted Programs: elementary, junior high, and senior high. Students who graduate from elementary MGPs need to pass the music exam in order to study in the junior high MGPs (Lim, 1995). The music exam varies by school but usually includes five areas: major instrument, minor instrument, sight-singing, aural dictation, and music theory. MGPs are subordinate to regular schools, and the students who join MGPs need to take almost the same academic subjects as general students in addition to music classes. Only very few non-academic classes can be omitted. Therefore, the pressure on MGP students is usually much higher than that on regular students. Table 1.4 illustrates the

curriculum of the Nan-Men school Music Gifted Program (Lim, 1995).

Table 1.4 Curriculum of the Nan-Men Junior High School in MGP in Taiwan

Academic Courses	7th Grade	8th Grade	9th Grade
Chinese	6	6	6
English	3	4	5
Mathematics	4	4	5
Biology	3	0	0
Health Science	2	0	0
Physics & Chemistry	0	4	4
Earth Science	0	0	2
History	2	2	1
Geography	2	2	1
Civics	1	1	1
Advisory Activities	1	1	0
Physical Education	2	2	1
Total	26	26	26

Music Courses	7th Grade	8th Grade	9th Grade
Applied Major	1	1	1
Applied Minor	0.5	0.5	0.5
Sight-Singing & Ear training	2	2	2
Theory & Music Appreciation	2	0	0
Harmony	0	2	0
Form & Analysis	0	0	2
Choir	2	2	2
Orchestra	2	2	2
Chinese instrument & Ensemble	2	2	2
Total	11.5	11.5	11.5

Piano training is strongly emphasized in MGPs. One-on-one private piano lessons are required for every student in a Music Gifted Program. If the student's major instrument is not piano, his or her minor must be piano. Most students take both major and minor instruments seriously because the music exam for entering an MGP or university music programs always includes two instruments. In

actuality, most MGP students consider their minor instrument as a second major instrument, especially for those whose minor instrument is piano.

The environment in an MGP is extremely competitive. Yang (2002), a piano teacher in an elementary MGP, explained that a piano test is given at the end of each semester, and a report of the grades (100 score system) and rankings, along with the names of students and teachers, is displayed on a bulletin board. To avoid embarrassing themselves and in order to prove competence, it is very common for parents to hire another private piano teacher to give their child extra piano lessons, making certain the way their children play will receive a good grade in piano tests. After reviewing the jury report, if a student's ranking is not satisfactory, quite often their parents will change their piano teacher to one whose students ranked higher on the test. This highly competitive environment is mainly due to the fact that parents and students want to keep doing well in order to get into top music programs in universities, and to eventually become good performers.

Despite the fact that there is only one assigned piece required of all students to play before jury, most Music Gifted Programs are quite flexible for piano teachers in that they have the freedom to choose the repertoire for their students. Kao (1989), however, indicated that there is a standard body of repertoire that most piano teachers in MGPs follow. Table 1.5 shows the standard repertoire in elementary MGPs. From this selection of teaching repertoire, we find that in the same level, the difficulty of contemporary pieces is less than the pieces from the 18th and 19th centuries. This is because initially many teachers ignore contemporary pieces, so that students have little experience of 20th century idioms. When students enter MGPs, piano teachers have to build students' contemporary sense by assigning easier pieces. Piano educators' reluctance to teach contemporary pieces is one of the more common problems of piano instruction in Taiwan.

In general, in order to make students move to a higher level of playing in a shorter span of time, a great emphasis on technique and teaching by using the traditional imitation-based directional style seems to dominate the entire piano instruction circle. As illustrated in Table 1.5 (Kao, 1989), it seems that a great emphasis on practicing etudes is the major concern of Taiwanese piano instruction. Although this mechanical training has its value, acquiring a profound understanding of great composers' works cannot be achieved through drilling a large number of inartistic etudes. Piano instructions in MGPs might not represent general piano education in Taiwan; however, their standard of piano instruction more or less influences private piano teachers' repertoire selection and style of teaching piano. In fact, due to this technique-oriented approach, when selecting methods for students, teachers in Taiwan need to choose the methods that can develop students' techniques very quickly. However, according to Tzeng's study (1994), the focus on technique in piano lessons has gradually changed due to the fact that during the 1970s and 80s, a new generation of European-trained Taiwanese pianists helped Taiwanese students develop a better understanding of Western musical style.

Table 1.5 Standard Piano Teaching Repertoire in Elementary MGPs.

Level One	
Etudes	Hanon Schmitt op.16 Czerny: op.599; op.139; op.261 Couppey: L'ABC op.17; L'Agilite op.20 Loeschhorn op.65 Little Pischna
Baroque	Bach-Caroll: First Lessons in Bach Bach: 18 Little Preludes Baroque Album I
Classical	Sonatinas: Clementi op.36; Kuhlau op.20; op.55; Dussek op.20; Beethoven, Haydn, Mozart's Sonatinas

	Hassler: 50 Pieces for Beginners op.38
Romantic	Schumann: Album for the Young op.68 Tchaikovsky: Album for the Young op.39
20th Century	Kabalevsky: 24 Children Pieces op.39; Children's Adventure op.89 Bartok: Mikrokosmos Vol.I,II

Level Two

Etudes	Hanon Czerny: op.849; op.636; op.718; op.748 Loeschhorn op.66 Little Pischna Bertini: op.100; op.29
Baroque	Bach: Two-Part Inventions; Little Preludes & Fugues Baroque Album I
Classical	Sonatinas: Clementi op.38; Kuhlau op.88; op.60 Sonatas: Beethoven op.49; Easier Haydn and Mozart's Sonatas
Romantic	Schumann: Album for the Young op.68 Tchaikovsky: Album for the Young op.39 Mendelssohn: Six Children's Pieces op.72
20th Century	Kabalevsky: Children's Pieces op.27; Five Sets of Variations op.51 Kelemen: The Donkey Walks along the Beach Bartok: Mikrokosmos Vol.II, III

Level Three

Etudes	Hanon Czerny: op.636; op.299 Loeschhorn op.67 Little Pischna Heller: Studies op.45
Baroque	Bach: Two-Part Inventions; Little Preludes & Fugues Baroque Album II
Classical	Haydn: Sonatas Hob. XVI: 14, 27, 35 Mozart: Sonatas K.330, 311, 280 Beethoven: Sonata op.79
Romantic	Schubert: Moments Musicaux op.94 Chopin: Easier Mazurkas, Waltzs Mendelssohn: Songs without Words
20th Century	Kabalevsky: Children's Pieces op.27 Gretchaninoff: op.115 Bartok: 10 Easy Pieces

Level Four

Etudes	Hanon Czerny: op.299; op.636

	Heller: op.45 Moszkowski op.91 Philipp: La Technique de Liszt
Baroque	Bach: Two-Part Inventions; Three-Part Inventions; French Suites Scarlatti: Sonatas
Classical	Haydn: Sonata Hob. XVI:34 Mozart: Sonata K.570 Beethoven: Sonata op.2-1
Romantic	Schubert: Moment Musicaux op.94 Chopin: Waltzs Mendelssohn: Songs without Words Grieg: Lyric Pieces
20th Century	Rubinstein: Sonatina in C# minor Debussy: Children's Corner Bartok: Mikrokosmos Vol.IV

Level Five

Etudes	Hanon Czerny: op.299 Bertini: op.32 Moszkowski op.91 Philipp: La Technique de Liszt Cramer-Bülow: 50 Selected Studies Pischna: 60 Progressive Exercises
Baroque	Bach: Three-Part Inventions; French Suites Scarlatti: Sonatas
Classical	Haydn: Sonata Hob. XVI:23, 28 Mozart: Sonata K.309, 332; Rondo K.485; Fantasy K.397 Beethoven: Sonatas op.14; Bagatelles; Rondos op.51
Romantic	Schubert: Impromptus op.90 Chopin: Mazurkas Mendelssohn: Songs without Words
20th Century	Kabalevsky: Sonatinas op.13 Debussy: Arabesque; Reverie Bartok: Sonatina; Romanian Folk Dance Ibert: Histories

The usage of elementary-age piano methods in Taiwan. For decades, many advanced Taiwanese pianists have trained in Japan, the United States, and Europe, from which the Taiwanese gained their pedagogical influence; therefore, Taiwan was exposed to a diverse pedagogical background. As a result, many method books have been translated into Chinese and used in Taiwan. Generally, all foreign

methods can be categorized into three categories: American, European, and Japanese methods. Among these three categories, American methods may have the most variety.

The higher educational degree system in Taiwan basically follows the American system, and because employment and careers are highly degree-oriented in Taiwan, many Taiwanese students go to the United States to study and pursue their degrees. As indicated in Li's (2001) study, many Taiwanese want to have a higher degree because it may result in finding a better job and earning a good living. After 1950, due to the gradual increase of a musically educated population in Taiwan, many Taiwanese went to the United States to study music—one of the main reasons why American piano methods were brought to and became prevalent in Taiwan. Among these American methods, *John Schaum*, *John Thompson*, *David Carr Glover*, *Bastien*, etc. had a significant influence on Taiwan's piano pedagogy. During the first half of the 20th century, *Beyer*, the century-old German method, was introduced from Japan and was the only piano method on the market. However, many Taiwanese piano educators began to evaluate and criticize the traditional *Beyer* method and to compare it to American methods. The introduction of various American methods gave piano teachers more choice of methods for children, thus generating different pedagogical viewpoints.

Many Taiwanese, Japanese, and Korean educators have revised the *Beyer* method due to its age and many criticisms. Today, there are more than 10 revised *Beyer* editions in Taiwan's market. These revised versions vary from one another. Basically, they enlarge the notes so that one small volume of original *Beyer* becomes a multi-volume method. Some other revisions include re-arranging the order of the pieces, adding pre-reading materials, using color pictures, providing titles for each piece, adding 20th century repertoire, and adding MIDI and CD disks

of accompaniment. This abundant variety of revised *Beyer* editions is one of the reasons why *Beyer* still retains its popularity, even though many modern methods have been introduced to Taiwan.

Yamaha Music Learning Centers have also been popular in Taiwan. Although they have published method books for elementary children, according to the manager of the Yamaha organization in Taiwan, the Yamaha piano teachers in Taiwan seldom use their methods to teach one-on-one private elementary children. The frequently used Yamaha methods in Taiwan are limited to pre-school. Several foreign methods without Chinese translation, especially American methods, such as the *Faber and Faber*, *Music Tree*, and *Pace* methods, are available in limited stores. These methods were introduced into Taiwan several years ago. So far there are no Chinese translations of these methods and, thus, they are not very popular, because English is rarely spoken in Taiwan. Table 1.6 identified which foreign elementary-age methods are translated into Chinese and published in Taiwan (Soidea bookstore, n.d.).

Table 1.6 Piano Methods Translated in Chinese and Published in Taiwan

American Method Books	Volumes & Levels
Modern Course for the Piano by John Thompson	Primer, Grade 1~5
Piano Course by John W. Schaum	Primer, Grade A~H
Peanuts Piano Course by June Edison	Level 1~6
Piano Library by David Carr Glover	Primer Level ~ Level 6
The Bastien Piano Library by James Bastien	Primer Level ~ Level 4
Bastien Piano Basics by James Bastien	Primer Level ~ Level 4
Alfred's Basic Piano Library by Palmer, Manus, & Lethco	Level 1 (A,B) ~ Level 6
Hal Leonard Student Piano Library by Kreader, Kern, Keveren, & Rejino	Level 1 ~ Level 4
Beanstalk's Basics for Piano by Finn and Morris	Level A,B, 1~4
European Method Books	
Vorschule Im Klavierspiel, Op.101 by Ferdinand Beyer	Originally One volume
Die Klavier Fibel, Op.59 by Willy Schnaider	One Volume
Erstes klavierspiel Ein Lehrgang by Fritz Emonts	Band 1~2
Europäische Klavierschule by Fritz Emonts	Band 1~5
Das Spiel zu zweit by Peter Heilbut	Band 1~4
Methode Rose by Ernest Van de Velde	One volume

Japanese Method Books	
The first piano book for children by JingKou JiCheng(井口 基成)	One volume
Do Re Mi by ShihWan YuLi (石丸 由理)	Lesson: Level A~E Theory: Level 0~6
Piano Land by ShuYuan LiangTzu (樹原 涼子)	Level 1~5
Malaysian Method Book	
Made easy series by Lina Ng	Level 1~3

Need for the Study

According to Max Kaplan's (1997) Comprehensive Model for Arts in Society, when discussing a topic, we need to be concerned both with the concept itself and the need to consider other factors of our society and environment. It is a common mistake to discuss an issue or execute a plan without considering other factors that exist in a particular society. Many successful teaching approaches may not receive the same results after being transplanted to another society. From this point of view, we may assume that a "perfect" method for one particular society might not be the best fit for another. Almost all of the piano methods used in Taiwan are from foreign countries, a factor which may generate problems because of cultural differences such as educational systems, parental expectations, differences in the economy, societal value systems, the value of music, teachers' training and quality, etc. It is important to know of problems or difficulties that Taiwanese piano teachers may encounter when choosing and using these foreign methods and to know how Taiwanese piano teachers gather and gain experiences from these diverse foreign methods.

Purpose of the Study

The researcher is interested in investigating the advantages and disadvantages of the diverse piano methods used in Taiwan through interviewing and observing Taiwanese piano teachers. The main purposes of this study are: (a) to evaluate the use of elementary-age piano methods in Taiwan and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of different methods from an experienced Taiwanese piano teacher's point of view, especially relating to Taiwan's cultural background and structure of society, and (b) to provide a basis for developing methods suitable for Taiwanese culture in the future.

Research Questions

1. What do experienced Taiwanese piano teachers think of the methods from different countries?
2. How do experienced Taiwanese piano teachers use and select these methods?
3. Could there be any problems in terms of cultural differences for Taiwanese teachers using foreign elementary-age piano methods? If so, what are these problems? Do Taiwanese teachers devise and implement ways to compensate for these problems?
4. Is it important for Taiwan to develop its own methods? If so, how will these methods compare with methods from other countries? What do we need to change or add based on methods from other countries and the needs of Taiwanese culture?

Definition of Terms

To assist the reader in understanding some common terms used throughout this study, the following definitions are presented:

Piano methods	Published and/or recorded materials designed to introduce music and specific piano playing techniques to beginning students (Brubaker, 1996).
Expert	In this study, an expert needs to meet four criteria: (a) must be aTaiwanese piano teacher who understands Taiwanese culture, (b) must possess at least a masters degree in piano pedagogy, piano performance, or music education with an emphasis in piano pedagogy, (c) must have at least five years piano teaching experience at the elementary level, and (d) be at least 30 years old.
Middle-C reading approach	A reading approach in which the student is immediately presented with the grand staff and the pitches A-B-C-D-E with the thumbs of each hand sharing middle C. Notes beyond these are added one at a time until a nine-note span is reached. The student then briefly experiences pieces based on a G-major tetrachord scale (Schubert, 1992).
Multi-key reading approach	At an early stage of piano instruction, the 12 major five-finger positions are learned by dividing the keys into groups according to those that are related by both sight and touch (Bastien, 1995). Details will be explained on page 39.
Intervallic reading approach	A reading approach that uses a landmark to locate and find the interval relationship between notes, which allows students to experience the entire keyboard and a better understanding of music (Schubert, 1992). Details will be explained on page 40.

Delimitations

1. This study was limited to a small number of expert Taiwanese piano teachers since the researcher was interested in gaining insights from the expertise of these educators. Therefore, opinions from average Taiwanese piano teachers were not included in this study.
2. This study was conducted in a short period of time (two months).
3. In this study, only one interview and two teaching observations for each teacher were conducted.

Organization of the Study

This study consists of five chapters, a bibliography, and appendices.

Chapter I presents an introduction which includes the background of Taiwan, education/music education/piano education in Taiwan, the purpose and need for the study, definition of terms, and organization of the study.

Chapter II contains a literature review of European, Japanese, and American piano methods, literature on using and choosing piano methods, and literature on teacher interviews and observations.

Chapter III presents the methodology and procedures which were used to collect data for the study. Trustworthiness and data analysis also are addressed in this chapter.

Chapter IV reports participants' backgrounds and the findings of the study.

Chapter V contains the discussion and implications of the study along with suggestions for further study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

European, Japanese, and American methods are the main sources from which Taiwanese piano teachers choose for the elementary-age students. In Taiwan, American methods have the most diversity and seem to challenge the centuries-old European method, *Beyer*, that has retained its popularity in Taiwan until now. Some Japanese methods, by creating their own philosophy of music pedagogy and adapting somewhat Western aspects of creating method books, began to emerge in Taiwan in the second half of the 20th century. In this chapter, the researcher reviews literature regarding educators' comments on European, Japanese, and American methods, as well as literature on using and choosing piano methods. Research literature on teacher interviews and observations are also addressed.

Literature on European Method Books

Contradictory Opinions

Strong emphasis on technique and the selection of serious classical repertoire seem to be characteristics of typical European methods. Schubert (1992) indicates, "European methods emphasize the 'classical' piano repertoire and the development of a strong technique through etudes and drills. The ultimate goal is the quick advancement of a beginning student to the intermediate level" (p.123). Lyke (1996) also claims that, unlike American methods based on psychological breakthroughs, European methods seem to emphasize only mechanical finger training. Schubert (1992) further explains that European methods may work well only for serious students, due to the lack of illustrations, color, written theory, creative activities, and supplementary repertoire.

Some educators claim that in order to judge a method fairly, the tradition of

European piano instruction should be taken into consideration despite the overly mechanical finger training. JungTian (1982) indicated that in many European countries, method books are regarded as teaching guides. Teachers create their own plan and strategy for each individual's needs, rather than follow method books page by page. Methods of teaching harmony, aural skills, and other music concepts are created by the teacher. Lin (1980) indicates that many German piano teachers do not use method books at all. They select pieces from various anthologies and even compose their own exercises for individual students' needs. NeiTian (1982b) also indicates that although some methods are popular in France, French teachers usually do not like to select the same methods for all students and do not like to strictly follow the order of the methods and teach page by page.

Beyer Method

Shao (1984), and Tzeng (1994) indicate that many methods from other countries were introduced to Taiwan via Japan soon after World War II. Among those methods, the German piano method by Ferdinand Beyer was indirectly introduced to Taiwan and had a strong influence on Taiwan's piano instruction. *Beyer* still remains the best selling method among the many piano teaching methods in the Far East, Asia-Pacific countries: Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan (ChangGang, 1982a; Chung, 1992; Shao, 1984).

What we refer to as "*Beyer*" was originally called *Vorschule Im Klavierspiel (Preparatory school in the piano playing), Op.101*. Written in 1850, many piano pedagogues consider this method outdated and do not regard it as a useful method for the modern-day student. Controversial discussions about *Beyer*'s method can be found in many books. On the other hand, some piano teachers still regard *Beyer* as an effective exercise book. Shao (1984) indicates that *Beyer* is a well-organized method, though it has several drawbacks, such as a lack in contrapuntal materials,

difficulty for beginners, etc. However, he thought *Beyer*'s method was comprised of excellent functional pieces that introduced important pianistic techniques in a well-organized, well-paced format. Since *Beyer* is very similar to Czerny, Shao (1999) also pointed to the contradiction that many teachers think that *Beyer* is no longer a suitable method for students, yet they advocate Czerny's etudes. Wei (1997) indicates that compared with some American methods, such as *John Thompson*, *Beyer* was designed more carefully. For example, young children usually have trouble playing triads with fingers 1,3, and 5. In John Thompson's modern piano method, triads appear early on in the book. In contrast, *Beyer* develops students' fingers with a combination of 1&3, 2&4, 3&5, and 1&5 in their early stage, and triads do not appear until the 84th exercise. This shows that *Beyer* developed this method with scrupulous attention.

Conversely, other pedagogues point out the drawbacks of the *Beyer* method. Agay (1981) indicates that Beyer was concerned with developing the fingers and rhythmic sense through playing ensemble music and that the *Beyer* method is only suitable for highly disciplined students because it contains numerous tedious exercises. Magrath (1995) also indicates that *Beyer* contains many academic and unattractive exercises, and features pieces in only one style. In his study, Chung (1992) indicates that there were many weaknesses in *Beyer*, including a lack of teaching philosophy, systematic process of organization, sequencing of methods, instructional approaches, and reinforcement. Shao (1984) claims that using *Beyer* to teach students to learn music from the classical period is reasonable because *Beyer* composed during the early 19th century; however, piano instruction is different now. In addition, Shao (1984) explains that to teach students today, piano teachers cannot use *Beyer* exclusively because of the material's lack of contemporary sense. TienTsuen (1982) also claims that the repertoire in *Beyer* only

includes Classical to early Romantic periods; therefore, it is impossible to teach music using *Beyer* exclusively because modern music is full of diversity.

Die Klavier Fibel (The First Piano Book), op.59 by Willy Schnaider

In 1906, Alexander Burkard wrote a piano method in which the first lesson starts by playing middle C with two thumbs and gradually expands the range by playing with other fingers (JungTian, 1982). This approach is termed the so-called middle-C approach. After World War II, this approach dominated most of the European methods. Among method books that used the middle-C approach, *Die Klavier Fibel, op.59* by Willy Schnaider and *Erstes Klavierspiel ein Lehrgang* (*First Piano Playing—a Training Course*) by Fritz Emonts became the standard methods used in Germany (JungTian, 1982).

Schnaider (1959) explains that the purpose of his method, *Die Klavier Fibel, op.59*, is to teach students basic finger techniques as well as to develop their sense of various musical styles. The selection of repertoire ranged from renaissance to contemporary. This method can be regarded as representative of the finger school. Schnaider (1959) believes that basic technique depends largely on finger strength, and he wrote numerous finger drills for daily use which, as he explaines, should be taught as soon as possible and should be practiced every day. This is one of the examples of how German teachers emphasize teaching finger strength.

Some educators claim that in order to use this method successfully, teachers should use it with great care. Lin (1980) indicates that when using this method, despite its excellent repertoire selection, teachers should posses a high standard of musicianship because the music theory and other functional skills are left entirely up to the teachers. JungTian (1982) indicates that contrapuntal materials dominate this method, making it too difficult for beginners to play, making it necessary for teachers to select homophonic supplementary materials.

Das Innere Hören (Internal Hearing) by Beata Ziegler

Das innere Hören—als Grundlage einer natürlichen Klavier-Technik (Internal Hearing—as in as a Foundation of a Natural Piano Technique), was first published in 1928. Ziegler continued to revise it, and in 1954 it became a four-volume method. The following year the publisher released an instruction book for teachers *Gedanken zum inneren Hören (Thoughts on Internal Hearing)* to accompany this method (ChangGang, 1982b). The most valuable aspect of this method may be its great emphasis on developing students' inner ears. Ziegler claims that teachers should not rush to teach students notation reading and pianistic techniques. Instead, to teach piano successfully, the most important thing is to develop students' sensitive awareness of the sound—first, to develop correct and vivid images (Klangvorstellung) in students' minds; second, to develop the ability to translate these images on the keyboard; and then to develop the ability to adjust the way the students produce the sound while performing in different places. Ziegler further claims that ninety percent of lesson time should be used to develop the ear (ChangGang, 1982b).

To develop a sensitive ear, in the beginning lessons teachers should ask students to pay great attention to how to touch the keys and how different touches affect the production of sound. Ziegler said that producing a good tone requires relaxed arms and body, but also fingertips full of energy. A good tone should have "Kern" (focused energy) and will be able to project and infuse the entire space. She states in the instruction book for teachers that when students touch a key, they should feel as if they are throwing a small stone into a still lake. The stone will sink to the bottom of the lake, but the waves will diffuse throughout the entire lake (ChangGang, 1982b).

The idea of producing artistic sound should be taught from the first lessons.

ChangGang (1982b) indicates that, in the first lesson of Ziegler's method, the teacher and student take turns playing one note with alternate fingerings. Students need to imitate exactly the sound the teacher produces, not by looking at the teacher's hand, but by listening carefully to the sound. ChangGang (1982b) indicates that this is an old method and that the presentation of musical concepts and the selection of repertoire are old-fashioned. However, the idea of developing a sensitive ear and touch in order to produce artistic sound at the outset of piano instruction is important for piano teachers.

Erstes Klavierspiel— ein Lehrgang (First Piano Playing—a Training Course) by Fritz Emonts

In the preface of this method, Emonts (n.d.) explains that the student's initial piano lessons have a major determining influence for the entire span of piano education. Thus, the purpose of this method is to establish successfully the students' basic foundation of musicianship and technique. Lin (1980) indicates that, overall, this method demonstrates the German technique-oriented tradition, emphasizing finger independence, various touches between hands, producing artistic tone, phrasing and articulation, etc. To reach the goal of good technique, Emonts provided abundant finger exercises and contrapuntal materials. Like Ziegler, Emonts's method pays a great deal of attention to developing students' ears. Emonts (1995) claims that the most common problem of piano education is teaching students to read notes too early. He explains this further, stating,

> The most natural way of creating and nurturing the relationship of a child with an instrument is to stimulate and encourage the child to find on the keyboard, and to play by ear, all the tunes he or she has so far assimilated... The natural progression, from singing and listening to playing, forms the foundation for the development of listening ability and musicality...the young player should already have a feeling of contact with the keyboard before piano playing is combined with the complicated process of reading music. (Preface)

Emonts revised his original method and enlarged it to a five-volume method book, entitled *Europäische Klavierschule (The European Piano Method)*, by adding many supplementary materials, such as play-by-ear, theory activity, piano duet, improvisation, and world music. He probably was aware of the trends in world music, as evidenced by the preface in which he states, "music is the language which all people understand. In view of the growing together of the European Community, I think it is important that our children become acquainted with the culture of other countries through their musical education" (Preface). *Emonts* omitted many finger-independence exercises in the new edition. As he states in the preface (1995), "training the functions of the motorial system does not only start within the narrow stretch of the fingers but within the larger playing apparatus of the arms and the whole body. In this way cramps can be avoided" (Preface).

Methode Rose by Ernest Van de Velde

This French method was introduced to Japan in 1951, and in 1963 was translated into Chinese and published in Taiwan (AnChuan & JinTza, 1982). Many educators consider this method useful in preparation for playing French music. AnChuan and JinTza (1982) indicate that the *Methode Rose* emphasizes how to capture the beauty of French music by using a delicate and elegant touch. NeiTian (1982b) also indicates that one of the distinguishing characteristics of French piano music is the great variety of tone colors created by various touches, and this method helps children to explore and develop a variety of touches. Lazare Levy, a French pianist who taught in a Paris conservatory, compliments this method as one of the most successful in development of an elegant singing tone and melodic expression in French music (Dai, 1963). AnChuan and JinTza (1982) also indicate that this method contains many beautiful French folk tunes that children would enjoy playing on the piano.

Reading begins with the five-finger C position; the right hand is placed one octave higher than middle C and the left hand is one octave lower than middle C. Note reading begins by playing the interval of the 2nd and gradually adding the 3rd, 4th, and 5th intervals using different combinations of fingers. AnChuan and JinTza (1982) indicate that different from the middle-C approach, this position is more physically comfortable for beginners. AnChuan and JinTza (1982) further claim that the greatest value of the *Methode Rose* is that it teaches music by using the imagination, not by explanation of expression markings. They indicate that this method provides a short description and story for each piece in order to generate children's imagination and to guide them to choose the right speed, touch, and character for each piece. AnChuan and JinTza (1982) further explain that children are different from adults, and that imagination and imitation are the keys to developing the musical intuition of a child. The complicated theory and detailed expression markings that may be beneficial for adults can ruin the development of children's natural musicality.

Literature on Japanese Method Books

The Development of Japanese Method

In Japan, before World War II, the method book *Vorschule Im Klavierspiel (Preparatory School in the Piano Playing)*, Op.101 by Beyer, or the *Beyer* method, was used exclusively. Soon after World War II, *Methode Rose* by Ernest Van de Velde was introduced in Japan. These two methods, representing two countries that are giants in the classical music tradition—Germany and France, dominated almost the entire Japanese pedagogical field of piano during the first half of the twentieth century (DaDau, 1982a). In 1948, a music association called "*Children's Music Classroom*" was established and organized by a group of musicians who devoted

themselves to children's music education and piano teaching. One of the main goals of the association was to evaluate the *Beyer* method that they had been using for half a century. They thought that since *Beyer* was published in mid-19th century Germany, there were some problems for Japanese students in understanding the instructions and learning all of the German melodies. Consequently, the Japanese began to publish their own methods which focused on infusing their own cultural style into piano pedagogy. The first Japanese piano method, *The First Piano Book for Young Beginners*, was published in 1958 (DaDau, 1982a). Since then, more than a dozen piano methods have been published in Japan. Some of these methods, such as Yamaha and Suzuki pre-school methods, are famous worldwide, while others, especially elementary-age piano methods, are popular only in Japan and Taiwan.

The First Piano Book for Young Beginners. by JingKou JiCheng

Based on the middle-C reading approach, this premiere Japanese method improved upon many the weaknesses of the century-old *Beyer* method. JingKou (n.d.) claims that this method is better than the *Beyer* method because it provides a teachers' guide for each lesson, helping teachers to discover the main purpose of each lesson and how to instruct students, and how to avoid or fix common problems of piano playing, such as flat fingers, wrong rhythmic counting, etc. Secondly, unlike *Beyer*'s homophonic-based materials, this method emphasizes the development of both hands. Also, in the first piano lessons, students are required to alternate fingers 1, 2, and 3 to play the same note. This reduces the tendency of attaching finger numbers to specific notes. Moreover, by using the middle-C approach, the bass clef is introduced at the same time as the treble clef; therefore, students are more familiar with the grand staff. Finally, some of the

pieces are arrangements of Japanese melodies. It is thought that children will play them more musically because the pieces relate to their own living experience.

Although the purpose of this method was to correct the weaknesses of the *Beyer* method, in many aspects this method was strongly influenced by same European traditions of emphasizing technique, producing a good tone, developing good ears, and securing memorization, that were part of the *Beyer* method also. JingKou (n.d.) explains that playing by memory should become a natural habit for children; consequently, memorization of all pieces, except the very first ones, is required for every student. Also, asking students to play with good tone makes them pay attention to the sound they produce and helps them develop sensitive ears.

In terms of reading approach, the JingKou method made some breakthroughs in its days. DaDau (1982a) indicates that although this method is based on the middle-C approach, a multi-key approach is employed as well. In the fifth unit of this method, five-finger pattern exercises use several keys (C, G, F, majors and A, D minors), an exercise often used in the multi-key approach. Unlike most multi-key methods, JingKou uses accidentals instead of key signatures to avoid complicated explanation of the keys. JingKou (n.d.) explains that it is difficult and needless to explain tonality to younger children and that teaching it may be delayed until children are more mature.

Despite its advantages over the JingKong method, DaDau (1982a) indicates that from the modern point of view, this method seems old-fashioned and has many drawbacks. The instructions are too long and difficult for average children, and the pacing of new concepts is too rushed. Also, in spite of the "well" selected repertoire that coordinates with musical concepts introduced, these pedagogical pieces may not be interesting to children. DaDau (1982a) further explains that if

the pieces are selected merely to teach musical concepts or piano technique but are not musically accessible, then it will be difficult to develop children's musicality and to encourage them to enjoy practicing. The most important aspect of beginning method books is the inclusion of materials that can be related to a child's living experience, music that will stimulate the children's imagination so that they will play musically. DaDau (1982a) also indicates that this method represents a common phenomenon among piano method books. After a method becomes old, if the materials are not updated, the value of the method is diminished.

Yamaha Music Education System (YMES)

Established in Japan in 1954, the Yamaha Music Education System began with an experimental classroom. After years of extensive research involving musicians, psychologists, and pediatricians, YMES developed teaching materials, curriculum, and philosophies, and became one of the most famous music training institutions in the world (Lancaster, 1984-5; Yamaha Music, n.d.). Most curriculum designs of YMES are for training children aged 4-8 to acquire basic music knowledge and skills.

> *The Primary Course* is a two-year program in basic musicianship for children ages 4-6. The curriculum focuses on pitch recognition, rhythm, singing, introduction to keyboard playing and ensemble. The basic approach is "by-ear" but music reading and writing are included... *The extension Course* is a two-year program for children ages 6-8 who have completed the Primary Course. The basic musicianship skills begun in the Primary curriculum are expanded with increased emphasis on sight singing, sight playing, ensemble work and keyboard performance. (Lancaster, 1984-5, p20)

Because both YMES and Suzuki were developed by the Japanese, they share similar teaching philosophies. Lancaster (1984-5) identifies the basic teaching tenets of the YMES:

1. Music is for everyone. A good music program should match students' various stages of physical, intellectual, psychological and social

development, so as to help students enjoy music and develop their innate musical ability.

2. Hearing comes first in music. For young children, listening skills develop much faster than reading and performance skills. The best way to develop children's music skills is to expose them to a musical environment and involve them in listening activities.
3. The keyboard is an ideal music learning tool. Due to its wide tonal range, accurate and clear tones, and its harmonic capabilities, the keyboard serves as a good tool for learning musical concepts.
4. Group learning helps children progress quickly. Through observing and learning from each other, children learn with faster speed. Group learning also promotes the development of social skills.
5. Skills are layered sequentially. Children learn music by using the sequence of ear-eye-hand in a progressive manner.
6. Parent's participation makes for successful teaching. "The learning process only begins in the classroom. Skills introduced by the teacher must be refined through practice at home. Thus parental partnership is crucial" (Lancaster, 1984-5, p.21).

YMES has received positive evaluations from several educators. Looney (1984-5) indicates that the YMES offers a unique course that develops children's aural and visual skills at an early age, while gradually developing their finger muscles. Lancaster (1984-5) indicates that the use of technology and research in music education are positive for educational progress. He explained that,

> Yamaha provides a model example of how a company is working to promote the education of its consumer. Its educational research and development program uses the latest in educational media and technology. Yamaha is to be commended for its use of outstanding video materials in its teacher training program and its consumer education program. (p.27)

Brubaker (1996) thinks that the materials provided by YMES help younger children to develop their listening skills, ear training, and other aural aspects of music. However, Lancaster (1984-5) indicates that the reading materials might not be sufficient for children as they make the transition from the Primary Course to American beginning methods. The reading in the YMES Primary Course is limited to pre-staff notation and does not prepare students well for staff notation.

Suzuki Method

Created by Shunichi Suzuki (1898~1998), the *Suzuki* method is based on the "mother-tongue" method, which models itself on the process of learning languages. Suzuki (1993; 1999a; 1999b) claims that the reason children learn a language in a seemingly effortless manner is because they are born into an environment that facilitates this process. Children are not coerced into learning to speak; they learn naturally by listening to the speech of those around them and imitating it. Learning music can be much the same.

Casper (1999), Dixon and Johnson (1999), Hoffer (1993), Maris (1984), and Yao (1989) review the *Suzuki* materials and identify its teaching principles:

1. Learning music should begin as soon as possible in order to build high fluency. Suzuki (1999a) explains that learning music is similar to learning language. Therefore, it is assumed that it is much easier for a child to absorb music as a young child.
2. Repertoire pieces assigned should progress by slight increases in the level of difficulty. Children can successfully master each piece, build confidence, and maintain enthusiasm by moving in small steps.
3. Parent's participation serves a crucial role in learning. Parents should attend all music lessons so as to know how to supervise their child's practice at home. They are also responsible for creating an enjoyable

learning environment for children.

4. Children should be exposed to music as much as possible. By frequently listening to the recordings of the Suzuki repertoire, children learn the music easily, just as newborn children learn their native languages. The more they hear, the more they will master the language.
5. Reading music comes after the establishment of aural and instrumental skills. "We teach children to read a language only after they can speak. This enables the main focus of the teacher's and student's attention to be on the sound: beautiful tone, accurate intonation, and musical phrasing then become a basic part of the student's earliest training" (Dixon & Johnson, 1999, p.1).
6. Skills are reinforced by constantly playing previously learned pieces. Continuously reviewing old pieces builds security and confidence in performance ability, and memorization becomes a natural process.
7. Observation of other students' lessons is a motivational aid. Dixon and Johnson (1999) indicate that "the child learns from advanced students and from his peers possibly more than he does from his adult teacher directly - children love to do what they see other children do" (p.3). However, Suzuki teaches us that it is essential to build a child's attitude of supportiveness for the accomplishments of others instead of promoting competition among students.

Many educators have demonstrated the *Suzuki* method's asset of adopting a language learning process; nevertheless, the postponing of reading has been a controversial topic. Maris (1984) indicates that postponing notation reading until after developing strong aural skills helps children increase their listening vocabulary, just as learning to speak before reading actually helps children grow

their future reading vocabulary. Casper (1999) also indicates that *Suzuki* students quickly develop reading skills with ease. As he said, "It is a very natural progression to learn to read next. Also, because the ear is so well trained and in use in playing, the Suzuki student will have the ability of transferring music to memory with ease and in an amazingly short time" (on-line). Chronister (1996) and Sexauer (1997) also believe that students should learn how to read after acquiring lots of experiencing listening and singing, just as one would not teach a baby to read before it can talk. Listening and singing skills help to develop fluency in reading skills later on. Yet, Landefeld and Stacy (1984) state that although many Suzuki students seem to read faster and more fluently and to possess a strong ability to read a group of notes, some Suzuki students are slow in learning to read because they have already developed good aural skills and the ability to play by ear. Students tend to think that reading is an unnecessary process in learning music. Some educators defend Suzuki's reading process, claiming that it is not negative. Clark and Sale (2001) claim that the main misconception of Suzuki's method is that it does not teach students notation reading. They further explain that

> Suzuki teachers have the flexibility to make their own decisions about whether to begin teaching reading within the first few lessons or delay it until the student is developmentally ready. The most important consideration is to prevent a large gap between playing and reading skills...Suzuki reading is postponed until the end of *Suzuki Book One*, the latter being taught by rote...From Suzuki Book Two onwards, the reading gradually catches up to equal the performance repertoire standard. (p.14, 16)

In terms of selection of repertoire, Maris (1984) indicates that, in general, the repertoire is well selected; however, since the repertoire selected in the *Suzuki* method is mainly from the Classical and Romantic periods, 20th century supplementary materials are needed. Maris (1984) also indicates that teachers should pay attention to the editing of pieces; *Suzuki*'s editions are very different from scholarly editions.

Mixed Opinions about American Methods

The evaluation of American methods is somewhat mixed. Chung (1992) compliments American methods on their contribution to the development of the reading approach. The reading approaches found in American methods can be divided into five types: middle-C, multiple Key, gradual multiple-key, intervallic, and eclectic (Schubert, 1992). Chung's (1992) study indicates that American methods, unlike the *Beyer* method, have given attention to the reading process and have arranged materials and concepts so as to strongly emphasize musicianship. In contrast, Lin (1980) claims that most American methods, such as *Bastien* and *Schaum*, inappropriately focus on developing reading skills and neglect the development of students' inner ears. Also, these American methods utilize mostly popular pieces of low artistic value, which may be detrimental to the development of a student's ability to play classical music. Lin (1980) further explains that when considering the beginning methods as a preparation for serious classical music, he preferred European methods, such as those written and compiled by Carl Zuschneid, Alexander Burkard, and Fritz Emonts to American methods. NeiTian (1982a) also indicates that many American methods focus on developing students' contemporary sense and creativity; therefore, the traditional repertoire is usually insufficient. He believes that Japanese-made methods are more likely to help students develop good sense and technique in order to play the pieces from the classical period.

Compared to the radical claims expressed above, ChianTzang's (1982) opinions are somewhat neutral. He explained that American methods, as compared to European methods, are more organized and interesting, but the pace is usually very slow and the materials are very repetitive. The philosophy of American

methods is to prevent students from being frustrated and giving up easily. However, these methods do not challenge students sufficiently.

General Characteristics of American Methods

American methods develop systematic reading approaches. Five reading approaches were identified in Schubert's (1992) study: middle-C, multi-key, intervallic, gradual multi-key, and eclectic. Among these five reading approaches, Brubaker (1996) and Schubert (1992) indicate that the middle-C approach is the most frequently used. As Brubaker explained further, since 1930, the middle-C reading approach, introducing notes outward from middle C and focusing on playing simple melodies, has been the most common reading approach. Several educators have demonstrated the advantages of the middle-C reading approach. Gordon, Smith, and Uszler (2000) indicate that the reasons for the middle-C reading approach's popularity is that it serves as an easy visual guide for understanding the grand staff and the relationship between keyboard and staff. Also, students can easily learn notation reading by slowly adding one note at a time. Moreover, using middle C as a signpost helps children develop ear and hand security. Brubaker (1996) also indicates that although middle-C methods present key signatures and other theoretical concepts in ways difficult for students to grasp, teaching notation reading outward from middle C is very accessible for beginners.

Brubaker (1996) indicates that the multi-key reading approach created by classroom teachers, has been used for training functional skills, such as harmonization, improvisation, composition, and accompanying. In Brubaker's (1996) study, she explains further that

> This reading approach complemented the singing activities in elementary school music classes and accommodated the voice ranges of children. Pupils played well-known tunes by imitating a teacher's performance and by transposing the music to a number of five-finger hand positions. When students finally learned the letter names of the piano keys, they were taught in relation to the black and white groupings. (p.360)

Later, several American method book writers, such as Bastien and Robert Pace, adopted this multi-key approach and modified it for use in piano instruction (MuTsuen, 1982). The benefits of this reading approach have been verified and include: (a) serving as beneficial preparation for learning homophonic literature, (b) allowing students to explore the sound on the keyboard, thereby developing the ear and self-awareness, (c) allowing the playing of the same patterns in different locations on the keyboard, which develops technical freedom of arm and shoulder, and (d) emphasizing chord playing in beginning lessons, which results in a better understanding of harmony (Gordon, Smith, & Uszler, 2000). MuTsuen (1982) also indicates that a multi-key reading approach helps children not only improve musicianship and technique, but can also develop an ear sensitive to the various colors created naturally by different keys. Despite these advantages, using the multi-key approach seems difficult for children, especially as they learn several complicated key signatures over a short span of time. To combat this problem, Bastien slows the pacing of the introduction of the twelve keys. This approach is called the gradual multi-key approach (MuTsuen, 1982). The gradual multi-key approach improves upon some of the weaknesses of the multi-key approach. However, MuTsuen (1982) indicates that in gradual multi-key approach methods, the 12 keys are presented over a much longer span of time, resulting in the loss of many of the benefits of the original multi-key approach.

Another important reading approach is the intervallic approach. Many prominent piano educators compliment this reading approach breakthrough. Day (1994) indicates that fluent readers do not read the individual notes; instead, they read by using locations and intervals. Carstens (1994) claims that when choosing a method, he looks for a method that teaches reading by intervals and from landmarks as well as letter names. Schubert's (1992) study also indicates that, by

using a landmark to locate notes and by concentrating on finding the interval relationship between notes, the intervallic approach allows students to experience the entire keyboard and gain a better understanding of music. Schubert (1992) states,

> Unlike middle-C and multiple key reading approaches, the intervallic approach is never confined to the notes of a five finger position. Students play in a variety of locations on the keyboard, with placement discovered by the student through observing the known landmarks and the fingering of starting pitches for each hand. The landmark notes reinforce the true meaning of the clef, defined by one dictionary as musical symbols that identify the position on the staff of single pitches…When accidentals are introduced, they are always related to the sound, look, and feel of their natural counterparts. (p.109)

Other advantages of the intervallic approach, as indicated by Gordon, Smith, and Uszler (2000), include: a variety of sound and effect is created by the exploration of different keys and wide ranges of pitch, and playing blocked intervals prepares for reading and playing triads. Richards (1996) also favors reading by intervals. He claims that the most important aspect of reading is the recognition of the relationship between notes. As Richards (1996) stated,

> Music reading is NOT music spelling… music reading involves interval recognition, and to be effective must establish relationships among notes… There is an even more important reason for reading by interval rather than by note calling, that of developing of aural imagery in the relationship of sounds. Beginners taught merely by note naming usually have a note-for-note sound in their performance. Pianists taught by interval possess a greater sense of musical flow in playing meaningful groups of notes. (p.56)

Because of the different benefits of individual approaches, recent American method compilers have been seeking ways to combine the strengths of various reading approaches to create new systematic presentations of music reading (Brubaker, 1996; Gordon, Smith, & Uszler, 2000; Schubert, 1992). These new approaches are usually termed "modified" or "eclectic" approaches. Brubaker's (1996) study indicates that in recently published method books, no matter what the main reading approach is, authors have incorporated intervallic and landmark

reading methodologies.

Apart from the different reading approaches discussed above, many educators claim that reading instruction should be incorporated with theory, which will enhance students' reading skills. Kowalchyk (2001) explains that music theory can enhance all aspects of piano study, including reading, with comprehensive musicianship being incorporated into the lesson curriculum. "By applying theoretical principles to a variety of functional skills, reading activities are reinforced in practical and useful situations. Theoretical analysis is a great aid in the recognition of patterns, an essential skill for good reading" (p.13). Sale (2001) also claims that music theory is the "grammar" of the musical language. When students acquire the knowledge of music grammar, they can learn new pieces with less time and less effort because their reading process utilizes their theory skills.

Use of off-staff reading approaches for beginners is also a characteristic that appears in many American methods. Most educators compliment its value. Syrkin (2001) believes off-staff reading allows students to learn notation reading faster and without much frustration. "It requires less effort at the beginning stage, and students start playing with both hands from the start. It develops good coordination as well as logical thinking" (p.14). Sale (2000) indicates that off-staff reading gives students the chance to experience complete registers of the keyboard and to explore motion when moving between these registers. In early grand staff reading, this kind of freedom is restricted. Gray (2000) claims that "students can easily read off-staff notation, and therefore can focus on other skills such as playing with a steady beat, mastering fingering and physical coordination, and playing with dynamic contrast. It gives students opportunities to play motivating yet complicated melodies without frustration" (p.12). However, several educators claim that teachers should be aware of this approach's minor drawbacks and use it

with care. Flatau (2001) explains that off-staff notation can be confusing. "Having the notation accurately spaced on the page is crucial if the visual aspect is to accomplish its intentions. It is extremely difficult for some students to judge the vertical distance between non-staff notes" (p.13). Gilmson (2001) claims that students should not stay in off-staff reading too long. He further explains that "we cannot read without knowing letters, but recognizing simple letters won't make us fast readers. The most logical approach is to make "off-staff" serve "on-staff" as soon as possible, using the newly acquired knowledge of direction and fingering for reading actual notes, thus bringing together the much needed recognition of notes and patterns" (p.14).

American methods publish multi-volumes with numerous supplementary materials. Unlike most traditional European methods featured in one volume, ChianTzang (1982) indicates that almost all modern American methods are comprised of multiple volumes with extensive supplementary materials, such as theory books, ear training books, performance books, technique books, etc. Brubaker (1996) also indicates that, "after 1960, the American piano courses are multi-volume, with many including several correlated books at each level and spanning pre-reading through intermediate levels of technical skill and repertoire" (p.498).

One of the main reasons for having these multiple volumes and extensive supplementary materials is the American methods' strong emphases on musicianship. ChianTzang (1982) claims that, unlike the traditional, technically-oriented European methods, many American educators regard learning piano as the process of learning music rather than just learning to play the piano. Brubaker (1996) also claims that learning piano with an emphasis on comprehensive musicianship—composing, harmonization, improvising and other

functional skills— is a key to acquiring a better understanding of music. Brubaker indicates that,

> Perhaps the greatest expansion of pedagogical materials since 1960 has been in the area of creative activities—harmonization, improvisation, variation and composition—which are found as "creative pages" within core texts or in completely separate books. Students are encouraged to vary pieces in their keys and ranges, improvise melodies, complete little unfinished compositions, create new harmonizations and accompaniment parts, set given words to music, compose small pieces and make other musical decisions. (p.507)

Business profit might be another reason why American methods produce many supplementary volumes. It is possible to combine all the ear training, functional, and technical exercises in one or few volumes; however, the design and sale of multiple volumes helps business grow faster (Brubaker, 1996).

American methods incorporate teaching musical markings and music making at the very beginning of piano methods. In the past, it was common for piano teachers to delay the teaching of musicality because they thought music making comes after technical maturity. In the second half of the twentieth century, many piano educators rejected this common school of thought and asserted that children have the capability to play music beautifully if teachers inspire them to use imaginations. Piano pedagogues began to pay a great deal of attention to students' musicality at the outset of piano lessons, resulting in an emphasis on expressive markings and music making in American method books. As indicated in Brubaker's (1996) study,

> In an effort to encourage the beginning pianist to play musically, more method writers are drawing early attention to articulations, dynamics and voicing. Before 1960, the treatment of dynamics was often ignored in beginning teaching materials or was presented as the last step in learning a piece. More recently, a few method writers have begun to introduce the dynamics of *piano* and *forte* in the first few lessons, and have added other gradations one by one with new repertoire. After a dynamic or expression marking is defined for the first time, some authors continue drawing students' attention to them by short printed directives or by highlighting the markings in colored ink. More piano pedagogues are advocating that instruction about musical interpretation and sound intensity should begin immediately as part

of the learning process. (p.504)

DaDau (1982b) indicates that this trend can be traced back to the early, influential American method by John Thompson. Thompson's method addresses thinking of the expressive quality and constructive elements of music from the first level onward and strongly influenced later American methods.

American methods provide diverse styles of repertoire. Although some modern European and Japanese methods provide repertoire from the Baroque period to the 20th century, almost all of the pieces are restricted to traditional classical repertoire. Some educators indicate that, unlike European and Japanese methods, American methods created after the 1960s provide a larger variety of materials, ranging from traditional classical pieces to folk, jazz, and even pop music (Brubaker, 1996; ChianTzang, 1982). Combining these styles of repertoire provides many choices to meet different students' needs.

Modern Course for the Piano by John Thompson & Other Early Middle-C Methods

Repertoire. *John Thompson*, along with other early American methods, may serve as a bridge between traditional European methods and modern American methods. The repertoire provided in these methods was new in the 1950s, but may not satisfy the needs of recent generations. ChianTzang (1982) indicates that although the repertoire in Thompson's method mostly employ traditional classical harmony, unlike most European methods, these pieces contain American jazzy styles, rich sonority, and diverse rhythmic patterns. Brubaker (1996) indicates that the early American methods, such as *John Thompson* and *John Schaum*, are essentially compendiums of classical repertoire, composers' portraits, short biographies, and descriptions of musical genres and styles. Schubert (1992) indicates that although these early methods contain several types of music,

including classical repertoire, newly-composed pieces, and folk-tune arrangements, they consist of limited styles and lack contemporary sounds. Akins (1982) also indicates that Thompson's method does not provide enough variety in composers from each historical era. Although John Thompson's method seems old-fashioned to most educators, Byrns (1998) strongly believes its value of selection of repertoire, stating

> The repertoire is musical and abundant, the rhythm is catchy and flowing, the duets are well written, the sequence of the books is good, the music is pianistic and lies well in the hand, and the pieces provide opportunity for balancing melody and accompaniment. That is quite a list of positive attributes. Imaginative it may not be, nor does it travel all over the keyboard, but I can use supplementary materials to compensate for these shortcomings. (p.43-44)

Technique. In the *John Thompson* method and other early American methods, technique is acquired by learning musically attractive pieces, rather than practicing drill exercises. ChianTzang (1982) indicates that although *John Thompson*'s method contains some etudes by Czerny or Duvernoy, the traditional technique exercise drills are comparably few. Brubaker (1996) claims that this is because educators writing after the 1920s believed that there was an abundance of fine teaching pieces that could replace superfluous technical exercises. Schubert (1992) also indicates that in this method technique instruction is primarily left to the teacher.

Reading and counting approaches. John Thompson, along with almost all of the early American methods, was written based on the middle-C reading approach (Bastien, 1995; Brubaker, 1996; DaDau, 1982b; Portnoff, 1968; Schubert, 1992). Among the early middle-C methods, *Piano Course* published in 1945 by John Schaum, was the forerunner in employing off-staff notation; earliest pieces were notated with a meter signature, measured diagram, and finger numbers (Brubaker, 1996). A significant drawback exists in early American methods.

Portnoff (1968) indicates that in these American methods, fingerings were generously given, which makes students associate notes with finger numbers and results in a reliance on numbers for note reading.

The numerical counting approach is strongly emphasized in *Thompson* and other early middle-C methods (DaDau, 1982b; Schubert, 1992). Schubert's (1992) study indicates that "this form of counting relies on the presence of time signatures, this concept is introduced at the outset, with 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4 meters introduced simultaneously in the opening pages of the Thompson course" (p.75).

Musicianship. These early American methods generally lack an exploration of musicianship. Bastein (1995) indicates that these methods have little concern for the area of musicianship, and the correlation between the written theory and actual repertoire is limited. Theory teaching only involves paperwork. Schubert (1992) indicates that studies of form, harmonization, transposition, composition, improvisation, and sight-reading remained largely unexplored in these methods. Although some ensemble pieces are provided, they are not a standard part of most methods. Akins's (1982) study also indicates that Thompson's method is not successful in development of transposition and harmonization skills.

Contributions. Overall, these early methods have many shortcomings, such as a lack of diverse repertoire, non-exploration of musicianship, and rapid pacing with little reinforcement. However, the authors of early American methods began to make piano more accessible through the use of child-centered psychological thinking (DaDau, 1982b; Schubert, 1992). As indicated in Schubert's (1992) study:

> They made significant historical contributions toward making the piano and the joy of music accessible to young children. Their emphasis on making music a part of a young child's world reflected early twentieth-century principles of progressive education and paved the way for a wealth of American piano methods written in the second half of the twentieth century. (p.78)

Reading approach. The reading approach in Glover's method is based on the middle-C approach but utilizes some multi-key aspects (Bastien, 1995; Gordon, Smith, & Uszler, 2000; Johnson & Miller, 1983). However, Johnson and Miller (1983) and Gordon, Smith, and Uszler (2000) think that there were several drawbacks to this method's reading design. First, the finger numbers are written above most notes, a trait which encourages students to play music by reading the finger numbers instead of reading the notes. This inhibits development of students' intervallic sense. Moreover, reading the bass clef tends to develop more slowly than that of the treble clef because many reading activities involve only a melody in the treble clef with chordal accompaniments in the bass clef (Johnson & Miller, 1983).

Technique. In general, basic pianistic techniques are well addressed in Glover's method but are not well explained or systematically paced. One such example can be found in the way scales are taught. Johnson and Miller (1983) indicate that, "technical considerations as to the 'how to' of thumb and finger crossings in scale passages are not covered. Movements involving shifting hand positions and hand/thumb extensions are not identified or addressed" (p.18).

Counting approach. Counting is based on the unit counting approach. Johnson and Miller (1983) criticize that, although this unit counting approach is addressed in the teacher's instruction book, it does not appear in the students' lesson books. Also, although this counting approach is reinforced in the students' theory books, all rhythmic exercises require only written work. Despite these drawbacks, Johnson and Miller (1983) compliment the Glover method's inclusion of some useful exercises for developing children's physical rhythmic sense, such as "clap and sing the words," and to "clap and count aloud."

Musicianship. Overall, in the Glover method, musicianship is left almost entirely to the teachers. Brubaker (1996) indicates that few materials are provided for aural development and for understanding musical form and structure. Schubert (1992) criticized that while some exercises of functional skill are provided, they are random and without organized treatment. Johnson and Miller (1983) explain further that,

> There is no mention of form or musical structure…It is left to the teacher to explore with students the interaction of musical elements, aural and tonal awareness, tension and resolution within a phrase, cadence or piece, as well as in the development of critical listening and the ability to form judgments relative to expressive and musical values. No opportunities are provided in the core texts for creative or aural activities involving improvisation, composition, putting chords to melodies, or playing by ear. (p.18)

Repertoire. Johnson and Miller (1983) indicate that the great advantage of the *Glover* method is that the arrangement of the repertoire is presented and repeated in layers of succeeding difficulty. Also, this method provides some programmatic pieces that sound difficult but are actually easy to play, which can build students' confidence and easily generate students' musical imagination. However, Johnson and Miller (1983) indicate that the repertoire provided in the *Glover* method is limited in variety and quality, which makes it difficult to provide adequate preparation for the intellectual, technical, and musical complexities of intermediate literature. As indicated in Johnson and Miller's (1983) study:

> Few opportunities are provided for students to become active participants in discovery process or in relating and integrating the separate fibers into a unified musical fabric. Melodies with primary chord accompaniments appear most often throughout these early levels of study and afford little opportunity for students to experience a variety of styles, forms, textures and rhythms…The sounds, rhythms, symbols and systems associated with the twentieth-century are omitted. Major and minor diatonic tonality is used almost exclusively; there is an absence of rhythmic originality and variety. While the music in the basic texts may be satisfying to play, it generally lacks those qualities necessary to challenge or develop students intellectually, emotionally, and musically. (p.20)

Concepts and reinforcement. Bastien (1995) indicates that in the *Glover* method, theory, technique, and repertoire is well coordinated with the core text. However, Johnson and Miller (1983) state that the introduction and reinforcement of concepts are mostly through paper drills and lacks much explanation. Flatau and Glover (1983), on the other hand, argue that the *Glover* method's supplementary materials serve as good resources for reinforcement. Also, despite the fact that concepts are principally drill-oriented, they are quite closely correlated to the core text of the method. They explain that "the reinforcement is achieved so musically that students do not get the feeling of being inundated by a specific concept. Students are allowed to work with one new element, becoming comfortable with it before complicating material is introduced" (p.24). They also point out that not every detail of instruction is printed on every page because it is the role of the teacher to assist the student and elaborate on musical understanding (Flatau & Glover, 1983).

Contributions. Despite the conflicting arguments cited above, compared to the early middle-C methods, Glover made several important contributions. Schubert (1992) and Brubaker (1996) indicate that Glover's method influenced modern American method books in its gradual sequencing of grade levels, its abundant color-coded materials, and great variety of supplements to the core text of the method.

Piano Basics & Piano Library by James Bastien and Jane Smisor Bastien

Reading approach. The gradual multi-key approach is adapted in both of Bastien's methods. Brubaker (1996), Gordon, Smith, and Uszler (2000), and Schubert (1992) indicate that all of the twelve keys are introduced by four groups based on the similarity of five-finger position. Group one includes keys (C G F), which have all white keys in the tonic chords. Group two consists of keys (D A E),

which have a white, black, white composition in their tonic chords. Keys of D-flat, A-flat, and E-flat are in the third group, due to the black, white, black composition in their tonic chords. The rest of the keys (G-flat, B-flat, B) are in group four, a group united because each key has a different pattern of white and black keys. Bastien (1995) and Schubert (1992) indicate that Bastien's gradual multi-key approach also incorporates intervallic-reading concepts by emphasizing reading through hand positions. Schubert (1992) further claims that Bastien's reading method can be considered global, in contrast to the analytical approach used in the middle-C methods. Uszler (1983) also asserts that this approach "makes reading become a way to remember what is heard rather than serving as the stimulus for actions that result in sound" (p.26). In addition to these strengths, Miller (1983) indicates that by using very few finger numbers, Bastien's methods discourage students from reading by finger numbers.

Counting approach. Schubert (1992) indicates that a nominative form of counting (in which students chant note names) and pre-reading examples are used in the primary level book. With the introduction of time signatures, numerical counting is introduced. The advantage of this counting design is that the note and rest values are introduced gradually in order to keep a slower pacing. However, rhythm is taught by counting beats, instead of by teaching students how to feel and sense the rhythm, a system derived from Dalcroze's eurythmics (Schubert, 1992).

Concepts and reinforcement. Miller (1983) indicates that in comparison with the pacing of early American middle-C methods, the presentation of concepts in Bastien's methods is systematic, and musical concepts are strongly reinforced. Schubert (1992) also indicates that the systematic design of introducing concepts and consistent reinforcement of concepts became a role model for beginning piano methods of the last several decades.

Technique. The literature evaluating the teaching of technique in Bastien's methods is not very positive. Schubert (1992) indicates that although the technical exercises are clearly addressed in the supplementary books and are strongly related to the core text, these exercises are paced so quickly that they may suit only older or more mature students. Brubaker (1996) indicates that lots of performance techniques are ignored in Bastien's methods because the exercises selected in early levels are usually limited to five-finger patterns. Miller (1983) also criticizes that there are many drawbacks in technique design of the method: (a) no specific suggestions or exercises to develop the hand arch, to insure curved, non-collapsing fingers, or to produce a good tone are given, (b) consecutive fingerings are used too frequently, which makes it difficult to attain digital control and coordination, (c) the introduction of the triad is presented early, at a time when beginners may not have the ability to depress three keys simultaneously, and (d) insufficient instruction on the playing of slurs and phrases can cause students to have stiff and awkward movements.

Design and format. The design and format of Bastien's methods demonstrate an improvement in the quality of printing. As indicated in Schubert's (1992) study, "the methods reflect an increasing concern with the design and format of beginning piano texts. Pictures are used abundantly in both methods. The music in both Bastien methods is legible, with the size of the music type appropriate for young beginners" (p. 102).

Repertoire. Many educators criticized the repertoire as being limited to homophonic pieces. Miller (1983) claims that although the repertoire in Bastien's methods is appropriate, progressive, and contains a variety of styles, the music is yet stagnant due to a similarity of texture, in which tunes are played by the right hand and primary chords in the left hand. Schubert (1992) also indicates that the

music of Bastien's methods is often limited by the use of five-finger patterns and a heavy emphasis on primary chord harmonization.

Musicianship. Many educators claim that one of the best values of multi-key methods is that they are designed for comprehensive musicianship. As Brubaker (1996) stated

> Many college texts teach music reading in this manner because it is conducive to learning music theory, in particular keys and triads. The introduction to all keys through five-finger patterns, triads and chord progressions, scales in tetrachords, and scales with traditional fingering works well for adults who want functional music reading and keyboard skills. (p. 500)

Schubert (1992) further indicates that the theory activities are closely correlated to the core text of each method, making these methods very accessible to the less-experienced teacher.

Despite the natural strength of multi-key methods, there are some minor weaknesses in Bastien's methods. Miller (1983) indicates that there is no suggestion to say or memorize the alphabet in various ways, like by skips, up, or down. Also, in theory books, most of the exercises are no more than mechanical copy work. Moreover, C and G root position triads are introduced early and are explained to students as chord I, which is unnecessary and confusing since there is no theoretical basis or logical explanation given. Schubert (1992) also indicates that creative activities in the Bastien method are limited to question and answer phrases.

Music for Piano by Robert Pace

Reading approach. Pace's method is representative of the multi-key reading approach. The 12 keys are explored after several pages of off-staff notation exercises (Bognar, 1983; Gordon, Smith, & Uslzer, 2000). As Schubert (1992) explained further, "exploration of the entire range of the keyboard is encouraged. Black and white keys receive equal emphasis in multi-key approaches. The grand

staff is introduced early, with unison pieces in parallel motion used to explore all twelve major keys within the first few months of lessons" (p. 87). Lin (2002) explains that one advantage of Pace's reading approach is that in the very beginning lessons, many different keys are introduced, enabling students to have the chance to explore different tonalities and removing the fear of playing piano in different positions. Bognar (1983) also indicates that a benefit of using Pace's reading approach is that each finger of the hand will be developed from the beginning of piano learning.

Counting approach. Pace's method uses a nominative counting approach, in which the name of each note is chanted rhythmically (Bognar, 1983; Schubert, 1992). However, some weaknesses of Pace's counting design were found. Schubert (1992) indicates that, overall, the method contains few exercises to establish a sense of steady beat or to aid students in internalizing a steady pulse. Bognar (1983) agrees that activities intended to assist students in feeling or internalizing rhythm are very limited.

Musicianship. Many educators, such as Bastien (1995), YungFu (1982a), Bognar (1983), Schubert, (1992), and Gordon, Smith, and Uslzer (2000), compliment the method's musicianship training. Bastien (1995) indicates that "improvisation, ear training, transposition, and harmonization are interwoven in an intelligent manner. Creative thinking is encouraged on the part of both the student and teacher through numerous improvisational studies. Basic musicianship is the primary concern throughout the entire series" (p.69). Bognar (1983) also says that after finishing three levels of Pace's method, students well understand the idiom of classical harmony, and have been exposed to selected contemporary compositional techniques.

Repertoire. Although there is a wide diversity of music—mixtures of original compositions, folk tunes, and rearrangement of original classical composers—most of the pieces are based on melody with primary triad accompaniment (Schubert, 1992). Despite this disadvantage, Gordon, Smith, and Uslzer (2000), ShenBau (1982), and Schubert (1992) indicate that the music is attractive and well-graded. Also, the use of pentatonic, hexatonic, modal, blues, and the twelve-tone structures in this method makes it distinctive.

Concept and reinforcement. Bognar (1983) indicates that the pacing in Pace's method is rapid and does not provide sufficient reinforcement. This makes some children feel insecure about the knowledge they have learned. Some educators claim that in order to introduce and reinforce concepts successfully, teachers must have adequate background and preparation. Lin (2002) states that the concepts in Pace's method are introduced very fast; therefore, guidance from experienced teachers is needed to fill in the gaps between lessons. Schubert (1992) also indicates that to use multiple-key methods successfully, teachers need to possess extensive knowledge of music and must read the teachers' guide thoroughly. Schubert (1992) explains,

> Teachers of multiple-key methods often need to understand the principles upon which the series are built, and to plan lessons so that materials are correlated and appropriately sequenced and reinforced. When properly presented, students studying multiple-key piano methods will be exposed to a comprehensive music program that reaches beyond the technique and repertoire that dominate middle-C methods. (p.94)

However, to defend Bognar's statement that the pacing is too fast, Pace (1983) explains, "The books move neither fast nor slow. It is the student that does the moving, and hopefully this will be movement both upward in difficulty and outward in understanding and knowledge" (p.33).

Contribution. Schubert (1992) indicates that the major contribution of Pace's method is that students experience and discover the music before learning symbols or analyzing. Also, Pace's method is flexible and easily adapted for use by various numbers of students (one, two, small, and larger groups), an aspect that distinguishes this method from other methods (Schubert, 1992). ShenBau (1982) also compliments the *Pace* method, stating that through Pace's teaching philosophy of peer learning in a small group of piano classes, students become highly motivated and active because observations of one another stimulate and enhance students, resulting in students becoming more involved in musical activities.

The Music Tree by Frances Clark

Reading approach. Clark's method is a representative method that uses the intervallic reading approach. As indicated in Brubaker's (1996) study, Clark's method employs spatial-directional reading, which emphasizes intervallic relationships more than individual notes, letter names of notes, or finger numbers. Clark and Goss (1983) and Schubert (1992) indicate that, unlike the middle-C and multi-key reading approaches, this intervallic approach begins with off-staff notation, then a partial staff, and finally the grand staff. Reading that uses landmarks is carefully developed from seconds through other intervals. Schubert (1992) claims that "students' understanding of notation developed according to the same steps by which the notational system itself evolved historically…the new landmarks, combined with the student's knowledge of intervals, greatly increases his reading range" (p.108).

Musical concept. Gipson (2001) compliments its design of musical concepts, saying that while most American methods employ visual, kinesthetic, and aural sequence of learning, *Music Tree* introduces new musical concepts through sound,

then reproducing the sound at the piano, and finally seeing the music notation. This aural, kinesthetic, and visual sequence corresponds to the fact that music is an aural art.

Design and format. Unlike most American methods, *Music Tree,* published in 1973, employs a single volume that contains several types of reinforcing activities (Brubaker, 1996; Clark & Goss, 1983). Clark explains that it is better to include the entire subject in each book than to divide the whole into its parts because teachers are teaching the entire subject, not only a part of it (Clark & Goss, 1983).

Music and repertoire. The repertoire in Clark's method is arranged with an emphasis on interval used. It is systematic and logically ordered but it is often thought less attractive. Schubert (1992) indicates that the music in this method was mostly composed by pedagogical composers; thus, the music usually progresses logically in length and technical difficulty. However, Brubaker (1996) suggests that the music is less appealing due to its thin texture, few familiar tunes, and late introduction of triads.

Technique. The design of the technique exercises, unlike most American methods, is brief, and exercises are learned by rote. This makes it easy for students to grasp and master each specific technique. As indicated in Schubert's (1992) study, "the emphasis on rote playing of technical exercises is a departure from the technical approach in the methods previously cited, all of which contained notated etudes. The technique is to be related to sound" (p.111). Lyke (1983) also believes that "the technical warm-ups never appear dull; they are short...and played in various registers of the keyboard...mirror patterns are employed frequently" (p.22). Other advantages of Clark's technical design are addressed by several educators. Brubaker (1996) feels that although the music is less appealing due to its

pedagogical goals, its slow pacing allows time for a child's hands to develop finger strength. Also, Schubert (1992) indicates that coordination and balance are emphasized by starting with the alternation of the middle fingers, and then concentrating on using fingers two, three, and four in various combinations.

Counting approach. Overall, the amount of written work regarding rhythm in Clark's method is much less than found in earlier methods, and the awareness of pulse is strongly emphasized. Schubert (1992) indicates that in Clark's method the emphasis on awareness of pulse instead of counting beats makes rhythmic teaching significant and reflects Clark's statement that, "every new rhythmic experience should begin with a total body response – dancing, stepping, or at the very least, swinging with a full arm swing" (p.113). Some other advantages of rhythmic teaching in this series include slow pacing and carefully sequenced lessons (Schubert, 1992). Also, this method in particular stresses the "feeling of rest", or measured silence. As Lyke (1983) stated, "silence, rather than rest, is stressed in the method, and students are instructed to whisper the counting during the various rests" (p.24).

Musicianship. Musicianship is probably one of the strongest areas of Clark's method. Schubert (1992) indicates that in this method, children have great opportunities for a comprehensive understanding of intervals, theory, harmonization, transposition, and ear-training. Moreover, sight-reading and ensemble experience are also emphasized, and aural activities, such as sing-backs, play-backs, question and answer phrases, etc., are involved, unlike many methods which only use written drills. Despite these advantages, Lyke (1983) indicates that the study of theory and musical understanding is often unrelated to the music that appears in the core text.

Repertoire. Many educators claim that the abundance of well-known tunes, encompassing a variety of styles and pedagogical designs, in Alfred's method can stimulate student interest (Bastien, 1995; Gordon, Smith, & Uslzer, 2000; TzuoTeng, 1982). Camp (1983-4) further indicates that not only does Alfred's method provide a great deal of variety, such as newly composed pieces, folk tunes, dances, classical music, rock, and blues, but also that the authors carefully considered the selection of the pieces. Camp (1983-4) identifies three considerations: "(a) sequencing of reading and rhythmic patterns, (b) progression of harmonic motion, (c) development of hand position without losing sight of the attractiveness of melodic or general musical content" (p.42). Gordon, Smith, and Uszler (2000) also indicate that the selection of repertoire is well sequenced, and technical and musical difficulties are adequately reinforced. Lethco and Palmer (1983-4) also claim that the repertoire is interesting to children, saying, "The song titles and illustrations relate to this real world. Subjects like video games, space ships and robots are interspersed with traditional subjects that all create interest for the students…they [lyrics] relate to what is being taught and also reflect the character of the piece" (p.44).

Despite these advantages, Lin (2002) indicates that the pieces used in Alfred's method are too often homophonic and need more variety in accompaniment. Also, Camp (1983-4) gives several suggestions improving repertoire, including: (a) adding more pieces that use a wider range of the keyboard, (b) adding pieces that are easy to play but sound difficult, and (c) adding pieces that utilize a mixture of various textures.

Theory. The exercises in the theory books always match the concepts of the core texts. As Camp (1983-4) said, "the [t]heory [b]ooks reinforce some technical

concepts from the playing books, such as pedaling and finger crossings" (p.42). However, the theory books have some weaknesses. First, written exercises instead of aural experiences dominate the entire curriculum of the theory books. This is unfortunate, since aural activities serve an important role in teaching theory by teaching students to perceive the sound and understand concepts aurally (Camp, 1983-4; Lin, 2002). Also, the theory books do not include improvisation, transposition, or composition exercises.

Technique. Technique in Alfred's method is strong. Camp (1983-4) indicates that the playing technique in Alfred's method evolves out of pieces instead of from abundant repetition of exercises. Camp (1983-4) further indicates that all the technical concepts are integrated and correlated with the musical concepts. Camp further stated, "the basics of perceiving and understanding the score are fully integrated with the technique of physically translating the score from symbols to sound…the technique of playing the keyboard is not presented separately as an abstract, physical concept" (p.42).

Reading approach. The reading approach in this method can be regarded as an "eclectic" approach. As Gordon, Smith, and Uszler (2000) stated, "the plan for the teaching of reading combines facets of several approaches: off-staff reading, position (including middle C) reading, intervallic reading, and aspects of multi-key reading" (p. 32). Camp (1983-4) also indicates that "the reading sequence is best described as an eclectic approach using middle-C, intervallic reading, a modified multiple key approach, and a simplified tri-chord concept, gradually leading into reading in several keys" (p.40). Beginning with pre-reading experiences on black keys using off-staff notation, the reading process progresses to the introduction of letter names, larger intervals, dynamic markings, etc. (Bastien, 1995; Brubaker, 1996; Camp, 1983-4). Camp (1983-4) claims that one of the most important

advantages of the reading approach is that it provides many materials with a similar design. Camp states,

> One of the most outstanding features about the reading approach is the inclusion of numerous pieces that are similar in design and approximately at the same reading level, thus promoting psychological ownership of reading concepts. Rather than presenting a quick mixture of many different kinds of notational patterns, several pieces are included in neighbor-note scalar patterns in simple rhythmic notation followed by triadic outlines. Only then are numerous types of intervals, articulations, and chordal patterns introduced. This lessens the chance of a student comprehending the reading process as a separate-note procedure or as the learning of pieces in contrast to learning how to read music as a "map" or a "book." (p.40)

Piano Adventures by Randall Faber and Nancy Faber

Reading approach. As Gordon, Smith, and Uszler (2000) indicate, this method uses the middle-C approach with surprising twists. Brubaker (1996) also indicates that "rather than a new pedagogical methodology, *Piano Adventures* employs what recently has been termed an 'eclectic reading approach,' combining various aspects of middle-C, landmark, intervallic and multi-key reading approaches" (p.484). Early pre-reading and off-staff materials are provided in the beginning level. Later, the notes in the middle-C position are introduced in groups, paying special attention to the G and F clef lines (Gordon, Smith, & Uszler, 2000).

Technique. Many piano educators complimented the Faber method's design for technique and artistry books. As Gordon, Smith, and Uszler (2000) indicated, "in each book there is consistent technique and artistry books offer an unusual mix of exercises, short etudes to apply the techniques, sight-reading clues, and ear training" (p.24). Another strength, as indicated by Lin (2002), is that the earliest level of this method is not limited to the five-finger position. Children are more apt to learn basic techniques, such as phrasing, and wrist flexibility in the early stages.

Concept and reinforcement. Lin (2002) indicates that the method provides detailed explanations and instructions when introducing new concepts or terminology. Brubaker (1996) thinks that the supplementary materials, such as the

Performance Book and *Theory Books*, reinforce well the concepts and skills presented in the core lesson books through a variety of activities. However, Lin (2002) states that the repetition of materials in this method is not sufficient for reinforcing style or concepts, so children may not learn the concepts with great security.

Musicianship and pacing. Lin stated that musicianship (form, sequencing, transposition) is emphasized early on in this series. In terms of pacing, Lin (2002) indicates that the pacing is reasonable for talented or older beginners; however, it may be too fast for six-year-old children.

Repertoire. The repertoire provided in this method is very colorful. Gordon Smith, and Uszler (2000) indicate that "there are a number of adaptations from standard piano and orchestral literature. There is a good mix of old, ethnic, and well-known tunes and original pieces. Lyrics are supplied for many original pieces to provide technical and interpretive hints…the pop, rag, rock and roll, and New Age pieces are musical and effective" (p.24). Brubaker (1996) also indicates that the *Lesson Book* and the *Performance Book*, provide an introduction to various tonal styles, and that the repertoire covers compositional techniques from Baroque to jazz and popular idioms. Lin (2002) also agrees that Faber's method provides excellent selections of repertoire and beautiful arrangement of songs. However, Lin (2002) claims that Faber's compositions are often in homophonic style and that classical repertoire should be introduced earlier.

Hal Leonard Student Piano Library by Kreader, Kern, Keveren, and Rejino

Reading approach. Like many newer American methods, such as *Piano Adventures*, the reading approach in this method can be regarded as "eclectic." Gordon, Smith, and Uszler (2000) indicate that abundant pre-reading materials are provided in level one. Later, a modified middle-C approach and the landmark

intervallic approaches are incorporated. From level two, the sharps and flats of various major and minor keys are gradually introduced without employing signatures initially. This allows students to gain some experience playing in major and minor keys before being confronted by complex theoretical concepts. To avoid the weaknesses of the middle-C approach in which students tend to attach finger numbers to the notes, this method uses various finger number sets to play FGAB/CDE (Music Educator's Marketplace [MEM], n.d.).

Contributions. The associated technology for the different volumes in this method has received great attention. Pace (2001) claims that through the use of electronic technology, teachers now have new and interesting ways to help students with sight reading, improvising, ear training, technique, and memorization. Lin (2002) and Gordon, Smith, and Uszler (2000) also indicate that one of the strengths of Hal Leonard's method is the use of technology, such as recordings and MIDI accompaniments, to motivate students' learning.

Concept. One of the major weaknesses of this method might be the delay in introducing artistry concepts. Lin (2002) claims that the artistry concepts should be included at the very beginning so that students can have a solid foundation in musicianship.

Repertoire. Gordon, Smith, and Uszler (2000) indicate that overall, this method provides colorful and diverse pieces, including folk songs, famous tunes, standard classical repertoire, and arrangements of orchestral works. Teacher accompaniments are also provided for most of the pieces in levels one and two. However, Gordon, Smith, and Uszler (2000) indicate that the quality of the pieces at higher levels is uneven.

Consider Teacher's Teaching Ability

Most people assume that choosing a good piano method book may result in successful piano teaching because the presentation of concepts is logical in design, and the selection of technique exercises and repertoire may provide what is necessary to help students acquire a solid foundation in piano playing. However, many educators think that teachers' pedagogical abilities may serve a more important role in successful teaching. As Bastien (1983) indicated

> The results of the students' performance are not only tied to the materials used, but are really dependent on the teacher's ability to teach. A method can be helpful for the student and assist in providing useful and thorough information, but that alone is not adequate. The teacher must be able to bring to the lesson knowledge, experience, and an ability to teach which will enable the student to play the piano in musical and convincing manner...If it would be possible to explain everything perfectly in print, there would be no need for teachers. A good teacher will expand on the method used and will introduce helpful suggestions or will introduce additional materials the teacher feels are important. (p.32)

When evaluating Alfred's method, Camp (1983-4) indicates that, due to the logical sequencing of complexities of this method, both experienced and inexperienced teachers could use this method successfully; however, to use a method successfully, a teacher's ability is as important as the method itself. As Camp (1983-4) stated, "success or failure is tied directly to teacher presentation and student involvement" (p.44).

Consider Individual's Needs

Many educators claim that when choosing a method, teachers need to be concerned not only with the quality of the method itself, but also with their own ability, and with student's individual needs. Harrington (1998) indicates that when choosing a method, each student's personality, level of achievement, and technical ability should be taken into consideration. Bastien (1995) claims that a "gold"

method for one teacher might be "poison" for another. Agay (1981) also indicates that "the choice [of methods] will depend on the teacher's training, extent of experience, philosophy of education, personality, the time available for preparation, and the student's age, interests, and learning speed" (p.327). Agay (1981) further explains that to fulfill different students' needs, it is common for teachers to use a combination of method books. As Agay stated, "the choice is an important one. Familiarity with what is available provides a better opportunity to meet not only the teacher's own special needs but also those of the student" (p. 328). Baker (2001) also suggests that because every student is different, teachers need to observe, analyze, and offer varying solutions when selecting a technique method book for a student.

Some educators indicate that the selection of methods needs to take into account a student's age and background; this is especially important for selecting methods for siblings. Rose (1998) indicates that "different methods suit different learning types and different age levels. Siblings several years apart need methods aimed at their particular age group. Yet if a method fits any age group, such as the Suzuki method, siblings several years apart can often use the same one without problems" (p.4). Mason (1998) also claims that if siblings begin lessons in different months or years, he uses the same method as long as it equally suits each child because younger children may have heard their brothers and sisters practicing the pieces and want to play them as well. However, Rose (1998) claims that in most situations, using different music methods for siblings can have more benefits. He explains that "siblings compete in many activities, and the use of separate music methods allows them to progress at their own rate without a point-to-point comparison. The use of separate methods makes this disparity less evident" (p.4). Despite Rose's claims of the advantage of using different methods for siblings, he

also points to some extra advantages of using the same methods for siblings. "Parents often assume their children will use the same series and they appreciate the monetary saving. Even more important, the second sibling often learns at a quicker pace than the first, simply because the music is familiar" (p.4).

Another important thing to consider when choosing a method is the teacher's teaching philosophy and how much a particular method corresponds to that philosophy. As Camp (1983-4) stated, "no series can be all things to all students. Each series has to be judged on the basis of the objectives the authors have attempted to achieve rather than expecting one specific series to cover all kinds of music, all types of musical and artistic concepts" (p. 42).

Considering an individual's needs may be one of the most important aspects for teachers to select and use methods. Manus's statement (1996) supports this idea. He states,

> The writing of a piano method is a complex, arduous, difficult, exasperating, exhilarating, and time-consuming task. Over the years, many methods have been written; few have succeeded. While many teachers can probably write a better method for his or her own students than any of those published, what a writer must strive for in a published method is a kind of universal appeal to a wide-ranging audience-good for all, perfect for none. It's up to the teacher to take the materials available and personalize them to the needs of each individual student. Writing a successful method is more of an art than a science. There is no magic formula that insures success. The true test is in the using-does the course hold the student's interest while skills are being acquired? (p.32)

Do Not Be Afraid to Change

Many educators indicate that each method has its own advantages and that teachers are free to choose the methods they are comfortable with in meeting their goals; nevertheless, educators claim that piano teachers should not be afraid to try new techniques and methods of teaching. Tzeng (1972) claims that piano teachers who always use the same methods and materials to teach show a lack of enthusiasm for investigating new ideas. Lyke (1996) agrees, stating

> It's comfortable to use one series year after year and not have to search for other books or develop one's own set of criteria to guide the musical progress of a young pianist...Teacher must be willing to experiment with new ideas and approaches and evaluate results with their students. If we have a philosophy and decide what we want to teach, how we want to teach it, what end results we want to observe in our students, then we'll have a basis for selecting an appropriate set of using a solid elementary series, the real joy comes when planning musical development for the young pianist at the intermediate level. Here, we are in control to select just the right piece, the right musicianship text or the right technic book from hundreds of choices. (p.52)

Consider Students' Global and Analytic Learning Styles

Some studies show that a student's learning style affects the way that student learns music. Madved (1987) identifies two learning styles, global and analytic. She explains that

> Global processing allows for interpretation, emotional expression, and holistic comparison between styles, periods, and forms. This right hemisphere process accounts for musicians' ability to read all necessary musical notation at once for a holistic or gestalt picture. The analytic processing of the left hemisphere balances the previously mentioned functions. Analytic processing deals with musical analysis, technique, classification, musical vocabulary, and component parts which are used to create music. (p.6)

Madved (1987) further explains how the two learning styles affect students' piano learning, stating

> A pure analytic type piano student prefers to learn by using a sequenced method that progresses from the parts to the whole. In learning a new piece, elements are mastered one at a time in a layered manner...the analytic learner also prefers visual stimuli, such as the musical score, as opposed to aural stimuli...Labels, such as note names and counting patterns, aid the analytic student in learning music...written (visual) assignments recorded in notebooks and practicing schedules also work well for the analytic student...The pure global type piano student learns best when material is presented in a "whole to parts" format which begins with the main idea and is followed by the relevant details...a global student likes to hear the entire piece first...Then, by using an aural mode to perceive the sound of the whole composition, the student can begin to discover the appropriate mechanics needed to reproduce the sound he has already heard. (p.97)

Accordingly, many educators emphasized the importance of combining these two learning styles. Madved (1987) claims that both styles are essential for music learning. A teacher's knowledge of these two types of learning styles and the

proper application of appropriate teaching strategies can have an effect on the teaching-learning relationship. Campbell (1984) indicates that the use of different hemispheres dominates different learning styles, and more connection between hemispheres will result in better learning and memory. YuTsuen (1982) also believes that the two learning styles should be integrated in the processing and making of music.

Unfortunately, Madved (1987) indicates that many teachers do not consider the students' individual learning styles and teach all students using the same style. The result of Madved's (1987) study indicates that when choosing a piano method for a student, teachers need to be concerned with the student's preferred learning style and what learning style a particular method uses. She further claims that "it is the responsibility of the teacher to motivate the student by beginning with what the student likes, gradually relating the initial successes achieved with the popular style to various other styles of music" (p.97).

Consider Taiwan's Particular Culture

In Taiwan, due to the strong influence of western culture, Chinese and Taiwanese music has been ignored. However, many educators claim that it is important to preserve our own musical heritage and further develop it. Chiou (1984) and Huang (1998) indicate that we have to preserve our own traditional art because it reflects our living experience and style and it generates a strong feeling that we belong to the same nation. Lin (1998) and Kuo (1996) indicate that different groups of people create different kinds of music, from which different kinds of beauty and esthetic values arise. The idiom of music can grow by combining and absorbing elements from diverse cultures; therefore, we cannot ignore our traditional art, even though western culture dominates our society.

Many Taiwanese piano pedagogues have recognized the importance of using Taiwanese and Chinese music in piano education. Shie's (1994) study indicates that western piano methods rarely incorporate Chinese or Taiwanese folk tunes. Therefore, piano teachers should select Taiwanese folk songs for supplementary materials when using foreign piano methods. Lin (1997) also claims that many American methods popularly used in Taiwan, such as *Alfred*, *Glover*, and *Bastien*, contain numerous American idiom pieces. It is a pity that there are no Taiwanese-made elementary-age methods, because Taiwanese children lack the chance to approach Chinese music. Li (2001) claims that it is now a crucial and difficult issue for Taiwanese musicians and educators to look for ways to infuse and balance Western music, including piano music, with real needs, which have evolved from traditional Chinese values and Taiwanese history. Law (2002) also indicates that the processes of globalization, localization, and sinophilia are determinants of the transformation of Taiwanese music education. Students in Taiwan are required not only to learn English, Mandarin, and Taiwanese, but they must also become tri-cultural with respect to western classical music, traditional Chinese music, and indigenous Taiwanese music. Piano teachers in Taiwan need to integrate more Taiwanese and Chinese music into their students' repertoire in order to reflect this tri-cultural trend.

Literature on Teacher Interviews and Observations

Many methods are used in qualitative research, such as observation, ethnography, photography, ethnomethodology, dramaturgical interviewing, case study, historiography, and document analysis. In this study, the researcher will use both interviews and observations to collect data; therefore, it is necessary to review qualitative studies that utilized similar methods in order to help the researcher

develop guidelines for conducting the study and for analyzing data.

Paul (1998), Kaplan (1998), Heaney (1998), and Shiu (2000) exclusively employed interviews to collect data. There are many similarities among these studies regarding the procedures used and data analysis. Each of these studies utilized a purposive, non-random sampling technique to select participants. In addition, the data of all these studies were transcribed verbatim and validated by independent interviewers and the interviewees. The interview questions used in most of these studies were reviewed by scholars or educators. However, Heaney's (1998) study, differed from other studies in that it involved a pilot. Heaney first interviewed a subject who was a former concertmaster of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. After completing this pilot study, Heaney revised the interview questions for use in his main study. In analyzing data, Paul (1998) and Shiu (2000) did not address clearly how themes emerged. Kaplan (1998) and Heaney (1998) followed the common procedure, which consists of transcribing the data and then reviewing it several times by randomly picking a participant's transcription. While reading the transcriptions, researchers made note of important events, of the interviewer's feelings during the events, and of interpretations of these events. Then, large categories (properties) and components were generated. After extensive review of the themes which emerged, the researchers discussed the final patterns and themes identified in the study with experts.

Li (2001) also employed the interview approach for her study, but a questionnaire was provided during the individual, in-depth interviews to gather information concerning participants' backgrounds and experience. After individual interviews, a group interview of all the participants was conducted to help the researcher focus on the general attitude of the group. In Li's (2001) study, this group interview served as a means of triangulation.

Speer (1994) and Brand (1998) both utilized the observation method to collect data for their studies. Both utilized the qualitative processes for collecting data but used quantitative approaches to analyze data. In Brand's (1998) study, teachers were asked to select two piano lessons to record on audiotape and were required to complete a survey that gathered demographic information about the teachers and students recorded. The data were transcribed word-for-word and coded for components of sequential patterns, such as teacher presentations, student response, teacher reinforcements, etc. The duration of each activity was measured and then analyzed in a quantitative manner to discover the correlation between activity duration and students' age or learning experience (years). Speer (1994) also used both qualitative and quantitative approaches to analyze data. The learning task given to children was assessed by two experienced judges to confirm that the task chosen was valid for the identification of the psychological entity underlying children's learning of a song. Reliability was then established by asking two independent judges to evaluate the data using a framework of categories and components. Speer (1994) coded data from the most detailed to the least detailed level. The observed behaviors included actions, activities, and phases, and the number of times each occurred behavior was calculated. The judges then calculated the number of mistakes that the children made when learning the song, and these data were analyzed statistically.

Different from Speer and Brand's studies, Schmidt (1998), Davidson, McPherson, and Pitts (2000) employed qualitative data analysis exclusively. Schmidt (1998) spent time each week observing student teachers' classroom settings, and their classroom teaching was videotaped. Detailed notes were written and expanded. The triangulation of Schmidt's (1998) study included interviews with student teachers, cooperating teachers, university supervisors, and music

education faculty. Schmidt (1998) analyzed the collected data through the processes of constant comparison and triangulation, looking for patterns, themes, and developing categories to account for the data. Davidson, McPherson, and Pitts's (2000) study also involved only qualitative techniques. Face-to-face, in-depth interviews and observations were used to collect data. This study was a longitudinal study in which young instrumental players were observed and videotaped for the first 20 months of learning. In addition to videotaping of practice sessions, the researchers interviewed parents, teachers, and children to monitor the amount of practice children engaged in and the ways in which their attitudes to learning and practicing changed. Many of the questions were consistent across the period studied, which allowed direct comparison over time. In data analysis, David, McPherson, and Pitts's study is similar to that used in Schmidt's (1998) study.

Huang's (1994) study combined document analysis and interview methods. First, Huang analyzed two piano methods, *Bastein* and *Glover*. Then she interviewed six Taiwanese piano teachers regarding their opinions on how to use these two methods. The results of the interviews with each individual were reported as falling within one of several pre-conceptive categories. Huang did not discuss similarities or differences among participants and did not compare the results of interviews to her analysis of the two piano methods. However, the interview section of her study serves as supplementary material for her document analysis.

Summary

European methods strongly emphasize the development of finger strength, focused energy in finger tips, artistic touch on the keyboard, sensitive ears, and other essential pianistic techniques; however, development of musicianship is

usually taught exclusively by teachers, and the exercises provided are usually unappealing. Japanese methods, such as the Suzuki and Yamaha methods, established the philosophy of developing highly aural ability by involving students in a musical environment during early childhood before moving to the next stage of learning—notation reading. American methods, based on psychological breakthroughs, develop systematic reading approaches and provide musicianship exercises that help students read and understand music more easily. Also, American methods offer various diverse repertoires for individuals' needs. The literature on teacher interviews and observations illustrates several different ways or different combinations of methods to conduct qualitative research, which provides guidelines for the researcher as to how to conduct the interviews and observations for this study.

The extensive literature review helped the researcher to understand that all of these methods, whether from Europe, Japan or America, have their own strengths and weaknesses, and that this diversity is what enables the different methods to co-exist in Taiwan's unique piano learning environment. Understanding the values of different methods, as well as the various educators' philosophies of using and choosing methods, helped the researcher focus on interviewing and observing Taiwanese piano teachers. Moreover, it enabled the researcher to discuss how much of an impact cultural differences might have in selecting and using methods by comparing information gathered from Taiwan's experts with those from literature reviews.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

As outlined in the first chapter, the purposes of this study are: (a) to evaluate the use of elementary-age piano methods in Taiwan and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of different methods from an expert's point of view, especially relating to Taiwan's cultural background and social structure, and (b) to provide a basis for developing methods suitable for Taiwanese culture in the future. In this chapter, the research design, instrument development, selection of participants, establishment of trustworthiness, data analysis, and participants' backgrounds, are addressed.

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative methodological approach in which individual, in-depth interviews with ten expert Taiwanese piano teachers and observations of each expert's teaching of two elementary-age students were conducted to collect data. As indicated in Bogdan and Biklen's (1998) book,

> In qualitative research, the researcher enters the world of the people he or she plans to study, gets to know them and earns their trust, and systematically keeps a detailed written record of what is heard and observed...qualitative researchers go to the particular setting under study because they are concerned with context. They feel that action can best be understood when it is observed in the setting in which it occurs. (p.5)

The main purpose of employing a qualitative interview design instead of using a quantitative survey was to gather in-depth insights from expert Taiwanese piano teachers. The details regarding teachers' opinions about different methods and concerning how teachers use methods in lessons were easier to gather using a qualitative research design. In this study, observations of experts' piano teaching provided a way to verify and describe the manner in which the educational philosophies and techniques described in the interviews were implemented in the

actual music lesson. The observations in this study helped the researcher to establish trustworthiness.

Instrument Development

The instrument in this study was an interview protocol (Appendix D). The interview questions were grouped into five categories: (a) information on general educational background and on working and performing experiences, etc., (b) discussion of the elementary-age methods used in Taiwan, (c) selection and use of piano methods, (d) the Taiwanese culture of piano teaching and use of methods, and (e) development of future Taiwanese methods. Dividing the interview questions into five categories helped the researcher interview piano teachers by moving gradually from general questions to centered ones.

The interview questions were reviewed by Dr. Kuo, a piano professor at Taipei Municipal Teachers' College, and three experienced Taiwanese piano teachers in order to see if these questions were appropriate and valid for this study. Two of the teachers have Master's degrees in piano performance, and the other has a Bachelor's degree in the same field. These three teachers were selected from a private musical institution, *Kuo U Ru Bau*, located in Taipei City. They have taught elementary-age students for five to eight years. In order to reduce possible bias, these three teachers were not included in the ten subjects interviewed by the researcher in the main study. This activity, a review by a panel of teachers, was one of the methods used to build trustworthiness in this study. The researcher began the interview procedure after eliminating major sources of disagreement among the three teachers. Several minor changes/suggestions from the teachers were taken into account in formulating the final interview questions, resulting in the changes as follows: after discussing with these three teachers:

1. Asking teachers about their teaching philosophy at the very outset of the

interview instead of asking it during the discussion of methods.

2. Since use of digital piano and music computer software are not very common in Taiwan, the question regarding the usage of technology refers to mainly CD accompaniment.

3. The piano method books listed in the interview protocol are numerous. These teachers believe that no one uses all of these books nor knows all of these methods well. The teachers suggested that the researcher let the teachers interviewed each pick the methods they know well first and then ask detailed questions about only those methods. In particular, it was suggested that the researcher not ask detailed questions about those methods a teacher does not know well.

4. Questions related to general music classes may not be suitable for a piano teacher who has never taught general music classes in elementary schools. Whether or not to ask these questions depends on a teacher's individual teaching experience.

Participants

Ten Taiwanese piano teachers participated in interviews for this study. The participants met the following requirements: (a) be Taiwanese who understand the particular Taiwanese musical culture, (b) have graduate degrees in piano (piano pedagogy, piano performance, or music education with an emphasis in piano or piano pedagogy), (c) have at least five years of piano instruction experience at the elementary level, and (d) be at least 30 years old. Taking into consideration the fact that piano teachers trained at the same university might be strongly influenced by the same professor, the researcher did not choose more than two subjects who graduated from the same university. To protect each participant's confidentiality, a

pseudonym was given to each participant in study records.

The *non-probability, snowball sampling* technique was used to select participants. This technique began by explaining and discussing the purpose of the study with Debbie, an expert Taiwanese piano teacher who the researcher knew met the criteria stated above. Then, the researcher contacted Debbie and asked her to recommend one or more other experts. Contacting the piano teachers whom the first expert recommended allowed the researcher to find the next expert in the series. This process continued until the researcher found ten appropriate experts who agreed to participate in this study.

In addition, the researcher observed twenty elementary-age (7 to 12) piano students. The ten experts then selected the students. Each expert selected two students (whom he or she taught at the beginning level of instruction and who were using elementary methods) for the researcher to observe in a lesson setting with the expert teacher. Lessons were video taped. Approximately thirty minutes before each piano lesson, the researcher installed a video-taping device and asked the teacher questions about the student's backgrounds (e.g. age, daily practicing time, years of learning piano, etc.). The researcher then left before the piano lesson begin in order to avoid distracting the student. The audiotapes of teachers' interviews and videotapes of teachers' piano lessons were identified by numbers. The researcher adhered a numbered label to each audio and video tape.

Procedures

In this study, the researcher conducted observations prior to interviews. The researcher scheduled two 30 to 60 minute one-on-one teaching observations per teacher. Interviews that took place as a follow-up to the observations provided the researcher with better ideas about which questions to ask and helped the researcher

improvise questions in order to gather in-depth information during interviews. Furthermore, the process of conducting observations before interviews discouraged teachers from developing any biases based on the researcher's interview questions. The observations were video taped with the permission of teachers, students, and the students' parents. A pseudonym was given to each student in order to protect the participant's confidentiality. All of the observations were also confidential. Teachers, parents, and students read and signed a consent form (Appendix B, D and F) before the researcher conducted the observations.

After observing each teacher's lessons, the researcher scheduled a session for the interview. The interview with each subject took place in person and lasted approximately one hour. The interview was audio taped with the subject's permission, and was transcribed word for word. A high quality tape recorder and microphone were used during the interviews. As Wang (2000) claimed, recording of interviews can insure that the researcher will not miss any details of participants' statements. After the interviews were transcribed, copies of the transcripts were sent to the participants to assure them of the study's trustworthiness. Before analyzing the data, the researcher contacted the participants by email and phone to ask them to review the transcripts to see if they would like to make any changes. Some supplementary information and minor changes were made by each teacher. The researcher used the updated data for coding in the data analysis process. In these interviews, a pseudonym was given to each subject in order to protect the participant's confidentiality, and the individual interviews were confidential. Also, all participants read and signed a consent form (Appendix A) before the researcher conducted this project. After collecting all the data from interviews and observations, the researcher analyzed the data.

In Taiwan, the official language is Mandarin Chinese, of which the most

common dialect is Taiwanese. Although students are required to take some English classes beginning in junior high, English has never been popular for daily use in Taiwan. Therefore, in this study, all the interviews were conducted in Mandarin Chinese, transcribed, and then translated to English.

Data Analysis

In qualitative research, data analysis involves the process of identifying patterns. As described in Bogdan and Biklen's (1998) book,

> Date analysis is the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, fieldnotes, and other materials that you accumulate to increase your own understanding of them and to enable you to present what you have discovered to others. Analysis involves working with data, organizing them, breaking them into manageable units, synthesizing them, searching them for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others. Data analysis moves you from the rambling pages of description to those products. (p.157)

The data collected for this research consisted of transcripts of the interviews during which the participants spoke of their experiences using and selecting piano methods, as well as observations recorded during the piano lessons. To discover these Taiwanese piano teachers' experiences choosing piano methods and teaching, the researcher looked and searched for patterns and common themes. In qualitative research, this is the process of coding. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1998),

> Developing a coding system involves several steps: You search through your data for regularities and patterns as well as for topics your data cover, and then you write down words and phrases to represent these topics and patterns. These words and phrases are coding categories. They are a means of sorting the descriptive data you have collected. (p.171)

In a qualitative study, it is common to use a computer word-processing program to assist in locating codes. In this study, besides reviewing the data by reading, the researcher used simple computer word-processing software, *Microsoft Word*, to assist in locating codes. The codes were categorized into four main categories: opinion of methods, use and selection of methods, problems of using

foreign methods, and the development of future Taiwanese methods. These four categories correspond to the research questions stated in the first chapter. However, to avoid researcher bias, another independent reviewer reevaluated the data gathered from interviews and observations and reviewed the researcher's codings. Afterwards, the researcher discussed and resolved any disagreements with the independent reviewer.

Trustworthiness

In a qualitative study, due to the difficult nature of generalization, the terms "validity" and "reliability" are usually avoided. However, it is important to establish trustworthiness in a qualitative study because it shows that the researcher has attempted to reduce his or her personal biases. In this study, five methods were used to establish trustworthiness: colleague review, member checking, thick descriptions, lesson observations, and the participation of an independent reviewer.

Colleague review allowed the researcher to examine whether the interview questions were valid for this research. After the researcher generated the interview questions, the questions were then reviewed by Dr. Kuo and three experienced Taiwanese piano teachers who have taught elementary-age piano students for at least five years and the interview questions were revised. The researcher conducted the interviews after the questions were agreed upon to a high degree by all three piano teachers.

Member checking allowed the study's participants to review what they said, and provided them with the opportunity to elaborate on what they stated previously. In this study, after transcribing the interviews, the researcher sent transcripts to all of the participants for them to review. Also, the subjects had a chance to change or add things they forgot to say during the interview.

The third technique used to establish trustworthiness was thick description. In this study, the personal profiles of each of the participants were provided in order to allow readers of the study's results to familiarize themselves with the background of each person. Unlike quantitative research, qualitative studies do not control the variables, and the samples selected are usually not random; therefore, the results are almost impossible to generalize. Nevertheless, through having a better understanding of each participant, the audience can speculate as to how much teachers' opinions are trustworthy.

It is human nature that when answering an interviewer's questions, people tend to express an ideal situation rather than what in fact transpired. Therefore, these interviews should provide additional insight into the ways teachers use the methods. Observing the piano lessons of ten Taiwanese experts helped the researcher compare what teachers said during the interviews with what they did during an actual lesson.

It is also natural for a researcher's interpretation of data to be biased. Therefore, after completing the coding activity, the last method to establish trustworthiness is to have another independent reviewer read the interview transcriptions and observation field notes in order to review the researcher's codings. In this study, some incongruencies were found, which the researcher discussed with the independent reviewer until the differences between the researcher and the reviewer were resolved.

Summary

In this study, the researcher employed a qualitative methodological approach in which individual, in-depth interviews with ten expert Taiwanese piano teachers and observations of each expert's teaching of two elementary-age students were

conducted to collect data. After the researcher developed the interview protocol, Dr. Kuo and three experienced Taiwanese piano teachers reviewed the interview questions to verify that these questions were appropriate and valid for this study. The non-probability, snowball sampling technique was used to select ten participants who meet certain requirements. In this study, the researcher conducted observations prior to interviews in order to provide ideas during interviews and to eliminate possible biases. The data collected for this research consisted of transcripts of the interviews and observations. After the interviews were transcribed, copies of the transcripts were sent to the participants to assure them of the study's trustworthiness. Later, the researcher searched for patterns and common themes. The last step used to establish the trustworthiness of the study was the participation of an independent reviewer. After coding the data, the researcher discussed and resolved disagreements with the independent reviewer before addressing the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

After analyzing the data and discussing it with the independent reviewer, the researcher reports what was found in this study. This chapter is divided into three main parts. The first part provides the profile of each expert teacher. The profiles address the teachers' educational backgrounds and teaching experiences, which allows readers to familiarize themselves with the background of each person. In the second part of this chapter, comparison of interviews and observations regarding teachers' philosophies, and their use and selection of methods are addressed. As described in the previous Methodology chapter, comparison of what teachers said during interviews with what they actually did during lessons served as a means of trustworthiness. In the last part of this chapter, the researcher presents the findings from the interviews under four major categories: opinions of methods, use and selection of methods, problems of using methods in Taiwan's culture, and the development of future Taiwanese methods. Appendix H indicates the codes of the teachers' interviews.

Description of the Participants

Profile #1—Debbie

Debbie began taking piano lessons when she was seven years old. She received her professional music training while studying in Music Gifted Program (MGP) in Tainan Girls' High School, majoring in piano and violin performance. Debbie holds a Bachelor's degree in music education with a concentration in piano from Taipei Municipal Teachers' College in Taiwan, and two master's degrees: one in piano performance from Ohio University, and the other one in piano accompanying from Florida State University. She is currently working on her

D.M.A. degree at Florida State University in piano accompanying. Although none of Debbie's degrees are in piano pedagogy, she took several piano pedagogy classes while studying at universities.

Debbie began teaching piano when she was a sophomore student. Since then, she has taught more than fifty students, most of whom are elementary-age beginners although some are at advanced levels ranging from elementary students to adults. She also teaches in an elementary MGP, where students range from late intermediate to advanced levels. After graduating from Teacher's College, Debbie worked in an elementary school as a full-time teacher, teaching general music classes for several years. Apart from teaching, Debbie is also an active performer. She has given several solo recitals in Taiwan and the United States. Also, she has accompanied for many instrumentalists as well as operas and choirs, performing in Canada, Taiwan, and the United States.

Despite Debbie's busy teaching and performing schedule, she attended a piano pedagogy conference while studying in the United States and she has attended several workshops in Taiwan to improve her teaching skills. Also, she goes to music stores regularly to look for updated information. Furthermore, she likes to discuss students' problems with her colleagues because she thinks she benefits and improves her teaching a lot through discussing with her colleagues and friends.

Profile #2—Michael

Michael began piano lessons at age eight. He holds a Bachelor's degree in piano performance with a minor in voice from Chinese Culture University in Taiwan, and a master's degree in performance from Trinity College of Music in England. He began to teach piano while studying at the university in Taiwan. Although Michael now only teaches approximately five students per week, he has

more than ten years of piano teaching experience. Almost all of his students are elementary-age beginners. Apart from teaching piano at his studio, his other working experience includes teaching piano in YAMAHA, KAWAI institutions, teaching general music classes as a part-time teacher in an elementary school, playing piano at several nightclubs and bars, teaching voice, and accompanying for a choir while studying in England. Michael is currently a full-time instructor at a junior college in Taiwan teaching music appreciation classes.

To improve his teaching and performance skills, Michael attended several piano performance and choir conducting conferences when he studied in England. In Taiwan, he believes that the major way to improve teaching is to go to music stores, looking for new information about teaching methods as well as some newly released piano education books.

Profile #3—Kevin

At age nine, Kevin began to take piano lessons. Since then he has continued to take piano lessons with famous pianists in Taiwan to improve his performance skills. Kevin possesses a Bachelor's degree in music education (concentration in piano, minor in flute) from Taipei Municipal Teachers' College, and a Master's degree in music education with an emphasis in piano pedagogy from National Taiwan Teacher's University.

Kevin began to teach piano while studying in college. Except during a two-year period of military training, Kevin has always taught some piano students at home or in musical institutions. He has more than ten years experience teaching piano as well as teaching flute. He estimates that he has taught nearly one hundred students, and on average, he teaches eight to ten piano students every week. Most of his students are elementary-age beginners while some of them are higher levels, preparing to study in MGP. Also, he teaches some adults who take piano lessons

for fun. Apart from teaching piano at home, Kevin is currently a full-time general music class teacher at Bo-Cha elementary school in Taipei. Kevin was an active performer on both piano and flute when studying at college. He played in many joint recitals and chamber recitals in Taipei, Taichung, Hua-Lian, and Kaoshing. After Kevin graduated from college and began to work in the elementary school, his performance experience became mostly conducting children's band, and accompanying for children's vocal and instrumental competitions.

As a busy schoolteacher, Kevin has attended several piano pedagogy workshops in Taiwan and goes to music stores often to acquire new information. In addition, he frequently surfs the Internet looking for information on piano instruction. Kevin also likes to discuss piano teaching problems with his friends.

Profile #4—Holly

Holly began taking piano lessons when she was ten, which is considered late compared to the majority of piano students in Taiwan. She quit taking piano lessons in junior high due to preparation for the Joint Entrance Exam to high school. After studying in high school for one year, and because of her strong interest in music, Holly decided to quit high school and try to take the music entrance exam for Tainan Junior College. She passed the exam and studied at that junior college for five years with a major in piano performance. She later went to Japan for further study. There she received her Bachelor and Master's degrees in music education with a concentration in piano from Fu-Gin University.

Holly began to teach piano while studying at Tainan Junior College. After graduating from college, she taught piano and some general music classes in a MGP. Since then, she has accumulated ten years of piano teaching experience and has taught countless students. Her students' levels range from elementary-age

beginners to advanced MGP students. Now Holly is a full-time housewife and mother of two children, and teaches mostly beginners at her studio.

Holly tries to improve her piano teaching skills by going to music stores regularly and surfing the Internet frequently. She also attends recorder workshops once a week to have a better understanding of Baroque performance style and interpretations. She explains,

> When most students play Baroque pieces, they only think about the harpsichord or clavier, but they forget that recorder was a very common instrument to play together with the harpsichord. So when we interpret a Baroque piece, not only do we need to think about the harpsichord, but also in many cases we need to think about the Baroque ensemble music…Also, the articulation in Baroque music usually bothers teachers a lot. After attending the recorder workshops, I have more confidence about the Baroque articulation and musical style. I thought it [recorder workshop] won't really relate to my piano teaching, but actually it does. I guess all the different kinds of music are actually related to each other. If you just focus on the piano, it will limit your view of thinking of music" (Individual interview, p.5, 7/21/2003).

Profile #5—Lisa

Lisa began her piano lessons when she was in kindergarten. While studying in junior high, she was encouraged to take the Chinese instrument Gu Jeng and try to study in Wa-Gang Art School. After passing the entrance exam, she then majored in the Chinese instrument Nan Hu with a minor in piano at Wa-Gang Art School. She later received her Bachelor's degree in piano performance from Gwan-Du Christian College in Taiwan and a Master's degree in piano pedagogy from Ohio University.

Lisa has very colorful working and teaching experience. After beginning to teach while in college, Lisa worked for Orff, Pace, Yamaha and some other music institutions before she studied in the United States. After returning to Taiwan, Lisa taught music appreciation classes at a junior college, piano lessons at MGPs, and general music classes at a high school. She currently teaches piano in several

MGPs and at her private studio. Her students in MGPs are mostly in advanced levels while her private students are mostly elementary-age beginners.

Apart from regularly attending Dalcroze workshops to improve her teaching, Lisa also attends a lot of piano pedagogy workshops and conferences. She states,

> Attending these workshops and conferences is not just to get the new information. The most important benefit is that it stimulates your thinking. You think more, deeper, and also you expose yourself to this kind of environment [pedagogical environment]. That's how we improve our teaching" (Individual interview, p.3, 7/12/2003).

Profile #6—Molly

While taking piano lessons with a neighborhood teacher at age seven, Molly progressed quickly and was accepted to MGP during fifth grade of elementary school. From that time until high school, she received professional music training at MGPs. After her high school MGP training, Molly studied at Taiwan National Teachers' University, majoring in piano performance with a minor in flute performance. She is also an excellent Pi-Pa (Chinese string instrument) player. Molly holds her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in piano performance from Taiwan National Teachers' University.

Molly began her piano teaching experience early in high school while teaching some neighborhood children. She stated, "in my generation, in Tainan, there were not many qualified piano teachers. So, when there were neighborhood kids who wanted to learn piano, they just took the lessons with me" (Individual interview, p.4, 7/16/2003). Molly currently teaches general music classes in Yang-Ming Mountain elementary school in Taipei. She usually has four or five private piano students in a week, almost all of which are elementary-age students. Molly is also an active performer. When studying in MGPs and at the university, she gave several recitals and played both piano and flute in joint recitals as well as chamber recitals. After graduating from college, because of her full-time job at the

elementary school, her major performance experience now is mostly conducting children's choir, children's band, and some accompanying.

To improve her piano teaching skills, Molly goes to music stores regularly to look for new materials and updated information. She also often goes to the National Concert Hall and the National Opera House to listen to the concerts and pick up information about the piano workshops. She also has attended several piano, recorder, and music education workshops.

Profile #7—Cathy

Cathy received Yamaha music institution training when she was a pre-schooler, and she began her private piano lessons at age seven. Because of preparation for the Joint Entrance Exam, Cathy quit piano lessons for one year, during third grade of junior high. After she got into high school, Cathy began taking piano lessons again. She received her Bachelor's degree in piano performance from Fu-Lun University and her Master's degree in the same field from Taiwan Liberal Arts University.

Although Cathy's major profession is in piano performance, she claims she enjoys teaching piano as much as performing. Cathy has taught piano ever since studying at Fu-Lun University for approximately ten years. At the beginning of her teaching career, she taught only intermediate or advanced level students. After studying at Taiwan Liberal Arts University, however, Cathy began to teach beginners. She currently owns a piano studio in Taipei and teaches about 20 students every week. Most of her current students are elementary-age beginners although several are more advanced elementary-age students.

As a busy teacher, Cathy goes to music stores frequently to browse new teaching materials and newly released books on piano education. She also surfs the Internet often to look for updated piano pedagogy information. She honestly says

that she seldom attends piano workshops because she thinks that most piano workshops are very business-oriented, attempting to sell their methods. She did not benefit from those workshops very much.

Profile #8—Candy

Candy began her piano lessons at age ten. Because she started taking piano lessons late, she did not study in any MGP or any music school in Taiwan. Instead, she went to a business junior college to study. Later, because of her strong interest in music, she went to the United States to study music. Candy holds a Bachelor's degree in music education and a Master's degree in piano pedagogy from the University of Oregon.

First teaching while studying at a business junior college, Candy declares that she has always had a good relationship with neighborhood children, so even though she was not trained professionally, she sometimes had about 30 students in a week. When she studied in the United States, she taught in a private musical institution, teaching about ten piano students per a week. Candy is currently a part-time instructor in Taina Girls' College, a piano teacher in several private music institutions, and teaches some private piano students at her studio. Most of Candy's piano students are beginners, ranging from pre-school to elementary-age levels.

Candy attended two piano pedagogy conferences and many workshops while studying in the United States. While working in some music institutions, she has had a good chance to review newly released piano education books and piano teaching materials. Candy also uses the Internet to look for piano education information.

Profile #9—Anna

Anna began her piano lessons at age seven. She holds a Bachelor's degree in piano performance from Don-Heigh University in Taiwan and a Master's degree in the same field from Ohio State University. Although her major profession is in piano performance, she took piano pedagogy classes while studying in school.

As Anna began to teach while studying at the university in Taiwan, she has taught nearly one hundred students. Anna is now a full-time general music class teacher in a junior high school. She also teaches some advanced level students in MGPs and some elementary to intermediate level students at her studio. Anna enjoys teaching general music classes more than teaching piano. She especially dislikes teaching piano in MGPs because of the high-pressure environment. She stated,

> There are a lot of activities going on in a semester—the students' recitals, competitions, mid-term and final piano exams. Every exam has rankings. Parents, for sure, compete a lot. They want to know if you can create the competition winner…so you need to deal with not only the students, but also the parents. Also, your colleagues compete a lot, too." (Individual interview, p.4, 7/18/2003)

Anna is an active performer. She gave quite a few solo recitals while studying at universities. She accompanies many singers as well as instrumentalists and performs nationally in Taiwan. Anna also attended several piano pedagogy workshops and conferences while studying in the United States. She feels guilty that after returning to Taiwan, because of her packed schedule, she does not try hard to find ways to improve her teaching skills. The major way Anna improves her teaching skills is by going to the music institution owned by her friend to look for the latest information.

Profile #10—Karen

Karen began her piano training at around age five. Although she never studied in MGP, Karen took piano lessons with MGP piano teachers from the

beginning of her piano lessons. She holds a Bachelor's degree in piano performance from Chinese Culture University in Taiwan and a Master's degree in piano pedagogy from the University of Oregon. Karen has more than eight years of piano teaching experience. She began teaching piano while studying at Chinese Culture University. Karen also taught several students while studying in the United States. Most of her students during her school years were elementary-age beginners. After she returned to Taiwan, because of teaching in several MGPs, her students now are in mostly advanced levels while several students whom she teaches at home are in elementary level. Karen has given several solo recitals while studying in schools. Apart from her busy piano teaching schedule, she accompanies several singers and instrumentalists.

Karen attended quite a few piano pedagogy conferences and workshops while studying in the United States. After returning to Taiwan, however, her opportunities to attend piano conferences have lessened. To improve her teaching skills, Karen goes to music stores and bookstores regularly to look for the latest information and new teaching materials. She also uses the Internet to find teaching information. In addition, Karen likes to discuss and share her teaching experience with her colleagues and friends. She feels strongly that Taiwan should develop a large-scale piano pedagogy conference like America to educate Taiwanese piano teachers.

Comparison of Interviews and Observations

Teacher #1— Debbie

The methods that Debbie claims she uses often for elementary-age students include *Beyer*, *Hal Leonard*, and *Alfred*. She also combines these methods with some repertoire anthologies, such as *Piano Little Pieces* compiled by Shiau Chuan Yi Lang , *Piano Dreaming Forest* compiled by Tian Wan Shin Ming, and Keith

Snell's intermediate graded series. For technique, she likes to use *Children's Hanon*, *A Dozen A Day*, and Keith Snell's *Etudes* and *Scale* books as supplementary materials. She assigns some Chinese literature, but only for high level students, not for elementary-age beginners. During observations of her teaching, the methods and materials she used includes *Alfred*, *Hal Leonard*, *Beyer*, *Piano Dreaming Forest* compiled by Tian Wan Shin Ming, and Keith Snell's intermediate graded series, which matches what she said in the interview. However, technique supplementary books, such as *Children's Hanon* and *A Dozen A Day*, and Chinese literature that Debbie said she uses were not seen during the observations. Debbie explains that these two students take 30 minute piano lessons, so she basically lets them learn technique from the lesson books, Keith Snell's etudes, and from the repertoire given. Also, these two students are in lower intermediate levels, so she did not assign them any Chinese literature.

As to her teaching philosophy, Debby generally divides students into two categories: those who take piano for fun, and those who take it for a future career in piano. She believes that a teacher needs to have an interview with each student and the student's parents before accepting the student in order to see why the child would like to take piano lessons. From the interview, the teacher can create plans for each different student. For those students who take piano for fun, Debby concentrates on keeping students' interest in playing piano, discovering the musical elements, and helping them appreciate the beauty of music. For those who may consider piano as a future career, mostly MGP students, Debbie concentrates on developing their professional pianistic technique in her piano lessons. She explains that MGP offers many ear training, music theory, music appreciation, and music history classes; therefore, she does not need to focus on these fields in her piano lessons for MGP students.

Due to the purpose of this study, in Debbie's lessons, both of the students the researcher observed were elementary-age beginners. Teaching of MGP students was not observed in this study. In her lessons, Debbie was very energetic and spent most of the time discovering the musical elements for the students and asking students to play the pieces with expression and technical ease. She also likes to use metaphors to help students understand the music. "When you play ***p***, you need to make sure it sounds, just like you whisper to someone. It's very soft, but still need to whisper clearly in order to let the person understand you" (observation, p.1, 7/4/2003). When explaining ***ritard*** for a student, Debby said, "the ***ritard*** should sound natural. When your father drives a car seeing a red right, he must gradually push the brake, not suddenly. Playing ***ritard*** on the piano is the same" (observation, p.7, 7/4/2003). Basically, Debbie let the students play first, and afterwards identified their problems, including both technical and musical problems, in a very organized manner. She did not use specific books for a specific purpose. Debbie focuses on many details such as phrasing, balancing, breathing, dynamic contrast, expression markings, good touch and tone quality, and rhythmic sense on every piece selected from the methods. For example, when explaining the phrasing, Debbie said, "Let's play with a faster tempo to make it [phrase] flow. Let's not count by beat. Count with a unit of four notes" (observation, p.2, 7/4/2003). "Don't play an accent on the downbeat here. Play it softly at the beginning, so the phrase will have room to go" (observation, p.4, 7/4/2003). It seems that for Debbie, the methods books serve as repertoire collection, and detailed musical aspects of each piece were integrated and explained to the students.

Teacher #2—Michael

In the interview, Michael said the most frequent methods he uses are *Beyer* and *Glover*; however, currently he likes to use a new Malaysian method, *Made*

Easy Series, as well. He also uses some other methods for additional repertoire selection, including Japanese anthologies such as *Piano Little Pieces* by Shiau Chuan Yi Lang, *Piano Dreaming Forest* compiled by Tian Wan Shin Ming, and other American methods. In the observations, these methods were all used and besides these methods, *Alfred*, *Beanstalk's Basics for Piano*, and *Children's Hanon* were also selected. In the interview, Michael said that he assigns some Chinese literature for higher level students; however, because of the observations were limited to elementary-age level students, no Chinese literature was used during observations of Michael's lessons in this study.

In the interview, Michael said he believes that the most important thing for beginning piano lessons is to develop students' techniques, relaxation, posture, and hand position. He claims that these are fundamental to becoming a good pianist in the future, and these aspects should be addressed in the beginning of piano lessons. If these basic tools are not well-developed at a young age, it will be difficult to compensate when trying to develop them later. He explains,

> Because it [Chinese Culture University] is higher educational training, my piano teacher emphasized musicality more. I guess I was lucky. Because I had very good finger training when I was young. I didn't have to suffer from the difficulty that other students underwent. Some of my classmates' techniques were not sufficient, so preparing pieces for recitals and juries were difficult for them. I really thank my previous teachers. They developed my finger technique, good hand position, and body posture…You need to develop it from the beginning of the piano lessons. (Individual interview, p.2, 7/19/2003)

To develop students' finger technique, Michael usually uses *Beyer* because of its extensive finger exercises; nevertheless, for relaxation, posture, and hand position, he thinks the method books do not matter. Rather, how well students learn these basic tools depends on how a teacher teaches these aspects. For teaching musical concepts, Michael likes to use newer American methods. He explains that he also uses some old methods such as *John Thompson*, but basically they are for

additional supplementary repertoire. During the observations, Michael combined *Beyer* with other diverse methods, mostly American methods, to teach. Probably because the two students observed in this study are in very beginning levels, Michael did not focus on a lot of musical details. Instead, he focused on how to use the arm weight to drop the keys and also on finger action. For relaxation, Michael uses some activities that help students to feel how to coordinate arms, hands, and body to play the piano. "Jenny, let's do the relax exercise. Put your two hands on the keyboard. Relax your shoulders, then relax your forearms, then upper arms, then drop your thumbs onto the keys…let's lie down on the floor, and put your hands like this. Can you feel the strength of your fingers?" (observation, p.3, 7/18/2003). During the observations, Michael employed *Beanstalk* and *Glover*'s theory books to teach note spelling, reading, and other musical theoretical concepts. This corresponds to what he said during the interview regarding what he likes to use for teaching musical concepts.

Teacher #3—Kevin

Kevin believes that every method has its own strengths, so he usually combines different methods to teach instead of using books from the same series. Among the methods he uses, *Beyer* and *Alfred* are the most frequently selected. He also said that when students gradually move to higher levels, he usually combines these methods with traditional materials, such as *Hanon*, *Burgmüller*, and *Czerny*, as well as Kabalevsky's pedagogical pieces; however, he has recently decided that Keith Snell's graded series that divides scales, etudes, solo repertoire of Baroque and Classical, and Romantic and Twentieth's century serves as better supplementary materials than those traditional materials because Keith Snell's series provides a diversity of etudes and repertoire with good care of leveling. In the interview, Kevin also claims that he does not use American methods' theory or

technique books, and seldom assigns Chinese literature for students. He explains that theory can be explained using method's lesson books, and for technique, he prefers to use more traditional materials. During the observations, Kevin used *Alfred*'s *Lesson Book* (Level 4 and 6), *Children's Hanon*, and Keith Snell's graded series. This matches what Kevin said from the interview except that the *Beyer* method was not used during the observations. The researcher assumes that this is because *Beyer* is basically for the first year of piano study, and these two students' levels seem to have surpassed *Beyer*'s level.

Kevin believes that for a majority of piano learners, the most important thing is to keep their life-long interest in playing piano, listening to classical music, and discovering the beauty of music. To achieve these goals, he believes that the selection of repertoire should have a balance between artistic and entertaining values. Also, technique and artistry should be equally addressed in the lessons in order to make progress in piano playing. Kevin believes that a lack of either aspect will not keep students' life-long interest in playing piano. Evidence of support for Kevin's goals was witnessed during observations of his teaching, as *Hanon* and Keith Snell's series are often considered serious materials, while *Alfred*, in most educators' opinions from the literature review chapter, provides more balanced repertoire between serious and popular materials; however, the borderline between those categories can be subjective. In Kevin's two piano lessons, he basically followed the pace of each book, and identified student's problems immediately after student's playing of each piece. Then, Kevin worked on many details such as articulation, touch, dynamic markings, use of wrist, finger expansion, balance between hands, etc. Kevin's teaching of the piece "Haunted House" is an example of his focus on detail.

> You need to work on the triplet rhythm (Kevin circles the triplets on the music). Let's clap the rhythm before you play on the piano…this is a mysterious piece, so let's start the piece with a very soft volume (Kevin demonstrates). Put your fingers close to the keys, and use your arm weight to drop the fingers. You should feel the energy on your fingertips…you also need to work on articulation. Some notes are staccato, some should be connected to the next notes. You need to distinguish these differences…your touch is way too heavy. Make it lighter in order to play this mysterious piece" (observation, p.1-2, 6/27/2003).

This example shows that Kevin emphasized both technique and artistry in the lessons observed. Overall, in Kevin's piano lessons, students play few books and few pieces. The quality of the work seems more important than quantity. As to the teaching of theory, the researcher did not see any theory teaching in either of these two piano lessons. This may due to the fact that these two students are in higher beginning levels, and they already possess basic theoretical knowledge, so Kevin did not teach and explain theory in every lesson.

Kevin honestly says that he enjoys teaching intermediate or advanced level students much more than beginning level students. He explains, "It [teaching piano] is one of the few things that I can do well. I like to teach higher level students much more because they usually have already acquired some technique and basic musical knowledge, so I can focus on discovering the composer's thoughts to them. I enjoy teaching that, not the hand position, fingers… those beginning things. The pieces in beginning levels are too simple and boring to me" (Individual interview, p. 4-5, 7/15/2003). For the study, Kevin selected two students who were in higher beginning levels. Kevin's teaching of very early beginners was not observed because he currently does not teach any very early beginners.

Teacher #4—Holly

In the interview with Holly, she claimed that she likes to use Bastien's series as main books, combined with other supplementary materials, such as *Children's Hanon*, Czerny's easier etudes, *Beyer*, and Guritt's easy pieces for the beginning to

early intermediate level students. She also explains that although she uses most of the books from *Bastien*'s series, she does not use its theory books because she usually explains music theory from *Bastien*'s lesson book and reviews the musical concepts occasionally using other supplementary materials. During the observations of her teaching, Holly utilized Bastien's *Sight Reading* books, *Technique* books, and *Lesson* books, combined with *Beyer*, *Czerny 100 etudes* op.599, *Piano Little Pieces* compiled by Shiau Chuan Yi Lang, *Burgmüller 25 etudes*, and Gurlitt's *Album for the Young*, op.140. In comparing the interview with the observations, what Holly said in the interview closely matches the methods she used during the observations.

As to her teaching philosophy, Holly believes that teaching of functional skills, music theory, technique, and musicality, should all be included at the very outset of piano lessons. Through this integral education, which involves a teacher's demanding requirements, students will not only develop good performance ability, but will also be able to appreciate the beauty of music more. Holly states,

> I think we should teach them the theory, functional skills...also teaching musicality should start from the very beginning of piano lessons. We shouldn't wait until they have acquired good technique. Their ear won't be as sensitive if they begin to pay attention to artistry too late. I also believe that if a teacher requires students to play music with expression and with good pianistic technique, their ears will be better. Because in order to do what you ask them to do, students need to open their ears, need to care about the notes they play, so they will develop better ears, and will be able to appreciate music more. Because when they listen to music, they will open their ear to pay attention to these aspects...I don't believe teachers who make children play just for fun can develop their high ability to appreciate music (Individual interview, p.3-4, 7/21/2003).

During the observations, Holly's teaching style, as compared to other teachers, is more demanding. This can be seen in an example of Holly teaching tone quality. Holly commented to Johnny after he had played fluently on a chordal technical piece. "Not bad. But the sound should be more flexible. Imagine that it should

sound as if you are throwing a big stone into the sea, not throwing it on the ground…you need to make a flexible sound like Dong…not Piang…Johnny, try again. Remember, always imagine the sound in your mind before you play it" (observation, p. 6, 6/19/2003). Holly emphasized a lot of details for most pieces, and she required students to perform what was asked for them until she was satisfied. This is probably one of the reasons why both of her students play fluently, with very good technique, hand position, and musical expression. The researcher observed that Holly emphasized phrasing, hand gesture, rhythm/tempo, articulation, balance between hands, tone quality, dynamic contrast, evenness of 16th notes, and expression markings in her lessons. Holly also focused on musicianship, asking students to transpose to several different keys of several pieces from Bastien's *Lesson Book*. Also, although Holly did not use any theory books, she reviewed the music theory, such as formation of diminished chords and intervals, when assigning new pieces to the students.

In the interview, Holly states that she usually uses *Bastien*, *Beyer*, and some etude books page by page, but for repertoire anthologies, she usually selects some pieces for students and does not follow its order. During the observations, Holly followed the order of most books except Guritt's *Album for the Young* and *Piano Little Pieces* compiled by Shiau Chuan Yi Lang. This also shows that what Holly said in the interviews closely matches the methods she used during observations.

Teacher #5—Lisa

In the interview, Lisa claims that she prefers to use the books from the same series because books from the same series usually match each other, which gives students more integrated musical knowledge. Also, supplementary books from the same series usually reinforce musical concepts learned from the main lesson books. Lisa explains that she previously used *Pace* method very often, but due to its

limited availability in Taiwan, she has recently begun using *Alfred* for older beginners and using *Hal Leonard* for younger beginners. Lisa, unlike most teachers the researcher interviewed, does not like to use traditional methods such as *Beyer* and *Czerny*. She believes that the modern methods can replace the traditional materials. During the observations of both students, Lisa used Alfred's technique books, lesson books, and recital books. The other materials Lisa used during the observations were scale books from Keith Snell's graded series.

Stimulated by her extensive music teaching experience in music institutions and schools, Lisa integrates Orff, Dalcroze, and Pace's teaching philosophy into her piano teaching. She explains,

> Most people think it [Dalcroze] is not really important for teaching piano, but I feel they are actually strongly related. In Dalcroze's class, students learn how to improvise from the simple clapping or simple rhythmic patterns, and gradually can improvise a complicated piece. It amazes me. Through Dacloze's improvisation ideas, children feel the music more…our body should feel the music…I started to think to incorporate the Orff, Dalcroze ideas into my piano teaching. In my piano lessons, I began to use some activities to let students learn how to use body movement to feel the music, to feel the tempo, and so on. Now I'm learning the drum circle in Dalcroze workshop. Everyone makes a circle and improvises or creates some patterns. It helps us feel the rhythm, the body reaction. (Individual interview, p.4, 7/12/2003)

Also influenced by Pace's teaching philosophy, Lisa believes that the purpose of taking piano lessons is not just learning how to play the piano, but also to become a more complete musician. To achieve this goal, technique, musicianship, artistry, and other musical knowledge should be equally addressed in the piano lessons. The integration of these aspects should be addressed regarding every piece. All of the aspects identified by Lisa as being required of a complete musician were reflected in her piano lessons as observed by the researcher. Regardless of whether it was Keith Snell's scale book, Alfred's lesson book, recital book, or technique book, Lisa addressed phrasing, touch, tone quality, dynamic contrast, use of wrist,

participating with arm, etc. for almost every piece, even a simple scale. When teaching a five-finger pattern piece, Lisa asked the student to use hand gestures from a lower place to move higher, and afterwards she related it to how a scale moves to the highest note. In other words, instead of merely telling the student to get louder or get softer to work on phrasing, Lisa incorporated Dalcroze's body movement theory into her piano teaching. When teaching simple I-V chords, Lisa was not satisfied by just playing the right notes. Instead, she asked the student to feel the intensity of this harmony progression. When teaching a piece named *Elephant and Flea*, Lisa made up a story about these two animals, and then related the plot to music, which generates student's imagination and makes them play more lively. The researcher believes that the approaches Lisa used closely match her self-identified teaching philosophy from the interview.

Teacher #6—Molly

Molly states in the interview that her selection of methods is quite flexible. She does not have a fixed plan or methods. Instead, Molly likes to try different materials and likes to combine different kinds of methods and repertoire anthologies. However, Molly said that she frequently combines *Beyer* with American methods. For additional repertoire selections, she likes to use different kinds of anthologies, including the ones compiled by Taiwanese and Japanese educators. During the observations, *Beyer*, *Alfred*'s lesson books, and *Hal Leonard*'s solo and theory books were used. In addition, several repertoire anthologies (mostly compiled by Taiwanese and Japanese educators) were used, including *Happy Piano Variations*, *Sweet Melodies for Piano*, *Your Favorite Classical Melodies*, *Piano Little Pieces*, and John Thompson's *Christmas Duet Book*. Molly also used a Taiwanese theory book titled *Everyone Learns Music Theory*. The materials used in her lessons closely match the materials she

identified during the interview.

As to Molly's teaching philosophy, she believes that the most important thing is to keep students' interest. She further explains,

> I don't just concentrate on correcting their mistakes or focusing on technique. Of course I correct them when they have mistakes, but you need to think of how to explain it [the mistakes] without hurting their feelings. I usually use childish language and make it humorous for them to understand…if you just always correct them by saying "don't do this, don't do that" with a strict voice, they won't be interested in playing piano anymore…if you are strict to the children, you might see the result very quickly, but they may quit playing piano very soon, too. (Individual interview, p.5, 7/16/2003)

During the observations, Molly always used a very nice, gentle, and warm voice to instruct the students. When instructing how to avoid playing with flat fingers, instead of saying "don't play with flat fingers," Molly said to the student, "let's make the fingers wear high heels…you are unfair to the pinkies, how come they are not wearing high heels?" (Observation, p.1, 7/12/2003). As for what to emphasize in her piano lessons, Molly explains that artistry and technique should be equally emphasized at the outset of piano lessons. She explains,

> I think musicality is important at the outset of the piano lessons. I assign them [students] some melodic pieces, from which I teach them how to make the piano sing, and how to shape the lines, phrases. I don't wait until they acquire good technique. I think once they like the music, they have great potential to make the piano sing, to make the music sound beautiful. That's actually the key to developing true technique. Technique is not just finger training. To me, it should be the ability of how much you can transfer your sound image through piano. (Individual interview, p.5, 7/16/2003)

During the observations, Molly did not use any technique book. Instead, she taught technique step-by-step through the diversity of repertoire anthologies stated previously. While teaching a piece from *Sweet Melodies for Piano*, she emphasized particularly a two-note slur technique in an organized manner. She instructed, "Look at the line here. Every two notes is a group…let's imagine there's a rest between each two-note group (Molly demonstrated). See, when we put a rest in between, you can easily feel the two notes as a group…Drop the wrist on the first

note and then your wrist goes up on the second note…Now let's take off our imaginative rests…"(observation, p.4, 7/12/2003). Molly also employed several CD accompaniments in her piano lessons, including John Thompson's *Christmas Duet Book* and Hal Leonard's *Piano Solos*. By using the CD accompaniments, students were highly motivated, which reflects Molly's teaching philosophy concerning students' interest.

Teacher #7—Cathy

In the interview, Cathy states that she likes to use and try many different kinds of methods and teaching materials, especially new materials from the market. However, the most common methods she uses currently are revised *Beyer* and *Alfred*, combined with a diversity of technique, repertoire, and theory books, which are mostly compiled or created by Taiwanese or Japanese educators. During the observations, Cathy used quite a few methods, including *Beyer*, *John Schaum*, and Alfred's lesson, recital, and Christmas books. For technique, she used *Finger Movement* by a Japanese educator. She also used *Happily Sing and Play* compiled by a Taiwanese educator for additional repertoire selection. The materials she used during observations closely match what she said in the interview; however, the use of theory books was not seen in Cathy's piano lessons.

Throughout her ten years of teaching experience, Cathy has changed her teaching philosophy a great deal. She explains,

> If they [piano teachers] graduated from music schools and majored in piano, usually they are very academic, very picky about how students play. I was like that, too. I always required students to play the pieces perfectly. So in piano lessons, I focused on a lot of details…how to produce the good tone, the good touch, the accuracy, the tempo, the technique, the expression, everything…but after I graduated from Taiwan Liberal Arts University, I began to change my philosophy. I found that actually, many people take piano lessons just for fun. For this kind of amateur market, if teachers teach them [students] like music major students, they usually quit taking piano lessons. Because they think learning piano is such a difficult thing… it's a kind of torture for them…so now, I think keeping their interest in piano is

more important. (Individual interview, p.2, 7/17/2003)

To keep students' interest, Cathy believes that musicianship, technique, and musicality should be balanced in a piano lesson. She explains,

> If they [piano students] don't have technique, sooner or later they will notice they cannot play, so it will ruin their interest. On the other hand, if they don't have enough musicianship, once they move to a higher level, they probably don't know how to count the rhythm correctly, how to deal with the complicated chords, how to read the notes fast, so it will slow down their progress. Again, it will ruin their interest…If they lack one thing very strongly in any of these fields, I've found it's hard for them to keep learning piano. (Individual interview, p.2, 7/17/2003)

During the observations, Cathy used several different colored pencils to circle the places students needed to work on. Although Cathy worked on some details, she did not ask students to repeat a piece numerous times to achieve her ideal standard. Cathy seemed to have a good sense of how much detail the students can achieve during the lessons, and she also noticed how far she could go without letting students feel frustrated. This shows how much Cathy cares about keeping students' interest. Cathy's selection of materials also reflects her teaching philosophy concerning keeping students' interest. Cathy used *Beyer*, Alfred's lesson book, and *Finger Movement*, which represents the more technical-oriented methods, page by page. However, for a repertoire anthology such as Alfred's recital book, Christmas book, and *Happily Sing and Play*, Cathy chose some pieces for the students without following the order. She sometimes let the students select the pieces from these materials, especially the Taiwanese repertoire anthology, *Happily Sing and Play*, because it contains many familiar Chinese/Taiwanese songs, as long as she thinks the technique of the piece is suitable for the students. All of these examples show how much Cathy cares about retaining students' interest.

Teacher #8—Candy

Candy believes that the selection of methods depends on an individual's needs, age, intelligence, etc. However, Candy explained in the interview that for younger kids, she uses *Hal Leonard* more frequently, and for older kids, she prefers to use *Beyer*, *Alfred*, and *Glover*. For technique, Candy likes to use *A Dozen A Day* to replace traditional technique books. For repertoire, she likes to use different anthologies compiled by Taiwanese or Japanese educators because their pieces are more familiar to Taiwanese students. During the observations, for the first student, because of her limited 30 minute lesson, Candy only used *A Dozen A Day*, and Glover's lesson and repertoire books. For the second student, who is in a lower intermediate level, Candy used Alfred's lesson and performance books, John Thompson, *A Dozen A Day*, and *Children's Czerny* compiled by Japanese educators. The selection of methods used during observations matches those from the interview. However, the use of Taiwanese materials was not seen during observations.

Candy believes that taking piano lessons helps students enjoy music for their leisure time and helps them develop a higher level of appreciation of music and art. She explains,

> I believe taking piano lessons helps them [students] understand the music better, from which they will appreciate the music more. Learning piano is not just knowing how to play the piano...It's different from learning to ride a motorcycle. Learning how to ride a motorcycle is more like learning a tool for daily transportation. After you know how to ride it, the learning process is done. I feel taking piano lessons help the student become more aware, more sensitive about the sound, and the music around us. The learning process goes deeper and deeper, and it never ends. (Individual interview, p.2, 6/28/003)

To help students appreciate the beauty of music, Candy thinks teachers need to spend most of their time discovering the musical elements, which will make students understand music more deeply. Piano lessons should not focus mainly on

developing students' facility of playing piano. One example is when Candy taught a sequential pattern and she wanted the student to play it meaningfully. "Here, every three notes is a group, and this pattern repeats three times…you need to detach it between groups…Also, you can think about the sequential patterns that are similar to a person asking you the same thing three times, and each time raising his voice. Like, do you know, do you know, do you know, or why, why, why, and then the pattern that follows these three sequential patterns sounds like the answer I don't know" (observation, p.7, 6/18/2003). This example of teaching a sequence pattern illustrates Candy's enthusiasm for discovering and explaining the meaning of musical elements for students.

Teacher #9—Anna

In the interview, Anna claims that she likes Bastien's method the most because of its logical, multi-key approach design and because it matches well the books of the series. Bastien's method naturally becomes Anna's first choice of selection of methods. Besides Bastien's method, Anna also likes to use traditional European methods for supplementary materials, such as *Beyer*, *Hanon*, *Czerny*, *Burgmüller*, etc. especially for the students who are moving to intermediate levels. During the observations, Bastien's lesson book, technique book, and theory book were used. In addition, *Children's Hanon*, *Beyer*, *John Schaum*, and *Alfred* were also employed. The selection of methods used matches what Anna said in the interview. Anna's teaching philosophy is strongly influenced by her American-Taiwanese piano teacher when she studied at Don-Heigh University. She explains

> I completely disagreed with her teaching ideas. She focuses only on technique. We had many technique exams developed by her. We had to play lots of different scales—regular ones, double thirds, sixths, two against three, three against four, octave, and so on, with metronome. Freshman should play the scale with a metronome at a speed of 120. For sophomores, 132, then 144. I was totally sick of that. But actually, when I look back, I feel her way of teaching is not bad at all. It really developed my technique. So I use the same

> way to teach my students. I know it's boring for students, and less inspired, but it really works. In order to achieve high standards of performance, you need to undergo this kind of strict technical training. (Individual interview, p.2, 7/18/2003)

Anna also claims that although she thinks improvisation, transposition, and other functional skills are important for being a good musician, she however focuses mostly on technique in her lessons due to her lack of improvisation ability.

During Anna's observations, the metronome was used throughout most of the time in her piano lessons. As soon as students sat down at the piano, Anna set the tempo of the metronome that she had asked the student to do in a previous lesson. Afterwards, Anna stopped the metronome, circled some spots on the music, and then worked on those problems and difficulties with the students. After fixing the problems, Anna asked the students to play with a metronome again and assigned them a faster tempo for the next week. Anna spent most of the time working on students' technical problems and fluency. Although using a metronome for such a long period of time during lessons seems very old-fashioned, amazingly students played with fluency, solid technique, steady tempo, and great confidence. It seems that Anna focused on how to make students acquire finger agility and dexterity during the early piano learning stage, which matches Anna's teaching philosophy as stated previously. Also, although Anna said that she does not teach many functional skills because of her own lack of functional skills, during observations, Anna used *Bastien* to ask a student to do some transposition exercises. This shows that Anna does incorporate the basic teaching of some functional skills into her piano lessons.

Teacher #10—Karen

Karen likes to combine *Beyer* and American methods to teach beginners. However, Karen claims that as soon as students move to higher elementary or early

intermediate levels, she prefers to use traditional materials in which the main lesson book follows the *Beyer – Czerny op.599 – Czerny op.849 –Czerny op.299* process. For mechanical technique, Karen likes to use *Hanon*, *Schmitt*, *Herz*, and *Pischina*. For additional repertoire, Karen commonly uses *First Lessons in Bach*, *Sonatina Album*, *Burgmüller*, Heller's etudes, and Japanese compilers' anthologies as well. During the observations, both students were seven-year-old very beginners, and used the same materials: Alfred's lesson book, *Beyer*, *Finger Movement* (modern technique book by a Japanese educator), and *Piano Little Pieces* compiled by a Japanese educator. If comparing the interview with the observations, we can find that Karen indeed used *Beyer*, American methods, and Japanese compilers' anthologies. However, because these two students were very early beginners, the use of traditional methods for higher level beginners was not observed in this study.

As to her teaching philosophy, Karen believes that musicality, musicianship, and some other music knowledge should be gradually integrated into piano lessons; however, the most important foundation of early piano education is technique. She explains,

> Some students…you can see they are trying to make music sound beautiful…but because of their immaturity of technique, they cannot successfully make the music beautiful. You can tell they have some imagination in their mind, but they just cannot present it well, or even do it in a funny way. So I would say technique is the most basic foundation in plain playing, especially for beginners. I still consider the basic technique the major thing in my piano lessons. The hand position, the finger action, how to use the arm weight and wrist, how to coordinate the two hands…without the basic technique, you cannot require students to do much. (Individual interview, p.4, 7/24/2003)

During the observations, Karen spent most of the time correcting students' wrong notes and rhythms. Besides the note and rhythm correction work, Karen seemed to focus on how to make students play with technical ease and use good

hand gestures and movements to touch the keys in order to create beautiful tone. "Don't let your wrists shake up and down. It looks funny and ugly. (Karen smiled with gentle voice)...Also, if you shake like this, we cannot create legato sound. It sounds like every note is detached...Let's raise fingers a little bit and touch the keys a little bit slower (Karen demonstrated)" (Observation, p.2, 7/15/2003). Although most of the time during the observations was spent working on notes, rhythms, sound and touch, nevertheless, the teaching of musicality was not completely neglected. After correcting students' wrong notes and rhythms, Karen asked the students to work on some musical details, such as singing the melody and then shaping the phrases. Teaching of musical theory was not seen during Karen's observations. Overall, Karen's teaching during observations match her teaching philosophy to the degree that technique is the basic foundation, and musicality and other musical aspects should be gradually incorporated.

Findings of Interviews

I. Teachers' Opinions of Methods

Beyer Method

In this study, all of the ten teachers knew of the *Beyer* method and offered many opinions. Several significant common themes and patterns among teachers' opinions were found, including issues related to fair pacing, musical concepts poorly addressed, technique effectiveness, some advantages of its reading design, good preparation for classical style, and unattractive selection of repertoire. The common themes and patterns are addressed as follows.

Fair pacing. Most of the teachers think the pacing of the *Beyer* method is fine, but slightly too fast towards the end. As Debbie states,

> The pacing is ok in most of the pieces. But I found that in the second volume, around No.70, the pieces become somewhat harder. So there is a small gap

> within these pieces. If students work hard, or they are smart, they can move on without any problem. But if students don't practice regularly or are not smart, they usually feel frustrated and want to give up. (Individual interview, p.7, 7/18/2003)

Michael also mentioned a similar concern, stating that "Students can follow *Beyer* page by page without big problems. But when moving to the second volume, there are some gaps between pieces, especially when introducing the grace notes. It's not really a big gap. If children are disciplined and practice regularly at home, it's not difficult for them" (Individual interview, p.4, 7/19/2003). Anna indicates that the last few pieces of *Beyer* may have problems for some students. "*Beyer*'s pacing is not bad at all. But I have found that the last few pieces are quite difficult. It introduces double dotted rhythm, and the reading and technique suddenly become more complicated" (Individual interview, p.8, 7/18/2003).

Musical concepts poorly addressed. More than half of the teachers indicate that the musical concepts in *Beyer* are not well addressed. The teaching of theory is addressed irregularly between pieces, from which students can hardly learn musical concepts thoroughly; therefore, teachers tend to combine *Beyer* with other modern methods. One of Debbie's statements reflects many of the teachers' opinions. She states that "In terms of teaching musical elements and concepts, *Beyer* cannot compete with modern American methods, and it [*Beyer*] cannot be the context for piano lessons. I usually use it as a technique book" (Individual interview, p.7, 7/18/2003).

Technique effectiveness. Nine teachers claim that the *Beyer* method provides effective technique training because of the extensive finger exercises and the simplicity of the pieces. Anna states,

> The reason behind its [Beyer's] technical value is not because *Beyer* has good design of technical exercises. It's because of its simplicity. Because the notes are simple, the rhythms are simple, the style is simple. There is not much diversity of style, repertoire, or rhythm or even accompaniment patterns. In

> the modern view, Beyer is so backwards. But because of its simplicity, or you can say its monotony, it actually becomes a good material to develop good hand position, finger position, or finger technique. Other modern methods are usually full of rhythmic diversity…and pieces and rhythm are much more complex. Of course in a way it's very good. But it also becomes a distraction for beginners to focus on technique, to concentrate on the touch of the key, the quality of the sound they produce, and the hand and finger positions. (Individual interview, p.8, 7/18/2003)

Cathy also believes that simplicity makes *Beyer*'s technique more effective, but her reason is somewhat different from Anna's. Cathy claims that,

> Because the notes and the rhythm are very simple, in order to play well with the simple notes, you must have excellent control of the fingers. Just like pieces from classical periods, such as Mozart and Beethoven's pieces, are much more difficult than the 20th century music, even though the notes, the rhythm are far more simple…Because they are very transparent, you need to have very good control of the sound in order to make the simple notes sound good. (Individual interview, p.9, 7/17/2003)

Kevin also claims that *Beyer* is effective for developing finger technique. However, he thinks that many different types of technique that are required in modern pieces are not provided in the *Beyer* method; therefore, using a diversity of supplementary technique materials is still needed for successful teaching of technique.

Some advantages of Beyer's reading design. *Beyer*'s reading design basically begins with separate hand playing on C position in the treble clef only, and then switches to B diatonic position, and then G position, finally exploring the notes on the leger line in high registers. The introduction of the bass clef does not appear until very late. Several teachers think that *Beyer*'s reading approach has some advantages over traditional American methods' middle-C approach. Kevin states, "It [*Beyer*] starts with C position…after 24 short exercises, it switches to B position, so students know thumbs are not always placed on middle C…so they won't just read finger numbers, they need to look at the notes " (Individual interview, p.6, 7/15/2003). Kevin continues, stating that *Beyer*'s reading design of delaying bass clef is particularly suitable for Taiwanese students. He states,

> Probably it's [*Beyer*'s reading design] an advantage for Taiwanese students because they already have reading experience on treble clef in elementary

> schools. Later, based on this treble-clef reading experience, when you teach them how to read bass clef, it won't be very difficult...when a student comes to you, he wants to make sound immediately...*Beyer*'s reading approach starts with only treble clef, and because elementary-age children already know how to read the notes on treble clef, they can make sound very quickly during the very first piano lessons. (Individual interview, p.7, 7/15/2003)

Michael, Holly, and Candy like *Beyer*'s reading design because it stays on white keys for a longer period of time during beginning piano learning. Holly states,

> Of course teachers will think we should introduce the black keys as early as possible. That's also true. But there is a very good advantage to staying on only white keys...Students will focus on the fingers...they are not distracted from complicated notation or moving upward or downward because the black keys are involved...I can focus a lot on their fingers, and students usually feel that it is easier to do what I ask them to do because of its [*Beyer*'s] regular patterns and staying in the white key position. (Individual interview, p.7, 7/21/2003)

Good preparation for classical style. Half of the teachers in this study claim that Beyer is effective in preparation for the classical style pieces, such as Clementi and Kuhlau's sonatinas, and Czerny and Hanon's etudes. Many teachers indicate that the reason behind this is that *Beyer* was written in the early 19th century; therefore, the style of the pieces is based on the musical language of the classical period. As Kevin stated, "*Beyer*'s pieces are mostly in classical writing, the balanced phrases, the functional harmony, the regular rhythm...because of this, *Beyer* is a good material for the preparation of playing music from the Classical period" (Individual interview, p.6, 7/15/2003).

Selection of repertoire in one style and unattractive pieces. Most teachers in this study indicate that *Beyer*'s selection of pieces is limited to the classical style, which makes it a good resource for preparation for classical style pieces; however, because of *Beyer*'s lack of diversity of styles, teachers believe that the repertoire provided in *Beyer* is neither sufficient nor broad enough for students' thorough piano study. In addition, Cathy, Anna, and Karen indicate that the similar melodic

lines and sentence structures appearing in many of *Beyer*'s pieces, and its monotonous accompaniment and rhythmic patterns, make the *Beyer* method unattractive from the modern point of view.

Methode Rose

Except Michael, all teachers in this study knew of this French method; however, many teachers had used it only once or had never used it. The reasons for the rare use of this method are shown in the patterns found among those teachers who had used or heard of the method throughout this study. For example, all of the codes found for the *Method Rose* in this study were negative, and complaints included its poor design, format, and printing, its unattractive pieces, that it is never revised, and that it can be replaced by other methods. Most teachers criticized its small notes and poor printing quality, which makes the notes hard to read for young beginners. In terms of selection of repertoire, Candy states, "Its selection of pieces is not interesting…I remember I didn't like to play it at all when I was a kid. So I don't think children will like it" (Individual interview, p.6, 6/28/2003). Debbie also indicates,

> It [*Methode Rose*] contains a lot of French folksongs that are familiar to French students, but not to Taiwanese students. I feel the melodies are not familiar to Taiwanese students. Also they [French melodies] lack a strong pulse and beat. It is different from German folksongs. I think Taiwanese students are more familiar with German folksongs than French songs. That is one reason why *Method Rose* is not attractive to Taiwanese students. (Individual interview, p.8, 7/18/2003)

Emonts and Schnaider

There were no common themes found in this study regarding the *Emonts* and *Schnaider* methods because most teachers were not familiar with these two German methods. However, Debbie's positive opinions of the new *Emonts* edition may be useful and of interest to piano teachers for future use of this method. Debbie states that,

> For almost half of the first volume, it offers many exercises that let the students play by ear. The reading is gradually taught to students after students have had a lot of listening and playing experience. This is similar to Suzuki's approach. I like the idea very much…unlike most methods, *Emonts* emphasizes the development of both hands. The polyphonic music appears at the very beginning…In terms of introduction of concepts, it is very logical and well organized. After introducing the five-finger pattern, they modulate to different keys. It's similar to *Bastien*'s multi-key approach. So student's fingers will not be restricted to the middle-C position…*Emonts* includes a lot of world folksongs…it expands students' aural experience. And I would say students who play many different kinds of music from different countries will be less discriminative…They will be more willing to experience different cultures when they grow up, and will not be restricted to our own culture, if teachers explain these things from the pieces in piano lessons. (Individual interview, p.8, 7/18/2003)

Hal Leonard

Although *Hal Leonard* is a newer method in Taiwan's market, eight teachers knew of this method and discussed it during the interviews. Several common themes and patterns regarding this method were found in this study, as described below.

Slow pacing, and learning music by playing games and activities. Debbie, Molly, Cathy, Candy, and Karen all claim that the pacing in the *Hal Leonard* method is much slower than most methods, which makes young beginners progress without frustration. In addition, the majority of these teachers indicate that in *Hal Leonard*, learning of musical concepts is accomplished through playing games and performing activities. This makes children motivated to learn music. Candy states,

> The introduction of concepts is interesting, with a very slow pace. Instead of complicated explanations, it [*Hal Leonard*] uses quite a lot of games and activities to let student feel the music, the rhythm. It really cares about not making the students feel that it is too difficult. It makes students learn the music and play the piano step-by-step, without frustration. To some students, its pacing may a little bit slow, but for average students, I think it is the right way to avoid frustration. (Individual interview, p.9, 6/28/2003)

Offers fine CD accompaniment. Five teachers in this study compliment *Hal Leonard* for providing an excellent quality CD accompaniment, which motivates

students to practice, to experience ensemble music, and to have a chance to approach more diversity of sound. Debbie claims,

> The CD accompaniment is a big milestone. The patterns and styles of MIDI accompaniment in the CDs are very interesting…have a diversity of sound. This is also an advantage that other older methods cannot compete with. If students want to play ensemble music, they can just play the CD and play the piano with it. It makes students want to practice more. (Individual interview, p.10, 7/18/2003)

Colorful and interesting design/format/printing. Five teachers state that because *Hal Leonard* is a new method, it improves upon the drawbacks that exist in older methods, such as unclear layout, poor design and printing quality. Also, teachers claim that because of *Hal Leonard*'s colorful and beautiful pictures, students enjoy practicing more.

Provides modern and diverse sound. Many teachers in this study state that *Hal Leonard* provides a more modern and diverse sound as compared to other methods in Taiwan's market. This is also one of the reasons why teachers use this method. Molly states,

> The pieces [of *Hal Leonard*] are very different from traditional methods. If you look at most older methods, you will find their pieces are almost the same, not exactly the same, but the style, the harmony, and the phrases are very similar. But *Hal Leonard* is different. It contains many lively styles of pieces, full of unusual harmony, and teacher and CD accompaniment that contain many colorful sounds and diverse accompaniment patterns. I would say its selection of repertoire is the main reason why I use it. Its solo book is especially good for enlarging students' ear. (Individual interview, p.10, 7/16/2003)

Lisa's opinion is very similar, and she states, "I think the most significant advantage of *Hal Leonard* is that it provides a lot of fun stuff, modern sound…the selection of the pieces in *Hal Leonard* is very modern, very entertaining, full of interesting harmony…I like it very much because I didn't have the chance to approach this kind of music when I was a kid" (Individual interview, p.12-13, 7/12/2003).

Pieces too pop, classical materials not enough. As shown above, teachers in this study gave mostly positive comments to *Hal Leonard*; however, most teachers criticized that the pieces provided in the *Hal Leonard* method are too pop-oriented and the classical materials are insufficient. Kevin explains,

> I don't like its repertoire selection. It's too American. Most pieces are composed by contemporary pedagogical composers. When I use them for Taiwanese students, they don't match Taiwan's piano learning environment very closely. Some students may like it, but in the long run, we are going to play Beethoven, Mozart. I believe in order to let them play the classical music well in the future, we need to assign them mostly serious pieces during beginning piano lessons. We shouldn't assign students mostly American, pop-like pieces...one or two is fine, to let them explore different styles of music, but if they become the main dish, I don't think it's good for them [students]. They won't develop good sense to play serious classical music in the future. (Individual interview, p.8, 7/15/2003)

Candy felt the same way, stating,

> I'm afraid if they [students] want to play classical piano in the future, they might not be able to play well because most pieces in *Hal Leonard* are too modern, too American. It's good in a way because children may feel that it is easier to approach the modern sound. But at the same time, they may not have the sufficient ability to approach classical music in the future... they will lack classical sense of sound and technique. (Individual interview, p.9, 6/28/2003)

Cathy expressed similar concerns, using examples from her own teaching experience. She states,

> I have some transfer students who used *Hal Leonard* exclusively...I let them play some pieces from *Beyer* or *Alfred*. I found that even though they played a lot of wrong notes, they didn't realize it at all...they couldn't realize it's wrong because they are used to listening to only dissonant sound. Children are like white paper. At the beginning stage of learning, no matter what you give them, they absorb it very quickly. I think using this method will enlarge their ear to approach modern sound, but at the some time, they need to be exposed to more traditional, more classical pieces. *Hal Leonard* doesn't provide enough classical material. (Individual interview, p.8, 7/17/2003)

John Thompson

The researcher found four common themes for the *John Thompson* method: big gap between levels, music concepts poorly addressed, poor printing quality, and fine selection of repertoire. These common themes are addressed as follows.

Big gap between levels. Nine teachers in this study mentioned that the big gap between levels in *John Thompson* makes it difficult for teachers to use this method by following its leveling design. Holly said, "There's a gap between the primary level and the first level, and the gap between level one and level two is even worse. So, I would say it's almost impossible to follow its leveling" (Individual interview, p.9, 7/21/2003). Candy felt the same way, saying, "There are huge gaps between the different levels. You can't just use it from one level to the next level. Each level changes the difficulty completely" (Individual interview, p.11, 6/28/2003). Cathy explained the problem in more detail, stating,

> The primer level to level one has some gaps, level one to level two has bigger gaps, then the gaps gets bigger and bigger. I think the author thought that from the primary level to level five, students will learn the piano step-by-step, and after level five, they will be able to play some lower advanced pieces. But I looked at level five; the pieces are quite difficult, like Chopin's nocturne…I don't think there's a child who can use this method following its pace from primary level to level five. (Individual interview, p.6, 7/17/2003)

Music concepts poorly addressed. Michael, Kevin, Lisa, and Anna claim that musical concepts are poorly taught in the *John Thompson* method. The essential concepts, theory, and other musicianship appear irregularly throughout this method, which makes it impossible for children to learn musical concepts through an organized approach. As Michael stated, "It doesn't have a very organized and systematic design concerning how to develop students' knowledge of musical concepts. To me, it's [*John Thompson*] just a compilation of pieces" (Individual interview, p.7, 7/19/2003). Anna said the same thing, stating,

> To me, their [*John Schaum* and *John Thompson*] introduction of concepts is not like the modern methods that clearly design each lesson in a better way. I mean they [modern methods] have a more thorough design about what to teach first, and what to teach next. *John Thompson* and *John Schaum* are more like a collection of pieces. I won't say they are bad methods. But if using *John Thompson* exclusively, teachers need to explain musical concepts almost exclusively by themselves. Teachers need to know when and how to add supplementary materials. It's not very easy to use…but I do use them…I don't use it as the main lesson book; instead, it's more like performance book for me. I only choose some pieces from it. (Individual interview, p.10, 7/18/2003)

Poor printing quality. Five teachers mentioned that *John Thompson* is never updated, so its printing quality remains the same as that appearing in the first edition, which makes it unattractive and hard to read by children. Also, because of its poor printing quality, it is difficult for the method to compete with other modern methods.

Fine selection of repertoire. Although most common themes found concerning this method were negative, many teachers compliment the *John Thompson* method's selection of repertoire despite its lack of contemporary sound. Debbie claims that "Although the pieces seem a little bit old and lack contemporary sound… in terms of artistic value, I think the pieces are quite good. For example, it [the method] arranges many world famous pieces, and it's very well done" (Individual interview, p.10, 7/18/2003). Michael also states, "I think they [pieces] are more melodic, so children like the pieces more than those in *Glover*. Also, I think the pieces are more artistic and classical. The harmony arrangements of famous classical melodies are more convincing than many similar kinds of materials" (Individual interview, p.7, 7/19/2003). Although Lisa did not like *John Thompson* very much, she claims that its repertoire can serve as excellent music appreciation materials for piano lessons. She states, "It's [*John Thompson*] not systematic, but the pieces are good for music appreciation…there are a lot of arrangements of famous classical pieces…letting students play these world famous melodies and listen to the recordings of original version will be very helpful for them to approach classical music" (Individual interview, p.16, 7/12/2003).

John Schaum, Peanut Course, Beanstalk, and Robert Pace

There were no common themes or patterns found regarding these methods due to the fact that not many of the teachers in this study were familiar with these methods. However, some opinions from several of the teachers may provide good

insight into the advantages and disadvantages of these methods. Opinions of *John Schaum* were similar to those of *John Thompson*. They both employ the middle-C reading approach and the teaching of musical concepts depends almost entirely on teachers. However, in terms of pacing and leveling, teachers claim that the *John Schaum* method exercises more care and does not have the big gap problem found in the John Thompson method.

Opinions regarding the *Peanut Course* method were all negative. As to the modern American method, *Beanstalk*, some teachers found that this method tries to develop students' weak fingers at the very outset of piano learning. Also, it provides some thoughtful teaching aids, such as stickers and weekly practice plans, for teachers' convenience, although these considerations may not be of significance when discussing the merits of a method.

Since the *Pace* method is only available in the Pace institution in Taiwan, in this study, only Lisa had used this method because of her previous working experience at the Pace institution. Her statements of the advantages and disadvantages of the *Pace* method provides insight for teachers' future use of the Pace method. As to the advantages of the *Pace* method, Lisa claims that musicianship is *Pace*'s strongest area, despite the fact that its repertoire and design are not attractive to children. Lisa stated,

> *Pace* is a very complete, professional method. For technique and notation reading, it introduces 12 keys in a short span of time. From this design, the teaching of musicianship such as transposition, harmonization, is comprehensively taught…its theory, creative book, solo book, and lesson books are all well matched…The purpose of its design is to produce not just a pianist, but a composer, a conductor, or musicians in many different fields because of its strong value in musicianship. But the pieces, design, and format do not attract children. That's its main disadvantage. They should use more colorful pictures, or select more pieces that relate to the children's world, or more familiar tunes. The pieces are designed for pedagogical reasons, but are not aurally attractive. In most of the piano methods, the selection of the pieces is basically for attracting children's ears first, while considering some pedagogical concepts. (Individual interview, p.7-8, 7/12/2003)

Lisa also mentioned that a professional teacher is needed in order to use the *Pace* method successfully. She states,

> It [*Pace* method] requires a professional teacher in order to teach this so-called multi-key approach. For most teachers, the first time they look at the 12 keys appearing in the very beginning of the method, they think, "how am I going to teach this?" Most teachers teach black keys by explaining which ones need to be flat or sharp. I usually teach them with a chart (Lisa shows her keyboard chart illustrating 12 keys arrangement). Imagine there are many white and black teeth. Each triad has its own arrangement of white and black teeth. Like C, F, and G chords, their arrangement is white, white, and white. But for D, A, E, they are white, black, and white…also, in Pace's music institution in Taiwan, group piano classes are given prior to one-on-one piano lessons. When I taught there [Pace institution], a small group had four students. All students need to take keyboard classes prior to taking piano lessons. In keyboard classes, students don't play on the keyboard, they learn basic music rhythm through simple clapping or musical games…through playing games and doing many activities, their hands, body movements will be ready for playing piano. Like, imagine the leaves falling, then the children move their hands, fingers to the ground. Through doing these kinds of activities, their fingers and hands become softer, more flexible, not stiff. Many teachers don't know we need to do this kind of preparation before using the *Pace* method. (Individual interview, p.8-9, 7/12/2003)

Bastien

In this study, all teachers knew of the Bastien method but only Anna and Holly use it regularly. Several important common themes and patterns were found in this study, including opinions related to the systematic design of musical concepts, which is good for musicianship, pieces more homophonic, dilemmas of teaching technique and musicianship. These common themes with teachers' explanations are addressed as follows.

Systematic design of musical concepts, which is good for musicianship.

Anna, Debbie, Candy, Lisa, and Holly all claim that due to *Bastien*'s systematic multi-key approach, it can develop students' musicianship more easily than most other methods. Anna states,

> I like to use *Bastien* because it is very systematic. It divides the 12 keys into 4 groups by similarity of position…I find teaching using this kind of multi-key approach helps students to master each key, and they can transpose on the piano easily due to its emphasis on the chords, and the similarities of the

> chord position to the keys in each group…also, its theory and technique books all match the lesson books very well. (Individual interview, p.7, 7/18/2003)

Similarly, Holly states,

> It introduces three keys in Book level one, C, G, and F. They are all related keys, and easy to transpose because of their similarity of hand position. And in the first level, teachers and students know they need to master these three keys and their chords in order to transpose among these three keys. They also learn the functional harmonic progression. Because of its systematic design, children don't feel transposition is difficult. (Individual interview, p.5, 7/21/2003)

Pieces more homophonic. Although several teachers compliment *Bastien*'s systematic design of the multi-key approach, Michael, Debbie, Molly, and Anna indicate that the selection of repertoire in *Bastien*'s method seems very homophonic-oriented, which makes it lack a diversity of sound. Molly states, "The pieces are not bad at all. But I would say they are not very special. In order to match its multi-key approach, it uses a lot of triad accompaniment on the left hand with the right hand playing the melody. I think it should include different kinds of accompaniment styles" (Individual interview, p.11, 7/16/2003). Anna mentioned the same point and explained that she compensates for the problem by combining Bastien with other methods.

> To me, the pieces are written mostly in a homophonic style. That's the drawback, but other advantages compensate for this drawback…you can use different methods to compensate for this problem. Like in Beyer, many pieces in the beginning level are quite polyphonic. I remember in no.20 to 40, the pieces are polyphonic. They can be used to compensate for *Bastien*'s problem. (Individual interview, p.7, 7/18/2003)

Dilemma on teaching technique and musicianship. Some teachers indicate that the strongest area of the *Bastien* method is its focus on musicianship and harmonization, so the introduction of triads and of playing triads on the piano are required at the beginning of the *Bastien* method. However, young beginners usually have trouble controlling and playing triads well. This is a big dilemma. Debbie addressed the problem, stating that,

> Probably the purpose of this method is to teach musicianship. It's really a

> dilemma:..to teach students harmonization, the *Bastien* method uses a lot of triads at the beginning. The problem is that beginners usually don't have the ability to control the triads, so their hands, finger positions, become bad easily. (Individual interview, p.11, 7/18/2003)

Molly offered a similar point, saying,

> The reason why I don't use it [*Bastien*] often is because it introduces triads too early. The children, especially young children, don't have any control of muscle to play the triads. According to my experience, they usually feel very frustrated to play it. I usually ask them to play broken chords instead. Although its design of multi-key approach is quite convincing, when considering children's motor development, I don't think it's very suitable. (Individual interview, p.11, 7/16/2003)

Glover

There were some common themes found for the *Glover* method, but they seem fairly insignificant, mostly just relating to *Glover*'s characteristics, including the use of the middle-C approach, being an older method, and the fact that the teaching of theory contains mostly pencil-paper drills. These codes are shown in Appendix H.

Alfred

Alfred seems to be one of the most popular American methods in Taiwan. In this study, all of the teachers knew of this method and many teachers use it to teach beginners. Some common themes were found in this study and are discussed below.

Combines different reading approaches. Debbie, Kevin, and Candy mentioned that *Alfred* combines different reading approaches, which makes students' reading skills more solid and makes it easier to establish students' recognition of patterns and intervals. Debbie states, "The reading approach is based on middle-C, but it offers many explanations about intervals, so students will recognize the relationship between notes" (Individual interview, p.12, 7/18/2003). Candy agrees, and further explains that,

> It starts with off-staff material to let students know the contour of the lines...

> They don't have to learn how to read during the very beginning lessons. They just need to learn how the notes go, skip or step, the relationship between the notes...when using these off-staff materials, children's fingers are in the middle-C position. Later, after introducing the grand staff, they use many different positions, such as C position, G position. That's a little bit similar to the multi-key approach. It tries to combine the advantages of different reading approaches. (Individual interview, p.10, 6/28/2003)

Musical concepts well designed and paced. Several teachers compliment *Alfred*'s design of teaching musical concepts. Debbie, Candy, and Lisa indicate that *Alfred*'s introduction of musical concepts is very systematic and organized. Before assigning children the main piece, it offers short exercises in the beginning of each unit to discover what and how to learn upcoming pieces. Kevin states that,

> In terms of musical concepts, it is really far ahead of *Beyer*. It analyzes the difficult patterns or musical concepts before playing a piece, so students will learn the specific pattern of the piece they are going to play. This design makes students have more understanding about the pieces. Unlike *Beyer*, as using Beyer requires depending exclusively on the teacher's ability. (Individual interview, p.7, 7/15/2003)

Kevin also mentioned that the technique, theory, and other books of this series are all well matched, which also provides strong reinforcement of learning musical concepts.

Fine selection of pieces, but some gaps in high-level books. Most teachers in this study compliment *Alfred*'s selection of repertoire as being balanced in both classical and popular circles. Lisa states,

> The pieces are very good...it [the method] contains some modern sound pieces, but also includes the essential classical repertoire. In another words, the selection of repertoire has a balance of popular and classical value. I also like its piano duet book. The pieces are not really hard, but sound very good. (Individual interview, p.14, 7/12/2003)

Molly also claims, "The selection of pieces is quite good...it contains many different styles. It is not as colorful as *Hal Leonard*, but it contains both classical material as well as entertaining pieces. I would say *Alfred* tries to include diversity pieces while not neglecting serious classical repertoire" (Individual interview, p.11, 7/16/2003).

Although teachers' opinions regarding *Alfred*'s selection of repertoire are positive, Debbie, Candy, and Anna point out that there are some gaps when moving to higher levels of this series. Anna claims that "about level 2-3 or 3-4, I've found in terms of rhythm, the selection of the pieces suddenly become very difficult, so I usually don't use *Alfred*'s high level books. I only use it up to level two, and then I switch to other methods" (Individual interview, p.6, 7/18/2003). Candy also states, "The high level ones [of *Alfred* method] are quite difficult. Usually after I finish the lower levels, I switch to Keith Snell's graded series or Japanese system" (Individual interview, p.10, 6/28/2003).

Jing Kou Gi Cheng

In this study, most teachers discussed this method, but none of them use it frequently. The common themes found were all negative, including complaints that the method stays in the middle-C position too long and that the pieces are boring. Michael, Holly, and Karen claim that the beginning of this method is written only in the middle-C position, and the two thumbs play the middle-C note for many pages. Although the purpose of this design is to establish students' strong association of notes written on the score with keyboard topography, most teachers think it is unnecessary to do this forceful drill for such a long time. Teachers believe that it makes children bored and disinterests them. In addition, the selection of repertoire is unattractive. Six teachers in this study indicate that the repertoire is only in one style and lacks diversity, which makes it insufficient for preparation of 20th century modern pieces.

Piano Land

There is no common theme found in this study regarding the *Piano Land* method because few teachers knew of this newer Japanese method. However, Debbie's positive opinions of this method's technique design may be helpful for

teachers' future use of this method. Debbie indicates that

> The technique exercises are very professional, well designed, very systematic, very different from other methods…its technical exercises do not require students to read the notes. Instead, they imitate teachers playing…the so-called playing by rote. This way of teaching technique will make students improve very fast…according to my experience, students' reading ability will not match the ability of their finger movements. Usually their physical ability develops much faster than their reading ability. So learning by rote makes them concentrate on motor skills. They don't have to struggle reading the notes. So I think this technical design is positive and will be helpful for students to develop technique in a short span of time. (Individual interview, p.14, 7/18/2003)

Made Easy Series

There are no common themes found in this study for this method because only Michael and Cathy have used this newly released Malaysian method. The comments regarding this method from these two teachers are all positive. They both think that the technical exercises in this method are sufficient to develop children's basic techniques during the beginning year of piano study. In addition, the pieces selected in this method are all famous tunes and folksongs, which attracts and motivates children to practice. Furthermore, this method is written in both Chinese and English, so it attracts many parents and students because of the current trend in Taiwan's society for children to learn English.

Use of CD accompaniment

Due to the fact that the usage of digital piano and music software is not popular in Taiwan's piano education, in this study, the use of technology in piano teaching refers mainly to the use of CD accompaniment. Several common themes and patterns were found regarding teachers' opinions of the use of CD accompaniment. Teachers indicate both the advantages and disadvantages of using CD accompaniment.

Except Karen, all teachers in this study compliment CD accompaniment as

being a motivational device. They believe that students can be motivated by being exposed to the diversity of sound provided by CD accompaniment so as to increase their ability for playing ensemble music. However, teachers indicate that when playing with CD accompaniment, due to its colorful arrangements, students are usually busy following the CD and do not pay attention to the sound they produce. Also, the musical inflection of CD accompaniment is very limited; therefore, teachers suspect that children who play with CD accompaniment too often may actually harm their imagination and musicality in the long run. These benefits and drawbacks were reflected in many teachers' statements. For example, Cathy states, "I have found that playing with a CD makes children like to practice more...but I have also found that they don't listen carefully to the quality of sound they produce. The only thing they focus on is how to catch and match the CD, but sometimes they just hit on the piano and make noisy sound without noticing it " (Individual interview, p.8, 7/17/2003). Kevin agrees, and states,

> It's very motivational. It encourages children to practice more. I find nowadays children are different from our generation. They usually don't practice long...they cannot sit for a long time at the piano...CD accompaniment makes them want to practice more. Also, because they are eager to match the CD, they have to practice...also, children will learn the ensemble music and how to play with other people. I sometimes play the piano duet with them, and they like it very much. But at home, there's no one who can play with them, so CD accompaniment becomes a replacement. But I have found that they tend not to think of how they are going to play a piece, they just follow the CD. It actually loses the chance of using the thinking process... Also, they cannot do ***ritard*** or some other inflections. (Individual interview, p.11-12, 7/15/2003)

Debbie also states,

> It motivates the students to practice at home because they can play ensemble music at home...but students don't notice what they are playing. They do not listen carefully to the sound they make, not to mention the tone quality. Teachers need to be aware of this. Also, the tempo in the CD accompaniment is very fast. Average students usually cannot follow the speed, so they tend to play messy while playing with the CD. Also, in terms of musicality, there are some problems, too. When playing a duet with the teacher, the teacher can guide students where to make crescendo, where to speed up, where to make a ***ritard***...But when playing with the CD, they are very mechanical, no

inflections, so students are apt to play mechanically. Teachers should be aware of all of these problems. I mean, we can use it, but don't think technology is so important for piano lessons. It has many drawbacks, too. (Individual interview, p.14-15, 7/18/2003)

Molly uses CD accompaniment as a "dessert," explaining that,

> I think the most significant advantage is that it makes students feel accomplishment. They feel there is a person or an orchestra to accompany them. Actually, we should say they follow the CD accompaniment, not the CD accompanies them. But it's very motivational for them. Also, the sound is richer, colorful, so they like it very much. Because the simple melody in the beginning methods is usually boring, the pieces sound much better with the colorful accompaniment. Another advantage is that it actually helps students to develop an ear for playing ensemble music. Because when they play with the CD, they have to listen very carefully in order to match it...but as I said before, the player has to follow the CD. Ideally, the player should be the main player, not just a follower. Also, the tempo is usually too fast. You cannot adjust for different students' abilities. Also, when they play with the CD, they tend to forget to make good tone, good touch. So, as I said, it shouldn't be the main dish for them. I only use it as a "dessert." (Individual interview, p.10, 7/16/2003)

Method's Advantages Are Also Its Disadvantages

Several teachers in this study indicate that almost every method has its value, and a good teacher should know of a method's value so as to use it more logically. Kevin in particular addressed that everything has two sides. A method's advantages are actually its disadvantages. He states,

> I don't believe there is a perfect method in the world or even close to perfect. Teachers need to choose what they need from each method. If they just try to depend on one method, or think there's any one method that can be used without any drawbacks, that's impossible. Actually, I find that the advantages of each method are also its disadvantages...The CD accompaniment is an advantage of *Hal Leonard* because it's motivational. It helps students to learn ensemble music. Also, because of its diverse patterns, children will be exposed to a diversity of sound. It will enrich their ears. But at the same time, when they play with the CD accompaniment, they lose the chance to think of the piece, the tempo, the dynamics, and the inflection. They don't pay attention to the kind of tone quality they make... Let's say *Beyer* and *Czerny*. They are good at developing finger technique because they are written in one style, the classical style. Through the intensive, same pattern, same thing over and over, students develop good technique. But at the same time, they tend to become mechanical...they also lose the chance to become exposed to different styles of music. So teachers should use the materials wisely...keep the advantages but try to find a way to balance against the disadvantages. (Individual interview, p.12, 7/15/2003)

In summary, although teachers' opinions of each method vary to a certain degree, in general, they think European methods are more technically effective, but that musical concepts are usually not well addressed. In contrast, American methods are concerned with integrity of musicianship and provide more diversity of sound, although several teachers criticized American methods' repertoire as being too pop-oriented. Generally, teachers' opinions are similar to those from the literature review; however, in terms of repertoire selection, there are some differences of opinion, and the researcher will discuss the possible reasons for this divergence in the discussion chapter.

II. Use and Selection of Methods

Combining Different Methods and Materials to Teach

In this study, all of the teachers combine different methods and materials to teach; however, the methods they combine vary among teachers. The following shows the common themes found in this study regarding the combining of methods.

Combining Beyer with American methods. Except for Lisa, all teachers in this study combine *Beyer* with American methods to teach. The reason why they choose to combine *Beyer* and American methods is because they believe that American methods are more thoroughly concerned with musical concepts and provide more diversity of repertoire, while *Beyer* serves as a technique book that prepares students for the future study of *Czerny* or *Hanon*'s etudes. Among the various American methods, the ones most commonly combined with *Beyer* are *Alfred* and *Hal Leonard*. Besides these two methods, *Bastien*, *John Thompson*, and *Glover* are also employed by some teachers. Anna and Holly employ *Bastein*'s series as main lesson books. They select few other American methods to combine

with *Beyer*. Anna explained that *Beyer* provides some polyphonic pieces, which can supplement the lack of polyphonic pieces in *Bastien*'s series. When compared to Anna and Holly, other teachers in this study are more flexible in terms of the diversity of American methods selected. Mainly they use one or two books from *Alfred*, *Hal Leonard*, or *Glover* and then select some other methods, such as *John Schaum*, *John Thompson*, and other anthologies, for additional repertoire selection. Basically, they do not use a particular series exclusively.

Combining methods with Japanese anthologies. As stated in the introduction chapter, Taiwan was colonized by Japan for 50 years. Due to this historical and geographically close relationship with Japan, Taiwan has employed many Japanese teaching materials. In this study, many teachers combine methods with several Japanese repertoire anthologies. Many teachers claim that Japanese repertoire anthologies and technique books contain excellent classical materials that are very suitable for piano beginners. Among various Japanese repertoire anthologies, *Piano Little Pieces* compiled by Shiau Chuan Yi Lang, *Piano Dreaming Forest*, and *Piano Wizard* compiled by Tian Wan Shin Ming, are the most popular.

The reason why teachers prefer to use Japanese repertoire collections instead of American methods' solo books is because they think Japanese repertoire collections contain more essential classical materials, which are more suitable for Taiwan's typical, classical-oriented piano learning environment. As Michael stated,

> I like to use Japanese anthologies, like *Piano Little Pieces* compiled by Shiau Chuan Yi Lang. The selection of repertoire is very good…it has many fine pieces with various styles, like Guritt, Stregbogge, Heller, Richter, and of course, some famous composers' small pieces, and folksong arrangements, and so on…their selection is more classical than American methods' performance books. American solo books contain too much rock, popular stuff. They are a little bit noisy for me. And I don't think those popular

> pieces' artistic value is high and they are not very suitable for students, especially considering the fact that most Taiwanese students are going to play classical music in the future. (Individual interview, p.11-12, 7/19/2003)

Combining methods with Keith Snell graded series. Keith Snell's graded series was translated into Chinese and published in Taiwan about three years ago. Four teachers in this study claim that they like to use Keith Snell's graded series in combination with other American methods. Teachers indicate that this series combines a lot of essential classical repertoire with various styles, ranging from Baroque to the 20th century. In addition, due to its logical and reasonable leveling, teachers can save time finding a diversity of repertoire and students can use it with convenience. Among the teachers who use the Keith Snell series, Kevin seems a big fan of the series, as compared to teachers who select only one or two books from the Keith Snell series. Kevin states,

> I currently like to use this series a lot. Actually, I think it can replace a lot of traditional materials, such as *Hanon, Czerny, Burgmüller*'s etudes. Because it carefully selects many etudes and repertoire from different styles of the essential etudes and classical repertoire, we don't have to ask students to buy many different books. Also, the etude books actually contain more diversity of technique. Unlike *Czerny*, it [Keith Snell's series] does not just focus on finger technique...so I currently like to use many books from this series, including its etude book, scale book, and various repertoire books. (Individual interview, p.2, 9/25/2003)

Combining methods with Chinese/Taiwanese literature anthologies. Although many teachers in this study mentioned that they occasionally assign several Chinese pieces for students, assigning Chinese pieces is limited to higher-level students due to the fact that the quality of Chinese/Taiwanese literature in lower levels is poor. Molly, Cathy, and Candy, nevertheless, still use some Chinese/Taiwanese literature, despite its poor quality, to teach beginners. Their reason for using Chinese/Taiwanese is that the familiar tunes and songs attract students, motivate students to practice, and make them feel that playing the piano is more enjoyable. Candy stated,

> I also use the ones [repertoire anthologies] composed by Taiwanese

> educators. I actually use these quite often because they contain many familiar pieces, although the arrangements are not very appealing, due to their monotonous and conventional harmonization. But I've found that students like these very much because of the familiar melodies. (Individual interview, p.14, 6/18/2003)

Cathy also explains,

> I use *Piano Pieces for Singing and Playing*. It's composed and arranged by Yin Hung-Ming. Actually, this book is not very good at all. Most of the pieces are arrangements of Chinese or Taiwanese folksongs, plus some other famous melodies. Basically he just uses the same chords, same patterns, mostly Alberti bass, to accompany these melodies. Actually, I don't like it at all. I use this one because the students request to play it. Because they like those melodies...it's important to use some familiar melodies to attract them, to let them feel playing piano is fun, and it should be related to what they usually sing from their music classes. The problem is that the accompaniment is really bad. Sometimes I have to change the notes, or rewrite the notes to make it sound better. Sometimes we want them to play some pieces that relate to their lives...unfortunately the arrangements are poor. So many students end up playing the western pieces exclusively. (Individual interview, p.14, 7/17/2003)

No problem to combining/switching methods to teach. Although most teachers combine different methods to teach, they claim that there is no problem for them to combine or switch methods for the students. They believe that as long as teachers take a good look before using a particular method or a particular level, it will not be a big problem. Cathy explains,

> For me, before I change a method book, I look at the content of this method. And when I use the new one, I observe the student's progress to see what they are missing, or what they need to work on more. So I'll go to the music store to find supplementary books for them. I've never had a problem because I always observe what they lack and assign them the supplementary books they need. (Individual interview, p.16, 7/17/2003)

Karen also gave an example, stating, "I don't feel there's any problem as long as you look at the material to see if it will work well for a student's level. For example, the student finishes *Alfred* level one, and then you want to switch to *Hal Leonard*. The *Hal Leonard* level two might not work for the student. So you probably need to use level three. That's what I mean" (Individual interview, p.7/24/2003).

Molly and Michael both claim the same thing, and also explained further that

combining different methods is actually combining the different advantages of each method. Molly explains

> Usually I don't have any problem because after a student finishes one book, of course I will see how good this student is, how smart he is, what level he is, and select the next book for him. Sometimes it's actually better than following one series because most of the methods, no matter how good, how deeply they are concerned, there is usually some small gap between levels. And also because books from the same series are written by the same people, the styles, and what they can think of are usually the same. We need to use different methods in order to see different views. (Individual interview, p.16, 7/16/2003)

Michael agrees, and also claims,

> I think a good teacher should know how to control the possible problems. If you notice the piece…for example, if *John Thompson* is too difficult or comes out with something new that doesn't appear in *Glover*'s lesson or theory book, you probably won't select this piece for the student at this stage. Or, if you think it is ok, 'I just need to explain something new, and it won't really be a problem', then go ahead and teach it. I think the teacher should have the ability to decide. If I use everything from one method, I will probably miss something to teach, too. None of the methods is perfect. I don't think I can use one method…or use every single book of a series, and then tell the student and parents that I didn't miss any musical concepts. Besides, if you only use one method or all the books from one series, students will probably be bored, too…they are more willing to use many different methods. (Individual interview, p.12, 7/19/2003)

Use of Diversity of Technique Books & Seldom Use of American Methods' Technique Books

In this study, most teachers like to use various technique books instead of consistently following a particular method's technique books. In actuality, except Anna and Holly, who consistently use *Bastien*'s technique books from level one to level four, and Lisa's use of *Alfred*'s technique book, all teachers claim that they seldom use American methods' technique books. Cathy explains that she prefers to use modern technique books, such as *A Dozen A Day*, *Finger Movement*, and *Excellent Athlete*. As she stated,

> I usually use *Excellent Athlete* and *Finger Movement*. They are similar to *A Dozen a Day*, but the pieces are more interesting. Also the size of the notes are bigger…I seldom use American methods' technique books, because I already use *Beyer*. For some students who need to work on technique more, I

> sometimes add *Glover* or *Alfred*'s technique books, but not commonly. Besides, I already use *Excellent Athlete* or *Finger Movement*...I think for most students, that's enough. (Individual interview, p.12-13, 7/17/2003)

Karen also prefers to use a modern technique series rather than American methods' technique books, and for higher-level students, she switches to traditional *Czerny*, *Hanon* etudes. She explains,

> I feel its [American methods'] technique books are usually too easy, not really helpful for developing techniques. For example, in *Hal Leonard*'s technique books, they just use very simple patterns...I can just teach that using its lesson books. I don't need to use the extra technique books to teach this kind of simple technique...I prefer to use more, how can I say, more efficient ones, such as *Finger Movement*. This is for lower level students. When they move to higher levels, I use *Schmitt* and *Hanon*. And of course, *Czerny*. I think this kind of technique is much more efficient... their patterns are usually much more difficult. In *Finger Movement*, they use titles, something like jumping ropes, these kinds of titles to evoke some imagination...it makes students feel more interested in practicing technique. (Individual interview, p.10-11, 7/24/2003)

In this study, many teachers prefer modern technique books, such as *Finger Movement, Excellent Athlete, A Dozen A Day,*. as described above. In addition, many teachers like to use Children's *Hanon* and *Keith Snell*'s scale and etude books for additional technique teaching materials.

Use and Selection of Methods Depends on Individual's Needs/Ability/Situation

Regardless of whether teachers use methods with more fixed or flexible plans, most teachers in this study mentioned that the use and selection of methods actually depends on a student's needs, ability, and situation. Different teachers focus on different aspects. For example, Cathy and Molly mentioned that their use and selection of methods depends on students' progress, weaknesses, and how they react to a particular method. Molly explained, "I usually don't have a fixed method for them...it depends on children's reactions. Sometimes you find a student doesn't like this one [a particular method], so you change to another one. If the child likes a particular method, then you can keep using this series for him"

(Individual interview, p.14, 7/16/2003). Cathy selects methods by basically observing students' weaknesses. She explains,

> If I think a particular student is weak in a particular area, I will select some particular books for him. For example, if the student is weak at musicality, I'll go to music stores to find more melodic solo books for him. If the student's technique needs extra work, I'll go pick up some additional technique books. It really depends on each student's case. (Individual interview, p.11, 7/17/2003)

Candy is more concerned with students' ages and abilities. She explains,

> If a student's age is very young, like seven years old or even younger than that, I will use *Hal Leonard* first, and then after several lessons, I'll gradually add different materials, probably *Beyer*, *John Thompson*, or *Alfred* or pieces compiled by Taiwanese educators. For older beginners who already know how to read the notes, I can assign them *Beyer* during the very beginning lessons. Or, I can just use *Alfred*, or *Glover*...if they [students] are smarter or more disciplined, you can use more traditional materials, like *Beyer*, and after that use *Czerny*, *Hanon*...but for average kids, I'll let them use *Hal Leonard* or some more interesting American method books. (Individual interview, p.12, 6/18/2003)

Anna has a very interesting perspective regarding the use and selection of methods. She cares about not only a student's ability, but also their sense of self-accomplishment and self-discipline. She explains,

> I feel no matter how good a method designs, for some students, they just cannot use certain methods. I mean, for some less smart students, they just can't follow its pacing. But you still need to select a method that makes the student feel that he progresses every week. For example, if the student is less smart or does not practice often, then I select a level which is lower than his level, so he still can pass a piece every week. But for other methods, I can just let him do it slowly...And, I think a lot of the best music is actually somewhat "boring," or hard to understand. That's why more people enjoy popular music than classical music. Sometimes I feel those fun pieces or fun methods, such as *Hal Leonard*, that attract students, might not be the right methods for the classical music world...sometimes you need to develop students' ability to tolerate boredom in order to reach a higher level. You can't let them always play those fun pieces...I feel the most important thing to play well is discipline and hard work in order to conquer the difficulty. If they always play catchy pieces, of course it motivates them, but in the long run, I don't think they will develop enough ability to play classical music. That's why I said they must play at least one method that is boring to them. It makes them develop the ability to be disciplined and to develop their concentration. And develop their ability to sit at the piano for several hours. If they are going to play sonatinas, more serious music...they need to have the ability to tolerate boredom in order to discover the beauty that exists in the serious music. (Individual interview, p.13, 7/18/2003)

As compared to the teachers' opinions stated above, Kevin seems to have a more serious concern regarding the use and selection of methods. He states,

> It depends on where you teach, depends on students' needs, and levels, and depends on if the teacher is familiar with that particular method. Even though I said I don't like and don't use *Methode Rose*, probably in France, because of the use of French music, they probably use it very successfully. I use *Beyer* because I know how to use it, and the reading process is related to students' general music classes, and I also like its classical writing of the pieces…the selection of methods may be very different when considering many different variables. (Individual interview, p.10, 7/15/2003)

Use Main Lesson Book Page by Page, Select Solo Pieces from Repertoire Books

Many teachers in this study mentioned that they usually use main lesson books page by page because they believe that most lesson books have a logical design of musical concepts; therefore, skipping any page may jeopardize the continuous process of learning musical concepts. On the other hand, when using supplementary materials, especially repertoire books, teachers think they can choose some pieces without following the order and without causing any problems. As Kevin stated, "Basically, I follow the major lesson book page by page, but for solo pieces or technical exercises, I don't follow the order exactly. Because in the lesson book, they explain the basic theory, basic musical concepts, if you skip some of them, the students will probably miss some important concepts, which makes it hard for them to go on (Individual interview, p.14, 7/15/2003).

Holly considers the *Bastien* series main books. She uses it page-by-page. However, for additional repertoire, she selects some pieces from various anthologies. As she stated,

> For *Bastien*, because it's my main method book, I almost always follow the method page by page. Because it has such a systematic design, I'm afraid if I just pick out some pieces, or skip some part of it, students will miss something important…As for other methods, like *John Thompson*, I basically just select some pieces for the students. I don't follow its order at all. I just pick up some pieces that I think are appropriate for a student's current level, and they [pieces] match the current lesson of *Bastien*. (Individual interview, p.12-13, 7/21/2003)

Karen explains the same thing concerning the difficulty and problems that may be encountered if teachers do not follow the main lesson book's order.

> For a lesson book, I mean the main book, such as *Beyer*, or the lesson books from American methods, I use them page by page...unless you are really very good at teaching children using your own system and organization of musical concepts. I believe it will take a long time to develop a teacher's own organization of teaching concepts. For most teachers, it's quite difficult...most modern methods are written in a logical design, so using them page by page won't miss the important concepts...But for solo pieces, I select the pieces from various books, not page-by-page. I select the pieces that I think are suitable for the student's level, or that match the concepts I'm teaching. Yeah, that's the way I use the method. It's convenient to just follow the well-designed method. That way makes teaching easier. (Individual interview, p.14, 7/24/2003)

Both Method and Teacher's Ability Are Important vs. Teacher's Ability More Important than Method Itself

None of the teachers in this study completely deny the importance of methods for successful piano teaching. In fact, most of them believe both method and teachers' ability are important for successful piano teaching. Cathy's statement reflects most teachers' opinions of why both elements are important. Cathy explains,

> If the method is good, but the teacher doesn't know how to use it, of course, the method won't be able to generate its maximum effect. But even if the teacher knows how to teach well, if there's no good method, unless the teacher knows how to compose, it's still hard to teach students successfully. So I think both are important. Besides, even if teachers just composed the pieces themselves, can they make the pieces colorful and beautiful, and provide pictures, like the methods on the market that attract students? Nowadays children care about visual attraction. (Individual interview, p.13, 7/17/2003)

Although all of the teachers believe in the importance of methods to a certain degree, Michael, Molly, and Karen claim that the teacher's ability has a more crucial role in a successful piano teaching. Karen's opinion represents these teachers' reasoning, when she states,

> Of course, if there's more selection of methods, it will be easier for the teacher to teach. I don't mean method itself is completely unimportant. But

> when compared with a teacher's quality, I think a teacher's ability is more important. Many students use the same methods, but some of them play wonderfully, while some of them sound like they don't understand the music at all. That's why I said teachers actually serve a more important role than the method itself. A good teacher will know a student's limits and will require him to do as good as he can. For a piece, good teachers care about the phrasing, the touch, the tone quality, the speed, the form, and the texture of a piece. A bad teacher might just let the student pass a piece easily, without considering these aspects. (Individual interview, p.14, 7/24/2003)

In summary, Taiwanese piano teachers prefer to combine the European method, *Beyer*, with American methods. They believe that European methods are more effective in developing technique and self-discipline, while American methods integrate education of musicianship and diversity of repertoire. The supplementary materials that Taiwanese piano teachers commonly use include Japanese and Taiwanese repertoire anthologies, various technique books, and Keith Snell's graded series. When using these diverse methods and materials, most teachers use the main methods page by page while selecting pieces that match the main lesson books from various anthologies. Most teachers believe that an individual's ability and needs should be taken into account when selecting the "right" method for students.

III. Problems of Using Foreign Methods

In this study, all teachers indicate some problems with using foreign methods in Taiwan's piano education circle; however, most teachers claim that these problems are not serious. Many teachers stated that because piano is a western instrument, using foreign (mostly western) methods to teach piano seems very natural and reasonable. Also, western classical music seems the mainstream worldwide; therefore, it becomes natural and inevitable for Taiwan to emerge into this mainstream. In addition, teachers mentioned that due to the number of diverse methods and materials available in Taiwan's market, teachers can easily select

ones that supplement the foreign methods if the materials in the foreign methods are insufficient. For these reasons, teachers think that the problems of using foreign methods are not very serious. The following shows the common problems found in this study.

Problems of Using English Alphabets

Six teachers in this study mentioned that the use of English alphabets creates some small problems for Taiwanese students due to the fact that elementary school students use a solmization system instead of English alphabets to learn and sing the note names in general music classes. Also, many elementary students have not learned English; therefore, methods that teach note names using English alphabets need extra explanation during piano lessons. However, most teachers indicate that this is becoming less of a problem as English is being gradually introduced into elementary-level education and an existing trend in Taiwanese society towards learning English. With this expansion of the English language into Taiwanese education and society students typically adjust to using note names based on the English alphabets more quickly. As Cathy stated,

> It's a small problem. I know in Taiwan we use do re mi fa sol la si, instead of CDEFGAB. But you know, it's the magic of Taiwan's education. Even though they [students] haven't learned English in school, parents teach them or send them to English cram school from the time they are in kindergarten. They are afraid of being left behind, so parents teach their children anything they are going to learn in school. Many students learn English before taking piano lessons now. So I don't think it's a big problem nowadays. (Individual interview, p.18-19, 7/17/2003)

Debbie also explains,

> Taiwanese kids did not learn English when they were in elementary school. So, when I used American methods...during the first piano lessons, I had to explain to the kids and teach them English alphabets...but nowadays, English classes begin in elementary school. Also, many children go to cram schools to learn English. So I think this problem now is no longer a big problem. (Individual interview, p.18-19, 7/18/2003)

Molly said the same thing, but also explained that she uses both English alphabets and the solmization system to teach note names.

> It [using English alphabets] has some problems, but is not a big problem at all. Because most children nowadays learn English from the time they are in kindergarten, so it's not a big problem anymore…I still start with do re mi fa sol la si do, because they learn that in elementary general music classes. So I start with the same. But after several lessons, I start to teach them CDEFGAB…they like to learn; actually, they think knowing English is a very honorable thing…but I still ask them to sing in do re mi. It's easier to sing because the vowel sounds are easier to produce. And when it's easier to sing, they sing it more correctly, more in tune. I also use Kodaly's hand gestures to make them sing in tune. (Individual interview, p.18, 7/16/2003)

Language Translation Problem

Although the use of English alphabets seems no longer a big language problem as described above, five teachers indicated that the language translation from foreign languages to Chinese generates some problems. Debbie, Molly, and Candy claim that many games and activities that appear in modern American methods cannot be played or used by Taiwanese students. As Molly explained,

> In some modern American method books, such as *Hal Leonard*…the musical activity books, or theory books, offer a lot of spelling games. Students need to use English alphabets to fill in some difficult English vocabulary. For these kinds of games, Taiwanese students can't use them at all because they [games] cannot be translated into Chinese, and if they keep these games in English, Taiwanese children's English is not good enough to play these games (Individual interview, p.19, 7/16/2003).

Candy also indicates that,

> Many American methods such as *Alfred*, or *Hal Leonard* use a lot of games to teach theory, and they use puzzles or some other games to learn music. But these vocabularies are unfamiliar to our students. Most Taiwanese students, at the elementary age level, only know the English alphabet and very simple words like I, You, and so on. So I find these games cannot be used by Taiwanese students. (Individual interview, p.16, 6/18/2003)

In speaking of ways to resolve this problem, teachers claim that there is no good solution. The only solution is to skip these games and activities, and to select some other theory supplementary books.

Debbie and Michael claim that the Chinese translation loses the childish language that exists in the original foreign methods. Michael said,

> The language [Chinese translation] is too complicated for the children. We should make the language easy, close to children's language. It may be the most significant translation problem. When translating from a foreign language, it is very difficult to keep the original meaning of childish language. Taiwanese translators probably need to work on this more…I think almost every page of the foreign methods has this problem, not just a particular one. It's a common problem. (Individual interview, p.15-16, 7/19/2003)

Debbie also explained "children's methods should be written in children's languages. But I don't know if it's because of problems with the original English edition or because of translation problems. I found most of these foreign methods' languages are too difficult for children" (Individual interview, p.19, 7/18/2003).

Kevin indicates another translation problem. He claims that the direct translations of the piece titles from their original languages into Chinese are usually too difficult for Taiwanese students to understand or to feel their meaning deeply; therefore, teachers' explanations of a particular cultural background are needed. Kevin explained and gave an example,

> I have found that some translations are difficult to understand. Taiwanese students are not able to understand them…I don't think they are translated wrong, but the problem is that we don't have the same cultural backgrounds or living backgrounds, so Taiwanese students won't be able to understand it…Here is one example. This one is from *Hal Leonard* lesson book, Dakota melody. The Chinese translation is 達科塔之音 [Dakota melody]. The translation is correct, but the problem is how are the children going to know what a Dakota melody is? You need to spend a lot of time explaining it to the children in order to let them have an imagination about this piece…actually, we can translate it to a different title. I mean forget about the Dakota melody. We can translate it to probably "A wild desert" something like that. Children will be able to feel the piece more. (Individual interview, p.17, 7/15/2003)

Problems of Selection of Repertoire

American methods contain too many American idiom pieces. Most teachers mentioned that some problems exist with the selection of repertoire in most foreign methods when used for Taiwanese students. Debbie, Kevin, and Mandy claim that American methods contain too many American idiom pieces, which are not suitable for Taiwan's piano education circle. Debbie explains,

> The repertoire in European methods is more universal…I mean in terms of classical music training. After all, most Taiwanese students mainly play classical music when they take piano lessons…the repertoire in European methods is more likely to prepare for [students] for classical concert pieces. I mean, they serve as preparation for playing Mozart, Beethoven…. But most American methods seem to include a lot of American style pieces that are not very suitable for the classical learning environment in Taiwan. Although students accept it, I don't think it is good for students to play this kind of music too much…their [the pieces'] entertainment value surpasses their artistic value. (Individual interview, p.19, 7/18/2003)

Kevin also explains the same thing, stating,

> I think in Taiwan, the selection of pieces in European methods resemble more closely to the pieces that students are going to play in the future. American methods…sometimes they use too many American idioms. I don't think it's very appropriate for Taiwanese children…because it's not the mainstream of western classical music. Just like Chinese music…you won't expect American children to play mostly Chinese music, will you? (Individual interview, p.14, 7/15/2003)

In terms of resolving this problem, Debbie, Kevin, and Mandy all agree that combining American methods with European methods, or using more traditional repertoire anthologies, such as the ones compiled by the Japanese, are possible solutions. They also state that they tend to not use American methods' solo books, which usually contain mostly American idiom pieces.

No Chinese/Taiwanese literature in foreign methods. Many teachers in this study mentioned that there is no Chinese/Taiwanese piano literature in most foreign methods, which may generate the problem of losing Chinese traditional music. Karen states,

> I'm thinking because we probably just use these western methods, there are no Chinese and Taiwanese pieces in these methods. Children don't have any experience approaching Chinese music. Our traditional music may gradually disappear. That's the problem. (Individual interview, p.15, 7/24/2003)

Molly also explains,

> Most of these foreign methods only include western music. There is no Chinese style or Taiwanese style music included. I think when children learn music, they should approach our own cultural music. A lot of Chinese music is actually very beautiful… American methods are full of American idioms, which are lively, cheerful, and interesting, but I sometimes ask myself whether we need to include our own cultural music for them. I have found that most of the younger generation kids are too westernized. They sometimes disrespect our traditions. (Individual interview, p.17, 7/16/2003)

Michael mentioned the same thing and strongly believes that educators should include Chinese literature in their teaching materials. He states,

> I think the most serious problem is that these foreign methods contain only their own pieces. Chinese or Taiwanese teaching literature is not included in these methods. There are a lot of fine Chinese and Taiwanese folksongs. We should include these in our teaching literature. I feel that learning music should be strongly related to our living experience. Chinese and Taiwanese folksongs are supposed to be our closest music experience. Unfortunately, because Taiwan is being westernized; our cultural heredity is gradually becoming ignored. So, I feel we should include our folksongs into our teaching repertoire. (Individual interview, p.15, 7/19/2003)

Some pieces cannot be deeply understood or felt. Lisa and Candy indicate that some pieces selected from foreign methods are not easy for Taiwanese students, or even teachers, to deeply feel and understand because of the differences in cultural backgrounds. Lisa explains,

> The most obvious thing is the style of the pieces and particular patterns that are very different from our music, our culture. They [Taiwanese teachers] don't have that kind of sense…teachers need to have the sense for that kind of music. For example, blues, or jazz. Teachers need to have that kind of sense and need to know how to teach children to feel the particular rhythmic pattern. Most Taiwanese teachers, like us, do not have many problems teaching classical materials because we were trained this way, and we listen to a lot of classical music. But when we encounter jazz or blues or some other kinds of modern foreign idioms, we cannot fully understand it, not to mention students. I think that's the problem when we use foreign methods. (Individual interview, p.17-18, 7/12/2003)

Candy also explains,

> Children like western music. They accept it completely, but they probably cannot understand it deeply. In order to know or to feel these foreign folksongs deeply, you need to be exposed to its culture. For example, they may like jazz, rock-n-roll, or a particular folksong, but when they [Taiwanese students] play it, it's just different from American's playing of jazz. They can't capture the subtlety. Maybe I shouldn't say they can't, but I believe it's harder. On the same token, when a western musician sings a Chinese folksong, he may not be able to sing it well because he doesn't understand the subtlety of the beauty of Chinese music. (Individual interview, p.15, 6/28/2003)

Taiwanese students shy to sing. Karen indicates that from her experience, most American methods employ lyrics for children to sing, but because Taiwanese students are usually very shy, these foreign methods' lyrics seem a burden to

Taiwanese students. She has to sing with the students; otherwise, the students will not sing and these lyrics seem useless. Karen said,

> American methods are usually more lively. Most of the pieces include the lyrics for singing…but I've found that Taiwanese students don't like to sing at all. They are usually shy, and don't like to open their mouths. Yeah. I think it's a problem to use American methods…you have to sing with them [students]. Then, because they realize they aren't singing alone, they will open their mouths and sing a little bit. (Individual interview, p.15, 7/24/2003)

Physical problems. Michael indicates that because of Taiwanese students' smaller hands, the selection of repertoire in foreign pieces sometimes seems unsuitable. He explains,

> I think probably in Taiwan, the average children who start taking piano lessons are younger than in western countries. At least, younger than average British kids. In England, I would say that the average child who takes piano lessons is 8-9 years old, but in Taiwan, probably 6 or 7…also, Asian's hands are smaller. When they use these methods, probably at level 3 or even level 2, they need to play octave. It's ok for western kids because they are older and have bigger hands, but for Taiwanese students, teachers have to devise ways to solve this problem. (Individual interview, p.16, 7/19/2003)

To solve this problem, Michael said that he changes the order of the pieces or changes some notes. He explains,

> I usually postpone teaching the octave or any pieces written in big chords or requiring big hand extensions. If I feel I need to teach a piece at a particular stage, I usually change some of the notes for them [students]…like octave, I sometimes make it 6th for them to play. But if a piece is written mainly for developing octave technique, I will skip it first. (Individual interview, p.16, 7/19/2003)

General Music Classes Helpful for Piano Lessons

Although several teachers mentioned that the teaching of notation and some other musical concepts in general music classes is somewhat different from those of piano method books, teachers indicate that there is no contradiction in adopting different approaches to teach notation and musical concepts. They further explained that in terms of teaching piano playing, due to the fact that most elementary schools do not focus on teaching keyboard instruments, the general music classes offered in Taiwan's elementary schools are not very useful.

Nevertheless, most teachers claim that the basic musical concepts learned from general music classes are helpful for students' piano lessons to a certain degree. As Candy said,

> I think they are a great deal of help for piano lessons. Many of my students can read music before taking my piano lessons. It makes my job easier, although they only know how to read the treble clef. But I have to say that once you know how to read the treble clef, the bass clef is not difficult at all. The only thing you need to improve is the reading speed. They [students] already know the lines, the space, and skip and step. You just need to teach them to read faster, to read by the music contour. Many of them can also count the beats. I think the general music classes are really helpful for piano lessons. Although they don't teach keyboard music often in general music classes, the teachers teach them how to play the recorder, and most of the schools have children's choir or children's band. If the children join these group activities, it can be very helpful. (Individual interview, p.16, 6/28/2003)

Karen and Lisa think the general music classes are somewhat helpful for piano lessons, but only to a mild degree as compared to Candy. Karen explains,

> I don't feel there is any contradiction. But if you say it's very helpful…I don't think it's very helpful, but it's helpful in some ways. They learn how to read in the school, but they cannot read well, cannot read fast. The music classes offered in elementary school are usually very general; they don't teach piano playing at all, I believe, although I've never taught in an elementary school. However, after taking the music classes and then taking piano lessons, they [students] won't feel music is completely new to them. Also, many students who want to learn because some of their classmates are learning piano. In music classes, they observe some classmates playing, so they want to learn too. I think general music classes generate the atmosphere of learning music and musical instruments. Also, they develop students' love of music. I think that this is the most helpful part of general music classes. (Individual interview, p.16, 7/24/2003)

In summary, drawing upon their own teaching experiences, expert Taiwanese teachers addressed some problems of using foreign methods in Taiwan. These problems include problems of using English alphabets, translating foreign languages, excluding Chinese repertoire, and adjusting notes to compensate for Taiwanese students' smaller hands. Taiwanese teachers have devised ways to resolve some of these problems, although some of the problems are yet unresolved. However, most Taiwanese piano teachers do not regard these problems as serious

because there are numerous materials in Taiwan's market from which teachers can choose. As to general music classes, most teachers believe that they are somewhat helpful for students' individual piano lessons and that general music classes and private lessons do not contradict one another despite the fact that some music teaching systems the two may differ.

IV. Development of Taiwanese Methods

Necessity of Developing Taiwanese Elementary-age Methods

All teachers included in this study feel that the development of a Chinese/Taiwanese method would be welcome, but, with the exception of one, they believe that the need is not pressing. Michael was the only teacher in this study who advocated the urgent development of a Chinese/Taiwanese method in order to compensate for the lack of cultural literature in foreign methods currently in use. Debbie, Kevin, and Holly, on the other hand, believe that the piano is a western instrument, and therefore using western methods to teach piano seems natural, suggesting that teachers simply assign some Chinese literature to compensate for its absence in western method. Taiwan's small market for piano methods also became a consideration for teachers discussing whether or not Taiwan needs to develop method books. Many of these teachers feel that the small market already has a number of method books to choose from as well as supplementary material which compensates for the problems of foreign methods, thus reducing the urgency for the development of a Taiwanese elementary-aged method.

Most teachers agree that the lack of Chinese/Taiwanese literature seems to be one of the problems of foreign methods and that this may result in students' ignorance of traditional Chinese music and culture. However, Debbie and Kevin

claim that, although it is beneficial to include some Chinese/Taiwanese literature in piano methods so as to preserve Chinese traditional culture, there are many alternate ways to preserve Chinese traditional music. Therefore, it is not necessary to preserve Chinese music through piano lessons. As Kevin suggested:

> Our traditional culture and music needs to be preserved, definitely. But I'm just thinking, is it necessary to preserve our music through piano lessons? Because after all, piano is a western instrument...I think we can preserve it through piano lessons, but probably it won't serve a crucial role. The most important way is through general music classes...In general music classes, we teach [students] a lot of Chinese and Taiwanese folksongs. So I guess it's not urgent to include Chinese literature in piano lessons...Also, although I would say Chinese music is precious, it hasn't developed well, so in terms of quality and probably quantity, Chinese music is quite local as compared to western classical music. So, because western classical music is still the major world-recognized music, I think focusing on western classical music in piano lessons is reasonable. (Individual interview, p.16, 7/15/2003)

Cathy and Karen also mentioned the abundance of methods and materials in Taiwan's market, and noted that Taiwanese teachers seem to prefer combining different methods and materials instead of following a particular series. For these reasons, even if Taiwan develops a systematic method such as modern American methods, Cathy doubts many Taiwanese teachers will use it. She explained:

> I agree that most of the Taiwanese materials are not as organized as American methods. They are basically just collections of pieces that teachers can choose from...But you have to think about the fact that developing a method requires a lot of money, effort...there are so many materials in Taiwan's market, and teachers tend to combine many different methods to teach, not just follow one method. They have this kind of habit using the methods. If you try to develop a method that is similar to American methods, and expect teachers will use most books from your method...I don't think it's very probable. Taiwan, although it hasn't developed a systematic method like American methods, provides an abundance of supplementary materials; you know classical anthologies, Taiwan's cartoon songs, popular song arrangements, American jazz, rock-n-roll, rap, movie songs, too many supplementary materials for teachers to choose from. They probably wouldn't use a Taiwanese method. (Individual interview, p.21, 7/17/2003)

Karen also pointed out that many teachers prefer to use the methods with which they are familiar. This, in addition to a glutted market, would make it difficult for a new Taiwanese method to gain extensive use. Regarding this

problem Karen noted that:

> Most teachers like to use the methods they are familiar with. They feel more comfortable using the methods they frequently use, unless they find that a method's quality is very bad. And look at Taiwan's market. There are plenty of materials and a lot of methods in the market that teachers can select from. In this kind of situation, I would say it seems there is not much room for new methods. (Individual interview, p.16, 7/24/2003)

Kevin claims that it may be beneficial to develop a Taiwanese method, thereby possibly resolving some of the problems that exist in foreign methods. However, he further claims that even if Taiwan were to develop its own method, the perfect method does not exist anywhere in the world. He feels that the most important thing regarding piano education in Taiwan is to educate teachers in how to use methods well. He explains:

> I think that no method is perfect for everything. Probably Taiwan could have one, and we will develop one. But again, it won't be perfect. The most important thing is to educate teachers how to select materials and use them well. If, many years ago, you asked me this question, I would say yes. We needed one [Taiwanese method] because there were only a few methods in the market, so it was difficult to select good materials for students. But now there are already so many methods, so many materials in the market…it makes me feel that the major issue for current piano education is not to develop a method; instead, we need to offer piano pedagogy classes to educate teachers. Also, different students have different needs…so even though we think of everything to develop a method, eventually it won't be able to satisfy every kind of student. (Individual interview, p.19, 7/15/2003)

Advocating Future Taiwanese Elementary-age Methods

Although most teachers in this study claim that it is not currently necessary to develop an elementary-age Taiwanese method for the reasons discussed above, they believe that having a Taiwanese method in the future would show that Taiwan's piano education circle has improved a great deal and will gradually become mature. In this study, teachers offer several ideas for the future development of Taiwanese methods. Their suggestions and opinions about how to develop a new Taiwanese method are categorized into several common themes: the necessity of adding Chinese/Taiwanese literature, the need to teach the elements of

Chinese music theory, necessity of being based on western musical concepts, the need to be distinguished from current methods, and the inclusion of music appreciation materials.

Need to add Chinese/Taiwanese literature. Despite believing that exclusively using western classical music to teach does not generate any serious problem, all of the teachers in this study suggest that Chinese/Taiwanese literature should be included in a future Taiwanese method. Their commonly shared reason is that Taiwan's traditional art and music must be preserved, and that students will be able to approach and become exposed to a Chinese music environment only through learning and experiencing Chinese/Taiwanese music. In the long run, students' exposure to Chinese/Taiwanese music will allow them to be able to appreciate the beauty of Chinese/Taiwanese music, giving them the desire to preserve Taiwan's Chinese musical heritage. Molly clearly captured the crux of the matter:

> People nowadays in Taiwan are very westernized; what we wear, what we use pretty much follows the western style, music, too. I have to admit that Chinese music hasn't developed to a very high level, as western music has. But Chinese music is still our heritage, we need to preserve it while learning western classical music…if we lose our traditions and only learn from western's style, it won't be a good sign for our future music development…many countries develop and improve their music by combining their own musical elements with others. (Individual interview, p.2, 9/24/2003)

Cathy was of the same opinion:

> Actually, Chinese culture in Taiwan is often being ignored now. I don't say Chinese culture is bad, but because the western countries are stronger now, it's natural that we learn from them…I guess because Chinese music…although started a long time ago, has not developed like western music. So, as compared to western classical music, Chinese music is actually not widely spread. In Taiwan, most children don't feel strange listening to western music, you know German folksongs, American folksongs, or even Jazz, rock-n-roll. They probably like western music more than Chinese music…I don't say Chinese music is bad. Actually, we didn't develop it, but the melody, the flavor, the spirit actually is good enough to be preserved. I guess we should teach some Chinese music in our piano lessons. (Individual interview, p.18, 7/17/2003)

Candy and Michael offered another reason why Chinese music should to be taught in piano lessons. They believe that Chinese/Taiwanese music is not only Taiwan's musical heritage, but also is the field in which Taiwanese students will become distinguished as specialists, and will surpass others. As Candy said:

> I do think incorporating some Chinese materials into our piano teaching is necessary. As I said, children like western music, they accept it completely, but they probably cannot understand it deeply. In order to know or to feel these foreign folksongs and pieces deeply, you need to be exposed to the culture, get into that kind of environment...My point is that Chinese music or Taiwanese music may be the field that we can really understand well and surpass other western musicians. So we should use it in our teaching materials. (Individual interview, p.15, 6/28/2003)

Michael agrees with Candy's idea, and further explains this viewpoint using an example.

> I really think it's very important to teach Chinese literature...it's the field in which we can be better than western musicians...Most musicians in Taiwan only perform western literature...But after all, that is not our heredity, so it's somehow not very close to us. Even though we try to do everything to make it [our performance] close to western people's performance, somehow we cannot capture the subtlety, the nuance. On the contrary, when western people play Chinese music, they can't easily capture our special musical language, either. It means we have the Chinese blood, and it really belongs to us. We need to make our music grow. I remember when the Giant Three tenors (Domingo, Cararas, Pavarotti) came to Taiwan to give a recital and they sang one or two Chinese songs with Jiang Hui (a famous Taiwanese pop singer). When Jiang Hui sang the songs, everyone was so touched, but when the Giant Three tenors sang the Chinese songs, I felt it was so funny. They can't capture the intonation of the Chinese language, not to mention Chinese's particular pronunciation and the way of expression. It sounded very funny to me. (Individual interview, p.18, 7/19/2003)

Need to teach elements of Chinese music theory. Michael, Lisa, and Candy explained that in order to preserve Chinese music, the inclusion of Chinese literature in piano lessons is not enough. The musical elements of Chinese music should also be incorporated into future Taiwanese methods. Lisa noted that:

> When we include Chinese or Taiwanese materials, I think it's not just to let the students play some Chinese pieces. We should let them understand why it sounds Chinese, why it's different from western music. Through a deeper understanding of Chinese music, they will appreciate it more. Not just to assign them Chinese pieces once in a while...it [Taiwanese method] should provide some Chinese music theory, or Chinese composers' biographies to let

them really understand our music. (Individual interview, p.20, 7/12/2003)

Candy agrees, saying:

> I believe to let the students understand deeply about the Chinese music, you probably need to write some other supplementary materials, such as the explanation of Chinese music theory, or probably Chinese music needs to use some other particular technique that western music doesn't use…I mean not just put some Chinese pieces in the methods, but also need to put some Chinese music theory, Chinese music appreciation, and so on to explain deeply about Chinese music. (Individual interview, p.18, 6/18/2003)

Need to be based on western musical concepts. Contrary to earlier suggestions advocating the inclusion of Chinese literature and theory, several teachers claim that future Taiwanese piano methods must continue to be based on western musical concepts, not Chinese literature. Their reasoning is that western classical music is mainstream worldwide, therefore, teaching western musical concepts and pieces in piano lessons seems inevitable. If this is the adopted approach to piano methods, then learning western musical concepts by playing Chinese music, which is written on mostly pentatonic scales, is clearly inappropriate. As Anna explained:

> You probably want to develop a Taiwanese method that uses Chinese or Taiwanese materials to teach musical concepts…But I have to say, after all, piano is a western instrument, and most essential piano literature so far is still western. So if we want to use Chinese and Taiwanese materials to design a Taiwanese piano method, I would say it's not very possible because Chinese music mostly uses pentatonic scales, which is completely different from western methods. (Individual interview, p.15, 7/18/2003)

In considering the issue, Lisa points out:

> If there's an American method writer who wants to make the pieces more colorful, he may employ some Eastern music in his method. So probably he will use some Chinese or Japanese music in his method. But I believe the musical concepts will still be arranged according to the western system. It's the same for our future methods. It's not easy to use Chinese materials as a main source to introduce western musical concepts. Chinese music does not use the western-based major and minor. (Individual interview, p.20, 7/12/2003)

Kevin also states:

> Western classical music has a very systematic evolution. So now they develop the major and minor modes. And to teach music, we typically follow western music theory. But Chinese music is not written based on major and minor modes. So if we try to teach music theory or try to develop a piano method based on Chinese music, it would be very difficult and almost impossible for children to learn basic, western music knowledge. But including some Chinese literature would be very nice. The different types of music will stimulate their ears. (Individual interview, p.20, 7/15/2003)

Need to be very distinguished from current methods. Cathy, Candy, and Karen claim that in order to attract Taiwanese teachers to a Taiwan-made method, it must be distinguished from the current methods in Taiwan's market, otherwise, teachers will continue using the same methods they are already familiar with. Going to the heart of the problem, Candy noted:

> There are so many methods in Taiwan, from America, Japan, Germany, France, and other countries; if we develop one, it must be very different. Otherwise, I feel will not attract me. If it's nothing special, why should I use it? I should use it just because it was developed by Taiwanese? I don't think teachers will think this way. It must be something different from others, so it will attract piano teachers' attention. (Individual interview, p.17, 6/28/2003)

Cathy added to Candy's position, and mentioned that:

> [w]hen you develop a method, it must be very special, very interesting, very distinguished from others, and of course, it needs to be very organized, and very easy to use, otherwise, it would be hard to for this method to compete with American methods or other good methods in the market. (Individual interview, p.21, 7/17/2003)

Add music appreciation materials. Four teachers in this study suggest that future Taiwanese methods ought to incorporate systematic music appreciation materials, which will be beneficial for enlarging students' musical knowledge as well as allowing them to enjoy and appreciate music more. In order to achieve these goals, teachers offered some suggestions regarding the design of music appreciation books. Candy and Debbie suggest that music appreciation books match the lesson books. In addition, music appreciation books should not be limited to introducing music composers and their works; instead, they ought to be

enlarged to include an introduction to many genres of art, such as opera, Chinese music, even visual arts. Candy elaborated on the idea, saying:

> Because my teaching philosophy is, as I explained, that through learning piano, using piano as a tool, we can approach the beauty of arts, sense the beauty of our environment, so I think good music appreciation materials should relate to other arts. Like painting, poetry, or…I have found that many children who take piano lessons just play the piano, so they only listen to the piano sound. They should expand their ears. So the materials provided should not be limited to piano music. Other kinds of music, from opera to lieder, from violin to brass, from western music to Chinese music. Then later, these materials should relate these different performance forces to different kinds of art, which really matches my philosophy of learning piano in order to appreciate the beauty of art, not just music. (Individual interview, p.18-19, 6/28/2003)

Debbie has a similar viewpoint, suggesting:

> You need to introduce different instruments to the students, different genres, different combinations of instruments…and I think appreciation is not just limited to the aural perception, but also visual and other different kinds of art. Opera, ballet, and even Chinese opera, Taiwanese opera, can be all included in our music appreciation materials. And it should match the lessons as much as possible. I feel in Taiwan, many pianists only listen to piano music. That's too narrow. (Individual interview, p.24, 7/18/2003)

Molly agrees with these ideas and, in addition, suggests that a CD of original performances should be included in the book so as to be convenient for students' usage. She states:

> They should arrange famous pieces in a level that is parallel to the main lesson book, and of course, the story of the pieces, and backgrounds of the composers, need to be written in a way students in this level can understand. And they need to have a teacher's accompaniment. If these famous pieces are played only in simple melodies, it will be too boring. If teachers can play duets with students, it will be very fun. Also, providing a CD that contains original versions will be very easy for them to listen to. Also, if the parents need to buy CDs for all of the pieces, it will be too expensive. (Individual interview, p.20, 7/16/2003)

Karen has a similar concept of supplemental CDs, but she also believes that these materials should include instructions that guide students toward imitating or imaging the orchestral sound while playing the piano. She explains:

> We can categorize the music arrangements into several categories: chamber music, symphony, opera, and so on. And maybe by different instruments, clarinet, violin, cello, something like that. So students can approach not only famous classical music, but also they can learn different instruments,

> different genres, different performance forces. Moreover, we should teach them that this voice sounds like a clarinet, and this line is actually imitating the cello, something like that. So, if the piano methods include these music appreciation materials with a very organized, systematic arrangement, students actually will imagine the different kinds of sound while playing the piano pieces. This is also good for teaching voicing and balancing. Then of course, we need to provide the original performance of the pieces. (Individual interview, p.17, 7/24/2003)

Additional Thoughts about Taiwan's Current Piano Education

In terms of additional thoughts about Taiwan's current piano education, teachers mentioned quite a few opinions as listed in Appendix H. There are two common threads running throughout all of these comments: parents' negative attitude and the need for Taiwan to establish large-scale pedagogy conferences.

Parents' negative attitude. Debbie, Holly, Lisa, and Anna indicate that parents demonstrate a negative attitude by expecting fast results and being too competitive, which makes teachers feel a great deal of pressure. Lisa explained the source of pressure on teachers:

> Some parents want their children to choose music as a career in the future. They want their children to enter MGPs. This type of parent competes a lot. They compete with other parents, and compare their children with others. They are always looking for teachers who can produce good performers, and they check to see if you are this kind of teacher. This is where the pressure comes from. (Individual interview, p.6, 7/12/2003)

Debbie also noted a similar feeling:

> I feel Taiwanese parents like to see the results so eagerly. They are very pushy. They want their children to play pieces in a short time. So the teachers will be under a lot of pressure. In this environment, teachers do not feel as though they can teach using their own teaching philosophy. (Individual interview, p.24, 7/18/2003)

Holly offered some examples for her own experience with parental pressure:

> I feel that students, maybe I should say parents, look for quick results. They don't really care about the basic things. For example, they just want to take the Yamaha piano exam in order to know what level their children are at. Or they just want to join the competition. So they play only a few pieces in a semester. Those pieces are usually far beyond what they can play. They keep working on the big pieces, but forget to develop the basic fundamental things, like the understanding of music, the expression, the producing of good tone, and so on. (Individual interview, p.19, 7/21/2003)

Taiwan needs large-scale pedagogy conferences. Many teachers mentioned that Taiwan needs large-scale piano pedagogy conferences in order for teachers to improve their teaching skills. When considering this point, Candy noticed the disparity between conferences held in America and those held in Taiwan:

> I have found that in Taiwan, many things are very advanced, just like in America. The piano teaching materials are as numerous as in America. Teachers' degrees are as high as those of American teachers. But why are there not many piano workshops or conferences in Taiwan? The piano workshops or conferences here [in Taiwan] are mostly private and small. Also, in the US, they have music teachers' organizations, which give many activities, workshops…I think we need to form a piano teachers' organization and develop bigger workshops and conferences. (Individual interview, p.19, 6/28/2003)

Anna feels the same way:

> We need to learn from the United States. They have many piano pedagogy conferences and workshops every year. Taiwan, in this field, still has a lot of room to progress. We need to hold more workshops or conferences to educate teachers as to how to teach better, how to use the materials more effectively. (Individual interview, p.18, 7/18/2003)

In summary, Taiwanese piano teachers commonly do not think it is urgent to develop a Taiwanese method at this stage but welcome such a development in the future. Taiwanese piano teachers offered some ideas for the development of Taiwanese piano methods in the future. Their suggestions include adding Chinese repertoire and Chinese music theory; however, the main repertoire and music concepts should still be based on western classical music. In addition, they suggest including systematic music appreciation materials in the piano method books.

Summary

This chapter was divided into three main parts: a) description of the participants, b) comparison of interviews and observations, and c) findings of the interviews. The first part provided the profile of each expert teacher. The profiles address the teachers' educational backgrounds and teaching experiences, which allows readers of the study's results to familiarize themselves with the background

of each person and to better understand the relevance of this study to their own teaching. In the second part of this chapter, a comparison of interviews and observations provided additional insight into the ways teachers use the methods, from which the researcher examined how much of what teachers said during interviews matched what they actually did in observations. The last part of this chapter presented the findings of the interviews within four major categories: opinions of methods, use and selection methods, problems of using foreign methods, and development of future Taiwanese methods. Several important common themes and patterns were found in this study, including each method's advantages and disadvantages, teachers' tendency towards combining *Beyer*, American methods, Japanese repertoire anthologies, and various technique books, problems of using English alphabets, problems of language translations, problems of selection of repertoire, no urgent need to develop Taiwanese methods, and adding Chinese literature and music appreciation materials to future methods.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS

As indicated in the first chapter, the purposes of this research are: (a) to evaluate the use of elementary-age piano methods in Taiwan and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of different methods from the point of view of experienced Taiwanese piano teachers, especially relating to Taiwan's structure of society, and (b) to provide a basis for developing of methods that are suitable for Taiwanese culture in the future. After interviewing the teachers and observing their teachings, the researcher categorized and coded teachers' opinions and then reported these results in the findings chapter within four main categories: (a) opinions of methods (b) use and selection of methods (c) problems of using foreign methods, and (d) development of future Taiwanese methods. In this chapter, the researcher discusses the results based on the findings in each category. In addition, the researcher offers some suggestions for future studies.

Opinions of Methods

When comparing the teachers' opinions of methods to the educators' opinions from the literature review chapter, the researcher found that in terms of each method's design of musical concepts, although there are some differences between them, generally speaking, there is no significant difference between teachers' opinions and the opinions stated in the literature review. Nevertheless, the researcher found that regarding the selection of repertoire, there are quite a few disagreements between teachers' opinions and educators' statements from the literature review. The researcher assumes that one of the reasons for this difference is that people from different cultures and backgrounds are likely to have different preferences of music. As indicated by Shao (1996), musicians, composers,

performers, and listeners are all influenced by their own traditional culture or the culture in which they grew up; therefore, people's music preference and their ability to sense particular style of music can vary by race or culture. In this study, this difference in music preferences is shown especially in the opinions of the repertoire selection of the French method, *Methode Rose*. Educators from the literature review chapter indicate that because of the usage of abundant French folksongs and familiar French tunes, *Methode Rose* attracts children, which makes children enjoy playing the piano. Yet, according to the findings, none of the Taiwanese teachers in this study gave *Methode Rose*'s selection of repertoire positive opinions, stating that most pieces do not have strong pulse or rhythmic drive; therefore, children's reaction to *Methode Rose*'s repertoire is negative. According to their teaching experiences, children feel the pieces are uninteresting, unattractive, and unfamiliar.

Another obvious example of culture impacting music preference is shown in the opinions of *Hal Leonard*'s selection of repertoire. Most educators' opinions in the literature review compliment *Hal Leonard*'s repertoire selection, claiming it is colorful, attractive, and full of diversity. In contrast, although some Taiwanese piano teachers in this study also compliment *Hal Leonard*'s repertoire selection, most Taiwanese piano teachers indicate that when using *Hal Leonard* in Taiwan, the pieces seem too pop-oriented and contain too many American idiom pieces. This makes *Hal Leonard*'s selection of pieces not very suitable for classical piano playing in the future.

According to the large spectrum of opinions regarding repertoire between teachers' opinions and those of the educators' from the literature review, the researcher believes that when discussing whether pieces are suitable or not, children's cultural background, their particular living experiences, and the value of

learning piano in a particular society should all be taken into consideration. The researcher believes that when teachers try to choose "suitable" repertoire for students, the artistic value of a piece may be the most important consideration. Teachers may judge the artistic value of a piece by its form, phrase, harmonic progression, etc. Although there are somewhat different opinions regarding the definition of beauty or art, by following some rules of what constitutes beauty, or selecting pieces from world famous composers, teachers will not go too wrong. However, when thinking about how to choose "attractive" pieces for students, teachers need to consider many variables. According to the opinions regarding the selection of repertoire for *Method Rose* and *Hal Leonard*, as discussed earlier, we may assume that an "attractive" folksong or a piece to one country may be somewhat difficult to feel or understand for another. One's ability to feel or understand a piece may strongly depend on that person's background while growing up and his music listening experience since childhood. This difference is not only a product of growing up in different countries. In Taiwan, for example, due to the dramatic economic, social, and educational changes over the past fifty years, different generations' opinions regarding what constitutes "attractive" music also illustrates this propensity for developing a specific preference.

As indicated in the first chapter, Taiwan began to receive western music education commonly after Japan's colonization. Many older generations of people in Taiwan have never received or receive little western music education. In contrast, younger generations receive almost exclusively a western music education. This explains a common phenomenon in Taiwan that while older generations enjoy playing Chinese instruments and listening to Chinese traditional music, younger generations, in contrast, listen to almost exclusively to western music, ranging

from western classical music, jazz, to rap, hip-hop, etc. Therefore, the music older generations like may be different from what children like nowadays. The researcher may also assume that the piano pieces Taiwanese piano teachers like may differ from the preferences of their students. *Hal Leonard*'s American, pop-oriented pieces may be very attractive to young Taiwanese children but may be somehow noisy to Taiwanese teachers. This also needs to be considered when Taiwanese teachers choose "attractive" pieces for students.

Nowadays in Taiwan, it may be very difficult for Taiwanese piano teachers to decide what really attracts children due to the fact that Chinese music and heritage are more or less infused with Taiwanese culture, but at the same time the Taiwanese people are also strongly influenced by western culture. Children from a family who live with grandparents may feel more intimate with Chinese music and feel that Chinese music is attractive. However, children who live with young parents may completely follow the style of western culture. Thus, childrens' backgrounds may strongly influence their preferences about music. In addition, since piano teachers in Taiwan are usually at least two, three, or even more decades apart from their students, and because of Taiwan's dramatic social change over the past decades, what teachers consider "attractive" may be very different from younger generations' opinions. All in all, when Taiwanese teachers select pieces for students, they may need to be very aware of Chinese and western cultural influences on Taiwan's own culture as well as of what younger generation's preferences are in order to select truly "attractive" pieces for them.

The Taiwanese piano teachers' opinions that *Hal Leonard*'s selection of repertoire is too pop-oriented may also reflect the fact that Taiwan's piano education mostly favors serious classical learning. Therefore, for many Taiwanese teachers, although they may feel *Hal Leonard*'s pieces are interesting and attractive,

Taiwanese piano teachers still feel hesitant and insecure to use the American-based, pop-oriented methods exclusively; however, all Taiwanese piano teachers in this study use modern American methods, and some of them claim that for the majority of piano learners, American methods seem more suitable. This may suggest that although piano learning that refers to serious classical piano training still dominates Taiwan's piano education circle, this learning trend is gradually changing. Taiwanese teachers have begun to consider the majority of amateur piano learners' needs, and are concerned with balancing traditional serious classical learning values with students' need for a leisure hobby.

In this study, the researcher focuses on the teachers' views about the methods. Yet, the usage of method books involves not only teachers, but also students. When conducting research on piano methods, considering only one point of view will never be thorough enough. For future studies, in-depth interviews with piano students in order to gain insight into their views of methods books is needed. It would be interesting to compare teachers' and students' views about the methods.

Use and Selection of Methods

Although there are many elementary-age piano methods from different countries in Taiwan's market, according to the findings, the most frequently used methods are *Beyer* and newer American methods, such as *Bastien, Alfred, Hal Leonard.* Findings also show that Taiwanese piano teachers have a strong tendency towards combining old and new, European and American methods for use together. This is because although teachers believe that the modern American methods are better considering the development of musical concepts, diversity of repertoire, and the teaching of musicianship, Taiwanese piano teachers still believe that there are some values and advantages in the traditional methods in terms of preparation for serious classical music and extensive finger techniques. These results imply

that Taiwanese piano teachers feel more secure when combining old and new methods and are afraid of using either traditional or modern methods exclusively because to do so would lose some of the methods' collective advantages.

One teacher in this study especially mentioned that the "boring" pieces of the traditional methods are necessary and beneficial to develop students' patience and concentration. This idea may seem very unique and unbelievable to many western educators, but this thinking actually reflects the fact that Taiwan's education is strongly related to Chinese-based educational philosophy. By examining the content and repertoire in modern methods, especially American methods, it is easy to recognize that the modern educators put forth extreme efforts to develop methods based on child-centered psychological thinking, and make methods colorful and attractive to children, so that children will be highly motivated and willing to learn and practice more. The researcher strongly believes that this child-centered philosophy of design methods has positive impacts on children's piano learning, making learning more enjoyable. However, we may still need to consider whether children's motivation towards piano learning depends too much on these kinds of "eye-candy, ear-catchy" aspects. Are they going to stay interested in learning piano for very long? When children begin to play less ear-catchy pieces, will they have the patience to learn more mature literature?

In Taiwan, Chinese calligraphy (using a kind of Chinese paint brush to write Chinese characters) is compulsory in every elementary school. Although nowadays no one uses the traditional brush to write words in daily life, because of its difficulty of writing and troublesome preparation, many educators believe that Chinese calligraphy is actually a good approach to developing students' patience and concentration, which are both neglected in this modern, "everything needs to be done fast", short-cut society. Therefore, teachers' opinions of using traditional

methods to develop patience and concentration correspond to the educational purpose of Chinese calligraphy. If we think of it in these terms of patience and concentration development, Taiwanese piano teacher's opinions should not be too foreign for those educators who believe only in modern psychological breakthroughs.

Russia and China, for instance, do not use any "attractive" modern methods, but still create numerous excellent performers. The elementary-age method books used in Russia and China are not "attractive" at all as compared to the various modern methods in Taiwan's market. ChrTza (1982) indicates that about 100 years ago, Russia used the *Beyer* method exclusively and later developed their own methods containing only serious classical pieces with some Russian educational composers' works. Wei (1997) also indicates that the *Beyer* and *John Thompson* are the only methods used in Mainland China so far. Although these two countries never used any fancy, modern, or "attractive" methods to teach beginners, no one can ignore the fact that they produce countless excellent pianists in the world and that the levels of their typical piano students are superior. The researcher does not believe that these examples of piano method usage in China and Russia can justify the conclusion that using a child-centered, well-designed, diverse method is the sole determinate of success, because there are still many aspects we need to address, such as the influences of living in a communist society, economic structure, historical background, etc. However, it would be interesting to know how Russia and China, and probably many other countries, can successfully produce excellent performers, and above average students without using any "attractive" modern methods. All in all, the teachers' opinions of using traditional methods to develop students' patience and concentration in this study may suggest that while the modern methods focus on how to motivate children's interest by

using more colorful, diverse, entertaining, and logical learning of musical concepts, the concern of developing students' patience and concentration may need to be taken into consideration as well. This concern may serve an important role in successful piano learning and should be an important aspect for using, choosing and even judging a method. As indicated in Tzeng (1972), patience, perseverance, and concentration are keys to be successful in piano playing; many talented pianists who lack these qualities will not be able to gain high achievement.

For future studies, the researcher suggests that a scientific approach of longitudinal experimental study should be an interesting investigation. Students will be divided into several groups and assigned different methods or different combinations of methods. After a long-term study with the same teacher, researchers should compare the students of each group to access progress of technique, musicianship, musicality, reading, rhythm, etc. So far there is no such scientific research to prove which method, if any, is actually superior to others. The opinions and judgments of each method from the educators in the literature review are only limited to teachers' personal experiences and opinions; therefore, there is no actual proof of which methods are good or bad. By conducting scientific experimental research, although difficult to conduct considering the many variables that need to be addressed, the result will serve as a more objective and fair outcome to indicate what method or what the combination of methods are actually most effective.

Teachers in this study prefer to combine the methods with Japanese repertoire anthologies and Keith Snell's graded series, which are both considered serious classical repertoire collections. This result may reflect, again, that serious classical piano learning is still the mainstream in Taiwan's piano education circle; however, it may also suggest that Taiwanese piano teachers' acceptance of modern pieces is

comparably low, or that Taiwan's piano education circle is not exposed much to a modern environment.

Most teachers in this study mentioned that they choose and use methods on a case-by-case basis. In the literature review, many educators also believe that when choosing a method teachers need to be concerned with individual needs. Agay (1981) states, "the choice is an important one. Familiarity with what is available provides a better opportunity to meet not only the teacher's own special needs but also those of the student" (p. 328). Baker (2001) suggests that because every student is different, teachers need to observe, analyze, and offer varying solutions when selecting a technique method book for a student. When comparing theses opinions, there is not much difference between the teachers studied and those represented in the literature review. Basically, they both believe that age, an individual's ability and interest, teacher's familiarity, etc. should be taken into consideration when using and choosing methods for students. The results suggest that Taiwanese teachers have enlarged their views of using and selecting methods, not following what they were taught. This is a good sign that when society gradually becomes more diverse, Taiwanese teachers sense and reflect this trend when choosing methods. However, since this study is limited to interviewing 10 expert Taiwanese piano teachers, it is inappropriate to say that average Taiwanese teachers take into consideration the diversity of students' needs when using and choosing methods. Therefore, in order to understand average Taiwanese piano teachers' usage and selection of methods, large-scale survey research is needed. As described in the methodology chapter, because there is no official piano organization in Taiwan as of yet, sampling becomes a difficult issue when conducting large-scale survey research. The researcher suggests that in order to investigate and conduct further research, the Taiwanese government should

cooperate with expert Taiwanese piano teachers to form a large-scale piano organization.

Many teachers in this study claim that when choosing a method, repertoire is the major concern. However, this is somewhat different from many educators. As Blickenstaff (1998) indicates, based on the responses of several teachers, found in Byrns, Dula, March, and Sallee (1998), "repertoire is an issue, but it may not be the primary one. Most of the respondents choose a beginning method for its pedagogy: the reading approach, or the value of teaching basic keyboard skills along with reading, or the way in which the student is directed to play a wide variety of sounds on an extended range of the keyboard" (p.44). The difference between Taiwanese teachers' opinions and those from the literature may imply that in this study, the researcher selected teachers who have high degrees and professional training; therefore, it is very likely that in terms of teaching musical concepts, experts may be less dependent on the methods. In addition, what they are most concerned with is the value of the pieces. In contrast, for the majority of average piano teachers, because of less professional pedagogical training, they may be more dependent on the method books, and are more concerned with a method's pedagogical value than its selection of repertoire.

The use of diversity of technique books in this study may imply that technique is still one of the major concerns in Taiwan's piano education circle. In addition, the usage of diversity of technique books ranging from traditional *Hanon, Schmit, Czerny*, to modern technique series, such as *A Dozen A Day*, *Finger Movement*, *Excellent Athlete*, created by European, American, Japanese, and Taiwanese educators shows that Taiwan's educators or businessmen know and sense quickly what is going on outside of Taiwan, and try to come up with the latest invention. This is, in a way, a good sign for Taiwan's piano education circle. However,

introducing abundant piano methods, technique books, and supplementary materials from many different countries without educating teachers how to use and select them, depending only on teachers' ability to judge and use these materials, may not generate the maximum impact of using these materials. For less experienced teachers, facing this diversity of technique books and methods may possibly result in randomly picking up a book and using it without knowing the philosophy behind these books and methods; therefore, the effect of using these diverse technique books and methods is questionable. As Uszler (1982-3) claims, America has produced an abundance of methods over the past fifty years. Educators may need to consider whether or not teachers are truly aware of the educational psychology represented by the methods they use.

Some teachers in this study did not know of several methods due to their unavailability outside of big cities in Taiwan. This may imply that although Taiwan is a small and highly city-centered country, some problems may exist regarding the supply of piano materials outside of big cities. In order to provide equal opportunities to cities around the country, music companies should direct their efforts towards introducing new materials to the countryside. Also, establishing sufficient order-on-line systems would lessen the disparity between cities.

Problems of Using Foreign Methods

Several teachers indicate that the use of a solmization system to teach singing and notation readying is commonly used in Taiwan's general music classes, and that this system is different from the use of English alphabets in most American method books. Therefore, Taiwanese piano teachers need to provide explanation during piano lessons in order to help students associate with these two systems. Teachers also indicate that because the European solmization system is easy to sing, the use of English alphabets cannot completely replace the European solmization

system in piano lessons. This result shows that piano teachers in Taiwan are concerned with students' singing ability, not just their piano playing ability. Singing is the natural reflection of personal expression which may be easier to generate than playing on the piano. As YungFu (1982b) claims, it is better for students to have the ability to sing solfège before playing on the piano because singing before playing makes it easier for students to project and transfer the sound image from head to hand. Ayal (1999) believes Kodaly's philosophy, stating "music education should begin with singing, and that before ever touching an instrument, children should learn to read music through singing. He [Kodaly] remarked that if a child never sings, he will have difficulty making any instrument sing" (p. 28-29). The researcher also agrees with teachers' opinions that singing with a solmization system is actually more natural and easier to produce good singing tone and probably even correct pitch. In addition, the use of English alphabets to teach theory and use of the European solmization system for singing suggests that Taiwan's piano education circle presents a diversity of combining different western countries, including America and Europe. This corresponds to the usage of both European and American methods in Taiwan's piano education circle.

Teachers in this study indicate that English translations of American methods have some problems. First, games and activities cannot be played due to the fact that Chinese and English are completely different language systems, many games cannot be simply translated to a Chinese version. Teachers claim that there is no way to resolve this problem. Secondly, some direct Chinese translations from English are difficult for children to feel and understand the original meaning, and the translations sometimes lose the childish language. Based on these results, American methods seem to have more problems than those from other countries.

In fact, most European methods do not develop games and activities to learn musical concepts; instead, they use mostly traditional paper-and-pencil drills or leave the teaching of music theory to teachers, which is why these problems only exist in American methods. In addition, unlike the repertoire of American methods, many European methods contain mostly numbered-etudes or non-programmatic titles; therefore, there are usually no translation problems. The researcher feels it is important to address the natural differences between European and American methods, so that these results do not mislead the audience.

These translation problems also reflect that when Taiwanese educators translate foreign methods, they may not be concerned deeply with Taiwan's particular language background. To solve the problem of unusable games, the researcher believes that for future translation of foreign methods, these unusable games and activities need to be completely re-arranged or even re-written in a way that Taiwanese students can use instead of merely translating them from English. To make the titles of pieces more meaningful and make the language more suitable for children, the researcher believes that the translation work needs to be done not only by translators, but also needs to involve educators and piano pedagogues. Educators have a deep knowledge of children's intellectual growth, so as to know better how to make translations attractive and understandable for children of different stages of growth. Piano pedagogues know how to translate professionally in terms of the terminology of musical concepts and theory. The cooperation of translators, educators, and piano pedagogues will eliminate the English translation problems that occur in the foreign methods in Taiwan.

As to the repertoire selection in foreign methods, many teachers indicate that there is no Chinese literature in these foreign methods; nevertheless, many teachers do not think this is a big problem because western classical music is a universal

mainstream and Taiwanese students accept and enjoy western pieces a great deal. What teachers' opinions reflect is that most Taiwanese teachers believe that western music is superior to Chinese music and that the ignorance of Chinese music is a common phenomenon in Taiwan's society. To judge whether or not western music is superior to Chinese music is beyond the researcher's knowledge and this issue may be somewhat controversial; however, the opinion that Chinese music does not highly develop as western music does may be true. This can be related to ancient Chinese philosophies towards music. Wang (1997) indicates that Chinese music was strongly influenced by two Chinese philosophies: Confucianism and Taoism. Confucianism believes that music is for cultivating the human being's behavior, soul, and spirit; therefore, music is mostly for one's own listening, not to be performed for others. It is not necessary for musical instruments to generate huge volume, and music compositions should be simple. Taoism believes that the best music in the world is silence or the sound generated by Mother Nature. It also believes that the best way of living is to live with nature peacefully, not to be busy creating or inventing materials, including music. Therefore, under the strong influence of ancient Chinese philosophies, Chinese music has never been highly developed.

Although it is a controversial issue to judge Chinese philosophies towards music, because of the irresistible globalization, western classical music has spread and become the mainstream of classical music. It is understandable that many Taiwanese people follow this trend and ignore traditional Chinese music. As indicated in the introduction chapter, many Chinese and Taiwanese musicians notice this issue and try to combine western compositional skills with Chinese elements and spirits; however, for the beginners' music education, there are not many musicians who contribute to this field, and successful works for piano

beginners are comparably few as compared to western pieces. This explains why many Taiwanese piano teachers rarely assign Chinese materials for beginners. This may also imply that musicians in Taiwan are not interested or have few chances to become involved with the piano education circle, and in contrast, piano educators who realize the importance of Chinese music are usually not excellent composers. The researcher suggests that Taiwanese piano educators should strongly cooperate with composers so as to create excellent Chinese literature for young beginners. By doing so, traditional Chinese music will gradually become infused into younger generations as a part of their daily lives, so Taiwan's traditional Chinese culture and music will have an additional means of being preserved and gradually developed.

Development of Taiwanese Methods

In terms of the development of future Taiwanese methods, the results show that most teachers do not feel it is urgent to develop Taiwanese methods although they think it is a good idea. Most teachers claim that because in Taiwan, there are many methods and materials from which teachers can choose, the development of Taiwanese methods is not an urgent issue in Taiwan's current piano education circle. Also, Taiwan's market is comparably small; therefore, it may not be cost-efficient to develop a Taiwanese method. Although teachers stated this reason, the researcher is somewhat surprised by teachers' strong tendency towards thinking that it is not necessary to develop Taiwanese piano methods. This result reflects that Taiwan's quickly growing economy has resulted in increases of piano learners and naturally the number of piano methods and materials translated from other countries has also increased dramatically in recent years. This makes Taiwanese piano teachers believe that developing Taiwanese methods is not an urgent issue because of the many choices in Taiwan's market. Although teachers'

opinions are sincere and reflect the reality of Taiwan's piano education circle, the researcher still believes that the development of Taiwanese piano methods is still a very important issue in Taiwan's piano education circle. The researcher believes that using foreign methods to teach Taiwanese students may not have serious problems; however, if Taiwan only follows the Western world's footsteps and is not willing to have any breakthrough in its piano pedagogy circle, Taiwan's piano education will always stay behind and will never meet that of western countries. This reflects a serious negative situation in Taiwan in many fields, not only piano education. Taiwan, in a way, is an "excellent" follower, absorbing information quickly and adopting it within Taiwan's society very effectively. However, Taiwan lacks innovation and invention ability. Yu (2004) indicates that Taiwan always quickly replicates the trends and cultures of the triad powers—Japan, America and Europe. However, the pathetic thing is that Taiwan, after absorbing others' culture, can hardly create its own innovative products, which always leaves Taiwan behind. Teachers' opinions reflect Yu's statement, and the researcher believes that "enjoying" being a follower may not cause any harm in the current stage, but in the long run. will not be helpful for the growth of Taiwan's piano education circle.

In addition, teachers in this study are experts who possess advanced degrees in piano. It is very likely that expert teachers have more knowledge and more experience of using and selecting piano methods for students; therefore, they can solve the problems of using foreign methods easily and do not think it is urgent to develop Taiwanese methods. In contrast, the majority of Taiwanese piano teachers may not have sufficient piano pedagogical training and teaching experience, which makes them more dependent on teaching exclusively the content addressed in the piano methods. As Uszler (1984) claims, "The good teacher may be aided by materials but is never completely dependent on them. An inexperienced teacher,

however, is supported by highly structured and well-coordinated materials and may be guided to better results by use of such" (p.32). See (1998) also claims that for the majority of teachers and students, a fine method with a logical sequence of reading and technique is needed. In this respect, the researcher believes that the development of Taiwanese methods may still be an important issue for the majority of Taiwanese piano teachers.

In terms of the small market in Taiwan, the researcher agrees with these teachers' opinions. Therefore, in order to expand the market of piano method books, consideration solely on Taiwan's market seems insufficient. Storey (2001) indicates that Taiwan's trading business and economy depends a great deal on China and Hong Kong, and that the business among them increases dramatically every year. The researcher suggests that in order to make developing methods more price-worthy, educators may need to work with economists to learn how to expand Taiwan's market to Chinese speaking countries, such as China, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Malaysia. Although Taiwan shares a similar language and culture with these countries, some differences in terms of culture and music preference should be take into consideration. Some research of these countries' usage of piano methods should also be conducted before expanding the market in order to adjust Taiwan-made methods to suit different countries.

Although most teachers in this study do not think it is urgent to develop Taiwanese methods, they are all willing to see the creation of Taiwanese methods and offer several suggestions regarding future methods. Their opinions of adding Chinese literature and Chinese musical elements within western's mainstream musical concepts and repertoire show the reflection of what modern Taiwanese and Chinese musicians are doing—composing Chinese flavor and spirit compositions using western's compositional skills, as indicated in the first chapter. This is a good

sign that Taiwanese piano teachers have gradually become aware of the importance of representing Chinese literature in piano lessons.

Teachers' opinions of developing music appreciation materials in future Taiwanese piano methods may imply a significant improvement of Taiwan's piano education circle. Taiwanese piano teachers have considered that learning piano is actually learning the integrity of music, not merely learning motor pianistic skills. In addition, teachers' suggestions may imply that because piano education has become common, Taiwanese piano teachers are now more aware of the needs of majority students who take piano lessons for leisure. Therefore, traditional piano lessons, which focus on developing pianistic techniques, have gradually changed.

Additional Aspects

From conducting this study, the researcher found an interesting phenomenon in Taiwan's piano education circle. Teachers who posses advanced degrees, especially those who have doctoral degrees, are seldom or not willing to teach beginners. Although many piano teachers in Taiwan posses doctoral degrees in either piano performance or piano pedagogy, they mostly occupy teaching positions at universities or colleges, and most of their private students are higher level college or MGP students. This fact impacts this study, in that none of the teachers interviewed have doctoral degrees due to this study's requirement of teaching elementary-age beginners. In addition, in this study, holding a master's degree was one of the minimum requirements for selecting teachers. However, in Taiwan, many piano teachers were trained in Europe, and due to the different education systems, most European-trained piano teachers received performance diplomas instead of masters' or doctoral degrees offered commonly in the US and Taiwan.

The issue of creating requirements for selecting piano teachers seems a

dilemma. In this study, because of the researcher's interest in expert teachers' opinions of elementary-age methods, teaching elementary-age students and having master's degrees seem inevitable. At the same time, although the researcher did not want to eliminate the European-trained teachers, and would like to recruit teachers who have doctoral degrees, due to the basic requirements, the European-trained teachers and people who have doctoral degrees were naturally eliminated, even though the researcher believes that people who have doctoral degrees may have deeper insight into the usage of methods in Taiwan and European-trained teachers may offer very distinctive opinions from those who were trained in Japan, Taiwan, or the US.

For future studies, any piano education subjects related to the selection of Taiwanese piano teachers, the different European degree systems, and the rarity if high-degree teachers teaching beginners should be taken into consideration. In addition, since teachers in this study who posses doctoral degrees and were trained in Europe were not included in this study, it would be interesting to interview these teachers in the future and to compare their answers and opinions with those included in this study.

Summary and Conclusion

Over the past fifty years, Taiwan has grown from a low income, agricultural-based country to a higher income, high-tech industry-based economy. The piano learning environment dramatically reflects this change. Piano was once considered a luxury, top social strata's privilege, but now is available for most people's education. The usage of piano methods in Taiwan has also changed from the *Beyer*-only method to a diverse selection of methods. However, the elementary-age piano methods used in Taiwan so far are almost exclusively from foreign countries. In this study, after interviewing ten Taiwanese expert piano

teachers about their opinions of methods and the problems of using foreign methods, teachers offered suggestions for the future development of Taiwanese piano methods.

The findings show that Taiwanese teachers believe that European methods are basically technique-oriented and more efficient, allowing students to progress to the intermediate level faster. American methods, in contrast, are more motivational, interesting, and are thoroughly concerned with the development of musical concepts. Because of each method's different advantages, Taiwanese teachers have a strong tendency towards combining *Beyer* with American methods. Teachers also indicate several problems of using foreign methods, including the English alphabet problem, language translation problems, physical problems, and repertoire selection problems. For the development of future methods, teachers suggest that although developing Taiwanese methods seems a good idea, it is not urgent for Taiwan's current piano education circle. The establishment of piano conferences to educate piano teachers seems more important. However, they offered several suggestions for developing future Taiwanese methods, including adding music appreciation materials, Chinese literature and Chinese musical concepts within the mainstream, and western-based classical music content.

Some results imply that Taiwan's piano education circle has gradually changed from traditional pianistic technique teaching to emphasizing the integrity of music learning. Teachers' strong tendency towards combining different methods implies that Taiwanese educators feel hesitant and insecure of using either American methods or European methods exclusively. Taiwanese piano teachers are not enthusiastic about developing methods because of Taiwan's existent abundant materials and its small market. This result may imply that expert teachers are more independent in terms of use and selection of methods. In addition, it may

imply the common attitude of Taiwan's ignorance of innovation and invention ability. The researcher also suggests that for future development of methods, Taiwan may need to expand piano methods' market to other Chinese speaking countries since teachers indicate that Taiwan's small market makes developing Taiwanese methods too expensive.

Quite a few studies have analyzed and compared each method using a document analysis methodology. However, this study is the first one that discusses the opinions usage of elementary-age methods and the development of methods in Taiwan's particular society through employing the qualitative, in-depth interview and observation approach. The researcher hopes this study will give Taiwanese piano teachers a better understanding of the usage and development of methods in Taiwan, and that Taiwanese researchers may use this study as a starting point to conduct further studies to benefit Taiwan's piano education circle.

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APPENDIX A:

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR PIANO TEACHERS

(English Version)

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS
For research Being Conducted Under the Auspices of the University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus

Dear Piano Teacher,

You are invited to participate in a study titled **A discussion of Piano Method Books Used in Taiwan: Interviews and Observations with Piano Teachers.** The project is being conducted by Kuo-Liang Li, a doctoral student at the University of Oklahoma, and Dr. Nancy Barry is the faculty sponsor/supervisor. The purpose of this Informed Consent Form is to inform you fully about the nature of this study before you consent to participate.

The purpose of this study is to help the researcher understand the usage of numerous piano methods in Taiwan. The findings from this study will provide insight for piano teachers who use foreign methods within Taiwan's particular musical environment. Also, the information gained by this study will offer a basis for developing new Taiwanese piano methods. If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to take part in an individual interview and allow the researcher to observe two of your piano lessons teaching private one-on-one elementary-age students. The questions asked in the interview will address the perception of piano methods in Taiwan. The interview will last approximately one hour and will be audio-taped. The observation will be 30-60 minutes for each piano lesson and will be video-taped. Both the interview and the observation will be recorded only with your permission.

Both the interviews and the observations will be kept confidential. The recordings of the interviews will be transcribed, and the transcriptions, along with the recordings and videotapes from observations, will be kept in locked file cabinets. After this study is finished, the audio- and videotapes will be erased. Only the researcher and the faculty sponsors will be able to access these materials. Your participation in this study is voluntary. Your student may stop participating at any time without penalty. A pseudonym will be given to you so that your real name will not be disclosed. Therefore, participation in this research project will pose no risk to you beyond that encountered in daily life.

To participate, you must be at least 30 years old and younger than 65 to participate.

If you have any question at any time, please feel free to contact Kuo-Liang Li at 002-1-405-5730566. Questions regarding your rights as a research participant may be directed to the OU-NC Institutional Review Board at 002-1-405-3254757.

Yes, I agree to have my individual interview audio-taped.

(Initial)

Yes, I agree to have my piano lesson video-taped.

(Initial)

I hereby agree to participate in the above-described research. I understand my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without penalty.

Signature Date

Please sign this informed consent form and return it. Keep one copy for your records.

APPENDIX B:

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR PIANO TEACHERS

(Chinese Version)

教師參與研究同意書

此研究受到美國奧克拉荷馬大學諾曼校區同意與支持

親愛的老師：

您受邀參與一項臺灣鋼琴教本的研究。這項研究由在讀美國奧克拉荷馬大學的博士班研究生李國亮所執行，並由南西 貝里博士（Dr. Nancy Barry）擔任指導教授。此研究同意書的目的是在您參與之前，向您告知此研究的內容。

這項研究的目的是為了瞭解外國鋼琴教本在臺灣使用的情況。此研究結果將有助於臺灣的鋼琴老師使用外國教本以及發展未來的臺灣鋼琴教本。假使您決定參與這一項研究，我將對您進行大約一小時的訪談以及觀摩您的兩堂鋼琴課。在您的允許之下，訪談將被錄音，並且您兩堂 30-60 分鐘、學齡兒童的鋼琴課將被錄影。教本使用的情形以及老師的教授方式將有助於此研究的結果。

這些錄音帶和錄影帶內容是保密的，錄音帶和錄影帶將不會流傳，只有研究者與指導教授會聆聽以及觀察這些錄音、影帶。此研究結束後，錄音、影帶會被洗掉。您的參與是自願的，您有權利在中途退出。此外，在撰寫報告時，您將被給予匿名，因此，此研究將不會對您具有任何危險性。

您必須 30 歲以上、65 歲以下方可參與此研究。

倘若您有任何的疑問，請與李國亮聯絡。電話：002-1-405-5730566. 電子郵件：kuo@ou.edu. 有關您參與的權利，可打此電話查詢：002-1-405-3254757.

我同意訪談內容被錄音

（簽名）

我同意鋼琴課被錄影

（簽名）

我同意參與這項研究，而且我瞭解此參與是自願的，我有權利在中途退出。中途退出不會有任何損失或處分。

簽名　　日期

請繳交此張簽名函，並保留另一張作為日後與研究者聯絡需要。

APPENDIX C:

PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN PERMISSION FORM

(English Version)

PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN PERMISSION FORM
For research Being Conducted Under the Auspices of the University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus

Dear Parents/Legal Guardians,

Your child is invited to participate in a study titled **A Discussion of Piano Method Books Used in Taiwan: Interviews and Observations with Piano Teachers.** The project is being conducted by Kuo-Liang Li, a doctoral student at the University of Oklahoma, and Dr. Nancy Barry is the faculty sponsor/supervisor. The purpose of this document is to inform you fully about the nature of this study before you give permission for your child to participate.

The purpose of this study is to help the researcher understand the usage of numerous piano methods in Taiwan. The findings from this study will provide insight for piano teachers who use foreign methods within Taiwan's particular musical environment. Also, the information gained by this study will offer a basis for developing new Taiwanese piano methods. If you decide to let your child participate in this study, one of your child's 30-60 minute piano lessons will be observed. The selection of piano methods used in the piano lesson and how your child is taught will address the perception of piano methods in Taiwan. The piano lesson will be video taped with your permission.

These observations will be kept confidential. The videotapes of the observations will be kept in locked file cabinets. Only the researcher and the faculty sponsors will be able to access these materials. The researcher will erase the videotapes after this study is finished. Your child's participation in this study is voluntary. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty. A pseudonym will be given to your child so that your child's real name will not be disclosed. Therefore, participation in this research project will pose no risk to you beyond that encountered in daily life.

To give permission for your child to participate, you must be 21 years of age or older.

If you have any question at any time, please feel free to contact Kuo-Liang Li at 002-1-405-5730566. Email: kuo@ou.edu. Questions regarding your child's rights as a research participant may be directed to the OU-NC Institutional Review Board at 002-1-405-3254757.

Yes, I agree to allow my child's piano lesson videotaped

(Initial)

I hereby grant permission for my child to participate in the above-described research. I understand my child's participation is voluntary and that I may let him or her withdraw at any time without penalty.

Signature Date

Please sign this permission form and return it. Keep one copy for your records.

APPENDIX D:

PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN PERMISSION FORM

(Chinese Version)

家長/合法監護人同意書

此研究受到美國奧克拉荷馬大學諾曼校區同意與支持

親愛的家長/合法監護人：

貴子弟受邀參與一項臺灣鋼琴教本的研究。這項研究由在讀美國奧克拉荷馬大學的博士班研究生李國亮所執行，並由南西· 貝里博士(Dr. Nancy Barry) 擔任指導教授。此研究同意書的目的是在貴子弟參與之前，向您告知此研究的內容。

這項研究的目的是為了瞭解外國鋼琴教本在臺灣使用的情況。此研究結果將有助於臺灣的鋼琴老師使用外國教本以及發展未來的臺灣鋼琴教本。假使您決定讓貴子弟參與這一項研究，貴子弟的一堂鋼琴課(30-60 分鐘) 將被觀摩。教本使用的情形以及老師的教授方式將有助於此研究的結果。在您的允許下, 貴子弟的一堂鋼琴課將被錄影。

這些教學觀摩的內容是保密的，教學觀摩的錄影帶將不會流傳，只有研究者與指導教授會觀看此教學影帶。此研究結束後，研究者會將錄影帶洗掉。貴子弟的參與是自願的，貴子弟有權利在中途退出。此外，在撰寫報告時，貴子弟將被給予匿名，因此，此研究將不會對貴子弟有任何危險性。

家長必須已成年(21 歲以上)方可決定貴子弟是否接受教學觀摩。

倘若您有任何的疑問，請與李國亮聯絡。電話：002-1-405-5730566. 電子郵件：kuo@ou.edu. 有關貴子弟參與的權利，您可打此電話查詢：002-1-405-3254757.

我同意讓我小孩接受錄影

(簽名)

我同意讓我小孩接受觀摩，而且我瞭解此參與是自願的，我的小孩有權利在中途退出。

簽名　　日期

請繳交此張簽名函，並保留另一張作為日後與研究者聯絡需要。

APPENDIX E:

ASSENT FORM FOR CHILDREN

(English Version)

ASSENT FORM FOR CHILDREN

For Research Being Conducted Under the Auspices of the University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus

Dear child,

My name is Kuo-Liang Li. I am a doctoral student at the University of Oklahoma and I am doing research on Taiwanese piano method books. The complete title is **A Discussion of Piano Method Books Used in Taiwan: Interviews and Observations with Piano Teachers**. Dr. Nancy Barry is my faculty sponsor. I would like to ask you to participate in this study. The purpose of this form is to let you understand this study before you participate.

I am trying to understand the usage of the many different piano methods in Taiwan. The results from this study will be helpful for piano teachers to use foreign methods more successfully in Taiwan. Some of the information may help someone write a Taiwanese method someday. If you decide to participate, one of your piano lessons (30-60 minutes) will be observed. The piano lesson will only be video taped with your permission.

These observations will be kept confidential. The videotapes of the observations will be locked up. Only faculty sponsor and I will be able to access them. I will erase the videotapes after this study is finished. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may decide not to participate at any time. You will be given a different name so that no one will know your real name. Participation in this study will not be of any danger to you. I will also get your parent's permission.

To participate, you must be 7-12 years old.

If you have any questions at any time, please feel free to contact me at 002-1-405-5730566. Or you can email me at kuo@ou.edu. You can contact the OU-NC Institutional Review Board at 002-1-405-3254757 if you have any questions about your rights.

Yes, I agree to have my piano lesson videotaped.

(Initial)

I agree to participate in the research described above. I understand my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without penalty.

Signature Date

Please sign this assent form and return it. Keep one copy for your records.

APPENDIX F:

ASSENT FORM FOR CHILDREN

(Chinese Version)

兒童參與研究同意書

此研究受到美國奧克拉荷馬大學諾曼校區同意與支持

親愛的小朋友：

我是美國奧克拉荷馬大學的博士班研究生李國亮。我正在進行一項臺灣鋼琴教本的研究，並且想請您加入這項研究。這項研究由南西 貝里博士 擔任指導教授。這個同意書的目的是希望在您參與之前，讓您了解這項研究的內容。

這項研究的目的是為了瞭解外國鋼琴教本在臺灣使用的情況。研究的結果將有助於臺灣的鋼琴老師使用外國教本以及發展未來的臺灣鋼琴教本。假使您決定參與這一項研究，小朋友您的一堂 30-60 分鐘的鋼琴課 將被觀摩。教本使用的情形以及老師的教授方式將有助於這項研究的結果。在您的允許下，您的一堂鋼琴課將被錄影。

這些鋼琴課教學的內容是保密的，教學的錄影帶將不會流傳，只有研究者與指導教授會觀看此教學影帶。這項研究結束後，錄影帶會被洗掉。小朋友您的參與是自願的，您有權利在中途退出。並且，您的真名及真實身份將被保密，您的姓名將以匿名呈現在報告中，因此，此研究將不會對小朋友您有任何危險性。

您的年齡必須是 7-12 歲才可參與這項研究並接受錄影。

倘若您有任何的疑問，請與李國亮聯絡。電話：002-1-405-5730566. 電子郵件：kuo@ou.edu. 有關您參與的權利，可打此電話查詢：002-1-405-3254757.

我同意讓我的鋼琴課被錄影

（ 簽名）

我同意我的鋼琴課被觀摩，而且我瞭解此參與是自願的，我有權利在中途退出。 中途退出不會有任何損失或處分。

簽名 日期

小朋友，請繳交此張簽名函，並保留另一張以便日後與研究者聯絡。

APPENDIX G:

POSSIBLE TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Possible Teacher Interview Questions

- Could you tell me about your educational background, and your working, teaching, and performing experience?

  Possible probing questions:

  a) Can you tell me more about your students? How many students do you have? What are their ages, levels?

  b) Let's talk more about your teaching experience. How many years have you been teaching at the elementary level? Do you enjoy teaching at that level?

  c) What does teaching piano mean to you?

  d) I'm interested in your educational background. Tell me more about it. Where did you obtain your degrees? What is the most significant knowledge you learned from the school? Did what you learn change your teaching philosophy?

  e) Do you think what you learned from school is sufficient in your piano teaching? How have you been improving your teaching skills? Did you attend any workshops, piano pedagogy conferences? How often? What do you learn from workshops and conferences?

- Let's talk about the method books used in Taiwan. There are quite a few average-age piano methods in Taiwan's market, what do you think of these methods?

  Possible probing questions:

  a) Do you support any specific method in any substantial way? In what ways?

b) Can you share your insights as to the advantages and disadvantages of these methods?

c) Can you talk more about the Beyer method? In your opinion, why is Beyer so popular in some Asian countries (Taiwan, China, Korea, and Japan) but rarely used in other countries? Why do you think it retains its popularity?

d) Can you say more about these methods in terms of repertoire, technique, introduction of concepts, reinforcement, musicianship, design and format, use of technology, etc.?

e) Now I would like to hear your opinion on the current trend of using technology for teaching. Many methods provide optional CD accompaniment. What are the advantages and/or disadvantages of using CDs?

- Let's talk about your piano teaching philosophy, and how you select and use the elementary-age methods.

Possible probing questions:

a) Let's now discuss the selection of methods. How do you select the methods for your students? Do you prefer using the method on which you yourself were taught?

b) What methods do you currently use for Taiwanese elementary students and why did you select these methods? Do you use a combination of different methods for your students? How? Are there any methods you previously used, but no longer use anymore? Why?

c) How do your teaching goals affect the way you select piano methods? What are your major considerations when choosing a method book for

your students? Does it relate to the method itself, students' needs, or something else?

d) Are there any supplementary materials you use to accompany the method books?

e) What do you think the values of method books are? Do you follow the method books page by page? Or do they just serve as guidelines? How much of an impact do you feel a teacher's choice of method books has on a student's learning?

f) Can you tell me how you use these methods to teach students technique, musicianship, and musical concepts?

- From your personal teaching experience, are there any problems that Taiwanese students encounter when they use these foreign method books? How do you devise and implement ways to compensate for these problems?

Possible probing questions:

a) Can you further elaborate on these problems in terms of Taiwan's educational system, music educational system, societal value, etc.?

b) What do you think of the selection of repertoire from these foreign methods? Do your students enjoy these pieces? Do they understand or grasp the pieces easily? Please feel free to elaborate as you see fit.

c) What are the major characteristics and differences between methods from America, Japan, and Europe? What characteristics are not appropriate for Taiwan's musical environment?

d) What do you think of the general music class offered in Taiwanese elementary schools? Is it helpful or does it contradict the development

of young piano students? How? Did you devise and implement ways to compensate for these problems?

- Tell me your views of the development of Taiwanese methods. Do you think it is necessary to develop Taiwanese elementary-age methods?

  Possible probing questions:

  a) Can you elaborate more? Why or why not?

  b) If you were to write a Taiwanese method, what would you include that is not covered or emphasized in most methods today?

  c) Based on your favorite method(s), is there anything you would like to see changed or presented differently in order to make the method(s) more suitable for Taiwanese students?

  d) Do you have any other ideas or thoughts about the current state of piano instruction or piano methods in Taiwan?

APPENDIX H:
CODES

I. Opinions of Methods

Beyer Method

Fair pacing, fast towards the end (1,2, 8, 9)
Fine pacing (4)
Musical concepts poorly addressed (1,3,4,6,9,10)
Reading starts with C position, which has some advantages (2,3,4,7,8,10)
Introduces bass clef too late (8)
Easy to feel progress (8)
Technique effectiveness (1,2,4,6,7,8,9,10)
Develops finger technique, but not enough diversity of technique (3)
Revised editions more attractive (1,2,3,4,6,7)
Preparation for classical style and Czerny, Hanon etudes (1,3,4,6,7)
Length of each piece too long (2)
Pieces only in one style (2,3,4,6,8,9)
Pieces are boring, not attractive (7,9,10)
Also popular in China (8)

Methode Rose

Poor design/format/printing (1,3,6,7,8,,9,10)
Pieces not attractive (1,3,8)
Focuses on technique (1,7)
Never revised (3,9,10)
Concepts poorly addressed (3)
Value can be replaced by others (3,6)
Never used (8,10)

Emonts

Developing ears prior to teaching notation teaching (1)
Reading similar to multi-key approach (1)
Technically develops both hands (1)
Offers fine piano duet materials (1,4)
Uses lots of polyphonic materials (4)
Includes worldwide folksongs (1)
Note size too small (1,10)
No teacher's instruction book (1)
Never used (10)

Never updated (10)

Schnaider

Never used (10)

Poor printing (10)

Never updated (10)

England methods

Combines with Kodaly concept (2)

Not easy to obtain in Taiwan (2)

Emphasis on singing (2)

Selects some pieces from Beyer (2)

British use of many European methods (2)

Hal Leonard

Slow pacing (1,6,7,8,10)

Learning music by playing games, activities (1,6,8,10)

Offers fine CD accompaniment (1,5,6,7,8)

Colorful and interesting design/format/printing (3,5,6,8,10)

Pieces too pop/American, classical materials not enough (1,3,5,7,8)

Combines different reading approaches (1,3,8)

Off-staff reading not necessary for Taiwanese elementary-age kids (3)

Not familiar (2,4,9)

Also suitable for group piano lessons (5)

Solo books more difficult than lesson books (5)

Teaching concepts not clear enough, as compared to Alfred (5)

Pieces have some order problems (5)

Provides modern and diverse sound/pieces (5,6,7,8,10)

Technique exercises not sufficient (5)

Series well-matched (5)

Not available in teacher's living area (9)

John Thompson

Use of middle-C approach (1,9)

Big gap between levels (1, 2, 3, 4, 5,6,7,8,10)

Fine repertoire (may lack contemporary sound) (1,2,4,7,8,9,10)

Music concepts poorly addressed (2,3,5,9)

Introduces triads too early (7)

No use of its high level books (4)

Old-fashioned selection of repertoire (3)

Teaching of theory irregular (1)
Technique exercise not sufficient (1)
Poor printing quality (2,3,5,6,8)
Cannot be main lesson book (4,7)
Cannot compete with modern methods (3)
Use it for selecting extra pieces (9)

John Schaum

Use of middle-C approach (1,9)
Less gap than John Thompson (1)
Unorganized and insufficient teaching of musical concepts (4,9)
Use of middle-C approach exclusively (1)
Poor design/format/printing (7)
Revised edition more attractive (7)
Pacing is fine (7)
Not familiar (2,3)
Use it depends on teacher's explanation (9)
Use it for selecting extra pieces (9)

Bastien

Systematic design of musical concepts (use of multi-key approach), good for musicianship (1,4, 5, 8,9)
Requires teachers who have good functional skills (1,8)
Books in its series well matched (4,9)
Fine selection of repertoire (4)
Pieces more homophonic (1,2,6,9)
Introduces triads too early (1,6)
Fair design/format/printing (1,2,6)
Complicated explanation of theory/concepts (2,10)
Dilemma on teaching technique and musicianship (1,2,6)
Slower introduction of keys, as compared to Pace (5)
Fast introduction of keys (1)
Introduces black keys too early (2)
No gap (9)
Not familiar (3)
Use of its supplementary materials only (3)
Design/Format not attractive (10)

Glover

Use of middle-C approach (1,5,6,8)

More systematic design, as compared to older methods (1)
Gap between some levels (4)
Pacing is ok (10)
Pieces not very attractive (4)
Old method (4,6,7)
Series does not match well (1)
Pieces old-fashioned (1)
Pieces more traditional (5,9)
Musical concepts not well addressed (4)
Theory contains mostly paper-pencil work (1, 2,7,9,10)
More diversity of pieces than Beyer, but not enough (2)
More logical design of teaching musical concepts (2,5)
Not enough technique exercise for preparing MGP (2)
Suitable for more serious classical music learning (5)
Introduces musical concepts too fast (8,9)
No preparation for notation reading (9)
Design/format not interesting (10)
Not familiar (6)

Alfred

Combines different reading approaches (1,3,8)
Musical concepts well designed and paced (3,6,8)
Series well-matched (7)
Some gaps in high level books (1,8,9)
Fine selection of repertoire (1, 2,3,4, 5,6,7, 8,9)
Attractive design/format/printing (1,2,6,7,8,9)
Not easy for young kids, as compared to Hal Leonard (5)
Not enough introduction of keys (5)

Peanut Course

Never used (1,6,7,10)
Old method (6)
Poor printing/design/format (1,6,7)
Attractive only by its cartoon pictures (7)

Beanstalk's Basics for Piano

Offers lots of off-staff materials (2,6)
Provides some thoughtful teaching aids (2,6)
Develops weak fingers (2,6)
Imaginative titles (6)

Not attractive format/design (2)
Complicated explanation of concepts (2)
Not familiar (4,7,8,9)

Pace

Available only in Pace institutions (5)
Use of multi-key approach (5)
Series well matched (5)
Complete teaching of musicianship (5)
Good design of musical concept (5)
Non-attractive design/format (5)
Unattractive pedagogical pieces (5)
Introduction of keys too fast (9)
Not popular (5)
Requires professional teachers to use this method (5)

Jing Kou Gi Cheng

Use of middle-C approach (1)
Focuses on finger technique (1,2)
Stays in middle-C position too long (2, 4,10)
Boring pieces (1,2, 4,7,8,10)
Musical concepts poorly taught (1)
Pacing is slow (10)
Size of notes is big (10)
Pieces have gap (1,8)
Never updated (8)

Piano Land

Colorful design/format/printing (1,2)
Offers CD/teacher's accompaniment (1,2)
Teaches technique by rote (1)
Economical (1)

Piano Lesson Made Easy (Malaysian method)

Sufficient technique exercise (2)
Attractive selection of repertoire (2)
Written in two languages (2)
Good printing quality (2)

CD accompaniment

Motivational device (1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9)

Learning ensemble music (1,3,6,8,9,10)
Student becomes a follower (3,6,10)
No inflection (1,2,3,5,10)
Tends not to pay attention to their own playing (1,3,4,6,7,8,9)
Improves rhythmic sense (8)
Listening to CD makes learning pieces faster (7)
Orchestra sounds will be better (2,5)
Should enlarge its function (5)
Tempo too fast (1,5,6,7)
Need parents' participation (10)

Additional thoughts

Uses different performance CDs to teach interpretation (2)
Old methods in one volume, while modern ones divided into different books (3)
Content more important than design/format/printing (3)
Advantages as well as disadvantages (every method has different value) (2,3,8,9)
No contradiction of using different reading approaches (6)
Off-staff materials good for young kids, not necessarily for older kids (3,10)

II. Use and Selection of Methods

Combine methods and supplementary materials to teach

Many choices in Taiwan's market (1)
Combines Beyer with American methods (1,2,3,4,6,7,8,9,10)
Combines methods with Japanese teaching anthologies (1,2,3, 4,7,8,9)
Combines methods with Keith Snell graded series (1,3,5,8)
Combines methods with Chinese/Taiwanese literature anthologies (6,7,8)
No problem combine/switch methods to teach (2,6,7,10)
Students do not like to use all the books from the same series (2)
Use the same series, missing some advantages (2)
Use of many supplementary materials (4,6)

For Technique

Use of diversity of technique books (1, 4,6,7,8,9,10)
Design teacher's own technique exercises for students (6)
No use of American methods' technique books (3,7,10)

For Theory

No use of theory book (1,3,4)
Always use a theory book (7,9)

No use of American methods' theory books (7)

Others

Use of Japanese methods because of Taiwan's piano exam (8)
No use of Chinese music anthology for lower level students (4)
Depends on an individual's needs/ability/situation (1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9)
No longer use old methods except Beyer (1,3)
Use main lesson book page by page, select solo pieces from supplementary materials (3,4,7,8,9,10)
Use the books page by page mostly (6)
Use of American methods for group piano classes (8)
Both method and teacher's ability are important (1,3,7,8,9)
How to teach more important than method itself (2,6,10)
Methods do not matter for teaching rotation, posture (2)
Let transfer students use the methods they were already using (2)
Use a method after knowing it well (4)
Use traditional teaching materials for high level students (2)
Dislike using traditional methods (5)
Like to try new methods (5,6)
Equally emphasis on quality and quantity (6)
Repertoire is the major concern (3,7,8)
Many teachers still use Beyer (2,5)
Some materials can replace Beyer (2)
Piano teachers in Taiwan feel comfortable using the methods they were taught (2)
All methods can be replaced, but also cannot be completely replaced (3)
Old methods still have value (3,5)
Need to have a balance between serious and popular pieces (3,6)
Few teachers use Beyer exclusively (4)
Use and selection method in Japan similar to Taiwan (4)
Use of CD accompaniment occasionally (3,4)
One method needs to be moving, one needs to be boring (9)
Students who learn in Yamaha tend to have bad hand positions (10)
Teaches 20th century music after tonal sense established (4)

III. Problems of Using Foreign Methods

Problems found

Problems of Using English Alphabets (1,3,4,6,7,8)

- Only American methods have this problem (3)
- Children do not learn it from general music classes, they learn solfege instead (3)
- Need additional explanation in piano lessons (3,4,6)
- Not a big problem (1,3,4,6,7,8)

Problems of English Translation (1,2,3,6,8)

- Games/activities cannot be played (1,6,8)
- Difficult to understand/feel the titles (3)
- Chinese translation loses childish language (1,2)
- Skip the games (1,8)

Problems of Selection of Repertoire (1,2,3, 4, 5,6,7,8,10)

- American methods contain too many American idiom pieces (1,3,8)
- No Chinese/Taiwanese literature in these foreign methods (2,4,6,7,8,10)
- Some pieces cannot be deeply understood or felt (5,8)
- Not a big problem (1,3,8,10)
- Use of some Chinese literature for compensation (2,10)
- Taiwanese students shy to sing lyrics (10)
- Not sufficient technique exercises in American methods (7)

Physical problems (2)

- Taiwanese students' hands smaller (2)
- Change order/notes for compensation (2)
- Use wrists effectively to compensate for this problem (2)

No big problems (1,4,6,7,9)

- Piano is a western instrument (1,4,6,7)
- Problem is how to use these foreign methods (4)
- Many selections in the market (1,4,6,7,9)

Related to Elementary Schools' General Music Classes

Not very helpful for learning piano (4,7)

Helpful for learning musical concepts in piano lessons (1,2,3,5,6,7,8,10)

Not helpful ten years ago (2)

General music classes poorly taught in some schools (2,7)

Taking piano lessons helpful for general music classes (2,3)

Different notation teaching system in general music classes (learn faster) (1,7)

No contradiction to piano lessons/using piano methods (1,7,8,10)

Helpful or not depending on a teacher's quality (2,5)

Recent change of policy makes general music classes not as helpful (5,6)

Use of Kodaly concept in piano teaching (6)

Additional thoughts

Problems exit in each method and depend on students (8)

Poor quality of Chinese teaching literature in Taiwan's market (1)

IV. Development of Taiwanese Methods

Necessity of Developing Taiwanese Elementary-age Methods

Need a Taiwanese method (2)

Good to have one, but not necessary (1,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10)

Piano is western instrument (1)

Many methods available in Taiwan's market (1,3,5,6,7,8,9,10)

Taiwan's market is small (1,5,7,9)

Preservation of Chinese culture not necessary from piano methods (1,3)

Taiwan's special environment of using methods (7,10)

No method is perfect even if we were to develop one (3)

Educate teachers how to use method more important (3)

For future Taiwanese methods

Needs to use Chinese/Taiwanese literature (1,2,3,4,6,7,8,9,10)

Needs to teach elements of Chinese music (2,5,8)

Needs to be designed systematically (1,4)

Needs to be very distinguished (7,8,10)

Needs to be based on western musical concepts (3,4,5,9)

Should use solfege instead of English alphabets (3)

Musical concepts should follow modern American methods (1,3)

Should reduce American idiom pieces (1)

Should add worldwide folksongs (1,5)

Should add music appreciation materials (1,6,8,10)

Should provide CD accompaniment (w orchestra sound) (2,7)

Needs to provide teacher's instruction book (2)

Needs workshops to educate teachers how to use the method (2)

Teaching of musical concepts cannot be based on Chinese literature (3,4,5)

Needs good advertising (2)

Needs to add/develop teaching aids (5)

Should provide more games/activities (7)

Needs attractive artwork (7)

Needs to be concerned with pacing/concepts (7,10)

Should avoid other methods' drawbacks (8)

Needs to be concerned with how to make experts work together (9)

Experiments are needed before releasing method to the market (9)

Needs different versions for different intelligence levels of students (9)

Should also be suitable for small group piano lessons (10)

Additional thoughts of Taiwan's current piano education

Parents' negative attitude (1,4,5,10)
Taiwanese students lack performance experience (10)
Parents do not care about piano lessons as much as before (6)
Difference between US and Taiwan's education (1)
Piano lessons too long for younger kids (2)
Teachers and parents push students too much (2)
Need to develop a national piano exam system (3)
Emphasizes too much on technique; musicianship and musicality are ignored (3)
Tuition fees too high (3)
Teachers are not strict enough, which allows bad habits (4)
Taiwan needs a large-scale piano pedagogy conference (6,8,9)
Taiwan has matured enough to develop systematic methods (9)
No perfect methods in the world (9)
Taiwan may develop pedagogical consultation center (9)
Problems of letting students listen to CD recordings (10)
